



Beaverton Downtown Loop Urban Design and Transportation Plan

CAC Meeting #2

April 21, 2021

Via Zoom. A recording of the meeting can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3lxWV6ZwPA&t=25s>

Attendees

CAC members present

Melissa Bell	Ruben Halperin	Ginger Rapport
Oswaldo Bernal	Michael Hashizume	Brandon Sharp
Kira Cadore	Lyndsey Lanphere	Stephen Smelley
Jefferson Chao	Brad McClean	Paul Thornton
Thom Drane	Myong-Hui Murphy	Sarah Zahn
Randy Dunlap	Kathleen Perry	
Brett Francis	Rachel Phillip	

CAC Members absent

Travis Henry	Ben Reese	Scott Sloop
Paige Lerwick	Lauren Reese (alternate)	

City Staff

Community Development Department: Dan Turk, Jean Senechal Biggs,

Community Services and Engagement Department: Franziska Rose

Consultant Team

Walker Macy: Ken Pirie, Tiffany Swift, Mike Zilis

Communitas: Deb Meihoff

Guests

JL	Ramesh Krishnamurthy
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WELCOME + KICKOFF

Dan Turk started the meeting at 4:35 pm and thanked all for joining the meeting. He shared that the CAC would have the opportunity for discussion in breakout groups later in the meeting.

MEETING OVERVIEW & ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS

Deb Meihoff, the meeting facilitator, gave an overview of the agenda and the Zoom meeting functions. The Zoom chat will be recorded with the meeting notes. (*Attached at the end of these notes.*) Members of the public are invited to comment at the end of the meeting.

Deb shared that CAC members will receive a follow-up survey after the meeting to offer feedback and to share any new thoughts on this evening's discussion.

Deb also asked CAC members if they have any corrections to the meeting notes to contact Dan or Jean. The notes will be published on the project website in the next week.

INTRODUCTIONS

Deb led a quick round of introductions from CAC members and the project team.

Deb asked Melissa Bell, who was not able to attend the first meeting, to introduce herself to the committee. Melissa shared that she has lived in downtown Beaverton for 12 years. She has two children, so she walks in downtown a lot and knows many of the business owners. For two years, she owned the octagonal café kiosk in City Park near the library.

REPORT BACK: PICTURE THE LOOP

Jean Senechal Biggs gave a slide presentation with the CAC's responses to the photo assignment, Picture the Loop. A total of 16 or 17 CAC members spent time walking around downtown and gathering photos. Each person forwarded images to Dan, specifically, three photos of things that they believed are assets and three photos of things that they would want to change. Not all of the photos were included in the slide show; Jean and Dan will compile them into one document, so everyone has access to them.

Many CAC members – almost all – commented on the trees, tree canopy and green spaces as assets to The Loop. Several members also commented on City Park as an asset. One member shared an old photo showing the fall color of the red maples adjacent to the Farmer's Market parking lot on Hall Boulevard.

CAC members also voiced near agreement on intersections and crossings needing change. Hall Boulevard and Watson Avenue at both Canyon Road and Farmington Road were described as very noisy, uncomfortable, unpleasant, and dangerous. Some commented on

the long wait for the walk signal at Watson/Farmington, as well as a desire for more pedestrian-oriented signals and warnings at the railroad crossings.

Some CAC members also shared feedback on corner curb ramps that they felt were assets (wide ramps at Hall/Farmington) or needed change (ramps with grates at the bottom). A couple of CAC members commented on the brick/concrete intersections – some see them as an asset to be highlighted, and another commented that the pavement blends in and that it should change.

Jean said they received many photos of narrow, cluttered sidewalks. Dan commented on the many types of surfaces and ages of sidewalks. Many CAC members commented on broken and missing sidewalks. In a few places along The Loop, the sidewalks are wider and more pleasant.

Several members commented that changes are needed for people cycling. Bike lanes exist along some of the Loop, but in other places the bike lane drops, and cyclists have to merge with traffic.

