

To: City of Gresham Planning Commission
From: Pleasant Valley Project Team
Date: June 24, 2024
Re: Pleasant Valley Plan Update: Project Update and Draft Land Use Map Recommendations

Background and Purpose

The 2004 Pleasant Valley Concept Plan and District Plan envisioned a complete community with a range of housing choices, transportation options, schools and parks, a Town Center, employment opportunities, and green development. This was an ambitious vision, and after 20 years, the area remains only partially developed, with many of the critical ingredients of a complete community lagging. ECONorthwest—along with sub-consultants 3J Consulting, MIG|APG, Veritas, and Kittelson Associates—is working with the City of Gresham to update the Pleasant Valley District Plan to better align with current market conditions and the priorities of a diverse range of local stakeholders, and to address development barriers and challenges with infrastructure delivery. The update retains a focus on delivering a “complete community”.

City staff last met with the Planning Commission in March 2023 to share the findings from the project work completed up to that point which included an update on engagement efforts, draft recommendations for updates to the Code, and the implementation of infrastructure, such as streets and parks. Since that meeting, the project team have conducted additional engagement and have further evaluated updates to the Pleasant Valley Plan map. This memorandum and enclosed materials summarize the concepts currently under consideration and identify the key questions for input from the Planning Commission (PC).

Engagement Update

The purpose of engagement for the project was to understand how the community’s wants and needs for Pleasant Valley may have changed over the past two decades. Outreach efforts aimed to reach both longer-term and newer residents of Pleasant Valley and include a city-wide approach to incorporate voices from the rest of the community.

Engagement occurred in two phases. The first phase of outreach focused on re-affirming the vision for Pleasant Valley and learning about the community’s priorities for the area. The second phase of outreach involved receiving community feedback on draft concepts and strategies for reaching the vision for Pleasant Valley. Outreach activities for each phase are included in the table below.

Since the last Planning Commission Work Session, the project team held a series of focus groups with stakeholders from the community. The focus group discussions centered on the land use map, Code concepts related to the different subdistricts in Pleasant Valley, and larger



topics including housing, transportation, and parks. Feedback from the focus groups has refined our draft Code recommendations and the land use map.

Outreach activity	Phase 1					Phase 2									
	Apr 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	
Property owner and developer interviews															
Online open house (~161 responses)															
Informal conversations (~25 people)															
In-person open house (~50 people)															
6 Community events															
Community workshop #1 (~50+ people)															
Community workshop #2 (~60 people)															
3 Focus groups (~10 people each)															

What We’ve Heard and What We’re Doing

Below is key feedback we heard from focus group members and how the project team is addressing that input.

What we’ve heard:

Livability: Walkability is important to the Pleasant Valley community

What we’re doing:

The project team recommends having multiple commercial nodes in Pleasant Valley (a Town Center, an Employment Center, and two Neighborhood Commercial nodes). While the community expressed a desire for more commercial nodes, the market analysis did not support commercial nodes beyond what staff has proposed. However, in the High-Density Residential subdistrict staff are recommending allowing (not requiring) commercial uses within residential development to provide more opportunity for commercial nearby to best meet the community’s feedback.

Transportation: There are concerns around the impact of incremental development on the transportation system as they relate to traffic congestion and safety from increased vehicle trips.

The project team is investigating how impacts to the transportation system get addressed with incremental development of individual lots and smaller areas.

Transportation: There are concerns around clustering commercial uses (i.e. Town Center and Employment Center) and the impacts of increased traffic congestion.

The land use map recommendation locates commercial areas (particularly the Town Center and Employment Center) in different parts of Pleasant Valley so potential increased vehicle trips are not concentrated to one area.

Transportation: The City will need to take on larger transportation projects (i.e., 172nd Avenue and Giese Road extensions).

Advancing these projects as capital projects requires additional design work, securing the new alignments, and the ability to pay for the project before the area is built out. The project team is refining recommendations to address these next steps.

Transportation: There is a need for ongoing coordination with transportation partners (i.e., Portland and Multnomah County) to ensure we are coordinated on impacts to Pleasant Valley that fall outside Gresham limits.

The City will participate in ongoing coordination and conversation with these partners.

Parks: Public parks are a priority. There is also a desire for open space in denser developments.

Changes are not proposed to the existing plan for Pleasant Valley parks. The project team is evaluating whether improvement can be made to how the City approaches park acquisition.

Housing Variety: There is a desire for variety of housing, both with the type of housing (i.e., single detached adjacent to townhouses) and the building design (i.e., single-story adjacent to two-story houses).

