Metro

# Hillsboro
## Walkability Workshops






The City of Hillsboro hosted a walkability workshop in June 2010 to explore how context sensitive transportation practices could help enhance the downtown area for a wide array of transportation modes. Through a partnership with Metro, national transportation experts from AECOM and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute visited the city and conducted a multi-day, interactive and community-driven process.

Walkability workshops can be a powerful tool for people to discuss common issues of interest or concern related to the design, maintenance, and operation of streets, parks, and open spaces. The goal of the Hillsboro workshop was to identify and prioritize solutions to current issues to help enhance livability and redevelopment potential downtown. Thoughtful input was provided during interviews with residents, elected officials, planning staff, and representatives from various agencies. This summary highlights the set of ideas and priorities that emerged from the walkability workshop, and outlines a new approach that the City of Hillsboro is poised to help advance and implement with the support of Metro.

Sustainable transportation systems meet the present transportation needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The current practice of sustainable transportation planning was developed in reaction to the limitations of conventional, auto-centric transportation policy, practice, and performance throughout the USA during the past half-century. Urban transportation systems based only on the car (speed and accommodation for the motorist) have proved unsustainable, consuming excessive energy, affecting the health of populations and delivering a declining level of service despite massive capital and environmental costs. Many of these negative impacts fall disproportionately on people who are least likely to own and drive cars.

Today, sustainable transportation advocates call for improved transportation equity, shifting the emphasis in public spending and actions away from conventional, auto-oriented practices, and to instead address the needs of a broader array of citizens and transportation modes. Building streets that accommodate pedestrians safely and comfortably is especially critical given prior decades of emphasis on designing streets primarily for motor vehicles. By designing for pedestrians first, communities establish a better balance between different transportation modes and add value to homes and businesses. Walkable communities lead to more social interaction, physical fitness, and diminished crime and other social problems.

AECOM | Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

# Hillsboro
## What We Heard

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

### ISSUES

- Too many one-way streets
- Driver behavior / speeding / lack of courtesy towards pedestrians
- Sizing of streets (Oak, Baseline, and 10th)
  - Hostile environment for pedestrians
  - Noisy
- Lack of signage, wayfinding, and gateway features downtown
- Inadequate driveway treatments
- Missing teeth - vacant parcels/properties that need redevelopment
- Inadequate ADA facilities
- No residential uses on 2nd stories

### ASSETS

- Great bones (street network) in downtown
- Charming downtown character and history
- Active main street
- Arts revival efforts
- Farmers market
- Tuesday Marketplace
- Close proximity to transit
- Nice aesthetics
- Redevelopment opportunities
- Intact neighborhoods downtown
- Access to open space
- Urban renewal district creates funding source
- City is very supportive of downtown revitalization efforts

### GOALS / OPPORTUNITIES

- Desire for higher quality of life
- Improved aesthetics
- Improved downtown character
- Properties ready for infill redevelopment (Wells Fargo site and 2nd Ave/Washington site)
- Transit close to downtown
- Increased walkability
- Increased on-street parking and access


*Study Area - Walkability Workshop Route*

# Top Priorities

## SHORT TERM

### TURN MAIN STREET INTO A TWO -WAY STREET (INCLUDING LINCOLN & CROSS STREETS)

*ALIGN TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY WITH DOWNTOWN VISION*


*Turning downtown streets to a two-way system will reward local trips and emphasize place - Explore the conversion of Main Street, Lincoln Street and north/south streets; it is also recommended exploring the decoupling of Baseline and Oak Street.*

One-way streets 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 create more traffic and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and can confuse non-local motorists. When businesses and pedestrians are valued, the drawbacks of 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 on Main Street, Lincoln and 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th might allow for these streets to shift to a two-way system with very little or no impacts. In a downtown context, two-way streets offer improved accessibility and direct routing, give all shops improved exposure and make wayfinding easier. Two-way streets 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 to move 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 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 include 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.

### IMPLEMENT RAISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ON MAIN ST.


*Before (existing condition)* *After (visualization of implemented measure)*

One raised pedestrian crossing is proposed on Main Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue. This measure enables the pedestrians to cross the street at sidewalk height, eliminating the need for curb ramps, and requiring motorists to traverse ramps. Raised crossings make pedestrian crossings more conspicuous to motorists and allow children to see and been seen more easily by raising their stature. This creates a little bit of a "slow zone" condition at a location with lots of pedestrian activity, which makes it perfectly appropriate for the context.

