



POWELL-DIVISION TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DEVELOPER ROUNDTABLE

February 5, 2015 | 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. | Catholic Charities, 2740 SE Powell Boulevard, Portland

KEY THEMES AND OUTCOMES

Real estate developers, redevelopment staff from the Portland Development Commission and the City of Gresham, and real estate staff from Portland Community College participated in a facilitated 1 ½ hour discussion surrounding development opportunities and challenges along the Powell-Division corridor. The discussion was organized around five themes including: building and streetscape design on high volume arterials, revitalizing underutilized shopping centers, preserving income diversity, serving campuses (including Gresham Vista Business Park, Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center, and Mt. Hood Community College), and strengthening downtown Gresham.

Participants were invited based on their experience with the issues being discussed on the corridor and included large and small property owners, redevelopment agency staff, and developers with expertise in affordable housing, commercial office development, industrial development, shopping centers, apartments, and single family and innovative housing types. Input from this meeting, along with findings from public outreach and other analysis will help policy and investment strategies for the alignment and station areas being developed by the cities of Portland and Gresham. Major recommendations were as follows:

- **Design approaches for high volume streets** – improve streetscape and pedestrian environment with wider sidewalks, deeper setbacks, plazas, or courtyards; improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, access, and connectivity; provide designs that address the pedestrian environment for high volume streets
- **Commercial revitalization opportunities** – allow and encourage interim and temporary uses, such as food carts and market tents, and consider limited duration (5-10 year) permits for low cost buildings; review code to allow more investment in non-conforming properties; encourage businesses to foster deeper connections in their neighborhood
- **Preserve income diversity** – land bank for affordable housing; maintain zoning capacity for multifamily housing along the corridor; allow alternatives to traditional single family housing; expand home ownership assistance programs for residents with low incomes
- **Serve campuses** – Plan for bike and pedestrian connectivity; provide transit to serve shift worker schedules
- **Downtown Gresham** – bring more and higher paying jobs; encourage higher density housing; improve transportation connectivity; encourage place-making; develop vacant, publicly owned land; finance streetscape improvements; assemble land

Participants

Trell Anderson	Catholic Charities	Michael Liu	Fubonn
Gina Bell	Portland Development Commission	Ed McNamara	Turtle Island Development
Amy Fleck-Rosete	Portland Development Commission	Jeremy McPherson	Killian Pacific
Josh Fuhrer	City of Gresham Urban Renewal	Eli Spevak	Orange Spot
Mary Hanlon	Hanlon Development	Jessica Woodruff	Human Solutions
Brent Hedberg	Specht Development	Gina Whitehill-Baziuk	Portland Community College
Eric Cress	Urban Development + Partners	Ken Yu	Kaly Construction & Design

Meeting purpose

- Understand the perspective of real estate professionals regarding the policies and public investments that will be most effective in attracting investment and fostering healthy communities along the corridor.

Question posed to the roundtable

- How can urban design and public realm investments foster an appealing environment for pedestrians and transit users on streets carrying high volumes of traffic?
- In areas where economics do not support redevelopment at urban densities, what can be done to improve underutilized shopping centers' economic productivity, visual appeal, and support for pedestrians?
- How can we preserve and strengthen income diversity in neighborhoods along the transit corridor?
- How can the transit project best serve campuses including Gresham Vista Business Park, Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center, and Mt. Hood Community College?
- How can downtown Gresham leverage the transit service to achieve greater vitality?

EXPANDED SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

High volume urban arterials

- Given traffic volumes on 82nd Avenue, design approaches can't be the same as those used for lower volume streets such as inner Division.
- Assuming we want to incentivize more multi-story with housing above retail, it can be more challenging to lease up without a major setback on a busy street.
- We need to examine our current code so buildings can better buffer occupants from busy streets. Some key strategies, like larger setbacks or stone walls, are not allowed outright.
- In planning wider sidewalks in front of Portland Community College, we first sought community input, we and then decided that we would create a safe-haven environment. What we built is not allowed through the current code, we had to apply to apply for a variance to create that space.
- Encourage pedestrian, bike, and vehicle access into shopping centers from side streets off of the main arterial.
- In places with missing sidewalks, lack of lighting, basic improvements can go far. People are greatly influenced by whether or not they feel safe.
- Crosswalks spaced closer together greatly improve pedestrian flow and foot traffic.
- More side streets and rear parking lots can also provide traffic calming, especially during rush hours.
- Restrict left-handed turns to move people through quickly and still peel off to shops, side streets, to the right.
- We should encourage pedestrian traffic, and attempt to achieve slower speeds on 82nd.
- As far a building design, we should encourage more outdoor café's but that won't happen until the traffic slows down, now it's too dusty and fast.
- Where there is capacity, parked cars can serve as a useful buffer between pedestrians and a busy street.

