

To: Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission Technical Committee, Advisory Committee

From: Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects, Manager of the Consultant Team

Subject: Progress report on Arch Bridge/Bolton Town Center

Date: July 7, 2014

Over the past few months since the Storefront Studio in mid-April, the consultant team has been working with City Staff to analyze various aspects involved in developing the town center. We have assessed the market for various uses, examined several catalyst sites for feasibility, compared street and intersection alignments, examined development concepts, and looked at ideas for parks and public open spaces. This memo summarizes our findings as well as our concepts for creating a town center. We would appreciate your thoughts on a number of key issues.

Findings:

1. An assessment of the market revealed the following:
 - There is a strong demand for urban residential uses: apartments, condominiums, and row houses, including a need for affordable units.
 - There is a need for a full-service hotel with meeting facilities.
 - There is a strong demand for restaurants and personal services.
 - There is not much demand for other retail.
 - There is a modest demand for office space, with shared services and spaces.
2. An assessment of transportation revealed the following regarding the area south of I-205:
 - Although the idea of a roundabout in the town center was initially appealing, it would potentially back up traffic during peak hours. Moreover, a roundabout would need to accommodate semi-trucks. This would require an immense footprint that would consume land area otherwise available for development and public spaces.
 - A more conventional urban intersection would fit with a town center better than a roundabout and accommodate pedestrian and bicycles more easily.
 - The presence of the gas station right in the exact center impedes the ability to create a conventional intersection as well as a walkable main street, lined with shops and housing.

3. An assessment of the physical setting revealed the following:

- Assuming building heights in the range of 3 to 6 stories, the area south of I-205 could accommodate the following:
 - 250 – 350 housing units (approximately 300,000 sf)
 - 15,000 -20,000 sf of restaurants, services, and other retail
 - 25,000 – 30,000 sf of office space
 - 80-100 room hotel
- With acquisition of the gas station, Willamette Drive could be extended into the Mail, property and become a 3-4 block long “Main Street.”
- Parcels along Willamette Falls Drive and Territorial could accommodate row houses with extraordinary views.

4. An assessment of potential public spaces revealed the following opportunities:

- Creating unique and dramatic park beneath the I-205 bridge, including a trail connection into and through the town center.
- Repurposing Broadway into a terraced linear park.
- Developing a one-of-a-kind, stepped, hill climb cascading down from West A Street, through the town center and down to the fishing pier.

5. An assessment of three catalyst sites revealed the following:

- In order to create a town center with appropriate densities requires that buildings have structured parking.
- Structured parking is very costly and hampers the financial feasibility of development at the present time.
- Some incentives will be necessary to make structured parking work, especially in the initial years of development.
- Development of the City’s parcel at Willamette and Broadway could serve as a demonstration of new development types.

Town Center Concept

Area North of I-205: Modest Changes

1. Encourage soft infill development.
2. Enhance streetscape on Willamette Drive.
3. Adopt new mixed use zoning to allow greater variety of uses.

Area South of I-205: Major Changes

1. Develop a new park under the freeway bridge, with trail connections.
2. Adopt new, mixed use zoning to allow greater heights, densities and variety of uses.
3. Re-align street and intersections to transform Willamette Drive into a “Main Street.”
4. Convert Broadway to a public space with landscaped terraces.
5. Encourage street level shops, services and restaurants, with housing in floors above.
6. Attract a hotel with meeting facilities to a prominent site in the town center.
7. Create a series of unique terraced plazas with overlooks and space for markets and events.

Issues for Consideration:

Key role of gas station parcel / potential acquisition

Appropriate building heights south of I-205

Role of the City in reducing the cost of structured parking