Goose Hollow Urban Design Study

The Urban Projects Workshop
University of Oregon - Portland
Urban Architecture Program
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The Urban Projects Workshop
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Introduction

This monograph summarizes observations and urban design recommendations for the Goose Hollow neighborhood of Portland’s Central City West Side. The work was completed by a team of graduate students from the Urban Projects Workshop of the University of Oregon Portland Urban Architecture Program. The recommendations and suggestions are intended to inform the neighborhood and Central City 2035 Plan which is currently underway.

We appreciate the opportunity to have met with staff members of the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Vision Realization Committee of the Goose Hollow Foothills League during the process of our study. We incorporated feedback and suggestions after presenting our preliminary work.

Goose Hollow is not one neighborhood. It is a quilt of several distinct smaller districts, each with their own identity, opportunities, problems and urban design issues. At the present time, the area suffers from fragmentation caused by streets and traffic, separations of land use and poor pedestrian connections.

On the positive side, Goose Hollow’s natural amenities, location in the city and excellent public transit give the neighborhood potential to become a more unified and linked district if walking opportunities are improved, new pedestrian linkages are developed and new sensitive infill development can fill in the “gaps”. A rich mix of nearby shopping and entertainment opportunities are close-by in Northwest Portland and some points along West Burnside. Recreational opportunities in Washington Park are nearly limitless. Short trips to Downtown Portland on public transit are quick. However, it’s often difficult to get from one place to another on foot or bike.

Over the years, the City has been negligent in addressing the neighborhood’s needs. The West Burnside corridor and Jefferson-Columbia couplet have given fast traffic movement priority over people movement. Pedestrian safety for high school students and residents has been neglected. Older commercial strip development on Burnside has remained, separating Goose Hollow from Northwest Portland. City-owned Jeld-Wen field is a fenced fortress inaccessible on all but a few game days. There is a need for a neighborhood recreational park and a public gathering place such as a village green or square.

The study recommendations are divided into three districts:

- The West Burnside Corridor
- The Stadium District (at the northeast corner of the neighborhood)
- “The Jefferson-Columbia Corridor, which we now call the "Jefferson-Columbia Greenway".

The text that follows departs from conventional urban planning jargon. Recommendations are presented as if it is now the year 2035, the target year of the Central City 2035 Plan.

The recommendations and illustrations are not complete. Urban plans are never finished or fixed. They are always in motion as time and circumstances change conditions. Design details and additional drawings may be added during the coming year.

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West Burnside Street
West Burnside Street: 2035

The West Burnside corridor is an important gateway into Downtown Portland from Goose Hollow and the West Hills. One of the city's longest and best-known streets, Burnside extends eastward from Downtown to the Willamette River and beyond to East Portland and Gresham.

West Burnside Street continues to play an important role as a transportation corridor to the city. In recent years, new infill development, a streetcar and pedestrian improvements have made Burnside a more human-friendly link between SW Vista / NW 23rd Avenue and Downtown.

Street and Transit Improvements
The Portland streetcar has been added to West Burnside, extending from Grand Avenue on the east side to NW 21st Avenue on the west side.

East of the Burnside and SW 19th Avenue/SW Alder Street intersection, West Burnside has been narrowed to three lanes, sidewalks widened and a planting strip with street trees added. New and re-programmed street signals at 20th and 22nd Avenues slow thru traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

Portland Firefighters Park, named David Campbell Memorial and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, has been enlarged by closing the street on its east edge and consolidating the park and adjacent buildings. Tables and seating of adjacent restaurants on the east edge have been added to make it an active "pedestrian pocket".

By reconfiguring the intersection of Burnside at SW Morrison Street, a new "pedestrian pocket" has been added with trees and other amenities.

The West Burnside bridge over Interstate 405 has been remodeled and widened with "saddlebags" added to each side to accommodate pedestrian and bike movement. The imaginative design provides a colorful entrance to Goose Hollow and Northwest Portland from Downtown.

