Barbur Concept Plan Neighborhood Walk Summary

Both neighborhood walks (Capitol Hill & Hamilton Walk and Crossroads & Terwilliger Walk) were held on the following dates:

- Thursday, September 22, 2011 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday, September 24, 2011 10:00 a.m. to noon

Capitol Hill and Hamilton Walk

Attending 9/22: Morgan Tracy, Joan Frederiksen, William Danneman, Laura Campos, Paul Gleason, Chris Smith, Rebecca Koffman, Thomas Riese, Sam Tenney, Roger Averbeck, Jonathan Winslow, Phil Richman, Glen Bolen, Crista Gardner, Mara Gross, Kay Durbelu, John Gillam, April Bertlesen, Shannon Axtell, Don Baak, Sam Tenney, Leonard Gaard.

Attending 9/24: Jay Sugnet, Mark Turner, Lee Buhler, Eric Schnell, Janet Lang, Karen Withrow, Marianne Fitzgerald, Glenn Bridger, Lia Mitterrique, Bob Stacey

Capitol Hill / Safeway area

- In 1980s, the area was a demonstration for what could be on Barbur. Great plans were made, but those plans sat on a shelf. Only minor improvements were made to the corner sidewalks at Barbur and Capitol Hill.
- During the SW Community Plan, participants suggested that the City plan for the entire corridor instead of asking each neighborhood what they wanted to see happen along their section of Barbur. "we've been waiting for this opportunity" in the SW Corridor Plan
- Connectivity a big issue. Historically in southwest Portland, developers worked around the steep topography so there is not a grid like the east side, but rather lots of dead end streets. Also lots of unpaved streets
- Bike boulevard concept doesn't work as well on west side due to lack of parallel streets. One
 potential is the portion of Multnomah boulevard from Tobacco Town to Fred Meyer behind Barbur.
 Another is the portion of Taylor's Ferry across from the Transit Center as well as Slavin Road from
 Fulton Park to Hamilton.
- New Safeway development will increase size of store from roughly 20,000 square feet to 60,000.
 Although community is excited about new development, there is concern about the lack of improvements to help people walk or bike from surrounding neighborhoods to the new store
- Also concerns that the increase in traffic will cause more traffic to cut through the neighborhood streets.
- Community members asked Safeway to build housing as part of new store, but Safeway said it didn't make economic sense. Community members asked City for bike lanes on Capitol Hill, but City said they couldn't require it or have the money to build it. Same with extending sidewalks further into the neighborhood. "Sharrows" will be required instead of bike lanes in Capitol Hill since those will not require curb relocation. One participant asked about the possibility of including a bike lane at the same level as the sidewalk, with a widened sidewalk in this short section.
- In both directions along Barbur away from Safeway the right-of-way narrows which means limited bike and pedestrian connections – quite dangerous. In particular, the bridge over Multnomah is narrow and lacks a bike path. The sidewalk is very narrow and raised with a low railing – feels unsafe for bikes and pedestrians
- Lots of businesses have customer parking in public right-of-way and there are no sidewalks.
 Pedestrians must walk though the parking lot or in the street (e.g. Tobacco Town)

- There are three schools in the area. Lots of students and parent pick-up and drop off. Lots of foot traffic across I-5 bridge at 19th; times of significant traffic spikes on Capitol Hill Road in constrained and substandard ROW. We witnessed several children on their bikes negotiating the gravel shoulder northward on Capitol Hill.
- New sidewalks and bioswales were installed along Spring Garden. Bioswales are larger than on eastside because the soils don't infiltrate.
- Speed bumps installed between the school and church were controversial, some neighbors complained that the bumps were too noisy, caused damage to cars because they are not expected – City is considering at a series of speed bumps
- Design work is beginning for the east side of 19th Ave from Spring Garden to Barbur. Also on west side of 19th, improvements from overpass to Spring Garden Rd. and Spring Garden Rd from 19th to Taylors Ferry. In other areas: Multnomah- Barbur to 34th, Huber, Sunset Blvd and Vermont (30-37th). All will be designed this year and constructed in 2012. Also looking at candidates for state funds for Barbur between 19th and 26th.
- Lots of regional traffic from Clackamas County (Sellwood Bridge) uses Spring Garden to access I-5.
- Access ramps significant issue for this section of I-5. It was the last section completed and many cost saving measures were taken which explains why some ramps dump directly into the neighborhoods or why there are no southbound ramps between the Ross Island Bridge and Capitol Hwy. Neighborhoods were promised that this issue would be looked at as part of a corridor mobility study (which is part of the SW Corridor Plan now underway). The area at 26th Ave was suggested as an I-5 access ramp to be studied
- Unlike other light rail/transit projects elsewhere in the City, Barbur does not have existing connecting/access infrastructure in place. Greatly adds to the scope of the work.

