

SUMMARY

Downtown Yakima Master Plan Meetings & Public Workshop #1 May 9-10 2013

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Summary

The first of three Downtown Yakima Master Plan committee and stakeholders meetings and public workshop were held on May 9th and 10th, 2013. During that period, the consultants presided over a total of 7 one-on-one hour-long meetings with a Technical Advisory Committee, a Steering Committee, and stakeholder groups at the City Building located at 129 North 2nd Street.

The Public Workshop #1 was held on May 9th from 6:30-8:00pm at the Howard Johnson Plaza Ballroom and was attended by approximately 150 community members.

Meetings and Workshop Purpose

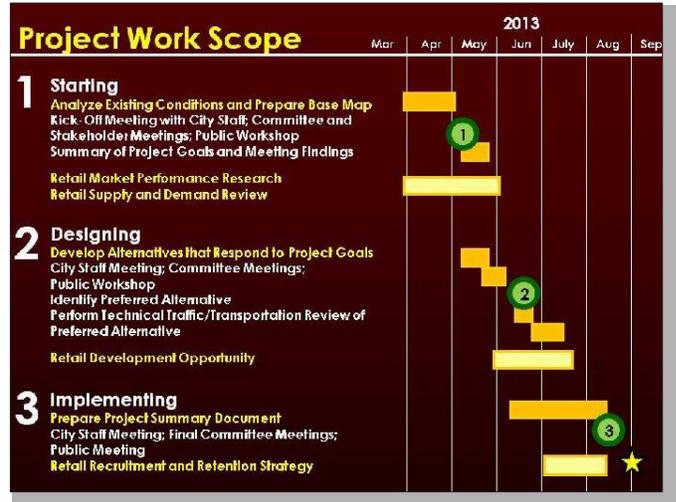
The purpose of the meetings and workshop was to:

- Inform the committees, stakeholders, and citizens about the planning process
- Obtain thoughts on key issues that need to be addressed
- Answer questions

Each meeting began with the consultants presentation of the project process and schedule (shown above right) and analysis of the opportunities and challenges of the study area. Following the presentation, attendees discussed the issues and concerns. The workshop portion concluded with table reports from each group summarizing the discussion. Written response sheets (shown below right) were provided to all with the purpose of documenting the top issues and concerns as well as the areas presenting special design opportunities.

The following pages include:

- Draft Project Goals
- Response Sheet Summary- Top Three Issues and Concerns
- Special Design Opportunities and Areas of Concern
- Presented Opportunities and Concerns



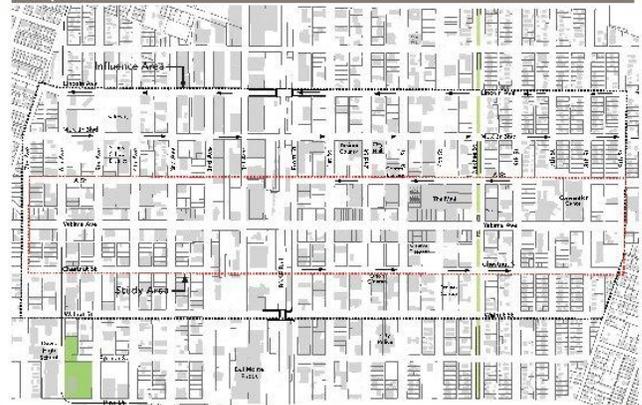
Project Process & Schedule

Response Sheet

Downtown Yakima Master Plan Meetings & Public Workshop #1 May 2013

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Study Area



Opportunities and Constraints

On the map above, please note areas you believe:

- Present special design opportunities
- Present design constraints

Issues and Concerns

List your top three issues and concerns:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Additional Comments

Please note additional comments on the back of this sheet.

Name (optional): _____

If you need additional time to respond, please email your comments through:

MAIL: 520 SW Yamhill, Roof Suite 4, Portland, OR 97204 EMAIL: jgroff@co-city.com FAX: 503-417-7904

Response Sheet

Draft Project Goals

A summary of the response sheets' top three issues and concerns form the basis for the project goals.

