

# Plan Purpose

For over a century, Burnside Street has played an important role in Portland’s transportation system. The street has traditionally provided the heavy lifting for service and commuter traffic in the Central City. Today, its transportation role remains as important as ever. However, surrounding neighborhood and commercial growth are beginning to press in on Burnside and its urban context. Burnside is Portland’s 24-hour center, serving residents and businesses by day and a lively entertainment area by night. Together, surrounding development pressure and the 24-hour culture are creating pressure to change Burnside into a exciting and comfortable “people place.”

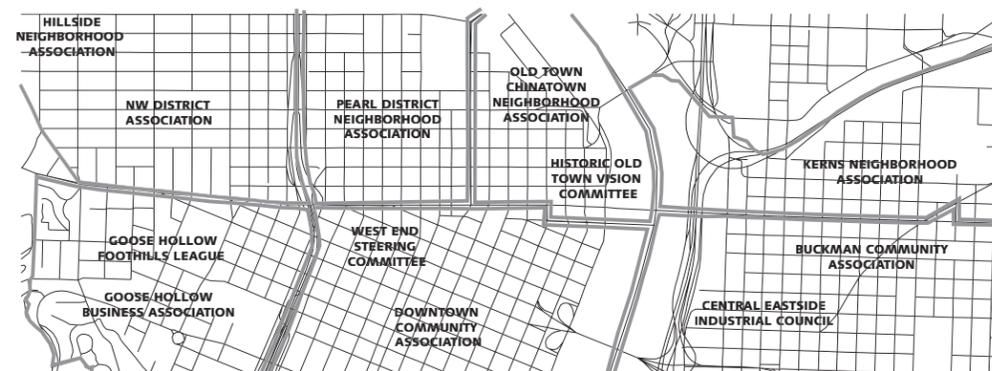
Burnside is Portland’s major east-west route providing a vital link across the Willamette River and access to eight business districts and neighborhoods. In its earlier days, Burnside Street was narrower, had wider sidewalks and carried less traffic. Over the years, Burnside evolved into a major thoroughfare carrying heavy traffic to and from downtown and across the river. Today, Burnside’s traffic volumes and narrow sidewalks make it uncomfortable for pedestrians, difficult to cross, and a barrier between the neighborhoods and limiting access to Central City destinations. The Burnside Transportation and Urban Design Plan is an exciting and far-reaching proposal for one of Portland’s landmark streets.

Much of the street and many of the sidewalks on Burnside are failing or are in poor condition and need reconstruction or repair. Before undertaking major maintenance and construction expenditures, it is time to think about how the street should serve the community in years to come. Additionally, many neighborhood and district plans encompass different portions of Burnside, which contain recommendations for improving community identity, access and circulation and overall livability. The Burnside Transportation and Urban Design planning process provided a forum to bring together interested stakeholders to discuss and participate in crafting a comprehensive long-term vision and implementation strategy for Burnside.

# Project Study Area

The project study area includes Burnside Street from NW 24th Place to NE 14th and Sandy on the east side. It also reaches one half block north of Couch and one block south of Ankeny on both sides of the river.

As the major east-west route through the city, it touches the Northwest, Pearl, and Downtown districts, the Old Town-ChinaTown, Goose Hollow, Kerns and Buckman neighborhoods, the Central Eastside Industrial District, and provides access for residents, employees, and visitors to downtown Portland and the Central East Side.



The study area extends from West 24th Place to East 14th Avenue, one-half block north of Couch and one-half block south of Ankeny. The context of the project includes adjoining neighborhoods and districts.

# Burnside's Context

Burnside is Portland’s geographic and symbolic baseline that delineates the city’s north and south quadrants. Because of Burnside’s size and history, its influence on land values, business vitality, public safety and leisure activities reaches beyond the street itself to adjacent blocks, neighborhoods and districts. Conversely, building development in the Pearl District, Downtown, Lloyd District and Central Eastside Industrial District are influencing changes within Burnside.