Under-utilized shopping centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through regulatory flexibility, encourage activation of underutilized parking lots with stalls for micro businesses, food carts, and markets under tents. ▪ When market rents don't support redevelopment, design and landscaping standards can inhibit incremental investment in nonconforming buildings. Therefore, explore ways to allow developers to make incremental improvements to non-conforming shopping centers. ▪ Encourage businesses to meet unmet community needs. For example, neighbors got together to fight the removal of a kiosk that had also been a place that latch key kids could deposit and pick up their keys. ▪ Improve sidewalk and pedestrian conditions. ▪ Encourage pedestrian, bike, and vehicle access into shopping centers from side streets off of the main arterial. ▪ Encourage investment by improving the quality of pre-application services so that small developers can avoid surprises later in the development process. ▪ Encourage investment by improving coordination between permitting processes of different bureaus and departments with goal of creating a one-stop shop for small developers and eliminating situations where developers face conflicting requirements. ▪ Lower barrier to new investment by offering limited duration permits (say 5 to 10 years) with reduced design and landscaping requirements.
Income diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use public funds to acquire land for future affordable housing, particularly in neighborhoods expected to experience rising housing prices. ▪ Because affordable housing tenants highly value transit access, use public funds to acquire land for future affordable housing along transit corridors. ▪ Use public funds to create land trusts for development with long term affordability covenants. ▪ Encourage home ownership so that residents can choose to stay or benefit from rising home prices. ▪ Provide public funding for land banking for affordable housing. ▪ Avoid policies that reduce the zoning capacity of land for multifamily housing. Even with inclusionary zoning or bonuses for regulated affordable housing bonuses, reducing the baseline level of entitlement for multifamily housing will constrain supply and raise prices for those who don't qualify for or can't get into a regulated affordable unit. ▪ Allow affordable and multifamily projects on streets other main arterials. ▪ Where lot sizes are awkwardly large/chunky , up-zoning and increasing allowed density can allow development to occur. In the interim, cottage or small houses can be a good fit.
Campuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider modifying BRT routing and scheduling as Gresham Vista builds out or other employers arrive. That can be a major benefit of BRT: Easy flexibility based on usage, with much less capital and infrastructure. ▪ With shift workers, consistency of transit schedules outside of peak period can be important to attracting riders. ▪ With large campuses, there is a need to plan for how riders get from the station stop to their final destination. ▪ We should be asking what complementary land institutions see demand for such as housing for employees or students or retail services or lodging. ▪ Plan for connections between campuses and supporting land uses such as retail,

housing, etc. There is a chicken-and-egg with developing in currently auto-oriented neighborhoods, as opposed to pedestrian-oriented: It's hard to create a place for people that people want to pay more to be near. But if you do begin to create more walkable places, then people will begin to pay more.

- To attract more employment, provide industrial land for sale. If we can buy versus lease, we'd prefer to buy. So where you can create ownership conditions, more people will invest.
- In currently isolated office parks, places where you would hope to see increased development and connections to campuses, consistency and reliability of transit is a cornerstone issue.
- With a half-mile walk from transit (MAX) to the office, trains need to come frequently or ridership plummets. For this reason, suburban environments tend to perform less well in terms of jobs and corresponding rents.

**Downtown
Gresham**

- Anything you can do to attract employment increases people's ability to pay higher rents and support more retail and intense forms of development.
- People come to main streets for social reasons: Bring jobs and recreation opportunities in, nightlife. Employment and jobs drives rent.
- We should have put some higher density Mixed Use residential right off the main street.
- Consider the coming wave of retirees. They tend to desire pedestrian-oriented small communities that are active for seniors. It's very different than the 20-to-30-somethings. Where can they take the grandchildren? Think Living Room Theater, ice cream shops and parks. Seniors also want access to arts, culture.
- Incentive restaurants as a destination use. Successful destination restaurants like can spur development around them. When going to dinner is a two-hour event, people will drive and park just to come. This is part of the reason we began with restaurants on Division to spur development.
- Baltimore allows TIF funding for projects or blocks. This may be a more viable scale for our purposes, rather than having to consider the whole district.
- On major roads such as Eastman and Division, consider adding planted medians for both beauty and to serve as pedestrian refuges. If you are going to change big boulevards, you have to change who they are designed for.
- Again, think about public acquisition of key parcels in and near downtown to attract high quality development that can provide the residential or employment base to strengthen the downtown core.
- Reducing parking requirements can make development more cost-effective.