In all, 112 response sheets were collected from the public workshop, and seven stakeholder meetings. From the responses, fifteen project goals were identified, as indicated below.

These combined goals will guide the planning and development of the Master Plan concepts throughout the planning process.

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Response Sheet Summary - Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

The comments below are a summary of the issues, concerns, and downtown opportunities mentioned in the response sheets collected from the committee and stakeholder meetings and Public Workshop #1. Comments are grouped under the over-arching project goal

Make Downtown a Hotspot for Restaurants, Shopping & Entertainment

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Create a destination area with restaurants and fun things to do in Yakima
- Vitality of downtown including N 1st Street
- Retail! Retail! Retail!
- Increase retail and restaurants 4
- We need an anchor retailer
- Lack of things to do downtown except during events
- Capitalize on Medical school students
- We lack culinary options and decent restaurants 2
- There is a lack of shopping opportunities
- We don't have the critical mass today
- Not enough activities for conference goers
- No people-watching area (plaza, shops, cocktails, light foods)
- There is no downtown grocery

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- A cooperative market in the old mall
- More retail and restaurants 11
- Make the Front-Historic District pop-out- make it a must see destination and bring it to life. Tell the history of the district 3
- A permanent farmers market 4
- Need more foot traffic business (like Olive Garden)
- T.O.D as related to retail development
- Bring in Chilis or TGIFridays
- Galleries, breweries and winetastings
- Continuous shop frontage loops and corridors: our current retail has too many gaps! 5
- Shops that stay open later
- A bookstore

Encourage Downtown Investment

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Present owner of Umpqua Bank is destroying Track 29
- Large empty buildings
- Absentee owners 2
- We need more infrastructure improvements
- Underutilized storefronts
- Lack of downtown businesses
- More businesses around the hotels along Yakima Ave
- Investment changes the perception of downtown
- We need the political will to affect change 3
- Redevelop parking lots
- Get the Old Mall repositioned
- Move the jail 2

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Chronic empty buildings and storefronts 5
- Economic development entities need to work together 2
- Old Yakima Mall is biggest problem and opportunity 14
- Lack of density- too many parking lots and ground-floor only use of buildings
- Short sighted & greedy owners/bad design/poor use 2
- Lack of support from investors
- Absentee landowners & development constraints 5
- Joe M needs to step up even if it requires concession from the city
- Parking lots 4
- Lack of political will 2

Response Sheet Summary - Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

Enhance the Downtown Pedestrian Experience

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Sidewalk 'scapes' need to be more green downtown
- We need shade!
- Pedestrian accessibility
- North 1st St is a big traffic impediment!
- There has been a lot of discussion of east Yakima Ave-- but the businesses people walk to are along east Yakima Ave

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Too much parking downtown we want green space
- Green things up
- Focus on peds
- Seems difficult to create a continuous pedestrian experience
- Close A St to auto traffic during business hours-- open after 10 pm to resupply businesses
- Walkable streets and sidewalks 13
- Promote green transportation walking, trolley & bike lanes
- Urban forest/water for welcoming atmosphere/draw dog friendly
- More shade on streets 6

Create a Central Gathering Space

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- We need a public space 4
- Love the idea of a 'game changer' public area-- like a park with water feature
- A plaza with built in infrastructure to serve events
- Love the idea of a plaza and the yellow brick road concept drawing people to retail
- Regarding a plaza talk to Rod Knipper
- Place the plaza where the two banks are today on Yakima Ave between 2nd and 3rd
- Lack of a gathering space encourages street closures for events which hurts downtown businesses

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Public place to hang out and people watch 2
- Public gathering- need place for fresh hop ale fest, concerts etc...