# Summary of Plan Recommendations

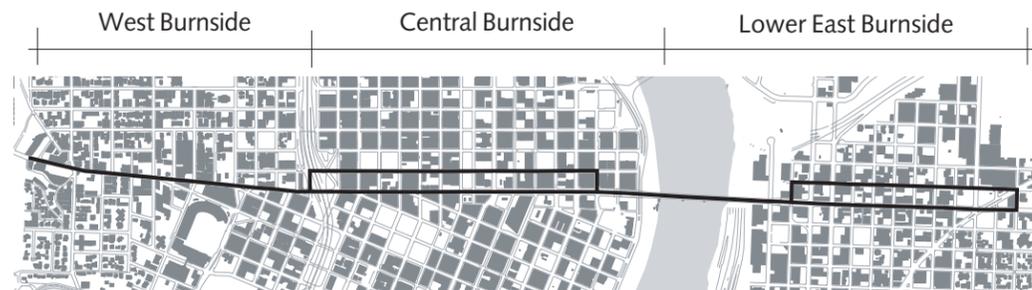
Based on more than two years of work, the Burnside Transportation and Urban Design Plan’s recommendations respond to the diverse needs of the Central City and its surrounding neighborhoods. The plan identifies catalyst development opportunities, functional and aesthetic improvements to the right-of-way, and establishes a blueprint for public and private investment. The plan’s vision integrates Burnside more fully into downtown Portland and creates a street that connects, instead of divides, districts and neighborhoods to the north and south on both sides of the river.

Specifically, the plan features seven catalyst development areas, expansion of the downtown one-way grid to Couch Street from East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue to West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue excluding the Burnside Bridge from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and a series of special urban places. Burnside and Couch become a couplet, which reduces the width of Burnside and balances traffic on both streets.

## Recommendations

### New Opportunities for the Couplet

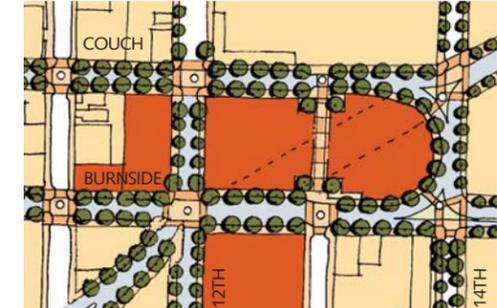
From East 14<sup>th</sup> to West 15<sup>th</sup>, Burnside and Couch would provide easier circulation for pedestrians, bikes and vehicles with shorter pedestrian crossing distances, greater gaps in traffic, full-time on-street parking and free left and right turns. Burnside would serve eastbound traffic while Couch would serve westbound traffic.



Plan diagrams showing the traffic configuration with Burnside providing eastbound travel and Couch providing westbound travel between East 14<sup>th</sup> and West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

### Eastside Transportation Improvements

Reconfigure the 12th/Sandy/Burnside intersection on the east side to simplify transportation for vehicles, transit, pedestrians and bikes. Allow left turns at Martin Luther King, Grand and 7th Avenue, instate fulltime on-street parking on Burnside and Couch from the Burnside Bridge to East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



Concept showing a more connected pedestrian network and simplified traffic intersections.

### “The Link”

Using “leftover” right-of-way on the north side of Burnside would create opportunities to bring social and economic vitality to the Central Burnside area. One concept envisions enhanced pedestrian activities between West 2<sup>nd</sup> and the North Park Blocks by providing areas for special features, cafe tables and restaurant “pop-outs”. Improvements would support redevelopment of bordering vacant or underdeveloped properties. A subsequent design process would determine the ultimate use of the remaining public right-of-way.



One-way eastbound traffic on Burnside would allow opportunities to reuse the “left over” right-of-way on the north side of the existing median.

## Catalyst Development Areas

Stimulate redevelopment opportunities through catalyst projects that benefit from infrastructure improvements. Seven areas were identified where significant multiblock development would help stimulate increased private investment and boost Tax Increment Financing capital.



Concept illustration of the 12th/Sandy/Burnside catalyst development.

## Ankeny Plaza Area

Ankeny provides an important pedestrian and service link between the North Park Blocks and Waterfront Park. The plan proposes transforming Ankeny into a special street with its own identity. Providing an active entertainment street or galleria, Ankeny could stimulate rehabilitation of existing historic buildings, inspire redevelopment and encourage positive uses and activities. This would complement and bolster the established entertainment district within the central Burnside area. In the plan, Ankeny continues to provide its service and parking function.



Ankeny is envisioned in this illustration as curbless with specialty paving, fountains, and active uses primarily for pedestrian use.

