

# Downtown Connectivity Study Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary

Tuesday October 1, 2019 1:00 – 4:00 PM  
Richland City's Shops Room 110, 2700 Duportail Street, Richland

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## **Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership (listed alphabetically by organization)**

- 20s Plenty (Laila Krowiak)
- Alliance for a Livable Community (James A. Wise)
- Bell Furniture (Pete Carroll)
- Ben Franklin Transit (Bill Barlow)
- Bike Tri-Cities (Francesca Maier)
- Boost Build (John Crook)
- City of Richland Emergency Services (Police Department, Chris Lee)
- Columbia Basin College (Brian Dexter)
- Economic Development Committee, City of Richland (Brad Bricker)
- Energy Northwest (Mike Paoli)
- ERA Sun River Realty/ Shareldan Property Management (Dan Houston)
- Farmer's Market (Kristin Suter)
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (Karen Blasdel)
- Parkway Business Improvement District (Megan Savely)
- Planning Commission, City of Richland (Kyle Palmer)
- Port of Benton (Roger Wright)
- Red Lion Richland (Zac Carter)
- Sterlings Restaurant (Laura and Jim Sterling)
- Uptown Business Improvement District (Gus Sako)
- Visit Tri-Cities (Michael Novakovich)
- Washington State University (Ray White)

## Project Team

- City of Richland, Public Works (Pete Rogalsky, Julie West, John Deskins)
- J-U-B ENGINEERS (Spencer Montgomery, Ben Hoppe)
- The Langdon Group (Bryant Kuechle, Caroline Mellor, Tia Schleiger)

## Additional Organizations with Members Unable to Attend

- Parks and Recreation Commission, City of Richland
- ADA Committee, City of Richland
- Richland School District
- Kadlec Regional Medical Center
- Tri-Cities Regional Chamber
- US Dept of Energy - Richland Office

## **Project Goals Statement**

The purpose of this Downtown Connectivity Study is to advance the City Council's vision for a pedestrian-friendly waterfront and downtown, while maintaining or enhancing the vehicular travel flow through downtown. The project team will develop, evaluate and prioritize street improvements in the area of George Washington Way between Williams Boulevard and Bradley Boulevard, a one-mile stretch. Street improvements are to include pedestrian, bicycle and other downtown enhancements and amenities. Ultimately the findings and recommendation will be presented to City Council for selection of a preferred approach.

## **Meeting Goal**

To discuss the initial draft alternatives; provide input on the initial alternatives, to brainstorm additional alternatives; to share the values and criteria of the CAC for potential new pedestrian, bicycle and other downtown enhancements.

## **Agenda Items Summary**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Pete Rogalsky, City of Richland, welcomed the group and introduced the goals of the project and the background for the study. Rogalsky shared graphics and data for existing traffic conditions and anticipated growth based on planned land use changes for the region, including projected locations for jobs and housing in the Tri-Cities.
- Rogalsky gave that the goal of the study is to determine potential roadway and traffic configurations that would allow increased options to support an inviting downtown with new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. He highlighted that the Study looks to grapple with the reality of the needs of area commuters and the regional economy while also supporting an activated, safe downtown.
- Bryant Kuechle, The Langdon Group, presented the goals of the meeting, the anticipated schedule for the project and ground rules for the CAC meetings.
- CAC members introduced themselves, represented interest or organization and their initial vision for downtown Richland. Visions included:
  - Neighborhood connectivity
  - Multi-modal/ move people (multi-modal gives equal priority to different means of travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, buses, scooters and cars)
  - Pedestrian enhancements
  - Tourism
  - Safety
  - Support small businesses
  - Live-work-play
  - Draw more people to downtown
  - Parking management
  - Reduce commute time
  - Role of Columbia Basin College