- Focus on open space 4
- A town square and meeting space--Depot or Front Ave plaza
- Green area for gathering
- Limited outdoor gathering space
- Street closures for events hurt businesses 2
- Game changer plaza 11
- Make downtown parking a plaza and move parking out 3
- Where is our 'living room'?
- Maybe an amphitheater
- Save track 29 for where you put the farmer's market/ late night concerts
- Millennium plaza is underused and icky

Embrace the Cultural Diversity & Heritage of Yakima

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Marketing Yakima to the world 3
- Community capacity building!
- A downtown arts center
- A way to unite Latino and Anglo
- Diversify- a mercado site to showcase Mexico
- Find niches like agriculture, wine and local produce
- Arts groups need to be located downtown
- Museums need to be downtown
- We need a cultural center
- Performing arts needs to develop an arts triangle linking together downtown venues
- An arts center in the depot
- The arts giving circle has sites for downtown public art

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Remember the Latinos (4)
- Emphasize fresh produce and fruit-healthy living
- Lack of input from Hispanic community and the surrounding neighborhood
- Cultural diversity- cater to all communities (6)
- Connect ideas to strength of local agriculture (3)
- Market Yakima both as local & regional
- We need public art downtown
- Lack a cohesive arts center
- Latino Arts and Culture Center 6

Response Sheet Summary - Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

Improve Downtown Safety

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Safety 6
- Reduce vagrancy & public intoxication
- Eliminate businesses that cause issues
- The safety issue is perception. I feel safe 2
- The perception of downtown as unsafe hurts downtown
- The city is starting bike patrols downtown
- Neighborhoods around downtown used to be stable now they are slums

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Graffiti 2
- Create a graffiti wall
- Perception of safety 5
- Not safe 5
- Homeless and vagrants 3
- Use of alleys as toilets 2
- Provide services for those in need
- Adjacent neighborhood- improve area around the downtown 3

Establish Development Guidelines and Standards

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Design standards 3
- Signage codes and code enforcement
- Current zoning and standards restricts the vision for redevelopment

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Design standards 8
- Lack of common building design standards
- Drive thru culture still exerting influence
- No McDonalds downtown/ no drive-through 4
- Disruptive architecture styles
- Lack of consistent zoning 3

Make Yakima Avenue a Destination and Gateway

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Slow down traffic along Yakima Avenue
- Ability for transit Bus's having access through downtown
- Convention visitors have to deal with negative aspects of Yakima Ave when getting into downtown
- I don't see diverting traffic off Yakima Ave is an option
- Can the 1-82 interchange affect traffic along Yakima Ave?

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Revert downtown traffic to another street so that core could be more focused
- A light at 9th St and Yakima Ave
- More park-like at the entrance of Yakima Ave/ freeway
- Slow down traffic
- Put Yakima Ave on a road diet 14
- Reduce traffic

Create Bike Friendly Streets

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- No comments

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Bike paths to greenway and rest of city needs to be developed
- Bikeability- I like the idea of connecting to the greenway
- Focus on bike accessibility 9
- Bike lanes 5
- Connect to greenway and river 4

Response Sheet Summary - Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

Cultivate Local Retail & Business Development

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- There is no place for Track 29 businesses to move to
- Maintain uniqueness- no homogenization
- Ensure the edge areas around Walnut, Chestnut and A support employment centers, incubators etc..
- Utilize old parking garage on Chestnut for shops

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Lack of variety of local owned restaurants- under saturated market
- Affordable rent for new and start-up businesses 5
- More diversity in types of businesses 4

Ensure Adequate and Convenient Parking

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Parking 4
- Opportunities for growth in business development
- Convenient parking
- Mall garage could be taken over by the city 2
- There is a lot being done such as the 4-hr parking zones
- The lot at 2nd and A street should become a structure
- The Mall structure is not grandma friendly
- The mall has 1,400 spaces

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Establish a parking policy that encourages housing downtown similar to Seattle neighborhood permits
- Parking-not enough 3
- Convenient parking and access 2
- Parking? Been proven, Yakimans prefer free parking

Increase Downtown Housing Options

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Housing!
- We need to look at housing on upper floors of buildings--possible federal programs to help finance
- Maybe looking at blighted areas for creating a neighborhood

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- More housing 7
- Promote downtown living in upper stories of buildings 3
- Too much low income downtown
- We need a grocery to support housing 6
- Lack of quality medium and high end housing
- Lack of good quality reasonably priced housing
- Loft living: needs lifestyle (secure park, BBQ, landscaping)

Locate a Downtown Trolley Route

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Possibility of a historic trolley going through town linked to Depot
- A great tool for downtown- bring it back to Front Street
- Could be an icon for Yakima
- Yakima Ave used to have a double set of tracks
- The Cascade Mill had a line that ran down 8th street to the Mill

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Trolleys downtown (A St, Front, to Convention Center 2
- Make accommodations for trolleys to go from A St to the Info Center
- Trolley is key! Bring it back 4
- How soon could trolley be expanded?