## Flanders Bike Boulevard

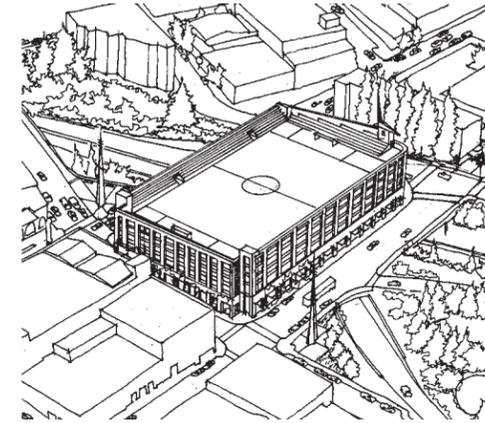
The Flanders Bike Boulevard would provide a continuous bike route from Waterfront Park to Westover in the Northwest District.

## Cap Interstate 405

The reconfiguration of the northbound on-ramp to I-405 creates a large rectangular block between the existing bridges at Burnside and Couch and NW 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenues. The Burnside/Couch couplet enables site access and the optimized block shape would provide an opportunity to develop a gateway project over I-405 eliminating the barrier it creates. This catalyst project would provide incentive for underdeveloped properties to the north and west to redevelop.

## Burnside at 18th and 19th Avenues

The Stadium area contains five blocks where potential redevelopment is possible. This would help humanize the intersection of 18th and 19th at Burnside and enliven the north side of PGE Park. Transit improvements on Morrison would improve bus operations and service.



Concept illustration for a mixed use "green architecture" building with public parking, ground-floor active uses and a playfield on the roof.



Pedestrian crossings and plazas at West 10<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Place would include the existing triangular islands.

## Special Places

Create special places along Burnside, from the waterfront and North Park Blocks using the small triangular islands that exist where the two street grids meet. Expanding the one-way street grid to Couch would create a range of possibilities for enhancing the North Park Blocks and pedestrian connections between the Pearl District and the Midtown Blocks.



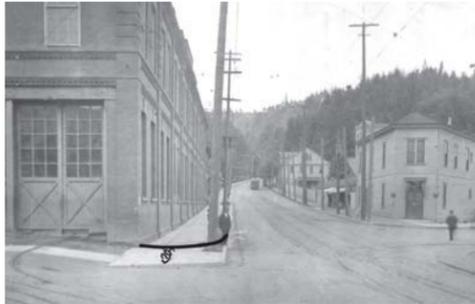
Concept illustration showing active uses, special street design and gateway elements in the North Park Blocks between 8<sup>th</sup>, Park, Ankeny and Couch.

## West Burnside Improvements

Reduce traffic lane width between West 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenues from 11-foot to 10-foot and increase the sidewalk width from 8-foot to 15-foot, allowing room for street trees and additional pedestrian space. Provide additional traffic signals at 20<sup>th</sup> Place and 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

# History of Burnside Street

## Burnside's Early Days



*From its early days, Burnside has been a link between downtown and the west hills.*

Burnside Street in northwest Portland originally was named B Street as part of the “Alphabet District” that was laid out by Captain Couch. B Street extended from the waterfront to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where it joined Washington Street to continue westward. What we call Burnside Street west of 16<sup>th</sup> today was considered an extension of Washington, not B, Street. This combination of B and Washington Streets formed the principal east-west thoroughfare from the river and led to Tuality Road, a rough road winding through present-day Washington Park over the west hills to the Tualatin Plains.

Burnside became notorious in the 1860s for liquor and card rooms that drew the sailors from the Portland waterfront docks at the foot of B, C, and D Streets. The street’s reputation for saloons and sailors made it almost impossible for respectable businesses to be located on Burnside.

By 1892, the street’s name was changed to Burnside, after David W. Burnside, an early Portland merchant. By this time, north Burnside was home to railroad, Union Station or hotel workers who lived in the older, less expensive homes available there. This area also had a more racially diverse population than other parts of the city, and housed a large proportion of Portland’s African-American population at that time. Four churches serving predominantly African-American congregations were established in northwest Portland between 1862 and 1901.

## New Improvements: The Streetcar and the Bridge

In 1903, the Burnside streetcar line opened to link the old Nob Hill neighborhood on the west to the newer Buckman neighborhood to the east. The line was short-lived, closing in 1915, possibly due to the undesirable nature of the street through which it passed. Various other streetcar lines continued to run over most of the same tracks for many more years.



