



October 30, 2019

**WORK GROUP LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (MEETING #1)
City of Maple Valley Downtown Design Standards & Guidelines**

Attendees:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Syd Dawson – City Council | Tawni Dalziel – Public Works & Community Development Director |
| Erin Weaver – City Council | Tim Morgan – Economic Development Manager |
| Jonathan Miller – Planning Commission | Matt Torpey – Community Development Manager |
| Dave Pilgrim – Planning Commission | Amy Taylor – Senior Planner |
| Candace Tucker – Planning Commission | Jeff Taraday – City Attorney |
| Jeff McCann – Property Representative | Daren Crabill – NBBJ |
| Laura Philpot – City Manager | Kim Selby - NBBJ |

Meeting Summary & Intent

See also the meeting presentation file, “2019 10 30 MVDG_Summit.pdf.”

- ✓ Introduce Work Group (“WG”) & Role
- ✓ Confirm Project Understanding & Scope of Work
- ✓ Define Communication Strategy
- ✓ Build Common Understanding
- ✓ Draft Vision Statement & Design Principles

Introductions

- WG Role is to provide input into the study and drafting of downtown design standards & guidelines. Study deliverable will go before City Council for review and approval.
- Review of study goals:
 - Build on Downtown Visioning Conversations (Spring 2019)
 - Confirm Downtown Vision & Area of Influence
 - Define Design Standards & Guidelines for Downtown
 - Provide Staff the Content to Incorporate into City Code
 - Identify Next Steps to Promote Downtown Creation
- Review of schedule & process.
 - WG members may have minimal homework between meetings, including review of provided web links for background information.
 - WG can also provide NBBJ examples.
- As analysis & study continues, NBBJ to provide pictures and examples to help convey design ideas and potential code.

Analysis & Early Visioning

- Intent is to develop an overlay with form-based code for the downtown.
 - Study will not address permitted uses. There is a separate conversation happening about what/where uses are allowed across the city.
 - Focus is on the look and feel – aesthetics, building form, height, footprint, materials, signage, etc., but not the use(s) inside.
 - Elements mostly in current code chapters 18.40 and 18.70
 - Create stand-alone chapter for adoption into municipal code; will expedite the process.

- Design standards could be applied later elsewhere in the city.
- Overlay allows the Work Group to avoid the use discussion.
- Rezone would require the use conversation; will pursue overlay and not rezone.
- Staff will need to update Comprehensive Plan eventually, to create “downtown”.
- Study will include design issues of parking (location, site planning, landscape buffers for surface lots or screening for structures, etc.).
- It feels difficult to discuss “look and feel” without knowing what is inside the building.
 - NBBJ will work with the WG to help consider how design considerations change (or not) with a variety of uses.
- If existing on-site uses want to grow in the future, they would be allowed to do so but design would have to follow new design standards & guidelines.
- Vibrant downtown requires density of uses, buildings, population and available parking.
- Need to make sure downtown is economically viable to be developed; make sure it’s meaningful.

Walking Tour Observations

- Existing buildings are not forced out or required to change because city adopts design standards & guidelines. Intent is to have the standards documented ahead of any potential redevelopment. Current condition could continue indefinitely.
- Existing north-south right-of-way (ROW) is 60’ wide.
 - Doesn’t seem wide enough to do what is needed?
 - ROW measures from back of sidewalk to back of sidewalk (including curb, parking, drive lanes, parking, curb)
- Discussion of Monarch apartments
 - Example of consistent, horizontal use across site (developer said vertical mixed use did not pencil)
 - Circulation of driveways & parking is scattered/complex
 - Successful, 90% leased out
 - Aesthetic had mixed reviews, some preferring more historic look while others like modern design with shed roof forms and variety of building materials.
 - May want to require incorporation of natural elements?
 - Site planning (layout of buildings, at-grade uses) described as chaotic or “plopped down”
- View of Mount Rainier is stunning.
 - It’s a huge asset of the downtown area.
 - Consider how to create view corridors, regulate building heights to celebrate & protect view.
- Need to improve connectivity to and through the site.
 - Consider both north-south and east-west potential ROWs (vehicle/bike/pedestrian) and/or pedestrian corridors.
 - Existing driveway off SR-169 feels too narrow?
 - Promote increased connectivity.
- 238th Place SE was built by developer on negotiated street section/design (not a current Maple Valley standard) and dedicated to city.



- Existing road standards are “out of date” and left over from King County, pre-incorporation.
- Consider future maintenance requirements when city is maintaining the street.
- Allow for street vacations for events? Or design walking malls that are pedestrian only?
- Crosswalk detail of raised table and colored concrete was appreciated for safety and prioritization of pedestrians, rather than cars.
- Existing retail on SR-169 followed code requirements but frontage is not functional. Discussion of difficulty of multiple entries in small retail establishment (security) and need for back of house service.

