

To: Chair Butler and Planning Commissioners
From: Brian Martin, Senior Comprehensive Planner, 503-618-2266
Memo Date: Oct. 15, 2016
Meeting Date: Oct. 24, 2016
Subject: Active Transportation Plan
and Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update
Attachments: A: Active Transportation Engagement Results map
B: DRAFT Pedestrian Network Improvements map
C: DRAFT Bike Routes for Everyone map
D: Bike Routes for Everyone poster

This work session's purpose is to provide updates and solicit Planning Commission discussion about two projects:

- [Active Transportation Plan](#)
- [Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update](#)

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING PURPOSE

- Provide an update regarding [Active Transportation Plan](#) public engagement results.
- Share the draft maps showing pedestrian improvements and biking networks and seek Planning Commission comment.
- Describe next steps and where the project is headed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Active transportation is any human-powered way to move through the city, such as walking or bicycling. (Active transportation supports transit.)

This citywide project will provide a detailed plan for active transportation to guide future improvements, such as prioritizing the addition of sidewalks, more safe crosswalks, bike lanes, trails and paths where they are missing. These improvements can make safer, more comfortable places to ride a bicycle and walk.

This project will:

- Inventory the City's active transportation network, including bike lanes, shared streets, trails, paths and amenities such as wayfinding and safety signs.
- Update the existing bike network (from the Transportation System Plan) and create a draft pedestrian network that are comfortable and encourage people to choose active transportation

to get to important destinations, including healthful food options, recreational opportunities, jobs and schools.

- Identify gaps in those networks and a list of projects to address those gaps and complete the active transportation network.
- Establish criteria for how the City prioritizes bicycle and pedestrian projects to improve active transportation networks.
- Update the vision and goals/objectives for City programs related to Active Transportation, such as Safe Routes to School and bike safety programs.
- Create a toolbox of feasible design options, including new design and engineering ideas.
- Feature inclusive public engagement to ensure a wide variety of people are involved in its creation, including people of color, people with low incomes and people of different ages and abilities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City and its consultant, Alta Planning & Design, completed an initial inventory and existing conditions of walking and bicycling routes in Gresham. Then we asked the community stakeholders the following questions:

- What are important places you need to go (jobs, stores, places of worship, locations where fresh, healthful food is available)?
- What makes it hard to get there on foot or on a bicycle (wide streets with fast traffic; lack of sidewalks, other reasons)?
- How should we choose the most important projects to improve walking and bicycling?

Staff reported to the Planning Commission on results of City engagement in the memo for the Sept. 26 meeting. Attachment A also shows important destinations and active transportation challenges.

Public engagement also was conducted by community liaisons hired through federal grant funding.

This project is partially funded by a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, which was awarded to Multnomah County by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The REACH grant is supporting integration of health and equity into the plan as well as culturally relevant community engagement and development of culturally specific maps and educational materials.

The REACH funding was used to hire Design + Culture Lab, a Portland-based firm that is helping the City connect with underrepresented community members. The firm has hired community liaisons to conduct engagement with the African American/Black community; other communities of color; people with limited English proficiency; low-income communities; renters and others.

Design + Culture Lab has trained the community liaisons about city government, outreach methods, transportation planning and how to report engagement findings. The community liaison efforts are being conducted in conjunction with the Rockwood Rising project to develop the catalyst site.

Some key info from the liaison engagement:

- Liaisons talked with 77 people at three major events in summer 2016, during intercept surveys on the street and in one-on-one interviews. About 38 percent of the people reported themselves as non-white.

- They received 296 comments about which destinations are important and 175 comments about challenges or barriers to walking and biking.
- The most important destinations were recreation opportunities, places to buy food, “other” destinations and transit, in that order.
- For challenges, the most frequently cited challenges were “other” challenges, lack of safe pedestrian crossings, missing sidewalks and lack of safe bike infrastructure, in that order.

DRAFT NETWORKS

The above technical and public engagement information was used to develop maps that show potential physical improvements for walking and biking in Gresham.

Attachment B shows potential pedestrian improvements, including possible locations for street crossing enhancements and potential sidewalk infill.

Attachment C shows potential Bike Routes for Everyone, which are low-stress networks that would provide a rough grid of streets throughout Gresham that would be comfortable for most riders, including children. Physical changes would be necessary in many locations to make these “bike routes for everyone.”