*Cars and streetcars coexisted on Burnside in the early 1900s.*

The Bennett Plan of 1912 proposed to widen Burnside and make it the great east-west axis of the city, dividing the retail district from the wholesale district. The plan also envisioned a “grand cross” at the intersection of Burnside and Union Avenue on the east and with the Park Blocks on the west. On the east side, Bennett also encouraged the city to extend Sandy Road west to meet East Burnside. At that time, Sandy ended at 15th Avenue. In 1927, Sandy was extended to 12th and Burnside, and in 1930 it was further extended to 7th.

In 1919, the *Report on City Planning and Housing Survey* by Charles Cheney recommended a new bridge at Burnside Street to relieve congestion on downtown bridge crossings. Traffic had become a big issue in Portland as the number of cars in Multnomah County increased from 20,000 in 1917 to 79,000 in 1925.

The Burnside Bridge opened in 1926, and, according to one source, worsened auto congestion



*The Burnside Bridge during and immediately after construction.*

downtown because it increased the number of cars that could get across the river. The new bridge included wide walkways, balustrades and ornamental lighting. The center lanes were dedicated to the streetcar lines with an underpass providing passenger access to the stops in the middle.

## Burnside Gets Wider

By 1931, the need for more roadway space led to a street widening project on both East and West Burnside. On the west, Burnside was widened from the bridge approach to the Park Blocks. Building fronts were moved back and rebuilt at the new sidewalk line to add an extra lane. On the east side, the first floor of many buildings became an arcade to accommodate a new sidewalk as the old sidewalk gave way to another traffic lane.



*Widening Burnside on the east side resulted in arcaded buildings.*

Another citywide plan that proposed changes to Burnside was the 1932 Bartholomew Plan, which proposed widening Burnside to 100', with eight-lanes from West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue to East 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The plan also proposed changes to the intersection at Burnside, 12<sup>th</sup> and Sandy on the east side.

Washington Street west of 16<sup>th</sup> became Burnside Street in 1933 when the city standardized street names and numbers. A couple of years later, property owners petitioned to change Burnside's name to Bonneville, but historical organizations protested and the name remained Burnside.

## Growing Auto Congestion

As early as 1935, recommendations were made to remove streetcars from the Burnside Bridge to provide more room for cars. Also during the 1930s, Burnside was home to most of the city's auto dealerships, as most people who could afford to buy cars lived in the nearby neighborhoods of Nob Hill and the West Hills on the west side and Irvington and Dolph Park on the east.



*West Burnside in the 1930s.*

During World War II, little changed on Burnside. But as soon as the war was over and the economy was booming, more people were driving and Burnside and other city streets began carrying heavier traffic loads. Even with the increased traffic, upper Burnside still retained wider sidewalks, ornamental lighting, and on-street parking at least part of the day through the early 1950s.

## New Proposals for Burnside

In the mid-1960s, a couplet on West Burnside and NW Couch was proposed from the bridge to NW 23<sup>rd</sup> to alleviate traffic congestion on Burnside. While the couplet was not built, a vestige of this concept remains in the extra overpass at I-405 and Couch.

On the east side, a proposal called the Fowler Plan recommended a grade-separated intersection at Burnside, 12<sup>th</sup> and Sandy. While this idea was never fulfilled, the issue of traffic congestion at this intersection has been studied several times over the intervening decades.

## Burnside's Future

As the city's population and traffic have increased, Burnside has continued to play an important role in the city's transportation network. To varying degrees, all of the districts and neighborhoods adjoining Burnside have raised issues about Burnside and its role. Plans and redevelopment projects in Old Town/ChinaTown, the West End, Lower East Burnside, the Civic Stadium and Goose Hollow Area, NW 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Pearl District and the Brewery Blocks all impact the uses and needs for Burnside, and paint their own picture about the street's future.



*The intersection of Burnside, Sandy and 12th in the late 1950s.*

# Overview of the Planning Process

## Project Management

The Burnside Transportation and Urban Design Plan was managed by staff in the Project Management Division of the Portland Office of Transportation. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) advised the project team and was comprised of representatives from the Bureaus of Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Office of Transportation, Urban Forestry Commission, Portland Development Commission, TriMet and Oregon Department of Transportation.

## Project Funding

The plan was funded from several sources: the Portland Office of Transportation, the Portland Development Commission, and a federal transportation grant.

## Project Phases

The Burnside Transportation and Urban Design Plan was developed in four phases as shown in the diagram on page 7: Inventory and Analysis, Develop and Evaluate Conceptual Options, Develop Draft Concept Plan and Plan Adoption. The Pre-Planning Phase occurred between January and October 2000.