Hamilton

- Lots of change over the years in this area more development, more traffic
- Improvement were made to intersection of Barbur and Hamilton but still some safety issues (e.g. bikes southbound on Barbur in conflict with cars moving east along Hamilton)
- If transit comes to this area, how will it connect to the 12,000 jobs at OHSU? There is already cut though traffic in the neighborhood by commuters trying to save time
- There once was a funicular up Hamilton to serve the neighborhood up on the hill
- The church has a shared parking agreement with the Veteran's Hospital
- The study should consider more pedestrian overcrossings of Barbur and I-5
- The distance between Hamilton and the next crossing to the north (SW Lane) is about 1,900 feet. Lane Street crossing is intimidating for pedestrians due to traffic speeds.
- Slavin road was the original road connecting downtown with the Tualatin Valley. Much of the right-of-way still exists and is a great opportunity to provide an alternate bike/ped route. The construction of the lowa bridge on I-5 is opening up another section of the road. ODOT offered to pave it as a multi-use path after bridge is complete
- The Corbett bridge over I-5 is a dangerous bike route there is discussion about creating an uphill bike lane
- A lot of bikes coming up Corbett very narrow and lots of work going up hill. Thus Hamilton and Corbett by extension need attention related to those users. PBOT has noted in the past they are not willing to reduce volumes on Hamilton due to its classification and essential nature in this location to connect to Macadam.
- Hamilton has a mix of very old buildings (1800s) and very new. Walk participants felt that the new
 development mixed in well with old. Throughout the project, show good examples of new
 development (many people seem to only remember the ugly buildings)

- There is a strong neighborhood interest in preserving the existing housing in the area.
- Some felt the new condos are very nice, the older condos not so much but the growth of mature street trees helps buffer the development. Some did not like the more modern buildings.
- Are there ways to incent/require rental unit vs. condos?
- Changes to the current required maximum setbacks for development on Barbur (as a transit) street should be evaluated. Perhaps different varying standards for commercial and residential uses.
- Taller buildings on Barbur may not be so bad if there were wider sidewalks and first level retail. Would there be willing developers/market?
- Trees are important to the corridor many people like the country feel that trees provide need to preserve tree canopy and enforce current tree requirements
- Corbett was a very pleasant area (quiet, low traffic, mature trees, mix of housing and businesses)
- While signage and tree canopy conflicts are not a zoning issue, may be appropriate to discuss as part
 of this work.
- Keep traffic on Barbur. If capacity is reduced, then these side streets will get more traffic and not be so pleasant
- Ensure that park and rides are part of the transit mix necessary elements that tend to get value engineered out of transit projects
- High capacity transit often means low levels of local bus service service was cut too low already bus service only once an hour is not service.
- In terms of open space linkage opportunities, the Christmas Tree lot area on the north side of Barbur Blvd (south of Hamilton near Rasmussen Apts) could be improved into a trailhead into the Terwilliger parkway area (note there is an existing trail noted on the streetscape plan)
- Cars coming up to access Barbur (from east) are at a steep grade and for visibility will often pull all the way into the bike lanes, and not cautiously. (Add signage to remind drivers of pedestrian and cyclists?)

Crossroads and Terwilliger Walk

Attending 9/22: Jay Sugnet, Malu Wilkinson, Marianne Fitzgerald, Glenn Bridger, Amin Wahab, Jeremy Grand, Leslie Hildula

Attending 9/24: Morgan Tracy, Glen Bolen, Andrea Frost, Robin Helm, George Helm, Linda Niles, Sally Willson, Roger Averbeck, CJ Gabbe, Phil Richman, Wendy Cawley, Jonathan Winslow, Jeremy Grotbo, Laurence Qamar, Chris Smith, Heather Kent, Don Baak, Joseph Reedy.

