

MEETING SUMMARY

St. Helens US 30 & Columbia Blvd./St. Helens St. Corridor Master Plan

Planning Commission Work Session and Public Meeting #1

January 14, 2014

7:00 pm

St. Helens City Hall

1. Introductions, Meeting Objectives, and Project Status Report

- Jacob Graichen, a planner with the City of St. Helens, welcomed the meeting participants. Jacob explained how the project has developed from prior planning efforts and direction from the City Council.
- Matt Hastie, consultant team project manager with the firm Angelo Planning Group, facilitated the meeting. He introduced other members of the project consultant team attending the meeting: Shayna Rehberg, also from Angelo Planning Group; Matt Bell, from the transportation planning and engineering firm Kittelson & Associates; and Tim Strand from the landscape architecture and environmental planning firm GreenWorks.
- Matt presented project objectives, which include creating streetscape plans for the project area; the Houlton area is a primary focus area and the US 30 and Olde Towne areas are secondary focus areas in the project area. Matt described meeting objectives including reviewing work done to date and presenting streetscape design ideas about which the project team would like meeting participant feedback.
- Comments/questions
 - The segments referred to as Olde Towne in the corridor project area is “almost” Olde Towne; using terms such as Uppertown and Lowertown or talking about the areas above and below Dispane’s Hill may be more accurate and familiar to residents.
 - The term “Main Street” may also be more familiar to community members. It describes the corridor from US 30 to City Hall.

- Matt provided an overview of the project status including work completed to date (e.g., project initiation, first round of meetings, a series of memos, draft vision and guiding principles) and upcoming work.
- The meeting PowerPoint presentation can be found under “Project Documents” on the project website, <http://www.sthelenscorridorplans.com>.

2. Corridor Existing and Future Conditions

Key policies and regulations

- Matt Hastie gave a brief overview of key State and local policies and regulations related to property access and street/streetscape design. They set parameters for the corridor planning process and/or may be modified by the corridor plan.

Transportation and access management

- Matt Bell of Kittelson & Associates reviewed access management regulations and transportation conditions in the project area.
- Several access points in the project area do not meet access management standards. However, the corridor plan will not be recommending access management strategies for specific locations; its recommendations related to street design will support moving in the direction of compliance with current access management standards.
- Comments/questions
 - Where does access not meet standards on US 30?

It is mostly private driveways that do not meet access spacing standards. The corridor plan will not necessarily propose access closures and changes (that was addressed in the update of the Transportation System Plan). However, the recommendations in the plan related to access will move access toward compliance.

- Existing transportation conditions in the project area offer opportunities to reconfigure roadway design for specific segments of the corridor and to focus improvements such as curb extensions, re-striping of bike lanes, and bicycle boulevard treatments at key crossing locations and along key travel routes for pedestrians and bicycles.
- The transportation conditions analysis also identified roadway needs at intersections including Milton Way/Columbia Boulevard, 18th Street/Columbia Boulevard, and 13th Street/Columbia Boulevard/St. Helens Street.

- Comments/questions
 - Is there one-way signage at the Milton/Columbia Boulevard intersection and at other intersections along Columbia Blvd?

The project team will check about one-way signage at that intersection.

- Will the Wyeth/US 30 intersection be evaluated? That also is a problem intersection in terms of safety and crossings. It is similar in terms of topography and sight distances to the Bennett Road intersection. Long trains can block the view there. Conditions are exacerbated by being near the middle school.

The intersection is being evaluated. Additional information from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) may be needed for this evaluation.

Land use and urban design conditions

- Matt Hastie of Angelo Planning Group reviewed general land use conditions in the project area, including the amount of vacant land, type of land uses, and development code requirements (e.g. for building setbacks, landscaping, and parking) in the US 30, Houlton, and Uppertown/Olde Towne segments of the project area.
- Tim Strand of GreenWorks walked through an urban design overview of each corridor segment. The overview addressed elements such as roadway design, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and the way that these elements as well as adjacent land uses and building design affect a sense of place and identity in each corridor segment.
- Notable urban design elements in the **US 30 segment** of the corridor include a variety of commercial uses, large areas of parking, and pedestrian facilities on the west side of the highway; and limited to no pedestrian facilities and railroad right-of-way (land that ODOT leases to Portland & Western (P&W) Railroad) on the east side of the highway. Above-ground utilities are sited mostly outside of the sidewalk area.
- Notable urban design elements in the **Houlton segment** of the corridor include a variety of commercial uses along Columbia Boulevard and mostly residential uses along St. Helens Street, wide right-of-way and travel lanes, utilities sited in the sidewalk area, and limited crossings and pedestrian amenities.
- Notable urban design elements in **Uppertown/Olde Towne segment** of the corridor include a mix of land uses with a predominance of residential uses, right-of-way that is constrained by natural features (basalt outcroppings) in some areas, and, like the Houlton segment, utilities in the sidewalk area, and limited crossings and pedestrian amenities.