### **Public Involvement Update**

- Caroline Mellor, The Langdon Group, provided an overview of the project’s public involvement Plan (PIP) and of the stakeholder interview summary. A copy of the stakeholder interview summary can be found on the project webpage.
  - Role of the CAC: Forum for representatives to serve as a conduit to their residents, members and employees and provide voice to the varied interests in the community. The CAC is a key participant in the alternative development and evaluation process.
- Stakeholder interviews:
  - Thirty interviews have been conducted, primarily with people in attendance at this meeting. These interviews served to capture an initial perspective on the needs of downtown Richland.
  - Overall, stakeholders expressed clear interest in efforts to create a safe, walkable, inviting downtown, however stakeholders largely noted conflicts with the current use of George Washington Way as a commuter thoroughfare. In the meeting, Mellor encouraged CAC members to hold space to examine and brainstorm options to be able to meet the dual goals of supporting downtown while recognizing current commuter concerns.
- General public involvement opportunities:
  - Business Workshops (Business owners, October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>)
  - Open House (Early December TBD)
  - Survey (December TBD)

#### **Discussion and Brainstorm of Draft Alternatives**

- Spencer Montgomery, JUB Engineers, began the discussion by stating that two initial alternatives were created for discussion and that any ideas for new alternatives were welcome.
  - Draft alternative A: No changes to current road configuration; add pedestrian and bicycle enhancements
  - Draft alternative B: One-way couplet with George Washington Way serving northbound traffic and Jadwin Avenue serving southbound traffic.
  - Draft alternative C: Quiet George Washington Way converting it to a local road to serve the business and residents while directing the majority of traffic to a re-designed Jadwin Avenue.
- The CAC members discussed the initial three draft alternatives and advantages and disadvantages of each. Montgomery highlighted that one advantage of changes to the current roadway configuration is the provision of additional space for new pedestrian and bicycle features. Other discussion items included:
  - Concerns that changes to Jadwin would create environmental justice issues (disproportionate effects on marginalized / low-income populations).
  - Concerns regarding the cost of the Jadwin option.
  - Interest to connect neighborhoods to downtown; concern that the Jadwin option would create a barrier to safe neighborhood access to downtown.
- Kuechle led the CAC members through a robust and participatory discussion of the considerations and ideas for traffic, pedestrian, bicycle and downtown enhancements. CAC member ideas included:
 

*Considerations:*

  - Connect neighborhoods (East to West) to downtown
    - East-West pedestrian and bicycle travel

- Current experience of a parking shortage
- Parking structures
- Safe access to parking (ability to safely walk from a parking area to other businesses along George Washington Way)
- Increased use of residential mixed-use zoning
- Transitions between blocks with different enhancements
- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Effects on businesses
- Effects on the region's carbon footprint

*Ideas:*

- Use of a circulator bus
- Reversible lanes
- Complete Streets / Road Diet (narrow travel lanes for cars and add new pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; 1-lane each way, turn lane and bicycle lanes)
- Allow on street parking during off peak hours
- On street parking as a buffer between cars and bicyclists
- On street paid parallel parking
- Overpass/ underpass – advanced pedestrian crossings
- Partnerships with area employers – increase opportunities and usability or rideshare
- Context-specific design – consider needs of existing uses and populations (homeless, schools, hospitals)
- Enforcement (concerns regarding cars parked in existing bicycle lanes)
- *New draft alternatives for consideration:*
  - After CAC discussion, two new draft alternatives were carried forward for consideration for evaluation at the business workshops and CAC meeting #2. These are:
    - Draft alternative D. Complete Streets/ A Road Diet
    - Draft alternative E. Reversible Lanes

**Criteria for Alternative Evaluation**

- CAC Members discussed potential draft criteria to use to evaluate the alternatives. These criteria will be finalized at CAC meeting #2. These criteria are:
  - Safety
  - Multi-Modal: Move “People”
  - Neighborhood Connectivity (Live/Work/Play)
  - Move Traffic/Reduce Commute Time
  - Cost Ratio (bang-for-your-buck, ROW)
  - Get people downtown: Tourism, Support Small Business, urban environment
  - Parking Management
  - Context Sensitive Design
  - Health
  - Property impacts

**Action Items & Next Steps**

- The project team will compile case studies that represent the example enhancements discussed at the CAC meeting #1 and in the stakeholder interviews. These case studies of changes in other similar cities will be used to further the discussion at meeting #2.

- At CAC Meeting #2 the CAC will narrow the new list of draft alternatives down to four for further evaluation by the project team and for additional input from the CAC and the public.