

Beaverton

What We Heard

The following is a summary of the planning process, as facilitated by AECOM and WALC. The following were the major issues, opportunities, and desires voiced during the walkability workshops and discussions with different stakeholders:

ISSUES

- Driver behavior / speeding / lack of courtesy towards pedestrians
- Staging of streets (especially Farmington and Canyon Road)
 - Hostile environment for pedestrians
 - Noisy
- Parking too little on-street parking, parking management plan needs to be implemented)
- Driveways (too many and poorly designed)
- Undesirable suburban pattern of development
- Excessive prioritization for automobile users in downtown
- Lack of pedestrian crossings
- Long crossing distance at signalized intersections

ASSETS

- Good bones (street network) in downtown area
- Downtown character
- Streetscape efforts downtown
- Weekly farmers market
- Successful public library
- Active civic park
- Close proximity to transit station
- Active downtown businesses

OPPORTUNITIES

- Desire for urban life style
- Improve aesthetics
- Improved landscaping / streetscape
- Increase downtown character
- Beaverton central plant (district energy source) at The Round is an incentive to redevelopment in the district
- Properties ready for redevelopment
- Transit close to downtown

Top Priorities

SHORT TERM

IMPLEMENT PARKING STRATEGY / MANAGEMENT PLAN DOWNTOWN

Difficulty in providing appropriate parking has long been a major barrier to achieving density in the Beaverton Regional Center. The recommendations that came out of the Beaverton Downtown Parking Solutions Study (April 2007) should be implemented. This study represents an important component of the City's efforts to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown Beaverton. Near-term recommendations and changes in policy/code identified by this study should be prioritized. Adopting transportation management policies that support Beaverton's downtown vision, such as limiting parking provisions, shared parking strategies, and reducing parking requirements in areas serviced by transit, would set a good direction and complement the mentioned parking strategy. Establishing standard timed parking (2 hr) and/or permit parking helps with the perception of available parking and turnover. Expand wayfinding and signage package to direct visitors to off-street parking locations. Continue to work with neighborhood and businesses to implement parking time limits. Also, exploring the feasibility for additional on-street parking (parallel or angled) opportunities within downtown would be consistent with these efforts. These near-term recommendations are all relatively easy to implement as part of the parking management plan. These measures could be the first steps the City would take to attain its vision.



DEVELOP A SIDEWALK ASSESSMENT STUDY DOWNTOWN

It is recommended that a sidewalk/physical assessment study or pedestrian level of service analysis be done within the study area to look more in detail at current deficiencies and target specific improvement projects. The overall goal would be to improve the quality of public streets, increase safety, and make downtown more pleasurable for walking. The methodology of these studies design and implement an observational survey of factors in the built environment that may affect people's travel behavior. Themes usually include aesthetics, sense of safety, destination, dimensions, functionality, etc. A block by block assessment of the area is completed using a survey questionnaire to analyze the quantitative Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) and qualitative factors considered. The observations are logged to provide an evaluation of conditions and make recommendations for changes to the built environment to improve walkability.

DEVELOP AN OPEN SPACE PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN AREA



Poorly designed and unplanned development can permanently destroy the public realm; however, if people decide which areas should be retained as open space and which areas should be developed for more intensive use, then they can save what they love best about their communities while still accommodating desirable growth. Communities that plan carefully for their future and maximize the value of their open spaces are better able to attract the businesses and jobs that improve the local economy and that create quality communities. An integrated open space plan for downtown Beaverton would establish a framework to the preservation and enhancement of the public realm. This framework establishes a system of parks and open spaces that builds upon existing resources and aims to connect the downtown to adjacent greenway systems and neighborhoods. This planning exercise, integrated with a downtown vision and a context sensitive transportation strategy, will identify and focus key projects that will help plan for the continued growth and vitality of downtown and set the stage to leverage the greatest economic impact and generate momentum for future redevelopment efforts. Outcomes of this study will provide a strategy for improvements to make downtown more pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, livable, and attractive.

IMPLEMENT ARTERIAL TRAFFIC CALMING

EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES ALONG FARMINGTON, LOMBARD, CANYON, AND HALL

Traffic Calming – Traffic Calming is the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non motorized street users. Drivers tend to travel at speeds that are comfortable based on the street design, not necessarily at posted speed limits. Thus, the design speed of a street is critically important to its safety for all users, as well as the comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.

Through changes to the physical design of the street, traffic calming measures encourage improved driving behavior at desired speeds, which increases safety, reduces the number and severity of collisions, enhances community character, and increases walkability. On the other hand, traffic-control devices such as signs, signals, and pavement markings, as well as route-modification measures such as street closures, partial street closures, and turn prohibitions, do not necessarily calm the traffic and, in fact, can make traffic worse.



Explore roundabouts along Lombard and Hall



Built roundabout in Honolulu, Hawaii

During the last century roads have been widened and straightened to accommodate more and faster vehicle traffic. These changes facilitate driving but often degrade conditions for walking, cycling, and for nearby residents. Conventional practices such as removing roadside obstacles, providing wider lanes, and managing access, have consistently reduced accidents and increased capacity, mostly on our freeways. Over time, the same approach have been applied to arterial and local streets, at times with mixed results. Street capacity may be increased, but often at a loss of access, neighborhood livability, and pedestrian and bicycle mobility. In many cases, the application of freeway-type design principles on arterial and local streets has actually increased speeding and accidents. Arterial traffic calming efforts aim to minimize the divergence between adjacent land uses and driving behavior (speed). All too often this relationship is not considered or if so, is not integrated. City leaders and transportation professionals should strive to match the role of a corridor to its context, to determine appropriate operating, design and posted speeds. Through the Civic Plan efforts, the City may want to work with ODOT facilities to explore designing these using context sensitive street design, especially along the corridors being affected by the barrier effect their current design has created. Potential benefits include road safety, increased comfort and mobility for non-motorized travel, reduced environmental impacts, increased neighborhood interaction, and increased property values.