- Comments/questions
 - On-street parking in Uppertown/Olde Towne is in high demand around July 4 and on Wednesdays and Sundays for church services in the area.

3. Streetscape Design Ideas

- Tim Strand of GreenWorks then presented streetscape design ideas, grouped into the following categories and represented by the following examples:
 - Traffic calming features – bulb-outs/curb extensions, crosswalk enhancements, speed tables
 - Pedestrian amenities – special paving, pedestrian-scale lighting, street furnishings, street trees, planting areas
 - Civic identity and wayfinding features – gateways, signage, banners, community kiosks
 - Green street strategies – stormwater planters, vegetated swales, rain gardens, permeable paving
- Comments/questions in general
 - One meeting participant shared that she really liked the streetscape designs and ideas overall, and is looking forward to improvement and revitalization of the corridor.
 - It is very important that maintenance plans and responsibilities be established for recommended improvements and amenities.
 - These streetscape design ideas should be considered for other areas of St. Helens in the future. It would be great to create some kind of resource document or toolkit of ideas that could be applied in other areas.
 - Participants would like to see businesses provided with opportunities to conduct business on the sidewalks (e.g., racks, seating) when the sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate. This planning process should ensure that there is policy support for this kind of activity; there may have been policy barriers to this activity in the past.
 - Materials used for streetscapes should be timeless and durable.
 - What will the final product of this process be?

The corridor plan will consist of a set of recommended improvements and preliminary designs (not construction-level designs) for improvements in each segment of the corridor, with more detail in the

Houlton area. The plan can generally prioritize the recommended improvements and provide planning-level cost estimates. Changes to the Transportation System Plan (e.g. street cross sections), development code, and policies will be included in the plan as needed.

- Comments/questions related to traffic calming features and pedestrian amenities
 - Street trees
 - It was recommended that the presence of basalt not be made into a larger limiting factor than it may be.
 - The senior center in St. Helens has Japanese Maples and other trees that have been successful in shallow soils with underlying basalt.
 - The trees at the library/tech center on 18th Street have thrived with limited maintenance as well. The streetscape plan should include guidance on specific species of trees that lend themselves to use in areas with shallow soils and/or underlying basalt.
 - The project team was asked to identify trees that work in St. Helens soils and, in particular, compared to trees currently included in the development code.
 - Evaluate trees for nuisances (e.g., what birds they may attract).
- Comments/questions related to civic identity and wayfinding features
 - Banners – Banners can positively contribute to civic identity but they can also be an eyesore when they are damaged or worn. It is important to choose materials that do not easily damage or wear, or otherwise have a plan to replace the banners regularly. If we use materials that do not age well and we do not budget for replacement or maintenance, we may be setting a trap for ourselves.
 - During a time when we are coming out of a recession, it is particularly important to implement improvements that will last or require minimal maintenance.
 - With limited resources, it will be important to prioritize improvements based on those that are the most cost-effective. We will not be able to accomplish everything. The consultant team should recommend priorities based on their professional judgment and help distinguish between what we do not want, somewhat want, really want, and really need.
 - Wayfinding – Participants felt that wayfinding features/signs can work really well (e.g., Salem).

- Special opportunity areas
 - The corner at the post office should be considered as a special opportunity area; it already acts as a community news and gathering place.
 - Walla Walla has built good plazas.
 - The public works department would likely have maintenance responsibilities for these areas. However, other strategies could be considered, including maintenance by adjacent property owners or by a business or other association.
- Comments/questions related to green street strategies
 - It is important for communities to have a “flood fight plan.” Flood events, ice storms, and snow removal should all be considered in planning planting strategies and streetscape design. Green street features can help mitigate flood events. The City and project team should consider how streetscape features can help reduce the impacts of major flood events. For example, sandbagging drainage areas can increase their volume and allow them to contain more floodwater.
- The project team encouraged meeting participants to complete comment forms about the transportation, land use, urban design, and streetscape design ideas presented during the meeting, as well as a visual preference survey of specific streetscape design elements. The responses from the comment forms and visual preference survey are summarized in Attachments A and B.