### Pre-Planning Phase

The pre-planning phase was conducted to reach agreement on the topics to be addressed by the plan and on the process to guide the subsequent planning effort. It was designed to identify issues and needs that had already been articulated for Burnside, to obtain community input on the direction and scope of the planning process, and to develop a scope of work that responded to the range of issues that were raised.

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), representing neighborhoods, business associations, business and property owners, social service agencies, and city and community members impacted by the project study area was formed. Their function was to guide the project team on the process and scope of the planning process. The committee continued to work throughout the four planning phases of the project. The product of the pre-planning phase was a scope of work for this project and a summary report. Both were published in October 2000.

### Inventory and Analysis

The first phase of the planning process focused on inventory and analysis. Existing conditions information was gathered in the project area for transportation, planning, streetscape features and architecture and was analyzed to develop opportunities and constraints for possible plan outcomes. The *Inventory Report* contains information collected in this phase. Also during this phase, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee adopted a set of design principles, to guide the project. The Design Principles follow on page 8.

### Develop and Evaluate Conceptual Options

This second phase included exploring a wide range of approaches to improvements that led to three design alternatives. The alternatives were then analyzed and evaluated for impacts, advantages and disadvantages, consistency with existing adopted plans, and the ability to achieve the design principles. The Stakeholder and Technical Advisory Committees and the community reviewed the alternatives and provided guidance in selecting a preferred alternative. The *Analysis and Alternatives* document contains information gathered during this phase.

### Develop Draft Concept Plan

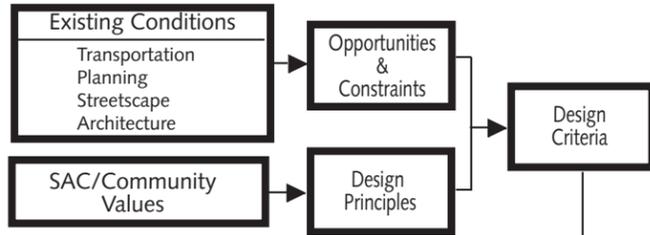
The preferred alternative was refined and the first draft of a concept plan for Burnside was developed. Options were developed to address some of the committee and community concerns about implementing the preferred alternative. These options were evaluated and circulated for community and Stakeholder Advisory Committee review and comment. This process culminated in a final preferred alternative which provided the basis for the draft plan. Implementation strategies, preliminary cost estimates, and phasing recommendations were also developed. A preliminary draft plan was available for review by the Stakeholder and Technical Advisory Committees and interested community members. Comments were incorporated into the plan recommendations.

### Plan Adoption

The Final Draft Plan was submitted to the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and the Portland City Council. The Final Plan was made by revising the Final Draft Plan based on Portland Development Commission and City Council recommendations.

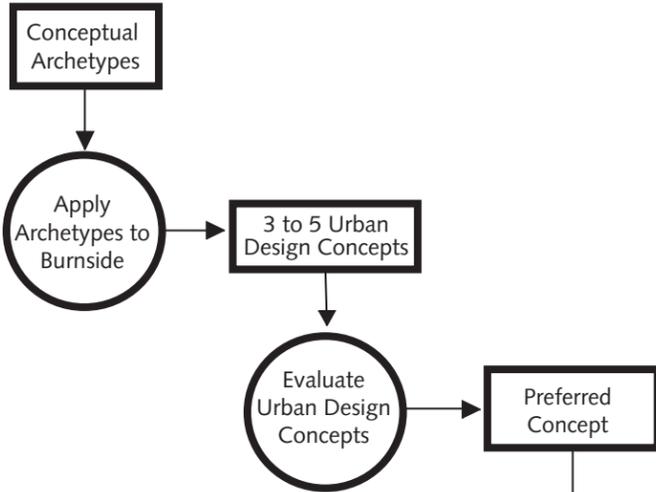
**1 INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

September - December '01



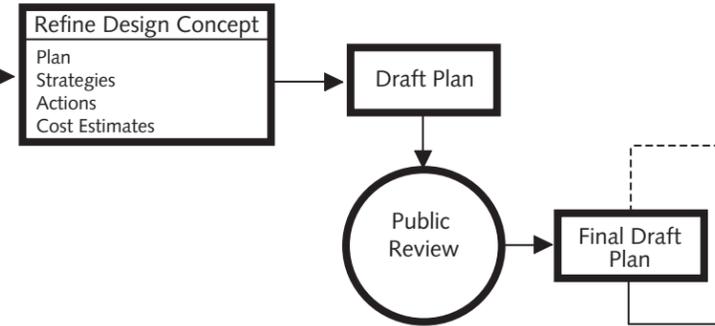
**2 DEVELOP & EVALUATE CONCEPTUAL OPTIONS**

