



CORNELIUS TOWN CENTER PLAN

Project Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Wednesday, September 26th, 2018, 4:00 pm

Dev. & Operations Conference Room, 1300 S Kodiak Cir.

MEETING SUMMARY

PAC Members: Karla Antonini, Carole Brown, Ralph Brown, Maribel de Leon, Rob Drake, Tiffany Fieken, Neal Knight, Jeannine Murrell, Heather Sturgill, Howard Sullivan, Jon Williams.

Staff/Consultants: Tim Franz, Terry Keyes and Ryan Wells, City of Cornelius; Steve Faust, 3J Consulting.

Welcome and Introductions

Ryan Wells welcomed Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members to the group's second meeting and thanked them for their participation. Ryan indicated that the purpose of today's meeting is to review the work that the consultant team did over the summer. After introductions, Ryan handed the meeting over to Steve Faust. Steve indicated that the consultant team has been busy conducting community outreach and researching existing conditions in the Town Center area. The next step in the process is to translate this information into preliminary concepts for the Town Center.

Existing Conditions Report

Study Area Boundaries

Steve reviewed the current Town Center boundary and described City/consultant ideas for revising the boundary to 1) remove properties toward the edges that are not consistent with the town center, such as mobile home parks, and 2) capture vacant land and redevelopment opportunities. Proposed changes include:

- Bringing the northern boundary down to the northern rail line
- Bringing the western boundary in to the eastern edge of Midland Manor mobile home park
- Bringing the southern boundary up in some areas to the southern rail line and in other areas to S Alpine Street
- Extend the western boundary east to N 26th Street

Urban Design

Steve continue the presentation using photos of sites throughout the study area to discuss urban design. PAC members received a complete set of photos and descriptions as included in the Existing Conditions Report so that members can participate in a self-guided tour of the Town Center area should they so desire.

Zoning Code Analysis

Every active city zoning designation touches some part of the Town Center area, which includes main street, residential, commercial and industrial uses. This patchwork of zoning districts makes it difficult to interpret and may result in higher costs for development or redevelopment. The new Town Center Plan will strive to consolidate zone designations resulting in a zoning code that is easily applied and better supports future development. The purpose is not to force out any existing uses, but to simplify the zoning code while establishing zoning that will allow for a transition to the community's vision for the area over time.

Transportation System Analysis

There is a need for better sidewalk connections and bicycle facility improvements, as well as transit-supportive improvements such as crosswalks and shelters. There are no existing traffic operation deficiencies during morning or evening peak hours and no intersection capacity improvements needed.

One participant mentioned the lack of parking in the Town Center area. Steve mentioned that the Report does include some language about parking and that is something the team will be assessing.

Market Conditions

Cornelius is characterized by young families with modest incomes. Most residents commute to jobs elsewhere. Retail and multifamily residential are the dominant real estate sectors, along with single family detached homes.

Desired industries in Cornelius with opportunities for growth include dining, retail, education and health services. Barriers to development include:

- Real estate market fundamentals. There is a mismatch between the rents that many local businesses can afford to pay and the levels needed to either sustain an existing property or incent the construction of a new commercial building. The consultant team will be exploring multiple approaches to overcoming this barrier.
- Confusing zoning code. Discussed earlier, the consultant team will seek to streamline the code while helping realize the Town Center Vision.
- Lack of existing building stock. Many communities have old downtowns with historic buildings providing a significant amount of space for retail and offices. Cornelius lacks that building stock.
- High water rates.
- Prior lack of engagement with property owners. Interviewees have acknowledged that the current administration is doing a good job of engaging the business community.

Key considerations for near-term development include:

- Focus on existing small/medium size commercial spaces
- Build partnerships with property owners and businesses
- Identify ways to support large property owners, such as conducting due diligence work on opportunity sites so potential developers don't have to

Summary of Outreach Activities and Findings

Over the summer, the consultant team, Centro Cultural and city staff reached hundreds of residents through the community outreach campaign. Activities included:

- Vision Ideation Session with community leaders
- Project Advisory Committee meeting #1
- Stakeholder interviews
- 12 community conversations with various community groups
- 12 community events including Movies in the Park, El Grito, and the Forest Grove Corn Roast.
- Online survey that garnered 119 responses.
- Passive project boards that appeared in various locations throughout town.

Outreach resulted in several themes:

Build on existing assets – including the new Cornelius Place Library, the Virginia Garcia Health Center, City Hall, Centro Cultural, and St. Alexander Catholic Church.