ROUNDABOUTS

A few modern roundabouts are being suggested within the study area. Modern roundabouts are circular intersections that use "horizontal deflection" on entry and exit to bring vehicle speeds down to a safe 15-20 mph. More detailed studies are recommended to determine the feasibility and operational details and geometries with respect to the suggested roundabouts.

The safety benefits of roundabouts are a result of three main factors:

- 1) Lower vehicle speeds: At typical signalized intersections motorists may speed up for green or yellow lights. As motorists approach a roundabout they slow down. As a result, motorists are much more accepting and respectful of pedestrians.
- 2) Fewer points of conflict: At a typical two-lane, normal signalized intersection, there are 32 vehicle-to-vehicle and 24 vehicle-to-pedestrian points of conflict; at a roundabout, points of conflict are reduced to eight for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- 3) Simplified operation: Left-turning movements are eliminated. Every turn in and out of a roundabout is a right turn.



Roundabouts are designed to accommodate emergency vehicles, school buses, and delivery vehicles. The center island employs a "mountable ring" around its circumference that is designed to accept the rear left wheels of large vehicles in order to eliminate any damage to the island's landscaping.

Overall, roundabouts are quieter, more attractive and have a more efficient operation compared to signalized intersections. Studies show that roundabouts provide a 90% reduction in fatal crashes and a 75% reduction in injury crashes. They also carry 30% more traffic per lane, creates added land value, and increases access.

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS WITHIN DOWNTOWN

Well marked and well maintained crosswalks add emphasis to all intersections, making it clear to motorists that they are to look for and yield to pedestrians actively crossing the street. Traffic calming measures to reduce speeds would also help pedestrians. Signals and signal timing, as well as street geometry, should be designed to keep traffic speeds low and safe. Pedestrian Lead Intervals (PLI's) should be added added at high pedestrian activity intersections. PLIs give the pedestrian a chance to enter the street before right and left turning traffic. Push buttons should also be eliminated in the downtown, giving emphasis to pedestrians.



LONG TERM

TURN HALL & WATSON BACK TO 2-WAY

DECIDE WHETHER CITY WANTS TO BE A "DESTINATION" OR A "THROUGHWAY"



Proposed street section within existing 40' face-of-curb to face-of-curb dimensions - provides on-street parking on both sides

One-way streets, if not properly designed, eliminate some direct routes and force road users to make extra turns and travel greater distances to reach destinations. In this way, one-way orientations may create more traffic and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and can confuse non-local motorists. When businesses and pedestrians are valued, the drawbacks of poorly designed one-way streets are harder to overlook.

Downtown's existing one-way street network might need evaluating to see if it truly satisfies residents' goals and if it's consistent with the City's downtown vision; a conversion back to two-way operation could yield real benefits for multiple user groups. Existing traffic volumes (maximum of 8,000-10,000 cars/day at busiest link) on Watson and Hall might allow for these streets to shift to a 2-way system with very little or no impacts. In a downtown context, two-way streets offer improved accessibility and direct routing, improve exposure for shops, and make wayfinding easier. Two-way streets often reduce turning movements, speeds, volumes, and miles traveled, all of which improve downtown livability and safety, and help to make a downtown a pleasant place to be. Two-way conversions might make access to downtown by car take a bit longer during the peak times, but would be more intuitive and offer better business visibility.

One-Way to Two-Way Traffic - As many communities are in the process of revitalizing their downtowns, a common issue is one-way street networks. The legacy of one-way streets can be traced back to when the streets' sole mission was seen as moving traffic into and out of the downtown as quickly as possible. An emerging role of downtown as a cultural and entertainment center is now challenging the embedded mindset that the primary purpose of streets is the movement of commuter traffic. As people return to downtowns, there has been a plea for a rebalancing of streets to make them safer and friendly again for all modes of travel. It is in this context that many cities are converting poorly designed one-way streets back to two-way streets. One-way street conversions are part of a much larger effort to make downtowns more livable and economically successful. Political and business leaders are becoming increasingly concerned with the quality of the outdoor environment and visitors' experiences. In addition to challenges for pedestrians, other problems with one-way streets includes speeding, added noise and vehicular volumes, and lack of redundancy. Today, many cities are changing their one-way streets back to two-way operation to maximize access, reduce speeds, and increase walkability.

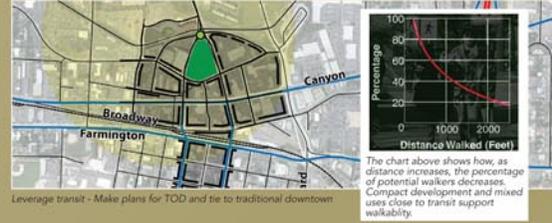
FOCUS EFFORTS DOWNTOWN

Just as the process of building a great city should never end, a city's vision should also evolve and be revisited from time-to-time. Given Beaverton's scale, the geography of Beaverton's downtown is too large to start just anywhere or everywhere. The limited resources of the City and participation of private stakeholders should be initially focused and directed in a small, intense location. The graphic below suggests a boundary that could be established as a way to concentrate efforts within this area. Direct revitalization efforts, incentives, public investment and private development to this district to leverage economic development sooner rather than later.



Establish a FOCUS AREA boundary to direct efforts that implement downtown vision

ORGANIZE LAND USES - Establish A & B Streets and regulate building placement & frontage



Leverage transit - Make plans for TOD and tie to traditional downtown

The chart above shows how, as distance increases, the percentage of potential water use decreases. Compact development and mixed uses close to transit support walkability.