January - April '02



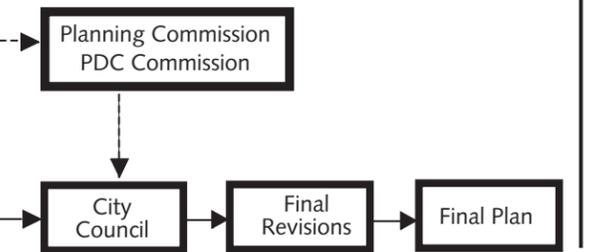
**3 DEVELOP DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN**

April - October '02



**4 PLAN ADOPTION**

October - December '02



**INVOLVEMENT**

**SAC** Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting  
**TAC** Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
**PW** Public Workshop

SAC • SAC • SAC • TAC • PW • SAC  
 Sept. 19 Oct. 3 Nov. 7 Nov. 7 Nov. 13 Dec. 5

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 Apr 10 May 15 Jun 3 Jul 9 Jul 31 Sep 18 Sep 25 Nov 20 Nov 21

# Design Principles

The design principles were developed from exercises and comments at two public workshops (May 2000 and November 2001) and at subsequent Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings held between those workshops. They were reviewed and endorsed by the SAC.

## Goal: Humanize Burnside

*Burnside will be Portland's most diverse and interesting street. Known as a "people place" it will be comfortable yet exciting – a place to walk, congregate, work, live and visit! As a gateway to Portland's most dense neighborhoods, and diverse and interesting districts and activities, there is safe access for pedestrians as well as vehicles.*

## Principles

### Recognize and Enhance Burnside's Diverse Character

- Develop a place that has unifying features or elements that reflect the range of cultural characteristics of adjacent neighborhoods and districts
- Improve Burnside while recognizing it as a street with a diverse mix of architecture, uses and activities – commercial, retail, entertainment/dining, residential, civic and social services
- Take advantage of the unique physical characteristics of Burnside such as the bridge, spaces created by the intersecting street patterns, and the park blocks crossing to increase places of interest, relief and refuge

### Support and Encourage a Mix of Businesses and Uses

- Provide street improvements and features that support new development and redevelopment
- Support mixed-use zoning that provides for a variety of retail, housing and office/commercial uses
- Encourage infill development on existing underutilized parcels and surface parking lots along Burnside
- Support the needs of Burnside businesses by addressing on and off-street parking and pedestrian access opportunities

### Eliminate Burnside as a Barrier

- Enhance Burnside as a "seam" providing safe connections between north and south side neighborhoods and districts, and linking districts, east and west of the river
- Facilitate safe and convenient north-south crossings and connections for all modes – vehicles, transit, pedestrians and bicycles

### Recognize Burnside as a Multi-Modal Transportation Corridor

#### Pedestrian Environment

- Make Burnside a more walkable street by improving pedestrian access and crossings
- Improve and clarify pedestrian safety, convenience, ease of movement, way-finding, and comfort along and across Burnside
- Develop approaches to help protect pedestrians from motorized vehicles

#### Transit Service

- Maintain, and, when feasible, improve transit service in the Burnside corridor (Burnside and parallel streets)
- Improve pedestrian access to, and waiting areas for, transit service

#### Vehicles

- Recognize Burnside as an important carrier of local and regional traffic into, through and out of downtown Portland
- Improve and clarify vehicular access to, from and within districts and neighborhoods along Burnside

#### Bicycles

- Support bicycle travel throughout the Burnside corridor – east-west and north-south

# Summary of Community Outreach

An inclusive public involvement and community outreach process provided a variety of ways for interested persons and organizations to get involved with the project. They provided a variety of ways for people to obtain information and provide input on the project at each phase.

## Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), was comprised of representatives from a variety of community, civic and business groups on and near Burnside, as well as property owners. The committee met monthly to provide input and guidance to the project team on each phase of the planning process. SAC members are listed at the front of this plan document.



