

North Bethany Concept Plan
Design Workshop, Open house #2 Report
5/30/07

Introduction

Washington County hosted the second North Bethany Concept Plan public event on May 19, 2007. Approximately 80 people attended the design workshop held at Portland Community College, Rock Creek. The purpose of the Workshop was to:

- Provide information about project background, purpose and timeline; finance; affordable housing program; mixed-use and housing program; transportation analysis; and parks program.
- Share refined land use concepts and gather input about preferences.
- Gather input about design concepts and what participants like or don't like about each concept.

Materials from the design workshop and an online comment form were also made available on the project website from May 21, 2007 through June 4, 2007. Forty-eight people completed the comment form either in paper or online (The survey will remain open until June 4, at which time we will have a complete count of participation and a finalization of results).

The workshop was one step in the comprehensive public involvement program for the North Bethany Concept Plan. To date, the process has included eight monthly meetings with an advisory committee comprised of community representatives including residents, business owners, and developers charged with providing on-going input and advice to the Project Team and ultimately to the Board of Commissioners. A website was developed for the project and was made available to the public in September, 2006. The first open house for the project was held on January 9, 2007 at Portland Community College Rock Creek; 250 people attended that event. The open house was advertised with a project kick-off postcard mailed to 1,400 addresses and an email sent to another 150 addresses. The Oregonian published a story about the first open house on January 8, 2007. Open House materials and an online comment form were also available on the project web site from January 9 through January 19, 2007. In total, 122 people completed the comment form either on paper or online. To date, thirteen small coffee discussions and community group briefings have been held to share project information and invite input from various community groups and organizations. An additional ten stakeholder interviews were held to gather input on the process and a school outreach process was initiated including an art contest for area children.

Notification for the May Design workshop included the production of a project newsletter that was mailed to 153 organizations in the Greater Bethany area, including homeowners associations, churches, West Union Merchants, Bethany Village merchants, Local School District Representatives, Beaverton School District Principals and to Interested Parties who asked for notification. An electronic version of the newsletter was e-mailed to and additional 372 individuals on the project's Interested Parties list. Notice of the meeting was published in the Cedar Mill News May 2007, the Skyline Ridge Runner May 2007, the CPO #7 May 2007 newsletter and the Washington County Updates May 2007. The Design Workshop was discussed in a cover story of the Oregonian Washington County Weekly on May 17, 2007, and it was also featured in a Hillsboro Argus article on April 27, 2007. An announcement of the workshop was placed in the calendar section of the Oregonian on May 10, 2007. Forty posters advertising the meeting were distributed to Bethany Village and West Union area merchants.

Open house format and purpose

The workshop began with 30 minutes of “walk around” time for participants to look at display boards and talk with staff. A 30-minute presentation included the following background information: overview of the Concept Plan process, imagery of a Community of Distinction, how the land use and transportation concepts were developed, and specific issues for discussion in the small group process. Then participants broke into eight small groups to work through a series of discussion questions with a volunteer facilitator. Each table was facilitated by either a member of the project team, Washington County Planning staff, or a member of the Technical Advisory Committee or Stakeholder Work Group. Discussion focused on the following topics:

- Community Park and mixed use centers
- Streets, bikes and trails
- Complete neighborhoods
- Visioning

This report provides a summary of the input gathered through the comment form and from table discussions. A complete list of responses to comment form questions is attached. Please note that the comment form was voluntary and not all attendees completed it; information from the comment form provides only an indication of community concerns and preferences. Discussion notes are a summary of the discussion recorded at each table and of concepts displayed on the project maps provided to each group.

Comment form responses

[*Note: The online survey is available for use until June 4, 2007. This is a preliminary summary*]

Participant profile

Of those participants who completed the comment form, 75 percent do not live or own property in the North Bethany study area and more than 50 percent reported living in the existing Bethany community. In addition:

- Fourteen percent live in rural Washington County.
- Eleven percent live in Cedar Mill.
- Less than five percent live in rural Multnomah County north or east of the study area or Beaverton.

Almost 60 percent of participants were longtime residents who reported living in their current homes for ten or more years. Almost twenty percent reported living in their current homes for five to nine years or one to four years. Participants heard about the open house through *the Oregonian* (48%), neighborhood or CPO newsletters (39%), Washington County newsletter (24%), Washington County email (13%) or an email from a group or individual (15%).

Mixed use center and community park

Of those who completed the comment form, more than half (23 respondents) said that Option B: West Kaiser Community Park best fit their idea of a community of distinction. Thirty-six percent (16 respondents) selected Option A: East Kaiser Community Park and 11 percent (5 respondents) responded with Option C: East Boundary Community Park.

Many respondents noted that Option A placed the park near the center of the community. Those who did not like Option A noted that the mixed use center and community park area could be congested and not offer enough parking, or that Kaiser Road would be a barrier between neighborhoods and the park.

Many respondents liked Option B because the park is centrally located and located close to trails and the commercial center. Respondents who did not like this park location noted that it was too close to the power lines.