Attachment D shows examples of physical improvements that would be necessary in some locations to create a “bike route for everyone.”

Upcoming public engagement will ask people if the improvements/routes would help them get to where they want to go and make walking and biking better in Gresham. This started during the Oct. 15 Walk, Talk and Eat event, when the community liaisons talked with people attending the walk and event.

An interactive online map also will be used to ask people what they think about the potential improvements/networks.

NEXT STEPS

The next phase of the project will use public engagement and design considerations to develop a second draft of the networks. Then a list of projects will be developed and ranked according to prioritization criteria developed for that purpose.

The eventual Active Transportation Plan will also include funding strategies, a review of city programs that promote walking and biking and an implementation plan.

CIVIC NEIGHBORHOOD VISION AND DESIGN DISTRICT UPDATE

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING PURPOSE

- Provide an update regarding [Civic](#) project.
- Summarize public input so far, including from interviews, an online survey and a Sept. 29 open house.
- Preview next steps, including a community workshop on Nov. 15.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project, which covers the area bounded by Burnside, Eastman, Division and Wallula (212th) will:

- Revisit the vision and goals for Civic Neighborhood.
- Update development rules to remove obstacles to development and create design guidelines and standards specific to Civic Neighborhood consistent with the vision/goals.
- Develop new rules and processes that are clear to applicants, staff and the general public.
- Create rules that balance the need for clarity, flexibility, quality design and financial feasibility.

The project will be complete by fall 2017.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Recent engagement has included stakeholder interviews, an online survey and a Sept. 29 community workshop.

Key findings from stakeholder interviews included:

- **Creating a unique identity:** Several participants indicated that the neighborhood currently lacks a common identity or character that makes it distinguishable from other places as a single and cohesive neighborhood.
- **Making authentic places and designs:** Participants noted that several existing buildings and public spaces are uninspiring or don't appear to have a specific purpose or well-defined intent. Some participants indicated that where future uses locate may depend on surrounding conditions, such as whether they are on a busy street on the edge of Civic or in the more walkable interior where there are pockets of parks and housing.
- **Complementing Downtown Gresham:** Participants indicated that Civic should be different from and complement Downtown. There was also an identified need to provide a clear connection that better links Downtown Gresham and Civic.
- **Creating more efficient connections within Civic:** Participants noted the good pedestrian connections within Civic and specifically identified the MAX line and stations and Wy'East Way Path as major assets. Others noted that there is also a perception that some uses appear too far from one another. There was also interest in improving or adding a MAX crossing and providing a new east-west connection through Civic, as well as updating street requirements to allow for design flexibility.
- **Integrating public spaces:** Participants discussed the need for improved public spaces where people are encouraged to gather.
- **Improving the streetscape:** Improved streets was another common topic, with participants indicating that existing streets should be improved to create a more pleasant walking experience, while integrating nature and green space.
- **Addressing the needs of young adults and small businesses:** Participants indicated that the neighborhood should do more to attract and retain young adults that comprise a large and growing segment of the population. This includes providing alternative flex-space offices, as well as smaller leasable spaces to start or grow a business.
- **Maximizing existing uses:** Several participants identified certain uses that already function well or that need change within Civic. Participants noted that medical and education-based businesses in Civic are doing well and should continue to be part of the future. Some said attention should be focused on redeveloping the Kmart site, as well as leveraging/retaining the

good visibility for commercial uses along busy streets, which are Burnside, Eastman and Division.

- **Attracting quality retail and shopping:** Participants noted that some establishments (such as Starbucks) are seen as neighborhood gathering places and that Civic has convenient shopping. There was also an expressed need for food and grocery stores, as well as a destination store that could 'anchor' other businesses.
- **Making better use of parking:** Participants discussed the importance of parking. Businesses, customers and employees rely on adequate parking. However, there was also an identified need to redevelop large surface parking areas that appear underused or limit the potential of Civic.

The Sept. 29 community forum included a project introduction and an exercise where participants were asked to determine the future desired location and intensities of uses in Civic Neighborhood, assuming new development on vacant lots and potential redevelopment of other properties.

Figure 1: Workshop exercise - Table 1.



Figure 2: Workshop exercise - Table 2



A list of takeaways from the workshop will be available at the Oct. 24 meeting.