Bikeway Improvements
Given the difficulty of biking on West Burnside Street, improved east-west bikeways have been developed along NW Everett and NW Glisan Streets, and along SW Alder and SW Morrison Streets. SW 18th Avenue has been developed as an improved bicycle link between West Burnside and SW Jefferson Street, connecting with the new Lincoln High School and Jefferson – Columbia Greenway to the south.

New Mixed-use Infill Development
New mixed-use buildings have replaced the one storey former drive-in facilities and surface parking lots along West Burnside, creating a continuous high quality pedestrian experience from SW Vista/NW 23rd Avenue to the I-405 freeway bridge. A diversity of commercial and residential activities create a vibrant, livable street. The City's initial investment in the streetscape improvements and streetcar extension stimulated development to fill in this long-neglected stretch of the street. New buildings are set back from the street with pedestrian amenities in front of the buildings, making up for the difficulty of widening sidewalks in some areas where the street width had to be retained.

As a multi-modal corridor, the addition of the streetcar serving West Burnside encourages the use of alternative forms of transportation and reduces congestion. This improves accessibility to the area and promotes public health and safety. Bike corridors have been improved through increased connections across West Burnside.
3D Drawing. West Burnside Street between I-405 and Washington Park. New development is shown in red.
West Burnside Street - Existing Conditions
West Burnside Street - Proposed Infill Development
West Burnside Street
Street Section Looking West, West of SW 18th Ave & SW Alder Street
West Burnside Street
Street Section Looking West, East of SW 18th Ave & SW Alder Street
West Burnside Street - Typical Infill Development

The following renderings exhibit potential new development along West Burnside Street. A project like this would appropriately address the street and help to create an atmosphere that is active both night and day.
Stadium District
The Stadium District is a lively mixed-use high-density neighborhood bounded by the I-405 Freeway on the east, West Burnside Street on the north, SW 20th Avenue on the west and SW Salmon Street on the south. The District has two important sports and athletic venues with Jeld-Wen Field and the Multnomah Athletic Club.

Streetscape and pedestrian improvements, as well as new infill development on West Burnside Street have dramatically changed the image and access to the Stadium District, providing an attractive "front door" to its many amenities. The district enjoys one of the best central locations in the city as well as excellent transit access with its two MAX stations. The Portland Streetcar has been extended to West Burnside Street, improving the link to Downtown and the Willamette River.

New Mixed-Use Infill Development
Developers finally realized the virtues of this district with its permitted generous densities and building heights. Several former surface parking lots have been built upon with new 12 to 18 story residential buildings that include ground floor retail and restaurant-entertainment activities. The most outstanding developments are located on the former Oregonian sites which served as development catalysts for the "new" District.

SW 16th Avenue: A New North-South Axis
A new north-south axis has been developed on SW 16th Avenue. The extra width of this street has been used to create a tree-lined pedestrian and bike-oriented linkage from West Burnside Street on the north to West Jefferson Street on the south, connecting Burnside and Northwest Portland all the way to the new Lincoln High School and the Jefferson-Columbia Greenway to the south. SW 16th Avenue has been designated as a "green street" which emphasizes slow movement of cars, pedestrian character with widened sidewalks, bike lanes and lush landscaping. New restaurants and bars on the ground floors of the new mixed use buildings spill out into the sidewalks to create a lively street atmosphere at all times. During game and event days at Jeld-Wen field, the street is closed to autos in order to provide priority to pedestrians.

Nearby, Yamhill Street has also been revitalized with new restaurants and bars at the base of new residential buildings.

The re-designed and enlarged Portland Firefighters Park / David Campbell Memorial facing Burnside provides a highly-visible pedestrian space at the "entrance" to the District. Additional small plazas incorporated into the new developments provide privately-managed pedestrian spaces activated by the adjacent restaurants, bars and retail shops.