Comments about parking called it out as both an asset and needing change. Jean shared that some commented that the parking provides separation and a sense of safety for people on the sidewalk. From the cyclist perspective, the location of the parking lane next to the bike lanes puts cyclists at risk for getting “doored” by people exiting parked cars which can cause serious injuries. Parking is another element for the project to take a closer look.

Some members commented on the look and feel of the street, particularly with regard to buildings and how they contribute to street life – or not. Some buildings face the street and sidewalk and encourage people to be in that space, whereas some segments of the Loop have no areas of interest for pedestrians and feel like a place to “get through.” Other comments about needed changes included closed buildings that detract from street life, buildings away from the sidewalk, and parking lots that produce heat in the summer. The Loop project is focused on the right of way, but the team is aware of the interface between people, the sidewalk areas, and where the buildings are.

Other features highlighted included: dumpsters adjacent to the sidewalks (needs change); outdoor dining (asset); civic places including the MAX, the library, the Farmer’s Market, the main street character of SW Broadway, and the under construction Patricia Reser Center for the Arts (all assets); wayfinding signage (five CAC members called it out as an asset); some particular neon business signage (asset); bus stop with shelter and benches (asset); broken water fountain (needs change); bike racks – more needed (change); and civic life/civic pride through the ballot drop box across from the library and the 1979 time capsule on Hall Boulevard near SW Broadway (asset).

Jean summarized the key themes and asked for feedback from the group:

Assets

- Green spaces and street trees
- Wide sidewalks at the library and where buildings are set back

- Gathering spaces for outdoor activities
- Wayfinding signage
- Connections to civic places

Needs Improvement

- Unpleasant, noisy intersections
- Narrow, uneven, cluttered, broken sidewalks
- Whole blocks with nothing of interest, “something to get through”
- Dumpsters and garbage
- Inconsistent bike lanes

Discussion

- Kathleen Perry commented that she appreciated the opportunity to look around her neighborhood for the things she appreciated. She doesn't do that on a daily basis, and it was nice to have an assignment to be grateful for things.

OVERVIEW PRESENTATION: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Ken Pirie provided a recap of the project schedule. Since work began in November, the team has done a lot of listening, learning and exploring to understand the existing conditions on and around The Loop and identify what's important to know for design alternative ideas. Upcoming CAC meetings will review the project's goals and objectives, design alternatives and further refinement of those alternatives.

Ken provided a presentation of the Existing Conditions report that was shared with the CAC in advance of the meeting. Ken reviewed the draft project goals, describing each:

- Reimagining the use of the public right of way (the street space between buildings)
- Making pedestrians a priority, as well as people biking and taking transit
- Emphasizing safety for all users
- Supporting the growing businesses community, and residents who live downtown
- Creating a district identity that celebrates what's there now, and the differences that makes places along the Loop unique
- Creating places for people to use throughout the day and encouraging fun
- Creating an inclusive decision-making process and building champions that will last long after the plan is complete.

Ken and Tiffany Swift presented a summary from the existing conditions report that identifies the opportunities and challenges for the project including: Urban Context; History; Zoning; Development; Existing Active & Underutilized Land; Character Areas; Identity; Stormwater; Open Spaces; Tree Canopy; Sidewalk and Tree Condition; Right of Way; Sidewalks; Street Furnishings; Pedestrian Through Zone; Sidewalk Width; Bicycle System; Bicycle Network Facilities and Gaps; Transit; On-Street Parking; Vehicular System; and Pedestrian Barriers & Safety Challenges.

Discussion

- Paul Thornton asked a clarifying question about destinations nearby but not directly on The Loop (e.g. PRCA). He asked how the group should contribute thoughts on those locations.
 - Ken responded that those locations are essential. They will drive pedestrian traffic. The Loop is not a narrow corridor.
 - Dan added that The Loop will connect people and have benefits outside the immediate streets, but for the plan the focus is on the right of way of Hall Blvd and Watson Ave for infrastructure improvements.

