

West Portland Town Center Plan

June 15, 2019 - Community Walk-Roll Event Summary

Overview

Over 50 community members - and many kids and youth - from many parts of the West Portland area participated in the West Portland Town Center walk/roll tour on a mid-June afternoon. Childcare, interpretation and refreshments were provided, and the sun came through for a warm afternoon.

The purpose of the walk-roll event was to hear from community members about their on-the-ground and day-to-day experience of these places and their ideas for things that would improve conditions and make West Portland TC an inviting, inclusive and vital place going forward.

We heard a wide variety of ideas, suggestions, and concerns. The following is a summary of what we heard as noted by community members on written surveys throughout the walk. Find the event map, survey questions and a transcript of all the survey responses here:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/79327>

The 1.25-mile round trip route started and ended at Markham Elementary and included stops at the following locations:

1. "Crossroads"/Barbur and Capitol
2. Barbur World Foods/Taylor's Ferry and 41st
3. Barbur Transit Center
4. I-5 pedestrian overpass behind transit center
5. Portland Islamic School/Capitol Hwy

Overall Takeaways:

- Area is divided in two. I-5 and Barbur split town center into north and south portions, creating a potential for two "hearts."
- The civic and multi-family/residential areas near mosque/Markham Elementary/park could be part of a "heart" south of I-5.
- Area around and north of Taylor's Ferry, anchored by Barbur World Foods, is a potential "heart" and commercial center north of I-5.



- Roadway conditions are a barrier and need rethinking and improvements, considering ways to deemphasize role of cars in local circulation.
- Many people are scared to walk and bike, especially on Barbur and SW Capitol; and safe, comfortable access is a needed foundation to making this place and town center feel welcoming and functional.
- People want places to gather — commercial AND community oriented.
- Barbur Transit Center has potential for redevelopment in ways that can serve community needs but getting there safely is as important as what goes on there.
- The I-5 pedestrian bridge is a critical link, but some people do not know it exists!

Summary by location

1. *Crossroads/Barbur and Capitol*

Questions: *How does it feel to walk across or near the Crossroads?*

What would make you feel safe to walk?

- Crossing is SCARY, LOUD and intimidating
- Additional roadway treatments and features are needed for time and comfort, especially for pedestrians. Suggested improvements included:
 - Removing left bus turn lane in Barbur (southbound) and replace with island/median
 - Change the light/signal timing so that there is more time to cross, a pedestrian signal that starts before green light and/or a pedestrian signal that is longer than green light
 - Limit or redesign right-hand turns (onto Barbur from Capitol northbound)
 - Create larger and more sheltered spaces at corners - both north and south; consider creating more sidewalk area, fewer sidewalk obstructions, colored paving, signage, physical barriers/bollards, etc.
 - Better signage, protected bike lanes and slower car speeds
 - Eliminate left turn (northbound) access to I-5 from Capitol Hwy or I-5 on ramps altogether

2. *Barbur World Foods/Taylor's Ferry and 41st*

Questions: *What kind of new businesses would you like in addition to Barbur World Foods?*

From here, where do you think the heart of the Town Center is on this side of I-5?

- An assortment of commercial services and community/family-oriented spaces are desired. Ideas included:
 - Movie theatre, hairdresser, cultural shops, bank, breakfast joint, food carts, daycare, ice cream shop, bike shop, print shop
 - Indoor soccer, health club, Boys&Girls Club
 - Performance space, community center/ event space
 - Recycling center, fire station, emergency hub, community health center
- Many noted Barbur World Foods as the anchor to any town center “heart” on this side of I-5. Potential for “heart” here along with Barbur Transit Center site and area north of Taylor’s Ferry. Some found location hard to visualize, lacking need for center or too close to Multnomah Village.

- Vehicular traffic and some streets are a barrier. Some asked about creating carless area here.

3. Barbur Transit Center

Questions: *Could you imagine this space used for another purpose? What would that be? What would make crossing Barbur to the transit center more comfortable or inviting?*

- People want a mix of uses, including businesses and housing, as well as community services and multicultural uses that are supported by transit. Similar uses to those listed above (stop #2) were called out for this location but other things noted include a plaza, more and better bike parking, European train stations as model, bike share, electric vehicle charging, farmer’s market, and cultural spaces.
- There were mixed views on parking and how much of it to have. Many considered structured parking an efficient element for this site.
- Similar pedestrian concerns/connectivity responses as at “Crossroads” (stop #1). Other changes suggested included narrowing Barbur to shorten crossing distance, pedestrian and cyclist waiting areas and covering/capping I-5.

4. I-5 Pedestrian overpass behind transit center

Questions: *What would encourage you to walk to the transit center? What would make using the pedestrian bridge feel safer?*

- Sidewalks on more streets leading to transit center, wider sidewalks, tree lined street/promenade, emergency call box, less steep access paths, car speed enforcement and better lighting would make accessing transit center crossing more comfortable.
- A surprising number of people did not know the I-5 pedestrian overpass existed; need signage to publicize and help with wayfinding.
- Ideas to Improve the bridge itself included: art on the walls created by local youth, more and better lighting, wider walkways, and higher (but transparent) barriers for sound.

5. Portland Islamic School/Capitol Highway

Questions: *How does it feel to walk to the school or library? What would make walking feel safer and more enjoyable? From here, where do you think the heart of the Town Center is on this side of I-5?*

- Walking along SW Capitol noted mostly as acceptable but would be better with more separation from traffic, slower speeds, landscaping and narrower driveways.
- Crossing SW Capitol is not safe. Further crossing improvements are needed particularly at SW Alfred (closest to mosque) such as flashing lights and sidewalk bump-outs to shorten the crossing distance. Vehicles turning onto Capitol from side streets were both a pedestrian and cyclist concern.
- Many noted a residential and civic “heart” near elementary school, the mosque, library and Holly Farm Park.