The project team has recommendations for achieving housing variety that will be further explored in Phase 2 of this project.

Trees: There is a concern about the removal of stands or groves of trees as part of subdivision developments that have occurred in Pleasant Valley. There is a strong community desire for greater protection and preservation of trees.

The City's Tree Code Update project will look at how to best address the community's goals and concerns around trees citywide. It will include policies related to the preservation of existing mature and healthy trees.

Draft Recommendations and Areas for Input

Land Use Map

The consultant team has worked with staff to identify possible refinements to the existing land use map to make it easier to build a complete community, remove some barriers to incremental development, and align with market demand. The current Pleasant Valley Plan map is shown in Attachment A: Existing Pleasant Valley District Plan Map, while potential new land use designations are shown in the Land Use Concept maps (see Attachments B, C, and D). Key areas for PC input are identified below. Additional details related to these topics are provided in attachments as noted.

Town Center

Goals: A future Town Center is a vital component of the vision for Pleasant Valley. A Town Center will provide existing and future residents in and around Pleasant Valley with a range of community-serving businesses within a comfortable walk, bike ride, or short drive. While shopping centers exist within a 15-minute drive from Pleasant Valley, the recent market analysis and developer conversations reaffirmed that the area could support an additional commercial center to better serve nearby residents.

Challenge: The original plan locates the Town Center at the junction of two planned road extensions, Giese Road and 172nd Avenue (see Attachment A: Existing Pleasant Valley District Plan Map). These roads do not yet exist. Given the number of properties involved and the scale of the projects, it will likely be years before the new roads can be built. Therefore, a Town Center at this location would not be viable for many years.

Alternatives analysis: The following options (see Attachment B) were explored as part of the potential map refinement work.

Option A Given the area requirements for the Town Center, the project team considered keeping the Town Center in relatively the same location as the existing Plan map. A wetland determination was conducted to identify and map potential wetlands on the site.

Option B Option B: The area at the intersection of 172nd Avenue and Foster Road was considered for the Town Center location as a more near-term development option, since it has existing infrastructure that provides stronger accessibility and visibility. Given the higher potential of wetlands in the area, a wetland determination was conducted to identify and map potential wetlands on the site to identify impacts for development viability. Our wetland consultant, Pacific Habitat Services, mapped one relatively large wetland and a tributary to Kelly Creek with adjacent wetlands across multiple tax lots within the Option B boundary. Due to the wetlands present in Option B, the project team determined Option B to not be a viable option for the Town Center.

Draft recommendation: The project team recommends keeping the Town Center in relatively the same location as the existing map. The project team recommends adjusting the location of the Town Center slightly, as shown in Option A (see Attachment B) to better align with property lines and to have better opportunities for access in the interim before new road extensions are complete.

Neighborhood Commercial

Goal: Neighborhood Commercial areas provide services and destinations accessible for daily community needs. Neighborhood Commercial nodes will provide a mix of commercial services to encourage short walking, biking, and driving trips from adjacent neighborhoods. While there are some commercial services nearby, the recent market analysis showed us that Pleasant Valley could support commercial nodes in addition to the Town Center.

Challenge: The original plan (see Attachment A) locates Neighborhood Commercial in two locations that have yet to be developed. Developer conversations throughout this project highlighted the preferred location at 190th and Giese because of its visibility at a strong location where two major roads meet.

Alternatives analysis: The following options (see Attachment C) were explored as part of the potential map refinement work.

Option A The location at 190th Avenue and Giese Road provides strong visibility and accessibility now and in the future. Existing housing and near-term residential development nearby support adjacent access to retail/services for residents and supporting the community's desire for a walkable community. There is currently Neighborhood Commercial designated at 190th Avenue and Knapp Drive.

Option B1 With the potential relocation of the Town Center, the project team was considering placing Neighborhood Commercial at the junction of two planned road extensions (172nd Avenue and Giese Road). While these roads do not yet exist, this option would not be viable for many more years. With the Town Center staying in relatively the same location as the existing Plan map, this option was removed from consideration.

Option B2 The intersection of 172nd Avenue and Foster Road is a strong location for Neighborhood Commercial due to existing infrastructure and strong visibility and accessibility. Though there are wetlands present over some of the area near 172nd Avenue and Foster Road, the wetland determination results indicate that there are approximately 6 gross developable acres that could support Neighborhood Commercial.