Diversify amenities and services – more diverse retail, grocery, and restaurant options and more family-friendly activities.

Improve traffic congestion and safety – improved street design, connectivity, safety, walkability, congestion, and parking.

Add community spaces and events – a new public pool or water feature, more culturally-relevant community spaces and programming, and a public/farmers market.

Enhance livability for all residents – redevelopment and/or improved maintenance of dilapidated properties, increasing community cohesion/diversity, and improving access to housing, childcare, healthcare, and professional services.

Discussion

Steve presented a set of preliminary questions that the consultant team intends to ask the community during Design Week. The overarching question is "What do you think are the best opportunities to transform downtown?" Additional questions include:

- Where is the town center core?
- Where are connections needed?
- Where are the gateways to downtown?
- What sites are ideal for a plaza?
- What ideas do you have for key opportunity sites?

PAC members had the following comments:

- How large should the plaza be? How would it be used/programmed?

- The open space east of Fred Meyer could be a good location for the plaza.
- The town center core seems to be near City Hall on the east end and Centro Cultural and Virginia Garcia on the west end. PAC members generally agreed that the town center core is between 10th and 14th avenues.
- The Library will have a public space with seating and parking.
- Historically, Hanks (Grande Foods) would have been considered the core of downtown across from the school.
- Having the town center core on the highway is presents parking challenges. There is some parking available at the school during off hours and at Grande Foods.
- An additional lighted crossing is needed at 12th Avenue and Adair and Baseline.
- Remove the design overlay zone and incorporate those principals into the base zone(s).
- It feels odd to put everything in the "town core". It should connect to veteran's Park. Work with the railroad companies to dedicate the vacant lots along the southern rail line for a farmers market. Need to spread opportunities throughout the general Town Center area and not limit to one location. Public and nonprofit facilities do not bring tax revenue. Where do professional services businesses locate?
- Ryan built on the previous comment by talking about the residential area north of Adair St. between 10th and 19th Avenues. Many of these homes are in poor condition and nearing the end of their usefulness. A change in zoning could open this area up to home businesses with the goal of a more mixed-use, walkable area adjacent to the highway.
- Steve and Ryan noted that the primary reason for identifying a core downtown is that you will see a higher concentration of activity in this area. It is denser and more pedestrian friendly. With a large town center area, the City will need to prioritize investments. The most optimistic forecast for urban renewal funds results in \$28 million.
- The housing Ryan mentioned is an important source of affordable housing for Cornelius. How will the City prevent displacement while transitioning from residential to mixed use?
- Ryan talked about a Mercy Corps model where community members buy into redevelopment at \$10 to \$100/month, resulting in community-owned development and a revenue generator for investors. It will take the whole community to identify strategies to prevent displacement of Cornelius residents.
- Michele Reeves consulted with the City previously and discussed the challenge of "superblocks" for pedestrians. The City did work with ODOT to get a lighted crossing at Adair, but not at Baseline due to traffic counts. Improved alleyways are option for pedestrians in the area.
- The City should consider dedicated funds to façade improvements for main street business.
- Explore the possibility of incorporating Cornelius into the Forest Grove bus system.
- Have heard the idea of extending Davis St. from 19th to 26th avenues to establish an east/west bypass to the north (Evergreen) to relieve pressure on the couplet.
- Hanks is the center of downtown; the core. The core should be considered from 10th Avenue to 19th or 26th Avenue.
- Cornelius needs to embrace its Latino culture.

Design Week (October 8, 9 and 13)

Steve announced that Cornelius Design Week is coming soon:

- October 8, 9am to 8pm @ Centro Cultural
- October 9, 9am to 6pm @ Centro Cultural
- October 13, 10am to 1pm @ Cornelius Elementary

October 8 and 9 are drop-in days where anyone from the community can stop by to learn about the project and share their ideas about desired community character and land uses in the town center. The format for Saturday's meeting is a workshop where small groups of community members will gather around maps and use various materials to create their desired future town center. There will be refreshments, a face painter, and activities for kids.

Our primary request of PAC members is to spread the word to their personal and professional networks. Early next week, Ryan will send an email message that PAC members can use to promote Design Week. He also will attach a flyer that can be sent or printed. We also hope that PAC members can participate in some portion of the week, whether it's dropping in on Monday or Tuesday or participating with the larger group on Saturday.

Next Steps

Following Design Week, the consultant team and Ryan will develop town center alternative(s) that we will bring back to this group at your next meeting.

Adjourn