Design Standards & Guidelines Discussion

- Existing standards have great goals but are hard to enforce – too many options and easy language that does not require compliance. They are guidelines, rather than requirements.
 - Need to eliminate provisions that allow big box retail. Modulation and blank wall dimensions (100’) are going to result in big box with minimal design improvements. That’s a driving speed interval; at pedestrian speed, 100’ is too long.
 - Do not promote small retail, mom & pop storefronts.
 - Landscape requirements look good. Buffers are effective.
 - Example of CVS project (SR-169 & Witte): public comment requesting building sited at the corner rather than setback. City cannot force zero lot line building location.
- Need full inversion of design standards to achieve what is wanted.
- Public input has wanted parking in the back, but people also want proximity of parking spot to destination. Need to require the design intent to achieve the desired result, even if it is different from what people are used to doing.
- Good examples:
 - Snoqualmie Ridge
 - West Seattle Junction area – a few parking stalls in front with bulk of parking in rear. Parking is overseen by business improvement district (BID).
 - Downtown Snoqualmie – front entries for public, back entries for employees; all parking is on-street (or in structures) without surface lots.
 - Downtown Ellensburg
 - Columbiana, OH (“friendliest town”)
 - Avalon, Alpharette, GA
 - Easton, OH
- Consider pedestrian corridors through long developments and/or smaller blocks.
- Consider waiving parking requirement in downtown if pedestrian environment is achieved.
- Form-based code discussed, versus Euclidean zoning (which includes use)
 - Next WG meeting will provide information about what form-based code is and isn’t
 - Need to provide examples of where it is being used, locally/nationally



- Sign code revisions are being finalized by Planning Commission right now. There have been complaints from residents & business owners about current sign regulations.

Vision Statement

- Purpose of vision statement is to guide development of guidelines & standards. Will repeatedly come back to vision to test if study is helping achieve the intent.
- Comp Plan description of North Town Center is still pretty true.
 - Newer development described as a lost opportunity to achieve this direction.
 - Need to achieve better connectivity. Is there a way to better connect to and through the downtown study area?
- Examples provided of other town visions & content from Spring 2019 visioning meetings.
- Draft Maple Valley vision statements provided for discussion purposes and evaluated:

Maple Valley downtown will create its own sense of place for the entire community -- an identifiable, walkable neighborhood, offering commercial opportunities, housing, civic and public park spaces which connect and integrate with adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas.		Maple Valley downtown is a community resource for gathering and creating connections between citizens of all ages and visitors alike. It is the new civic center -- our heart and soul -- with access to local businesses, and regional attractions and reflects the area's heritage.	
Likes (+)	Dislikes (-)	Likes (+)	Dislikes (-)
+ less open ended	- Don't like "public park spaces" – City only owns small parcel	+ intergenerational connections	- Don't like "new civic center"; the "heart and soul" is Lake Wilderness
		+ connections of neighborhoods - many (or all, via trail)	
		+ focused on people	

- Preference that downtown is created in the old style, where "people grew up"
- Expectation that road is named "Main Street"
- Examples of Main Streets that people like:
 - Snohomish
 - Snoqualmie
 - Walla Walla
 - La Conner (parking lots are located at the end)
- Housing is already located in the downtown. It will be a component, whether additional housing is permitted or developed.
- North Maple Valley at the Witte Rd roundabout is the "cultural hub" with the library, community center and museum.
- Downtown has the opportunity to be the "recreational hub"
- Consider a multi-use plaza in downtown to support hosting events.

- Require development of publicly accessible open space/landscape with new development (e.g., ratio of open space SF to office or residential SF)
 - Examples: Bellevue Bel-Red code, Seattle code
- Desire for businesses on both sides of the street, to activate downtown “Main Street”
- Need to use the existing 60’ ROW
- Every public input study (Legacy Site, branding effort) has received comments about celebrating the natural environment of Maple Valley, the trees and Lake Wilderness.
 - Living on urban-rural boundary is both an asset and a limitation
 - Need to protect & celebrate the environment
 - Consider inclusion of natural material usage as a requirement
- Consider historic settlement Maple Valley – should this aesthetic influence the design guidelines in order to be authentic?
 - Giant wood slide
 - Railroads
 - Summit
 - Native trails
 - Logging & coal mining history
 - Retreat / resort destination – playground for Seattle
- Should be walkable and bikeable

Guiding Principles

- Reinforces vision statement, helps explain *how* to achieve vision
- Like “authentic” – Maple Valley downtown shouldn’t be cookie cutter, anywhere in the USA
 - Examples lacking authenticity – Renton Landing, Kent Station
- Limited space should encourage efficient use of land & appropriate density
 - Park once and walk. Get out of cars as infrequently as possible.
 - How do you measure efficiency? Fewer buildings with greater height?
 - Create public plazas to maximize views
- Orient Main Street to celebrate Mount Rainier?
 - Mount Si is oriented to the railroad, not the mountain. Were they too used to seeing the mountain not to orient to it?
- Should be vibrant, energetic, support density & connect to nature

Public Comments & Next Steps

- No public comment. [Public members had already left.]
- Next WG meeting suggested for early December. Amy will send out a Doodle poll to identify a date.
- NBBJ will set up an online file transfer site as a repository for the WG to share presentation files, background information.
- Contact Amy Taylor with all questions/concerns. She will be point person on the project.

End meeting.