Crossroads / West Portland Town Center

- The Crossroads area (also know at the West Portland Town Center) was identified as a Town Center by the City of Portland as part of the 2040 Growth Concept in 1990. Since that time, many studies were conducted to understand what it means to be a town center (e.g. a concentrated area for housing, jobs, and services) and relatively few improvements were made to the area due to a lack of agreement on solutions to the very complex transportation issues (e.g. 3 major roads converging, poor circulation, and proximity of I-5 access ramps). The Town Center designation remains a "concept" in the Southwest Community Plan.
- The area has many amenities (e.g. grocery store, coffee shop, restaurants, etc.) but very poor pedestrian connections. Many people drive from one business to the other instead of walking. One walker commented that it was sad to see so many auto oriented uses in the area
- Walking up Capitol Hwy towards PCC, the group noticed the wide sidewalks, bike lanes, and on street parking. This was the first phase of the Capitol Hwy improvements done in the early 1990s.
 The road was widened, partly to serve the growing PCC Campus of 22,000 students
- The crosswalk was recently built in part to make it easier for the Muslim community to access the Mosque and also the associated school on Capitol Hwy
- Other improvements have been made over the years to improve pedestrian safety, but the major facilities still create a barrier to pedestrians
- Location of SW Trails should help prioritize pedestrian crossings for Barbur
- Traffic on Capitol Highway backs up to SW Carson (~3/4 mile).
- Walgreens will build a new store on site of Castle adult book store. Community pleased with new development, but feel that transportation and circulation issues are not being adequately addressed. The neighborhood requested a light at Taylors Ferry and Capitol Hwy, but was told by the City that it would not be safe. Bike lanes were requested, but City unable to require sufficient right of way dedication, construction and stormwater improvements through building permit review.
- One participant suggested a traffic circle as an appropriate alternative to a signal at Taylors Ferry and Capitol Hwy intersection.
- Taylor's Ferry is part of SW Trails #5, but lacks a clearly marked ped crossing where I-5 off ramp intersects (near 43rd)
- Taylors Ferry and Capitol Hwy were the main roads in the early 1900s. Barbur was built in the 30s which brought more houses and businesses. When I-5 was built in the 60s, there was a flood of new development in the area
- Residents are drawn to area by quick and easy access to I-5. One participant noted that about ½ of the westbound traffic on Barbur at this location is going to I-5 south onramp. (The next one is 1.3 miles to south at Tigard, or over five miles to the north at South Waterfront).
- Taylor's Ferry is a major connection to Washington Co. The City looked at bike lanes on the street, but the neighbors argued that it would not likely be used for regional commutes and that the efforts should go elsewhere in the area

- There were concerns over converting on street parking to sidewalk and bike lane use. Especially as more development occurs in the area, cars may be displaced into surrounding neighborhood. Need to consider importance of on street parking, and ways to integrate it as part of design concept (in terms of buffering pedestrians, slowing traffic speeds). Some noted that traffic speeds and volumes on Barbur make on street parking undesirable.
- Signal crossing for Capitol Hwy at Barbur goes too quick, especially for mobility impaired.
- Barbur Foods turned the area around after it was remodeled and changed their offerings providing a significant amenity to the area
- The blank wall behind Barbur Foods on Taylors Ferry is bad from the standpoint of the pedestrian (uninteresting, not inviting, left feeling isolated on the street).
- Curb extensions in front of Master Wrench are planned/funded to help with safety. Many cars use the bike lane to make right turns onto Taylors Ferry
- The transit center looks old and tired. It is often full, there is no real-time display of departures, the crossings of Barbur to the TC are out of direction for many pedestrians, and most importantly the buses no longer transfer there. To make a connection to the 43, 44, or 64, people need to walk to the nearest bus stop on Capitol Hwy
- Transit Center lacks public restrooms. Participants noted that the area around the pedestrian bridge over I-5 suffered because of this. Someone suggested adding a "loo".
- Bureau of Environmental Services is working on a project to manage stormwater from the parking lot in the isles between the parking stalls. Construction is expected to begin in the next few months