Those who liked Option C tended to say that it would be quieter than the more centrally located parks and offer more parking. Those who did not like Option C noted its relatively remote location from many neighborhoods which would require people to drive to the park.

General comments included concerns about how parks would be paid for as well as concerns about the viability of the commercial center.

Streets, trails and bikes

More than 97 percent of respondents said that the trail system shown definitely or somewhat fit their idea of a trail system in a community of distinction. Of those who suggested trails to add, comments included:

- Add more trails to link to existing system in Bethany.
- Serve mixed-use center and schools with trails.
- Add more trails to link to existing trail system beyond Bethany.

Of those who provided comments on the road system within the study area, many people said it was generally fine. Some concerns raised include:

- Pedestrian crossings of “big” roads.
- Kaiser Road (crossings, proximity to school, division in commercial center and alignment).
- Adequate north-south connectivity.
- Relationship to areas of Multnomah County.

Comments provided about the road system outside the study area included:

- Concerns about conditions on Springville Road and requests to “fix” Springville Road before development occurs.
- Requests for additional transit service in the study area.
- Concerns about congestion on Bethany Boulevard.
- Concerns about access to US 26.

Complete neighborhoods

More than 90 percent of respondents said that walkable places (about a 5 minute walk from center to edge) with parks trails and a mix of housing types was an appropriate mix of features for a complete neighborhood. More than 80 percent of respondents said that a complete neighborhood should include a small mixed-use node.

Other things identified for inclusion in complete neighborhoods included:

- Civic spaces like post office or library.
- Parks for passive recreation.

- Adequate schools including middle and high schools.
- Day care center.
- Parks for children to play at.

Other comments about topics not discussed

Several respondents noted the following:

- An interest in providing affordable housing in North Bethany.
- A need for planning for middle and high schools and general school finance questions.
- Interest in avoiding stormwater and sewer facilities near Abbey Creek.

Table Discussions

As was mentioned earlier, about 80 people participated in small group discussions around pre-established questions that mirrored those in the comment form. Notes were taken by facilitators and recorders at each table. Most groups also recorded ideas on maps that were provided at each table. Those results are summarized here.

Community Park and Mixed Use Center Options

Facilitators were instructed to ask their participants the following questions:

1. What do you like and not like about each of these options?
2. How do each of these ideas work to create a vibrant small mixed use center?
3. Do you like the idea of the mixed-use center and the park being located together?

Most groups pointed to a centralized location of the community park as a strength of Options A and B. Many specifically noted the separation or isolation of the park in Option C and a weakness of that choice. A few groups specifically noted approval of having a community park near commercial uses. Even more mentioned that some kind of community gathering place is important in this type of mixed-use center. Of the nine groups, three specifically chose Option B as their preferred option, one chose A, one chose C, one liked a mix of A and C the other three didn't specifically state a preference, but expressed more support for Options A or B. Several groups expressed concern about siting ball fields so that they do not conflict with residential uses.

Positives Aspects of each Option

Option A

- Provides a nice interface between the park and the businesses
- Adjacent to commercial area
- Allows for best integration of south neighborhoods
- More walkable
- Better for weather
- Like housing next to park
- Like views

Option B

- Like focus on natural areas; trail network

- Park is near the middle of the community. Central location. Close to the center.
- More linear layout seems to elongate the central experience in a positive way.
- Like some separation between park and center area – conflict of uses.
- Closer to residential areas for easy access and use.
- Farther from major roads and traffic
- Like park near forested tracts. More options because of proximity to wetlands/forest.
- Concern about a community park near a school – attracts bad elements?
- Like that park is along a regional trail (under power lines).
- Having a smaller park/town-square type area off Kaiser Street provides a nice place for community gatherings.
- The park is the “reason” to go to the commercial area and congregate.
- Like the amphitheater.
- Good use of space near power lines.

Option C

- Community park adjacent to greenway
- Large parks should be located away from large population areas due to noise, etc.
- Links the community to regional trail systems
- Provides buffer between natural areas and agricultural land to the developed areas of N. Bethany.
- Like connection to urban center to park.
- Like views
- Better for placement of THPRD parks

Negative Aspects of each Option

Option A

- Where do people park? Many will drive.
- Lack of connection
- Proximity of community parks and center seems congested.
- Kaiser Road might not be safe to cross and could create a barrier between park and commercial area. Not kid-friendly.

Option B

- Could “feel” bigger
- Do not like parks next to power lines.
- Too much park can take away from shopping.
- Will fields point to neighborhoods – adults can hit baseballs toward houses!
- Ball fields must have parking.
- Some people wouldn’t like the power lines in the park.

Option C

- Park is not centrally located for all neighborhoods. Separated from commercial center. Too far away. Not convenient. Not useful. Less accommodating for the area as a whole.
- Concern about terrain – too steep?
- Potential abuse/misuse
- Far from PCC campus

- Edge park is less convenient
- Seems far removed from the heart of the community—not easily accessible.
- Doesn't provide the same balance of park facilities for the entire community.
- Ball fields should be closer to neighborhoods.

