

Downtown Connectivity Study

Community Advisory Committee

Meeting #2 Summary

Tuesday October 17, 2019 1:00 – 4:00 PM
Richland City's Shops Room 110, 2700 Duportail Street, Richland

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

- 20s Plenty (Laila Krowiak)
- ADA Committee, City of Richland (Steve Sillers)
- Ben Franklin Transit (Bill Barlow)
- Bike Tri-Cities (Francesca Maier)
- Boost Build (Jenna Coddington for John Crook)
- Columbia Basin College (Brian Dexter)
- Economic Development Committee, City of Richland (Brad Bricker)
- Emergency Services, City of Richland (Police Department, Chris Lee)
- Energy Northwest (Mike Paoli)
- Farmer's Market (Kristin Suter)
- Parks and Recreation Commission, City of Richland (Jim Buelt)
- 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 (Jim Sterling)
- Tri-Cities Regional Chamber (Lori Mattson)
- Uptown Business Improvement District (Gus Sako)
- Washington State University (Chris Meiers for Ray White)
- Youth representative (Colin Barry)

Project Team

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

Additional Organizations with Members Unable to Attend

- Richland School District
- Kadlec Regional Medical Center
- US Dept of Energy - Richland Office
- Alliance for a Livable Community
- Bell Furniture
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
- ERA Sun River Realty/ Shareldan Property Management
- Visit Tri-Cities

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 refine the draft roadway alternatives for evaluation; to refine and weight the criteria to evaluate the roadway alternatives; to introduce and discuss potential downtown, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements that could be added to the existing roadway or within the roadway alternatives.

Agenda Items Summary

Welcome and Introductions

- Bryant Kuechle, The Langdon Group, presented the goals of the meeting and provided a public involvement update. He shared that the Business Workshops are in progress and that no additional potential alternatives have been introduced.

Evaluation Criteria Pair Wise Comparison

- CAC Members discussed and refined the criterion definitions to be used to evaluate the alternatives. Each CAC member completed a worksheet to weight the importance of each criteria. The weights were tallied and announced at the end of the meeting. A higher weight indicates a higher importance resulted from the committee’s aggregated weighting exercise. Discussion items included:
 - Pete Rogalsky, City of Richland, clarified that one of the goals of the Study is to address barriers to East-West movement within downtown. Downtown was defined as Williams Blvd at the north to Bradley Blvd at the south and Stevens Drive to the Columbia River, adjacent to the waterfront.
 - Committee members referenced interest in a criterion including potential economic impacts to local businesses from improvements in the walkability and bikability of an area.
 - Parking was clarified to refer to the opportunity to provide on-street parking, as the scope of the Study does not include parking outside of the roadway.
 - Property impacts as a criteria was also discussed and it was decided that impacts during construction were distinct from impacts resulting from property acquisition.

Final criteria and weights

Criteria	Definition	Weight
Safety	Allows for the safe movement of people in all forms (automobiles, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, disability aid) considering conflict points.	10
Improves Appeal	Attracts visitors, new residents and businesses to the downtown and the adjacent waterfront in support of tourism,	8

	small businesses, and residents' experience in the urban environment with natural features (Columbia River).	
Mobility and Connectivity for Alternate Modes	Focus on moving "people" in all forms (bicycle, pedestrian, disabled, transit, etc.), in all directions, in support of the economic vitality, healthy living and healthy environment considering the context of the environment, specifically the ability for residents to safely connect on foot or with disability aid from nearby neighborhoods to the downtown and from downtown to the waterfront.	8
Property Acquisition Impacts	Number of properties fully and/or partially acquired.	5
Cost	Easier to implement considering right-of-way, engineering and construction of roadway changes.	4
Move Traffic/ Reduce Commute Time	Accommodates the efficient movement of north-south automobile traffic through Richland.	4
Parking	Provides opportunity for additional on-street parking and wayfinding signs to existing available parking lots.	3
Construction Impacts	Severity of inconvenienced activities during construction.	3

Note: Those that scored the same were ordered alphabetically in the above table.