Terwilliger

- Significant improvements were made when the Terwilliger bridge was built over I-5 in terms of road, bike, and pedestrian facilities. Some noted that the left turn from Barbur east to Terwilliger continues to present a challenge for bikes.
- The community requested an on ramp to I-5 south at Terwilliger because there is no southbound access between the Ross Island Bridge and Capitol Hwy. ODOT decided not to build it because of conflicts with the Multnomah off ramp. One participant suggested adding a southbound onramp next to the offramp at the Pancake House (~SW 24th)
- Although the facilities were nice at the time, little is done to maintain the landscaping. In particular, the trees are dying. The street trees next to the car wash were removed and should be replaced.
 Street trees were noted in other places as making a huge difference in the feel of the pedestrian environment.
- Barbur Shops is noted as some of the nicest development along the corridor and something they would like to see more of. It was noted that Terwilliger has good connections to the neighborhoods on both sides of I-5 and up Terwilliger in particular with the multi-use path. Others noted that while the buildings themselves are oriented towards Barbur, the businesses have turned their backs on the street, opting to face the parking lot. The central corner element, for example, provides a view to the starbucks restrooms.
- The neighborhood was successful in getting the Barbur Shops developer to install a drinking fountain and other amenities that have helped make this area a good attraction.
- Initially there were employee parking issues with Barbur Shops. Employees were parking in the neighborhood until an agreement was reached on good places for them to park in the area
- Over the years the buses that feed the 12 on Barbur have been cut requiring people to walk long distances to get where they need to go. Need to make sure that doesn't happen with high capacity transit

- The redevelopment of Fred Meyer was generally a disappointment to many. Community members tried to get Kroger to put other uses on the site including housing. The large site has great potential, particularly because of the slope on the back of the site that would allow several stories below grade.
- The area around Fred Meyer also showed promise for potential redevelopment due to the topography and opportunity for great views of Mt. Hood. Noise levels were also significantly lower. Participants spent 15 minutes talking and standing partially in the street at 13th and Custer everyone felt more comfortable there compared to standing on the sidewalk of Barbur and 13th
- Although participants saw the potential, there was general agreement that any additional density or significant development must come with the pedestrian amenities and close examination of the traffic impacts "at the other end" (by drawing activity to these side streets, there is potential for spillover impacts to the system at intersections that were not designed for the increased volume). Development for too long has happened without the necessary infrastructure improvements
- There are also several surface parking lots around Custer and 13th. The challenge will be to get individual property owners to think about how to increase density and share parking to use space more efficiently
- Noise from Barbur and the freeway is a concern and quite noticeable through the corridor. When I 5 is rebuilt in the next 50 years, need to address noise in a more meaningful way
- The Portland Plan identified the concept of civic corridors throughout the city to help connect
 wildlife habitat in conjunction with pedestrian and bicycle connections. Terwilliger and Barbur are
 both identified as potential corridors and the Barbur Concept Plan will pick up on this concept as
 part of the planning process

Some other overarching comments for the Barbur corridor:

- Vision: Shift balance towards multi-modal access for all businesses; safer crossing and ability for people to walk from homes to the businesses along Barbur. The solution to Barbur is more than fixing the gaps in the existing ped/bike systems, it needs a transformation from an auto-centric design to more multi-modal.
- Need to see more mixed use development with residential above commercial. Add entertainment venues and independent businesses.
- Don't over-focus on Barbur, look beyond for opportunities, Barbur lacks the bones to be a village street (high volume, wide cross section)
- Look at access demand management, there are multiple driveways, some are poorly defined, which makes it unsafe.
- A lot of the intersections meet Barbur at a skew, impeding visibility and lengthening crossings. This is hazardous for bikes and peds.
- It's important to get a good cross section of the business community represented in this effort.
- When I-5 is backed up, Barbur fills up, and ultimately spills all over the SW neighborhoods.
- Is the existing zoning appropriate for how we should be thinking about these areas, or will changes to the zoning be necessary to move the concept plan forward?
- How will issues of air quality be addressed with regard to placing housing on and around Barbur and I-5?