General Improvements and Suggestions:

- Expand park to connect to wetland area on Option B
- Provide a mix of park uses at the community park for organized sports and other uses like picnics and relaxing.
- Think about locating ball fields responsibly.
- Think about separating park uses.
- Move school #2 to the center (too isolated by roads and streams).
- Make community park smaller (e.g. neighborhood park) in relation to commercial area.
- Parks will also be created by schools and THPRD.
- One group suggested moving the East Kaiser park to an area near the northern boundary of the project area between the two waterways west of Kaiser Road (Abby drainage?).
- Should be pedestrian and kid friendly (places for kids to play) and have access to green space.
- Parks with trees.
- Make the park perimeter road in Option A one-way.
- Facilities for bikes

Streets, Bikes and Trails

Participants were asked the following questions by their group facilitators to initiate discussion:

- What do you think about this draft trail network? Are there ones to delete or add?
- The street framework shows the main “through” roads (collector/arterial). What comments do you have on this network?
- To connect existing Bethany with the new neighborhoods, crossing Springville Road for bikes and pedestrians and cars is important. Are there particular locations where you'd like to see these crossings and associated safety improvements occur?

Most groups specifically stated their support for the trail system, particularly their approval of the “loop” systems shown in the plans. Almost every group talked about the importance of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment and giving future residents, particularly children, ways to travel without riding in a car. Half of the groups specifically noted the importance of establishing connections to PCC through paths and parkland. Groups talked about the importance of having multi-modal trails with different surfaces to accommodate various modes of travel on the paths. A few specifically mentioned the strength of the trail system that it provided a connection to wildlife. One group warned about this as a potential danger to sensitive habitats. Two groups said they liked that the pathways accessed major roads; one group said that trails should be separated from roads.

As stated earlier, creating a pedestrian-friendly community was a major theme of the small group discussions. Most suggestions about roads had to do with making them pedestrian friendly. A few groups expressed concern about what was envisioned for Kaiser Road. They didn't want to see it

become a barrier to access for the commercial area. One group suggested lowering the road and providing a pedestrian-only connection over it. Another specifically mentioned concern about traffic on Kaiser. They suggested bike lanes. Three groups talked about trees on this street to create a boulevard. One group discussed the use of couplets around the mixed-use area. They mentioned positive and negative impacts to their use (more of a “downtown” feel, confusing if you don’t know the area, good for bicycling, can be nice with a park in between).

Another group specifically identified the intersection of Kaiser and Road “A” as an area where an effective transition would be important to get from the northwest to the southeast corner of the community. Germantown road was mentioned twice as an area of congestion—one group specifically asked that it not be identified as a major road—it is too busy already. Another pointed out its significance as a bike route. The intersection of Roads “A” and “B” was identified by two groups as an area of concern because they didn’t want to see Road “B” becoming a through street for traffic. Other groups talked about the importance of pedestrian and bike connections, one expressed fear about creating throughways for non-local traffic on neighborhood streets. Another group specifically said they like road connections. One group suggested a separate entrance for PCC, maybe for buses only. Another said that Road “E” was not needed and the intersection with Springville Road would be very dangerous).

Important Crossings of Springville Road

Participants identified several specific crossings that they considered very important.

- West Side Trail
- Waterhouse Trail
- Road “F”
- Road “E” (blind spot)
- Kaiser Road (particularly near Bethany Presbyterian Church)
- Unnamed trail between Roads “E” and “F”.

Most groups discussed passages either over or under Springville Road to provide a safe passage for pedestrians. Other ideas mentioned included demand signals and pedestrian medians.

Complete Neighborhoods

Groups were directed to choose one of the neighborhoods on the map and answer the following questions:

- Where do you think parks should be located? What should their function be?
- Do you think this neighborhood should have the flexibility to have a small mixed-use node? This is different than the mixed-use center or small mixed use center in that it is probably a single street corner in the neighborhood with one or two shops. If so, where should it be located?
- Are there other things that you want to show for this neighborhood?

Nearly every group talked about the desirability of pocket parks. A few added ideas about community gardens. Many groups placed small pocket parks (a few included a community garden or a coffee shop inside) around the community.

Not every group discussed retail, but those who did were generally supportive of the contributions that small retails uses could add to a neighborhood environment. They did want to know that the

market would support such uses, however. Groups that didn't mention retail, talked about civic uses, schools, churches, daycare or community gathering spots in general. One group specifically mentioned an interest in a community center.

Visioning Question

In this last line of questions, participants were asked to imagine themselves back in 20 years when North Bethany is a built and thriving community. What do they see that they like? How does North Bethany integrate with surrounding neighborhoods?

The overarching theme of these visions was a pedestrian and bike-friendly neighborhood. The second most popular answer was an area connected to the region with well-used and efficient mass transit. One group envisioned a streetcar. Groups mentioned civic uses and community gathering spaces and events and entertainment for the community. One group focused on the mixed-use center saying they wanted to see an area like downtown Lake Oswego with a central focal point, parking inside or underground and people coming and going all the time. They envisioned nice restaurants and nice architecture. Schools, parks and retail areas were also discussed by some groups.