4. Next Steps

- Next steps in the project include:
 - Summarizing feedback from meetings today in meeting summaries and using meeting feedback to revise the memos (January).
 - Preparing preliminary streetscape planning concepts and options (February and March).
 - Meeting with the CAC, TAC, and business and property owners about the streetscape planning concepts and options (March).
 - Meeting with the Planning Commission and community about the streetscape planning concepts and options (April).

Attachment A: Summary of Comment Forms



Business and Property Owners Meeting #2 Planning Commission/Public Meeting #1 January 14, 2014 Summary of Responses

Overview

The results and responses presented in this summary report are primarily compiled from eight forms completed during or after the Business and Property Owners Meeting #2 and Planning Commission Work Session/Public Meeting #1, held on January 24, 2014. A few additional responses were gathered from emails or conversations following the meetings. While this is not a large set of responses, the responses along with results of a visual preference survey of streetscape design ideas will assist the project team in drafting design concepts and options in the next phase of the project.

The responses address the topics of land use, urban design, transportation conditions, and streetscape design ideas that were covered at the meetings. Below is a brief overview of the responses.

- Land use, urban design, and transportation conditions – Responses emphasized improving walking and bicycling conditions in the project area, from improving safety and access on US 30 to using wide right-of-way to offer facilities and amenities in Houlton and Olde Towne.
- Streetscape design ideas –
 - Respondents generally strongly supported improved pedestrian crossings, particularly in the US 30 corridor. There was also general support for improved bicycle facilities, again particularly in the US 30 corridor, but the support was weaker than for pedestrian crossings.
 - On-street parking, green street features, plazas/gathering spaces, and transit shelters were met with more mixed responses.
 - There was generally strong support for street furnishings, especially in the Houlton and Olde Towne areas.
 - There was general support for street trees, landscaping, information kiosks, and community identity features, again especially in the Houlton and Olde Towne areas.
 - Respondents supported signage to Houlton and/or Olde Towne across the board.
- Other streetscape design ideas – Ideas included slowing down traffic, suggesting specific locations for information kiosks and signs, encouraging bicycle tourism, adopting a theme, and siting a gateway between Houlton and Olde Towne.

Following are responses to each question on the comment form.

1. Do you have any comments about the summary of land use, urban design and transportation conditions provided at the meeting or in the technical memos?

- Appreciate the discussion about the **width of travel lanes on Columbia Boulevard**. They are too wide for a friendly bicycle and pedestrian environment. Cars drive too fast because the lanes are wide.
- Want to see more emphasis on **safe pedestrian and bicycle access on US 30**. There are a lot of cyclists on US 30 already, and there could be more if it was safer for riding.
- Want to see priority given to **pedestrian and bicycle traffic** in plan.
- Plan **street furnishings** throughout project area.
- Include **gateways** in the plan.
- Retain left and right **entry access into US 30 driveways**. Retain left and right **exit access onto US 30**.
- **Bulb-outs/curb extensions** seem best suited for the Houlton Business District because the right-of-way is so wide. The bulb-out could include pedestrian amenities like benches and plantings, and they could help slow traffic and reduce pedestrian conflicts at crosswalks.
- Recommend looking into **switching bike lanes and on-street parking** in Olde Towne (i.e., cycle track) to reduce chances of cyclists getting hit by car doors.
- Address safety at the **St. Helens Street and S. 4th Street intersection**. Several near accidents have been witnessed. A hill west of the intersection and a curve in the road near the intersection promote speeding and limit visibility. Pedestrians have been observed running across the intersection, likely due to speeding traffic and limited visibility.
- More clearly define the areas for bike travel and motor vehicle right turns westbound on Gable Road at the **Gable Road/US30 intersection**. There is a bike lane along the north side of Gable that ends just before the intersection and railroad tracks. It is common for people to use this area as a right turn lane to head north on US30.