The online survey was taken by 166 people, of which a large percentage actually completed the survey. The full survey results will be available at the meeting, but some selected results are below. (Percentages were rounded.)

Question: What would encourage you to stay longer or visit the Civic Neighborhood more often?
Choose all that apply.

What would encourage you stay longer or visit the Civic Neighborhood more often? Choose all that apply.

Answer	Count	Percentage
More shopping opportunities (1)	94	57%
More dining opportunities (2)	110	66%
Safer streets (3)	25	15%
More activities or events (4)	77	46%
Improvements to sidewalks and road crossings (5)	28	17%
More residential options nearby (6)	13	7%
Other	28	17%
Not completed or Not displayed	11	7%

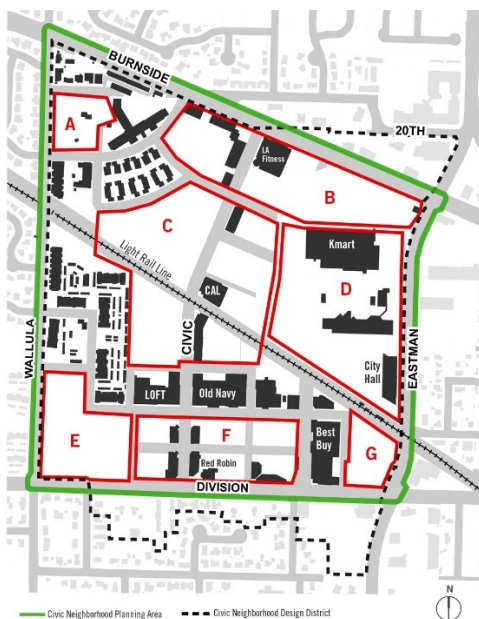
What types of features would you like to see in Civic Neighborhood? Choose all that apply.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Shade (1)	70	42%
Parks and plazas (2)	101	61%
Lighting (3)	49	30%
Planters (4)	47	28%
Seating (5)	77	46%
Walking trails (6)	69	42%
Water features (7)	75	45%
Play areas for children (8)	66	40%
Other	13	8%
Not completed or Not displayed	11	7%

Taller buildings (four to six stories) can provide space for people to live and work and generally add activity and vitality to a district.

Using the map for reference, where are the most appropriate locations for taller buildings in Civic Neighborhood? Choose all that apply.

Answer	Count	Percentage
A	55	33%
B	73	44%
C	71	42%
D	81	49%
E	63	38%
F	19	11%
G	26	16%
Not completed or Not displayed	15	9%



What are the three highest priority improvements needed in Civic Neighborhood? Choose up to three.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Adding more places for people to work, shop, and get needed services (1)	80	48%
Adding more places for people to have fun and enjoy entertainment. (2)	77	46%
Adding more places for people to live (3)	29	17%
Improving connections for biking and walking through the neighborhood (4)	35	21%
Improving connections for driving through the neighborhood (5)	20	12%
Improving the walking environment with features like signs to help people get around the district, shade trees, canopies for rain protection, plants, benches, public art, etc. (6)	70	42%
Adding more public spaces, greenspaces, plazas, etc. (7)	64	39%
Other	11	7%
Not completed or Not displayed	21	13%

Are commercial/retail uses such as businesses, restaurants, shopping, etc. in Civic Neighborhood a High, Medium or Low priority for you?

Answer	Count	Percentage
High (A1)	80	48%
Medium (A2)	45	27%
Low (A3)	10	6%
No answer	5	3%
Not completed or Not displayed	26	16%

Are office uses in Civic Neighborhood a High, Medium or Low priority for you?

Answer	Count	Percentage
High (A1)	17	10%
Medium (A2)	51	31%
Low (A3)	65	39%
No answer	7	4%
Not completed or Not displayed	26	16%

Are residential uses in Civic Neighborhood a High, Medium or Low priority for you?

Answer	Count	Percentage
High (A1)	26	16%
Medium (A2)	38	23%
Low (A3)	68	41%
No answer	8	4%
Not completed or Not displayed	26	16%

NEXT STEPS

The next step for the Civic project is a Nov. 15 community workshop, which will seek people's visual/design preferences in a fun, interactive environment. Along with the engagement conducted so far, that will assist the City in creating a vision and design framework that will inform future Development Code work.