Response Sheet Summary - Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

Preserve & Enhance Historic Buildings

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

- Find a way to use the Wilson building- it is central to everything else and a logical place for a downtown arts center
- Focus on historic buildings and renovation

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- Save Track 29 (5)
- Trolley system
- Heart of City historically the train depot- build on historic district & Larson building 2
- Building preservation and Track 29
- Save historic buildings 2
- We need a program to preserve vintage bill boards painted on buildings
- Train station...an unused classic 3
- Depot building needs to be city owned and maintained
- The Colonel should be saved

Create a Family Friendly Downtown

1. Steering, Technical and Stakeholder Meetings Issues & Concerns

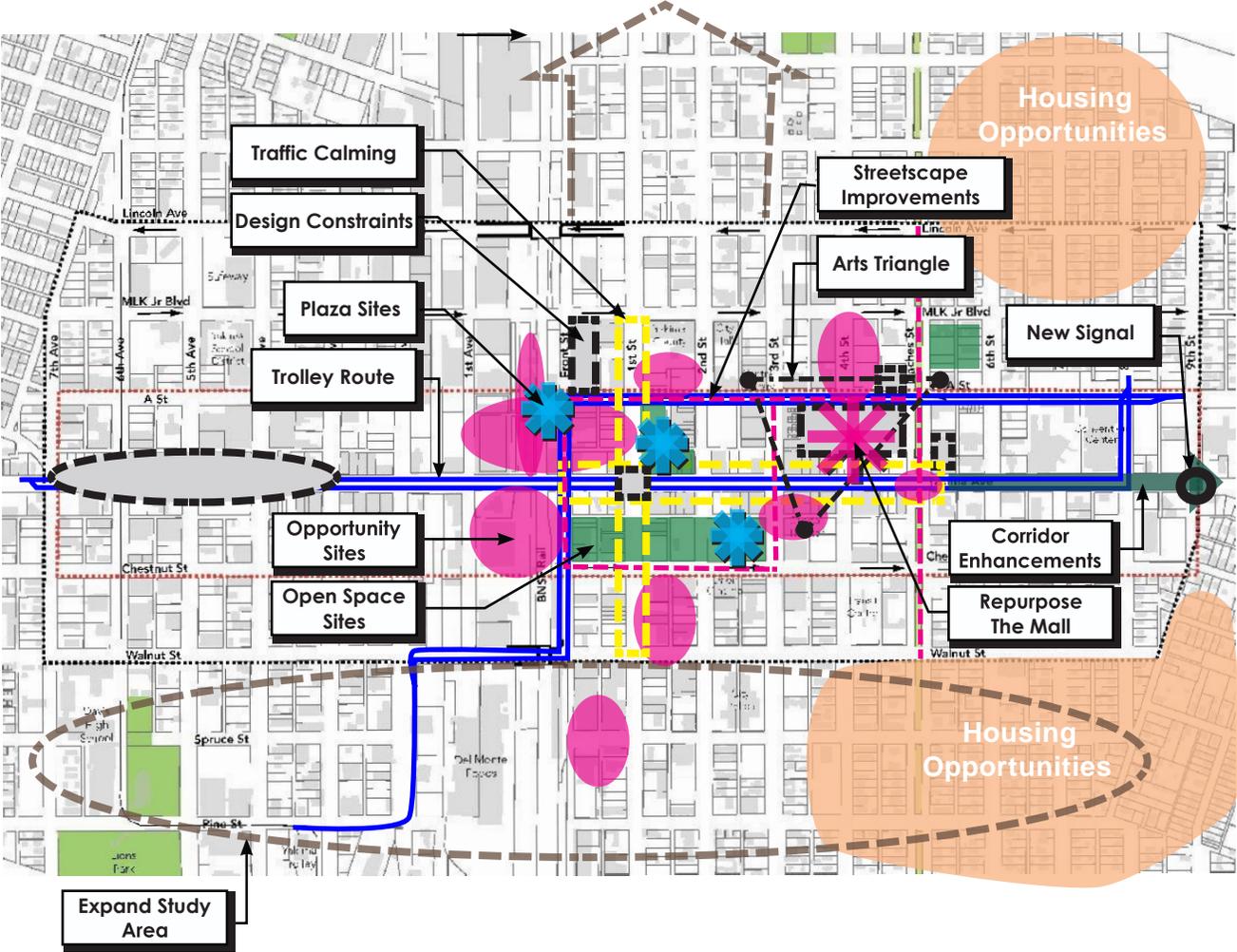
- We need family things to do!
- Need something for children when traveling with parents
- The trolley is family friendly
- Attracting families hasn't happened