2. Please circle your general level of support for each of the following types of streetscape design ideas on a scale of 1 to 5, with one being “don’t support at all” and 5 being “strongly support”, and circle where they should be applied (US 30 corridor, Houlton area, and/or Olde Towne).

a. **Improved pedestrian crossings (e.g., curb extensions, raised crosswalks, flashing beacons)**

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				

<i>2, do not support</i>				
<i>3, no opinion</i>				
<i>4, support somewhat</i>				2
<i>5, strongly support</i>	5	4	3	

Note: One participant circled curb extensions and raised sidewalks of the examples provided.

b. Improved facilities for bicyclists (e.g., bike lanes, separated bike lanes, bike racks, shelters)

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>				1
<i>3, no opinion</i>				
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	1	1	1	1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	5	3	3	

c. On-street parking for cars

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>	1			
<i>2, do not support</i>	1			
<i>3, no opinion</i>				3
<i>4, support somewhat</i>		2	1	1
<i>5, strongly support</i>		1	1	

d. Street furnishings (e.g., benches, trash cans, drinking fountains)

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>	1	1	1	
<i>3, no opinion</i>				1
<i>4, support somewhat</i>				1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	2	5	4	

e. Street trees and/or other landscaping along the street

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>	1			

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>2, do not support</i>				
<i>3, no opinion</i>				
<i>4, support somewhat</i>		1	1	1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	3	5	4	1

f. "Green street" features (e.g., swales, rain gardens)

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				1
<i>2, do not support</i>				1
<i>3, no opinion</i>				
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	1	2	1	1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	2	3	3	

g. Signage directing people to the Houlton and/or Olde Towne areas

<i>1, don't support at all</i>	
<i>2, do not support</i>	
<i>3, no opinion</i>	
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	3
<i>5, strongly support</i>	5

Note: One participant circled the space where the three areas are named in the other questions.

h. Plazas or small parks, open spaces or other gathering places

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>	1			
<i>2, do not support</i>				1
<i>3, no opinion</i>		1	1	
<i>4, support somewhat</i>				1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	1	4	3	1

Note: One participant put three bold stars by this heading.

i. Informational signs or kiosks

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>				
<i>3, no opinion</i>				2
<i>4, support somewhat</i>		2	2	
<i>5, strongly support</i>	2	3	3	

j. Pedestrian-scale street lighting

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>				
<i>3, no opinion</i>				
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	2	2	2	2
<i>5, strongly support</i>	2	4	4	

k. Transit shelters

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>				1
<i>3, no opinion</i>				2
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	1	1		
<i>5, strongly support</i>	1	1	2	

Note: One participant wrote a question mark next to this question.

l. Community identity features (e.g., gateways, banners, public art)

	US 30 corridor	Houlton area	Olde Towne	<i>No Area Circled</i>
<i>1, don't support at all</i>				
<i>2, do not support</i>				
<i>3, no opinion</i>				1
<i>4, support somewhat</i>	1	2	2	1
<i>5, strongly support</i>	2	4	3	

3. Are there any other ways that should be considered to improve the design of these streets to enhance their appearance, safety or function or to stimulate more shopping and other economic activity?
- Improve **safety**.
 - **Slow down traffic**.
 - Improve **aesthetics**; beautify.
 - Plant **trees**.
 - Improve **street lighting**.
 - Improve **pedestrian signal** crossing on US 30.
 - Improve **pedestrian amenities** to encourage pedestrian traffic.
 - Consider an **information kiosk** (or something like it) on US 30 that provides a local map and information about things to do in the city. Provide something similar on the waterfront for visiting boaters.
 - Consider a **gateway** treatment at the intersection of St. Helens Street and 1st Street, to serve as an entrance into Olde Towne and that could be seen from the river by boating visitors.
 - Promote **bicycle tourism** in the community. There are a lot of cyclists on US 30. Bike racks, bicycle-friendly paths, good signage to Houlton and Olde Towne, etc. would be very important. Bicycle tourism is an idea that can be tapped into to get more customers into stores and make the community more bicycle friendly.
 - Define a **theme or focus** and develop it from there. For example, themes may include: (1) planters along the corridor with only a specific type of flower; (2) themes like steamships, boats, windmills, salmon, flower, trains, historic, bird(s); and (3) a regular/monthly event in the city to draw people and business such as a Blackberry Festival, Antique Week, Chocolate Festival, and Flower Festival.
 - The Chamber of Commerce has started a discussion with Portland & Western Railroad, possibly ODOT Rail, and the City about the possibility of a **reader board sign** on the side of its building that faces US 30. The building is in railroad right-of-way and the sign would be, too. The sign is so far envisioned to be part of a potential gateway at that location and will be coordinated with the corridor planning process.
4. Do you have any other comments about this meeting or project?
- Strongly support the focus on traffic calming, pedestrian enhancements, and bicycle facilities.
 - US 30 is used by a lot of cyclists for such a large highway. Capitalize on them traveling through the community by offering bicycle amenities for them to stop and spend money on lunch, for example, and other ways to stimulate local economic activity.