### DEVELOP TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN FOR MAIN STREET NEIGHBORHOOD

This neighborhood would benefit from a traffic calming plan given its context and current conditions. Further study should be devoted to develop an alternative to the Main Street/6th Avenue intersection. Signals in this area are currently penalizing all pedestrian activity by requiring push buttons and by not giving pedestrians automatic and full cycles.

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.

For the purposes of calming the traffic, streets often are categorized as "framework" and "non-framework" streets. Framework streets are generally those that function as a significant connection and serve as primary emergency routes. Non-framework streets include the rest of the streets. The smart approach to traffic calming is to determine the appropriate measures for obvious places, such as key intersections and pedestrian generators. On framework streets, traffic calming can be accomplished using a variety of "cross-section changes," such as reducing the number and width of the lanes, using materials such as bricks and pavers to slow cars, adding edge treatments such as flushed curbs, providing on-street parking, and installing street trees, sidewalks and lighting. On non-framework streets, traffic calming tools such as speed humps, mini-traffic circles, chokers, and chicanes can be used to help self-enforce speed limits and increase safety. The correct use of these measures is relative to the desired motor vehicle speed.

### EXPLORE ARTERIAL TRAFFIC CALMING OPPORTUNITIES ON 10TH AVE. BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND WALNUT STREET



*Before (typical arterial corridor)* *After (sample visualization of implemented measures)*

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. Due to the evolving needs and function of an area over time, a corridor and its adjacent land uses may change and become incompatible. Arterial traffic calming efforts aim to minimize the divergence between adjacent land uses and driving behavior (speed). All to 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. Potential benefits include road safety, increased comfort and mobility for non-motorized travel,reduced environmental impacts, increased neighborhood interaction, and increased property values.

### IMPLEMENT HEAD-OUT ANGLED PARKING (IN FRONT OF CIVIC CENTER)



*Before (existing condition)* *After (visualization of implemented measure)*

One of the ideas along Main Street was to implement on-street head-out angled parking (sometimes called "back-in" angled parking) in front of the civic center (currently head-in angled parking). Head-out angled parking has proven to be favorable in many aspects compared to parallel and head-in parking, particularly with respect to increased safety. Some of the key advantages of head-out angled parking are illustrated in the figure below.

1. Better visibility: Head-out angled parking allows for better visibility since the driver is able to face forward when leaving the parking spot and pulling into the travel lane. This reduces the dangers of collision and proves safer for both the parked vehicle as well as moving vehicles.
2. Easier access: Compared to parallel parking, drivers maneuver into a head-out space in about half the time. Thus, the travel lane is blocked for a shorter time period.
3. Safer for users: Head-out parking allows for safer loading and unloading of a vehicle, by its trunk near the sidewalk.
4. When exiting the car, the doors direct occupants toward the sidewalk, not toward traffic. This is especially helpful for caretakers of young children.
5. Head-out angled parking eliminates the risk of "dooring" a bicyclist from a car that is parallel parked. Also, head-out angled parking allows for better visibility of bicyclists compared to head-in angled parking.

## LONG TERM

### EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE TO 5TH AVENUE

*Main Street and 5th Ave. looking West*

The downtown street environment seems to fall apart along Main Street past 4th Ave. Extending the downtown streetscape concept to 5th Ave would help define the book-end of the business district as Main Street transitions into a residential street. The goal would be to match the street design with the desired land uses and built form on this block, which would integrate with the rest of the district. The hope is for this public infrastructure investment to stimulate private sector redevelopment, which would enhance the quality of the built environment and public spaces in the downtown for the local and greater community.

### FOCUS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

*ESTABLISH FOCUS AREA TO IMPLEMENT DOWNTOWN VISION*


*Target projects and provide incentives/bonuses within the focus area ONLY*

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 Hillsboro's scale, the geography of Hillsboro'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 above graphic suggests a boundary that could be established as a way to concentrate efforts within this area. All revitalization efforts, incentives, public investment and private development should be directed to this district to leverage economic development sooner rather than later.