Refine Roadway Network Alternatives

- The CAC members discussed the initial roadway alternatives and the alternatives brainstormed at CAC Meeting #1.
 - Initial roadway alternatives are (1) Couplet with one-way George Washington Way northbound and Jadwin Avenue southbound; (2) Jadwin Option, where traffic is diverted to Jadwin Avenue and G Way is local street; (3) No changes to the roadway network.
 - Potential alternatives brainstormed at CAC Meeting #1: (4) Road diet, reduced lanes within the existing roadway with traffic calming measures; (5) reversible lanes.
- Kuechle shared that technical analyses showed that reversible lanes would not be possible on the roadways in this Study. Other CAC discussion items included:
 - The potential use of technology and smart systems to keep traffic moving beyond additional lanes. Project team members shared that this could be considered in the design process as part of any of the alternatives.
 - CAC members shared safety concerns regarding Jadwin Avenue and Gillespie Street if traveling by means other than a car. Project team members stated this issue would be accounted for in the evaluation process using the criteria created by CAC members. Conflict points between different means of travel will be one of the measures for safety.
- The refined four roadway alternatives for evaluation are:
 1. No changes
 2. Couplet
 3. Jadwin Option
 4. Road diet

Enhancements Examples

- Spencer Montgomery, JUB Engineers, presented visual examples of potential downtown, pedestrian and bicyclist enhancements within case studies from other similar cities. The examples were framed to spark initial conversation among CAC members and help those with different backgrounds participate in the discussion.
- Montgomery clarified that each roadway alternative provides a different amount of space, or opportunity within the curb to curb roadway, to implement potential downtown, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements. The approach of this Study is to evaluate the four alternatives and once a draft recommended alternative is selected, add the enhancements recommended by the CAC. The potential enhancements included:
 - Improved pedestrian crossings (flashing crosswalks, wider crosswalks)
 - Bikes lanes with buffer (barriers of landscaping, on-street parking or physical space)
 - Bike lane painted green
 - Pedestrian islands
 - Bulb-outs (curb extensions at an intersection)
 - Additional mid-block crossings
 - Raised speed hump crosswalks (only possible on a quiet G Way within the Jadwin option).
 - Grass strips (buffer between sidewalks and cars)
 - Distinct curb
 - Pedestrian bridge
 - Reduced speed limits
 - On-street parking (parallel and diagonal)
 - Wayfinding (maps and signage showing public parking, bike routes and pathways, bus routes/ stops, restaurants, downtown attractions, etc.)
 - Increased trees
 - Increased shade
 - Increased lighting
 - Sidewalk furniture and street art
 - Sidewalk patios
 - Roundabouts
- Discussion items included:
 - Roundabouts were discussed as potentially dangerous for pedestrian and bicyclists. After discussion between the CAC and the City, roundabout was removed from the list of potential enhancements relevant to this Study.
 - Pedestrian bridges were seen to be potentially useful in the right context; however, members voiced concern that a pedestrian bridge could encourage traffic to drive at a speed unsafe for non-motorized travelers.
 - Committee members expressed interest to more fully understand the path toward implementation of the potential enhancements. Rogalsky clarified that the Study is a Planning level Study that will result in recommendations to City Council. The City will undertake further processes once at a design stage. Rogalsky highlighted the incremental successes of the City in revitalizing downtown to illustrate this process; examples included The Parkway and John Dam Plaza. Committee members concurred that setting a clear vision with community buy-in is an important goal of this Study.

Action Items & Next Steps

- The project team will send out a survey to CAC members to rank the potential downtown, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements discussed at the meeting. The results of this survey will inform the process of selecting the recommended enhancements.
- The project team will technically evaluate the four refined roadway alternatives using the defined evaluation criteria as well as the results of the pair wise weighing exercise. This process will include a traffic analysis using future projections for population, housing and job locations.
- At CAC Meeting #3, the project team will discuss the results of the roadway alternatives evaluation and of the CAC survey with committee members.
- Upcoming public involvement opportunities: A public open house and survey will follow, likely in January. Further details will be discussed with the CAC and announced to the public.