- Provide places to sit, especially in Olde Towne, and preferably in places like plazas and along sidewalks. Have seen visitors (during festivals) looking for places to sit and then eventually just leave.
- Once a theme or focus is decided, it is important to have all businesses promote it. For example, if a boat theme was adopted, this should be integrated into businesses in a number of ways like making storefront signs “boat-like”, using a consistent color scheme, and modifying menus to reflect the theme (e.g., schooner burger, Titanic fries).

Attachment B: Summary of Streetscape Design Visual Preference Survey

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

ST. HELENS - US 30 & COLUMBIA BLVD./ST. HELENS ST. CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

January 27, 2014

During a meeting with Business and Property Owners and a subsequent Planning Commission work session on January 14, 2014, a series of boards showing images of streetscape elements presented in Technical Memorandum #5: Streetscape Design Toolkit were presented for feedback on visual preference of those elements. Meeting attendees were given green stars to stick on or near images that they considered visually appealing, and red stars for images that they did not consider visually appealing. Subsequently to those meetings, the presentation boards were on display for members of the community to weigh in as well.

The following is a summary of the "Star Exercise" survey results, indicating the overall tally of votes given to those images receiving stars. Images that did not receive stars are not included in this summary.

TRAFFIC CALMING FEATURES

CURB EXTENSIONS



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS



STARS



SPEED TABLES



STARS



INTERSECTION TREATMENTS



STARS



STARS



CROSSWALK ENHANCEMENTS



STARS



STARS



CROSSWALK ENHANCEMENTS CONT'D



STARS



CHICANES



STARS



PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

SIDEWALK PAVING



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING



STARS



STARS



STARS



SEATWALLS



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



BENCHES



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



STREET FURNISHINGS



STARS
★ ★
★ ★
★



STARS
★



STARS
★ ★
★ ★



STARS
★ ★
★
★



STARS
★ ★
★ ★



STARS
★
★
★

STREET TREES AND PLANTING AREAS



STARS



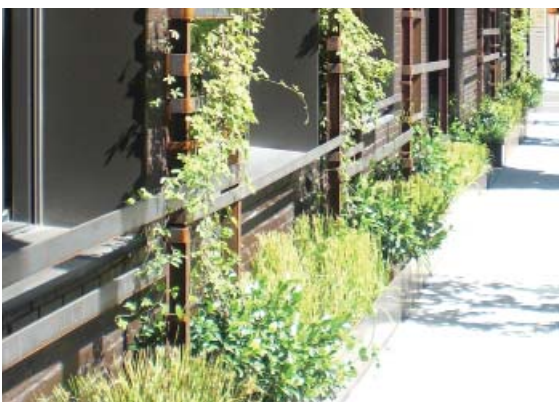
STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



CIVIC IDENTITY AND WAYFINDING

GATEWAY MONUMENTS



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



PUBLIC ART



STARS



STARS



STARS



BANNERS



STARS



SIGNAGE



STARS



STARS



STARS



COMMUNITY KIOSKS



STARS



TRANSIT SHELTERS



STARS



SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY AREAS



STARS



STARS



GREEN STREET STRATEGIES

VEGETATED SWALES



STARS



STARS



STARS



STARS



STORMWATER PLANTERS



STARS



STARS



STORMWATER PLANTERS



STARS



RAIN GARDENS AND BASINS



STARS
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★



STARS
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★



STARS
★



STARS
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★

PERMEABLE PAVING

CURB EXTENSIONS



STARS
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★
★ ★



STARS
★