



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

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MEMO

DATE: February 24, 2022

TO: Portland Design Commission

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SUBJECT: West Portland Town Center Character Statement and Plan Work Session

The purpose of this memo packet is to provide a revised draft of the West Portland Town Center (WPTC) Character Statement in response to the proposed amendments discussed at the Design Commission (DC) Work Session on January 27, 2021.

On March 3, 2022, the DC will hold a work session to review, discuss and recommend the revised WPTC Character Statement Draft (Attachment A). Staff will review the changes made in response to the discussion held at the previous session. These have been added to the amendment table (Attachment B) and are highlighted in yellow. Additionally, staff will review feedback received at a presentation made to the AIA/ASLA/APA Urban Design Panel on February 15, as well as two additional amendments proposed in response to this feedback (*See Attachment B*). The Design Commission will then have the opportunity to review the final changes and make a motion to recommend the revised statement.

PSC Schedule Updates

On February 8, 2022, the PSC held a work session to review proposed amendments to the project plan. Two amendments were reviewed during this session:

- *Amendment #2: RM1/RM2 Design Standards.* Proposed Amendment to revise (Option A) or remove (Option B) the proposed Design Standards for RM1 and RM2, zones. PSC moved forward with Option A on this amendment which proposes to modify this section by removing front façade window and exterior finish materials standard, while also adding a reflective roof standard.

- *Amendment #3: Design Overlay Zone Map.* Proposed amendment to remove the Design ‘d’ Overlay from RM zones and retain only on CM zoned sites. This proposed amendment did not receive support will not move forward.

Additional discussions on the remaining amendments are expected at the next work session on March 8, 2022. BPS staff also provided an updated list of technical amendments to the PSC, which includes updates and revisions to the plan’s urban design framework content and layout. For details on these proposed amendments, see Attachment C. Additional discussions on this topic, and additional Amendments to the project plan will be covered at the next PSC Work Session on March 8, 2022.

Summary of AIA Urban Design Panel Presentation

On February 15, 2022, BPS staff presented the WPTC Character Statement Project to the AIA/ASLA/APA Urban Design Panel. At this presentation, staff reviewed the proposed draft and discussed upcoming changes being made. Many of the questions we heard were regarding how the plan was coordinating with ODOT/PBOT and also about the anti-displacement measures/tools being proposed in the larger project plan. These fed into some of the discussion about the character statement and BPS staff has proposed two amendments in response some of the feedback.

Below are some highlights of the discussion on the character statement (items in grey are those that have related amendments):

- Q1. *Are there innovative landscape/streetscape opportunities to include nature as desired by community in the Natural and Scenic Resources section?*
 - A. Yes, there are some unique views and resources near sites North of Barbur that development, particularly along Collins St, could help strengthen access to. Language could be added to indicate this within the Natural and Scenic Resources Section. *(See Amendment 7d, Attachment B)*
- Q2. *Regarding the granularity of access and the struggle with post-war development which can lead to narrow sidewalks and issues with accessibility, is there any language to address accessibility within the center? Could the Green Ring be part of that?*
 - A. Yes, to both questions. We’ve worked to address accessibility both in terms of creating more accessible connections and by providing guidance on how development should respond to topography on sites within the center. Regarding the Green Ring, we’ve begun to add language that directs development to provide both physical and visual access to sites on and off the Green Ring. *(See Amendment 6f, Attachment B)*
- Q3. *Did we consult [ODOT’s Blueprint for Urban Design](#) for guidance on multi-modal design in the creation of the character statement? Was this referenced and was it helpful?*
 - A. Staff did review this document as a reference for how sites along Barbur Blvd should respond to the public realm (setback, sidewalk width, trees, seating), and multi-modal safety (buffering for bikes/pedestrians). We also consulted this document to get advice on how development should address noise/pollution adjacent to these thruways, although there is little on this subject in the document. This information was weighed in balance with community feedback when tailoring guidance in the character sections.
- Q4. *How is the issue of parking addressed within the statement?*



- A. Not directly addressed since this is dealt with by the guidelines, specifically Guideline 7. Since parking was not an issue raised during our outreach with community, we wanted to focus the guidance in the statement on the issues we did hear which relate more to connectivity and buffering sites from traffic noise/congestion.
- *Q5. Did we consider adding Barbur World Foods as a landmark/location that connections should be improved to?*
 - A. We did have Barbur World Foods specifically named in the document, however after discussions with both Commissions this was removed due to concerns about how easily this reference point could change. Instead, guidance focused on advising development to improve connections to and from the crossroads, which would in turn benefit sites within “the crossroads”, including Barbur World Foods.
- *Q6. Was there discussion or consideration on improving connections to schools?*
 - A. Yes, especially from sites that sit south of Barbur Blvd and along Capitol Hwy which acts as a sort of spine for civic institutions like Markham Elementary, the library and Jackson Middle School. There are revisions being made to the language in the Architecture and Urban Design Section to address the need for these connections.
- *Q7. Is there a future character statement for Barbur Blvd as a civic corridor?*
 - A. There is not one planned at this time but if another area plan is proposed along Barbur, with a Design Overlay, then there may be a character statement for Barbur Blvd.
- *Q8. Bike safety in this area is important and needs to be improved. How does the statement address bike connections?*
 - A. The character statement address these in different ways within all three character sections. Within the Community Character section there is guidance to provide space for bikes, including bike parking, in plazas. In the Architecture and Urban Design Character section the guidance around bikes focuses on improving connections for bike/ped between sites, as well as provide specific guidance for the green ring and green scape to help with connecting areas within the district. Finally, the Natural and Scenic Resources section speaks to providing more trees and vegetation along these connections and improving access to the area’s open spaces and natural areas like Woods Memorial Natural Area.

Overall, the comments received were positive and provided helpful feedback for future work. For language detailing the proposed amendments, see Attachment B.

Summary of Revisions

As noted, changes to the document in response to the deliberation at the previous session are listed within the amendments table in Attachment B. Aside from copy-editing changes, other amendments made are summarized below:

- Updated Diagrammatic Map.
 - Incorporated callouts on the outer corners of the Green Ring to serve as reference points.
 - Provided a link within the caption of the diagram, to the more detailed maps within the WPTC Project Plan.



- Corrected the label for 'Green Ring' in Legend. It previously said 'Green Loop'.
- Updated Glossary with definitions for Green Lung, Barbur Transit Center, Taylor's Ferry Promenade and Bi-nodal Center.
- Blurred New Seasons name on photo in the Architecture and Urban Design Section.

Next Steps

At the work session on March 3, this Commission will have a final opportunity to review and discuss amendments to this revised draft character statement and then make a recommendation. As noted, the larger project plan is scheduled to continue on to the PSC for a March 8 work session, with subsequent work sessions and a recommendation expected in late March/April 2022.

See schedule details below:

- **March 3 – 3rd Work Session.** Commissioners to review final draft and make a recommendation.
- **March 8 – PSC Work Session**
- **March/April – PSC Recommendation**

We look forward to discussing this work more with you on March 3rd. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Links:

[Portland Citywide Design Guidelines](#)

West Portland Town Center Plan - Proposed Draft documents – [Vol 1 – Report and Actions, Vol 2 – Code, Policy, and Map Amendments](#)

Attachments:

- A. WPTC Character Statement Revised Draft
- B. Table of Proposed Amendments (Revised)
- C. PSC Amendment Package for Feb. 8 Work Session



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