2. Public Meeting Issues and Concerns

- More family oriented entertainment venues & activities as well as shopping 3
- Activities/sports/climbing 2

Special Design Opportunities and Areas of Concern

Comments regarding special design opportunities and areas of concern identified on the response sheets and table maps are graphically illustrated and summarized on the diagram below.



Special Design Opportunities and Areas of Concern

Repurpose the Mall

This property was identified as a serious concern and a symbol of downtown disinvestment but remains a key redevelopment parcel to support downtown revitalization. Ideas for repurposing the Mall included:

- A Mercado
- An Arts/ Cultural Center
- Bring back anchor retail tenants
- City should acquire parking structure and make available for public parking
- Open the Mall along 4th Street
- An indoor farmer's Market
- Include a retail and small business incubator

Plaza Sites

A couple of sites were identified for locating a public plaza with several responses preferring the existing parking lot west of 3rd Street opposite the Capitol Theater. Sites included:

- Within the Old Depot Building and along Front Street
- North of Yakima Avenue along North 2nd Street
- Within the existing City parking lot between 2nd and 3rd Streets and north of Chestnut Avenue

Open Space Sites

Opportunities for creating downtown open space was identified at the following locations:

- South of Yakima Avenue between N. 3rd Street and Front Street as an organizing public gathering space oriented to the Capitol Theater, and Orion Cinemas
- North of the Seasons event space as a focus for arts and entertainment uses north of The Mall

Arts Triangle

The Arts Triangle was identified as a concept for integrating Yakima's art and public institutions including the The Seasons, The Capitol Theater, and the Library, through streetscape improvements--possibly an arts loop

Traffic Calming

Yakima Avenue and 1st Street were identified as streets with traffic needing traffic calming measures.

New Signal

A new signal at Yakima Ave and 9th Street was suggested to create a safe crossing

Streetscape Improvements

Key downtown streets were identified as having opportunities for creating a more walkable downtown, enhancing the shopping experience and greater utilization of the Naches "Boulevard". Suggested street improvements were identified for:

- A Street from the Front Avenue Historic District to Naches Avenue
- Naches Avenue was identified as an underutilized downtown amenity
- A downtown loop along Front Avenue, A Street, 3rd Street and Chestnut Street

Corridor Enhancements

Visual enhancements and redevelopment along the east end of Yakima Avenue, anchored by the Convention Center and hotels, was identified as an area needing to improve the visitor experience

Opportunity Sites

Multiple sites were identified as opportunities for redevelopment. Development suggestions included:

- An emerging do it Yourself (DIY) movement is taking shape in Downtown. Yakima Space Maker is looking at a potential site along Spruce Street
- Track 29 and the Front St Historic District
- South of Chestnut between 1st and 2nd Streets
- 2nd St and Yakima Avenue
- A Street between 1st and 2nd
- 4th Street north of The Mall

Design Constraints

Design constraints included elements that negatively influence the perception of downtown and significant impact the pedestrian environment and include:

- The Mall
- The County Jail
- 1st Avenue and Yakima Avenue
- The YMCA

Expand Study Area

Limits of the study area were mentioned and recommendations for expanding the study area include:

- 1st St North
- Extend into the residential neighborhood to the south

Trolley Route

Potential trolley routes were identified along Yakima Avenue and A Street