- Randy Dunlap asked if the first part of the process is a brainstorming and if cost is a consideration. He also noted that Ken discussed physical barriers and asked if there are other barriers, such as policy or cost.
 - Dan responded that this process is brainstorming, and the goal is to come up with ideas for potential design alternatives. He added that we want to have a free exchange of ideas and that now is the time to discuss them. Dan added that when we identify and evaluate alternatives, cost will be in the evaluation criterion, as well as policies.
 - Mike Zilis added that the policies will be interesting as we think about the street. The use of the right of way is almost as important as its physical aspects.

- Ruben Halperin asked if the number of travel lanes or direction of traffic are part of the scope of the project or if they are a constraint.
 - Dan responded that there is a hard constraint on the number of travel lanes for the potential effects at the wider network level. There is some opportunity for changes in the width of the lanes and removal of some of the lanes that are used for turning movements. The direction of traffic is likely to be a constraint unless there is a good idea.
 - Mike added that the project team did an exercise with the City to determine the realm of the possible. The road will remain a couplet. The team will determine what can be done to calm traffic. Mike noted that the team expects traffic volumes to return to pre-COVID levels. The team is making the assumption that there will be two lanes of traffic in each direction and that there are some surplus areas the project can take back for other uses.

- Myong-Hui Murphy asked how much consideration should be given to the fact that Beaverton is growing and to future traffic volumes.
 - Dan responded that streets nearby serve regional function and will continue to do so. Both Canyon and Farmington serve east/west traffic, and Watson and Hall are a major north/south connector for Beaverton and regional traffic. Traffic will continue to grow and that will need to be considered. At the same time, Beaverton has prioritized having a vibrant downtown. We are in a transition between a downtown focused on regional traffic and traffic passing through, to an area that has a special designation and a priority towards non-motorized traffic.

CAC DISCUSSION: EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Deb gave instructions for the breakout groups. She explained that the purpose of the discussion is to make sure there isn't something the team missed in the existing conditions and to get an understanding of priorities for CAC members. She pointed to the agenda with three high level questions for discussion:

- What are the ripest opportunities to meet project goals?
- What do you think about the constraints on design solutions?
- What other things should we be concerned with?

CAC members were placed into one of four, small breakout groups, each with a facilitator taking notes.

DEBRIEF ON DISCUSSIONS

Tiffany's Group:

- Discussed challenges at north end of the Loop. ("The Point") Walking all the way to the top of The Loop was not something they had done before and some shared that it felt unnatural; Millikan Way is much stronger connection to the activities happening in the north Loop.
- Discussed opportunities with on-street parking. ("The elephant in the room.") The group acknowledged that the parking will likely have to give in order to achieve many of the desired changes.
- Neighborhoods and the business community want bold solutions for the Loop, including asking about an elevated crossing over Canyon and the area in the middle.
- Discussed how to gauge success and the metrics we can use. There are pedestrian and bicycle level of comfort measures the team will use as we test alternatives.
- Be bold. There is lots of support for the project and it's a good time to do something significant.

Franziska's group:

- Crossing at Canyon: How do we make the worst part, the best part? This group had a discussion about an elevated pedestrian crossing/bridge.
- Key opportunity points are low hanging fruit: Where cars turn left on Canyon at Watson, can that be a dedicated left turn signal to avoid conflicts with pedestrians?
- Parking is a huge issue. How will we address that with this project?

Dan's group:

- Discussed that there is no reason to have no more than two lanes on any of these roads. Speed of cars make you feel unsafe as a pedestrian.