Draft recommendation: The project team recommends relocating Neighborhood Commercial to locations identified in Option A and Option B2 (see Attachment E) to support multiple commercial nodes (in addition to the Town Center) in Pleasant Valley. The project team recommends these two options due to their strong visibility and accessibility, providing greater potential for nearer-term development in different areas of Pleasant Valley, supporting the community's desire for a more walkable area.

The project team recommends relocating the existing Neighborhood Commercial at 190th Avenue and Knapp Drive to 190th Avenue and Giese Road (see Attachment C). Some community feedback supported keeping the existing Neighborhood Commercial at Knapp, but since the area can only support so much commercial, the project team recommends relocating Neighborhood Commercial to 190th and Giese given the strength of this location. The project team recommends designating the current Neighborhood Commercial area at Knapp Drive to High-Density Residential, which allows flexibility to develop commercial with residential uses.

Q1: Does the PC support the proposed location for both Neighborhood Commercial areas?

Q2: Does the PC support the project team's recommendation to relocate existing Neighborhood Commercial at 190th & Knapp to 190th & Giese?

Employment

Goals: The Employment area provides business/office park uses, medical services, and other employment opportunities within Pleasant Valley.

Challenge: There is currently an excess of the amount of employment land in Pleasant Valley based on the limited demand identified in the market study. Additionally, the location of current employment land areas spans portions of many small ownerships, have limited or no current access, and one is located away from existing and planned major roads and intersections (see Attachment A).

Alternatives analysis: The following options (see Attachment D) were explored as part of the potential map refinement work.

Option A While the area may not support a Town Center due to it being divided by wetlands, the project team considered the area at the northeast corner of the Intersection of 172nd Ave and Cheldelin Rd., where there are approximately 15 developable acres.

Option B1 This location has good accessibility and visibility now, but the area could pose a traffic challenge in the future given its proximity to the Town Center location.

Option B2 This option was removed from consideration due to the considerable slope of the site.

Draft recommendation: The project team recommends reducing the combined acreage in the Employment Center and Mixed-Use Employment subdistricts (currently over 82 acres) based on the limited demand identified in the market study. The project team also recommends consolidating the Employment Center and Mixed-Use Employment subdistricts into one subdistrict so there is one set of development standards.

The project team recommends Option A for the Employment area, with the size and location of the area adjusted to reflect findings from the wetland determination (which identified wetlands on the northern portion of this area close to the 172nd Avenue and Foster Road intersection). This location provides strong visibility and accessibility now. This location is farther away from the Town Center location which alleviates potential future traffic congestion concerns. Also, Happy Valley's employment area is directly south of the Pleasant Valley Plan area boundary, so this location would cluster employment uses, creating an employment hub for the area.

Q3: Does the PC support combining the two existing Employment areas into one Employment subdistrict with less overall acreage?

Q4: Does the PC support the project team's recommendation to relocate the Employment area along 172nd Avenue

Housing

Goals: One of the core goals for the Pleasant Valley Plan District is to have various housing options. The market study reaffirmed that there is demand for a range of housing types—including single-unit detached, middle housing, and multifamily—within the area. The City’s recent Housing Capacity Analysis (HCA) found that the city has adequate land for all housing types and densities over the next 20 years, considering the existing Pleasant Valley zoning, which includes a mix of Low-Density, Moderate-Density, and High-Density Residential subdistricts (see Attachment A: Existing Pleasant Valley District Plan Map).

Challenge: Only one relatively small multifamily development has been built or permitted to date in the only area zoned for High-Density Residential on the large sites adjacent to SE 190th Avenue. Many other areas zoned for High-Density Residential either have little or no existing access, include natural resource areas, or span multiple small ownerships.

Draft recommendation: The project team recommends relocating areas planned for High-Density Residential and Medium-Density Residential to better align with the proposed locations of the Town Center, Neighborhood Commercial, and Employment areas. The intent is to cluster the density closer to these commercial areas.

Next Steps

The project team will be presenting a project update and draft recommendations to City Council at the July 16 Work Session. The next phase of the project will include incorporating feedback from community engagement and Planning Commission and refining the project team’s recommendations, resulting in a final package of regulatory updates and strategies that will be brought to the PC and CC for review and potential adoption. That phase will include opportunities for input on the draft map, code amendments, and other implementation actions.

Attachments

- Attachment A** Existing Pleasant Valley District Plan Map
- Attachment B** Land Use Map: Town Center Concepts
- Attachment C** Land Use Map: Neighborhood Commercial Concepts
- Attachment D** Land Use Map: Employment Area Concepts
- Attachment E** Land Use Map: Draft Recommendation