*Stakeholder Advisory Committee members review transportation and urban design elements.*

## Community Events

Several public workshops and open houses were held to inform the community about the project and provide an opportunity to hear opinions on the proposed improvements. Events were held in May 2000, November 2001, March 2002 and July 2002. Workshop and Open House formats provided opportunities for participants to get information and ask questions. Interactive techniques were used in the work shops to elicit and develop participant ideas, and solicit comments and suggestions. Questionnaires to collect written feedback from participants were also used at each community event.



*Participants at a public event, May 2000.*

## Community and Business Groups

Members of the project team gave informational presentations to business and community groups throughout the project. The goal was to keep the affected groups informed about the process and to solicit their input during each phase of the project.

## Interviews

Over forty one-on-one interviews were conducted with property owners, business owners, and representatives from churches and social service agencies located in or near the project area to identify issues, concerns and desires for the street that could be incorporated into the plan.

## Project Web Site/Email

A web site was established for the project in September 2001 to provide timely information about the project. It included information on the project's background, the timeline and process, information on project work at each phase, and provided notification of meetings and public workshops. The web site also provided a link to email the project team with questions or ideas. The web site address is [www.burnsideplan.org](http://www.burnsideplan.org).



*Participants commenting on one of the plan alternatives and options, March 2002 public event.*

# Research and Decision Making

## ***Inventory Report***

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- Transportation Conditions Report
- Transportation Figures and Diagrams
- Streetscape Inventory
- Pedestrian Facilities Inventory
- Building Typologies
- Historic Resources
- Architectural Observations
- Overview of Plans and Design Guidelines
- Summary of Existing Zoning
- Summary of Existing Setback Requirements
- Summary of Community Issues and Needs
- Synthesis of Key Stakeholder Interviews
- Summary of Design Priority Exercise
- Existing Conditions Maps and Diagrams

## ***Analysis & Alternatives***

### **Table of Contents**

- Analysis of Burnside
- Opportunities and Constraints
- Street Archetypes
- Design Alternatives
- APPENDIX: Traffic Analysis of Alternatives

## **Inventory of Existing Conditions**

To understand the complex nature of Burnside and all the influences working on it, technical and background research on the existing conditions was conducted. This included an analysis of the physical environment, both in the right-of-way and on private property, the existing planning policies and zoning, and the transportation conditions on the street today. This provided a factual basis for the team to begin its analysis of the opportunities and constraints of the project area. Much of the information collected during the inventory phase is contained the *Burnside Inventory Report*, published in February 2002.

## **Analysis of Existing Conditions**

The existing conditions analysis provided information about Burnside's role and use and was used to craft conceptual approaches and design alternatives. For example, research showed that Burnside is less of a through-route than previously thought, and that central Burnside on the west side is the origin or destination of most vehicle trips on Burnside. The research also confirmed that pedestrian crossing opportunities are limited in Burnside's current configuration. This led to the development of alternatives that would enhance existing crossings and provide additional pedestrian crossings. Interviews with business and property owners showed that the current lack of left turn opportunities for vehicles from Burnside is a detriment to businesses. With regard to land use, the existing zoning allows considerable flexibility in what may be built along the street, which allowed the team to design for a variety of possible future uses.

The complete analysis, contained in the *Analysis & Alternatives* document, provided the basis to develop the design alternatives. These alternatives were presented for consideration to the community, Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and other interested groups and individuals. The design alternatives are outlined in the *Analysis & Alternatives* document.

## **Design Alternatives and Preferred Alternative**

Alternative C, which recommended a Burnside/Couch couplet to reintroduce the traditional downtown one-way grid pattern, was preferred by the majority of people who reviewed the alternatives. However, in response to community and stakeholder group requests, the project team developed several options within the preferred alternatives for review by the community and Stakeholder Advisory Committee. These options included several configurations for the intersection at 12th/Sandy/Burnside along with different treatments for the East 11th and 12th Avenue couplets. Options were also looked at for transitioning the couplet back to Burnside on the west side at 15th, 16th or 19th, and various lane and sidewalk configurations on West Burnside from the transition to 23rd Avenue were considered.

The team conducted additional traffic analysis on the options and presented the options and analysis to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee in June and July 2002 and at an additional community open house in July 2002.

## **Final Plan Recommendation**

Based on the analysis and community input, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee made its final draft plan recommendations in September 2002. The Technical Advisory Committee affirmed the draft plan. Based on the input from both groups, the project team produced the final draft plan recommendations.