



January 7, 2020

WORKGROUP MEETING #3

City of Maple Valley Downtown Design Standards & Guidelines

Attendees:

Syd Dawson – City Council
Erin Weaver – City Council
Jonathan Miller – Planning Commission
Dave Pilgrim – Planning Commission
Jeff McCann – Property Representative
Laura Philpot – City Manager
Tawni Dalziel – Public Works & Community Development Director

Tim Morgan – Economic Development Manager
Matt Torpey – Community Development Manager
Amy Taylor – Senior Planner
Jeff Taraday – City Attorney (via Phone until 6:25pm)
Candace Tucker – Planning Commission
Daren Crabill – NBBJ
Gerrard Allam -NBBJ

Excused:

Kim Selby – NBBJ

Meeting Summary & Intent

Introduce:

- The structure of walkable downtowns
 - o Primary Streets
 - o Secondary Connections
- Block Size
- Pedestrian Access
- Secondary Connection Regulations

Revisit:

- Parking
- Building Heights

Public Comment:

- No members of the public attended therefore there was no public comment.
- City should consider reengaging the citizens who participated in the visioning portion and invite them to explore the project website. The city has a list of these participants.

Proposed Schedule

- It was stated that a working meeting will be had between City Staff and NBBJ within the next 3-4 weeks. This meeting will take place before the next Workgroup session.
- The schedule was also changed to add an additional Workgroup meeting in place of the public open house and include a public open house later, perhaps prior to Planning Commission meeting.

Walkable Downtowns - Precedents

- There was discussion and clarification on the sidewalk sizes and ROW dimensions in the precedent studies presented.

View Corridor



- It was asked if the existing R.O.W could be adjusted in the future if it was determined beneficial. Potentially yes, but it was noted this is a different process. Looking the potential of a realignment is outside the scope of this current project.
- The Design Standards and Guidelines that NBBJ and the Workgroup are establishing can and will always apply moving forward so no matter what the R.O.Ws are. The Design Standards and Guidelines will not be affected with potential alternate R.O.Ws
- The view corridor item was brought up since it was an important issues that many people in the community and the Workgroup care to address.
- NBBJ is not recommending any standards or guidelines to create a “view corridor” to Mt. Rainier.

Parking

- The tradeoff of having angled parking versus parallel parking is that angled parking while providing more parking spaces encroaches into the pedestrian space and takes away from the sidewalk. While parallel parking provides less parking spaces it provides a narrower roadbed, curb to curb, and more space within the ROW to pedestrians.
- There was an inquiry whether or not an option of having parallel on one side of the street and have angled on the other side. This option although doable and could be explored, it would limit circulation and could also impede traffic flow. Also it could create an issue between business owners wanting to be on one side of the street versus the other. Any angled parking will take away from the pedestrian realm even if it is only on one side.
- A precedent from Middleburg, Virginia that was awarded APA Great Street Award was brought up and discussed to see if this model is in fact a good fit for downtown Maple Valley. NBBJ to review.
- The Workgroup identified the Bellevue parking precedent as a model to follow where the parking minimums are reduced and parking maximums are established.
- There was concern that shared parking for residential and restaurant may compete. And wanted to better establish what “shared parking” could actually look like in downtown Maple Valley.
- NBBJ explained development and parking within the current code structure are directly related in site development capacity.
- Workgroup wanted NBBJ to provide what a feasible number of parking minimums and parking maximums would be. NBBJ and City staff will review and provide a recommendation at a future meeting.
- Workgroup expressed that if there were to be condos that a minimum of one (1) parking stall would need to be associated with each condo.
- The Workgroup recommended moving forward with a minimum and maximum parking requirement for downtown. A completely free “first floor” did not seem reasonable for Maple Valley.

Primary Street Design Concepts

- Having parallel parking alongside a planted/landscaped area is not desirable as these areas fill up with mud and rain water and will a problem for people exiting and entering their vehicles having to maneuver in and or around these planting strips.