Jeld-Wen Field
The edges of Jeld-Wen Field have been dramatically improved by removing some of the fencing barriers that faced the street and opening the Timbers retail store directly to the street. Small pop-up retail, food stands and food carts have been added to activate the ground floor edges of the stadium and plazas.
Stadium District
Existing Conditions

Additional Proposed Density Increases

- MAX Line
- Sports / Food
- Entertainment / Retail

Under-Utilized
Parking or Vacant
Additional Proposed Density Increases
Existing Structure
MAX Line
Stadium District
Proposed Development
These images illustrate the maximum allowable heights in The Stadium District as permitted by existing zoning. We used them as a tool to inform decisions in our proposal about the future of the district. Building to the maximum appears imposing and unrelated to the context based on this visualization.
PROPOSAL GOALS

Our proposal accounts for medium density at the activated street edges on 16th avenue and Yamhill in order to respect the human scale and create a comfortable density. Development opportunities off of the main streets should be taller to accommodate a greater density close to the Urban Center and to provide space for growth inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

1. Increase density and activity in the Stadium District.
2. Allow for a mix of uses to encourage a live-work-play environment with mixed income housing, office spaces, and retail.
3. Develop 16th avenue as a two-way retail/commercial strip.
4. Make sports and activity the focus of Yamhill street between Jeld-Wen field and 14th street.
5. Use green streets, parks and public spaces to revitalize the neighborhood.
16th Avenue Section (Looking North)
1. Change street side parking from diagonal to parallel
2. Create a green street to improve pedestrian experience
3. Reduce traffic speeds by creating 2-way street
4. Widen sidewalks and add bike lanes
Jefferson - Columbia Greenway
Jefferson-Columbia Greenway: 2035

The Jefferson-Columbia Greenway, Lincoln High School and Mayor Vera Katz Freeway Park
The center of Goose Hollow been revitalized with a community park linking Goose Hollow, Downtown and Portland State University. Jefferson Street has been transformed into a lively pedestrian-oriented avenue of new mixed-use buildings with retail shops and restaurants. A new Lincoln High School building fronts SW 18th Avenue. The Jefferson-Columbia Greenway forms a major "green street" urban habitat corridor from Washington Park to the Willamette River.

Lincoln High School
Lincoln High School, an historic 9th thru 12th grade distinguished school that serves Goose Hollow and the Foothills has been re-built as an award-winning urban school fronting SW 18th Avenue. The new school, Zion Lutheran Church andMultnomah Athletic Club form a strong compatible trio of urban destinations. The new building faces the center of Goose Hollow, enlivening SW 18th Avenue with students and visitors to neighboring shops and restaurants. A new program of cooperation between Lincoln and the Portland State School of Education has strengthened university-level resources for the high school and created internship and lab opportunities for PSU students.

The Mayor Vera Katz Freeway Park
Following examples in Seattle, Phoenix, San Diego and Dallas, a freeway cap has been built over the I-405 between Salmon and Jefferson Streets, strengthening the connection of Goose Hollow to Portland State University. The idea for the freeway cap, first advanced by Mayor Vera Katz, creates an opportunity to provide a long-awaited community park. The new park provides a rich array of recreational and amenities similar to Wallace Park in Northwest Portland. West of the Park, Lincoln High School’s relocated track and athletic field offers additional recreation for community and PSU use during summers, weekends and evenings.

With traffic slowed and pedestrian improvements in place, a 1 ½-block-wide area between Jefferson and Columbia Streets has been designated as a “Greenway” extending from Washington Park to the Willamette River. Buildings and their yard spaces are located within this space of dense tree and shrub planting, bio-swales and urban habitat. Pedestrians and visitors are drawn to the area’s uniqueness created by the forest-like environment that coexists with human habitation.

The re-designed pedestrian and bike-oriented 16th Avenue forms a direct connection between Lincoln High School and West Burnside Street.

Jefferson-Columbia Greenway
Park Precedents

Collins Village Green
Removal of the Jefferson/Columbia couplet and Collins (traffic) Circle provided an opportunity to create a “village green” as a new pedestrian and gathering hub of Goose Hollow. The new green connects with the adjacent residential building to the east, and First United Methodist Church to the south. A transparent pavilion cafe, similar to Elephants at Director Park, is sited on the green and adds activity at all hours. This public space jewel symbolizes the new Goose Hollow and its humane pedestrian character.
Jefferson-Columbia Greenway
Jefferson Street Looking West

SW 17TH AVE.
SW JEFFERSON ST.
SW COLUMBIA ST.