- Concern expressed about being able to cross Hall and Watson to get to the other side, and also to get to the other streets themselves.
- Talked about the importance of the impact on businesses. Identified the need for getting support and assuaging fears, and the need to consider impacts during construction.
- Discussed the asset of the covered bike parking at Farmers' Market that makes it easier for people to bike there and walk to the rest of downtown.
- Identified the opportunity through signage, light poles, and/or unifying art feature to have continuity between the three areas.
- Discussed a concern for people riding bikes northbound on Hall Boulevard; it's not easy to take a left to get over to Watson.
- Talked about the concept of not being able to park right where you're going. For some, it's positive to walk a few leisurely blocks to get to your destination.
 - Melissa Bell added: There is tons of parking available usually just a block or two away, as well as the high school parking lot nearby.

Ken's group:

- The disabled community should be considered equal users of the Loop. The project needs to think about the entire sidewalk surface, not just the corners. If we solve for someone in wheelchair, we will solve for a range of other users as well, and make them feel safe and comfortable.
- Asked what happens with ride share (Uber, Lyft) and online delivery and takeout (DoorDash, UberEats, etc). As we come out of COVID, how will those activities impact The Loop? What space do they occupy on The Loop?
- Suggestion to find a unique name or use "The Loop" in district branding and be reflected in signage.
- Discussed the importance of calming the intersections: signal phasing that allows pedestrians to cross in any direction when the walk signal comes up ("pedestrian scramble"), slowing speeds, landscaped islands, special lighting to mark the intersections.
- Agreed that we all can't wait to get back at the fountain in City Park.

Deb asked CAC members to share any additional comments or ask follow-up questions in the remaining minutes.

- Thom Drane asked if a solution requires code change, whether the project is prepared to identify those so that the greater community could support those changes.
 - Mike responded that yes, the project is looking at the physical and regulatory changes needed. The plan won't develop code changes or regulatory changes but will look for key aspects that could be worked on in a later phase.
- Paul Thornton asked if an overhead pedestrian crossing is in realm of possibilities for crossing Canyon Road.

- Dan responded that a bridge is something often mentioned, and it is something that needs to be addressed, including reasons why it's not the best idea. There are considerations for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, as well as cost.
 - Jean added that a bridge has been mentioned further back in the past during the Civic Plan and that it's something that the team has discussed. A bridge is a big investment of infrastructure to go over a five-lane roadway. There is quite a bit of impact associated with a bridge and the space needed to allow for a bridge. By putting pedestrians and cyclists over the roadway, there's a certain amount of energy that then takes away from the street itself. Jean asked whether that is that something we want to achieve with this project, or if we want to keep people at the ground plane and create better crossings to connect to sidewalks and to connect to businesses nearby. Jean offered to talk further in a future meeting if there's interest in the bridge idea.
 - After Paul asked for a yes or no answer on the bridge question, Jean commented that in the spirit of this process, there is more information the team can share with the CAC to get their input. Jean shared that in her opinion the bridge is not an option and that there are better solutions to address crossing Canyon Road at the ground level.
 - Paul asked for further conversation so that the CAC can put more focus on the idea or just drop it. Jean offered to bring information back when we're ready to look at design alternatives.
- Brett Francis noted a comment in the chat from his breakout group that stated, "If don't have ability to smoothly and safely cross Canyon, then there is no Loop." Brett added that is the project's biggest item – first and foremost -- to knock down that barrier.
 - Brad McClean commented that there are many opportunities identified for The Loop and asked how they will be prioritized. He wondered whether they will be prioritized based on needs of downtown residents, businesses, visitors to downtown, or commuters.
 - Dan responded that at the next meeting, the agenda will include a discussion about the project vision, objectives and goals and the CAC will identify values to illuminate criteria to best evaluate and rank the alternatives.
 - Brandon Sharp shared interest in safely crossing the two major roads. He suggested bringing colored lights or crossing arms – something that will be as significant as a bridge but not a bridge.
 - Michael Hashizume commented on safety improvements that the City of Portland (PBOT) has been testing. PBOT has installed speed bumps in crosswalks that slow cars while they are turning. These are relatively low-cost solutions. Michael added that he is not sure if those are in the toolbox of transportation engineering best practices or if they are experimental, but that they seem like a good tool we might consider.
 - Jean responded that she is familiar with the devices that PBOT is installing and she will convey that suggestion to the team.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ramesh Krishnamurthy asked if bikes for rent and scooters for rent will be part of the project. He also commented that there is a triangle shaped space on Canyon Road just west of Watson Street adjacent to the Loop where an antique store used to be. It's a unique situation that could lend itself to a monument, park or fountain.