- If landscaping is to be done it will need to be done in the form of street trees within specific tree-grates which cover any exposed soil and allow for easier pedestrian navigation. This will also increase the sidewalk width.
- Dedicated bike lanes along parallel parked streets is not desired due to safety concern for bicyclists.
- Bike traffic should use the travel lanes with Sharrows. This will establish a “shared bicycle/vehicle” lane. This approach is safer for cyclists and will not impede vehicle flow especially because the speeds limits within downtown Maple Valley will not be excessive.
- Any street with a center median was not desired due to the limiting of traffic movements, required maintenance and upkeep, limitation of light due to center street trees, and the potential to impede emergency access.
- Establishing a Setback which creates a Build-To-Line expanding the pedestrian realm to allow for greater flexibility and to provide additional amenities (i.e: café seating, better pedestrian flow, etc)
- Weather protection can extend out approximately 6’ over the sidewalk to provide shelter. This is typical in urban retail areas.
- The Workgroup voted and decided that the optimal Primary Street section was the section recommended by NBBJ, “Option 1.”

Setbacks and Build-To-Line

- A concern was raised that by creating a setback, that will extend the pedestrian realm or sidewalk past the property line, landowners will be at a disadvantage and take issue with this as it seems the design standards and guidelines are encroaching further on their ability to develop. NBBJ explained that the current minimum setback is 10 Feet. The proposal would potentially reduce this allowing for landowners to develop more square footage than they could previously.

Look and Feel of Primary Streets and Secondary Connections

- It was discussed whether or not this Workgroup should determine the look and feel of the sidewalk/street and to what degree of prescription needs to be in place.
- A consensus was reached that the Workgroup must lay down the framework that will later establish the look and feel of the Primary Streets and Secondary Connections, and the public realm.
- It was asked of NBBJ to provide examples images of how “look and feel” standards can be applied.
- In the case of a curb bulb-out, it would be left up to the city whether to require bio-retention infrastructure. There are good examples of this locally of bio-retention in the ROW (eg Tacoma’s Pacific Avenue).
- Secondary Connections will be defined (type, dimensions, feel, etc).
- Developers may have the option of negotiating Secondary Connections as potential ROW but it would not be required.

Secondary Connections:

- NBBJ to presented connection types with widths and types of Secondary Connections and have the Workgroup react.

- The idea is to have a “menu” of Secondary Connections that the developer could choose from.
- There was a concern that by allowing these types of Secondary Connections there is a risk of creating spaces that are dark and canyon-like. NBBJ reassured the group that there were design guidelines could help alleviate that concern.
- All development, with or without Secondary Connections will have to allow for fire-access as established by the fire marshal (minimum widths, hydrants, etc.)
- Another question was raised about how service and garbage collection would work on a Secondary Connection. NBBJ explained that these types of services will be allowed to use these Secondary Connections but that the certain types of connections could serve this type of use better than others, eg service alley vs pedestrian corridor.
- It was asked if the design standards and guidelines could only require pedestrian oriented Secondary Connections. NBBJ explained that the need for vehicle access along some of the Secondary Connections was important as vehicles need to be able to access the parking lots in the rear of the development. These auto connections could help separate vehicle and pedestrians further creating a safer environment for all.
- The privately developed Secondary Connection could work well for creating a steady phasing flow which would allow the downtown to grow overtime.
- A need for a table highlighting the types of Secondary Connections, their dimensions, their allowed uses, and how their adjacent and facing connections will take place would help clarify the key concept.
- The question was raised whether or not the Secondary Connections needed to be the same width when they align with each other across properties. NBBJ explained that it depended on the type, and whether or not the connection crossed a Primary Street or just continued into an adjacent lot.
- NBBJ also explained that if there is a Secondary Connection were to cross a Primary Street and connect with another Secondary Connection that their centerlines is encouraged to align. In the case that is not possible, the Secondary Connections centerlines must be offset by a minimum of 125’ as to create a safe environment and avoid any “near miss” situations similar to Monarch driveway.
- The concept of having Secondary Connections was met with agreement from the Workgroup.

Block Minimums and Maximums

- The Workgroup understood the need for such minimums and maximums and agreed that they were necessary to achieve they type of downtown that is sought during the visioning process by the community.
- It was understood there is a certain incentive to be the first developer to create a Secondary Connection because that person could help determine what type and where adjacent or facing Secondary Connections will be built in the future.

Front and Rear Access Points:

- It was mentioned that businesses may have dual access points but primary access must be in the front of the building.
- Rear entry, should not be encouraged for use, but primarily for service access.



- The Workgroup expressed the need to not have “weird/awkward” back of house entrances.

Building Heights

- The Workgroup discussed that building height would be a minimum of 2-stories with step-backs at the 3rd floor from Primary Streets and possibly Pedestrian-Oriented Secondary Connections.
- The maximum building development in downtown should be 55’ and 5-stories above grade going forward. The Workgroup would continue to discuss in future meetings.

----End Meeting----