WRAP UP & ADJOURN

Deb noted that Dan will send out a follow-up survey to CAC members to offer feedback and additional thoughts on the meeting.

Dan thanked everyone for their feedback and time and gave an overview of the next meeting's agenda.

Franziska explained the upcoming community mapping engagement activity that will be available May 1 – 17th. People will be able to respond to online surveys at four different places on the Loop via a QR code. Questions will ask people what they think is working and what isn't working along The Loop.

Dan asked the CAC to continue to ask questions, provide feedback, and press upon the team for information when needed.

Deb and Dan thanked everyone for their participation.

APPENDIX: ZOOM CHAT

- 16:51:38 From Paul's iPhone : I had so many more pictures I wanted to add but picked the 6 that best fit .
- 17:03:52 From Lyndsey Lanphere : I am here feed back, is that just me?
- 17:04:09 From Lyndsey Lanphere : getting feed back from a mic...sorry
- 17:04:33 From Daniel Turk (he/him) : Thanks for saying. I don't hear it myself.
- 17:04:46 From Randy Dunlap : no problem here.
- 17:04:50 From Lyndsey Lanphere : ok maybe just me
- 17:06:22 From Paul's iPhone : green spaces and wider sidewalks. safer canyon crossing options, were my main themes.
- 17:32:20 From Paul's iPhone : I often imagine what a bike/pedestrian bridge over canyon would look like.
- 17:32:42 From Randy Dunlap : that's my thinking also.

- 18:09:40 From Paul's iPhone : bravo Tiffany very good summary
- 18:14:23 From Brandon - Ex Novo : very true
- 18:16:12 From Kira : This compact area has a lot of parking lots and structures that could be used for different parking uses at different times of day and days of the week.
- 18:16:26 From Paul's iPhone : Melissa had a good point about weekend parking at the HS and side streets. signage would help people like me. a lot.
- 18:16:54 From Stephen Smelley : If we don't resolve the ability to smoothly and safely cross Canyon, etc. from north to south and vice versa, there is NO LOOP.../There is just a North pod and a South pod.
- 18:17:31 From Paul's iPhone : is an overhead pedestrian/bike crossing over canyon in the realm of possibility?
- 18:18:34 From Randy Dunlap : plus wheelchair and strollers.
- 18:18:56 From Paul's iPhone : yas!!
- 18:20:26 From Randy Dunlap : and existing business considerations.
- 18:21:31 From Paul's iPhone : is that a yes or no? if it's not clear, can there be a focus to find out?
- 18:22:14 From Oswaldo Bernal : The Chiva is a good idea then.
- 18:25:40 From Paul's iPhone : amen Brad
- 18:26:49 From Guest: ramesh krishnamurthy : One suggestion for the crossing bridge - like the privately donated bridge that won a design award on the Pittok to Wash Park hike path may be considered? some of the Beaverton business may want naming rights for such a bridge?
- 18:29:44 From Kira : it will be helpful to know in the future how much can be done on Canyon given that it is an ODOT ROW.
- 18:30:13 From Oswaldo Bernal : I Agree we should ask ODOT for help
- 18:31:54 From Paul's iPhone : wonderful meeting for me. thank you. I'm hoping a pedestrian bridge can be clarified as in the realm of possibilities or not. so we can adjust focus toward real options.
- 18:32:18 From Michael Hashizume : Thanks all!
- 18:48:18 From Franziska Rose (she/her) : I've got to get going—I'm on bath time reading duty :) great meeting. Thanks for including me!