Bringing the Train Back to the Station:
Design Excellence in Oregon’s 4th Largest City

October 20, 2010

Mike Abbaté, ASLA, LEED™
Director, Urban Design & Planning
Gresham 2010

- Oregon’s 4th largest city
- Population 100,000+
- Home to:
  - 32 Private Industrial Corporations, including Boeing, American Honda, Solexant
  - Award-winning Civic Neighborhood
  - Mt. Hood Community College
  - Center for Advanced Learning
Gresham 2010

- Natural Settings
  - 1,111 acres of Parks & Natural Areas including 8 Forested Buttes, Johnson Creek and Fairview Creek
  - Habitat Conservation Area
  - Kelly Creek Plan
  - Tree City USA
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• Sustainable
  - 7th Green Power community in Oregon
  - Waste Water Treatment Plant
  - Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement
  - Infrastructure Practices
  - Great Businesses Program
  - Green Development Code
  - Urban Forestry Management Plan
Gresham 2010

• Recent Growth
  - Beranger Condos
  - Central Point
  - Crossings
  - New MAX stations

Beranger Condos

Civic Drive MAX Station
Gresham 2010

- Potential
  - Historic Downtown
  - Rockwood
  - Pleasant Valley Plan
  - Springwater Plan

Main Avenue / Downtown
Design Issue

• Factors
  – “No there, there”
  – No landmark buildings
  – Recent development quantitative not qualitative
Design Issue

• Factors
  - Few projects designed by qualified Architects
  - Lack of City and Code flexibility to permit great design
Design Issues

• Community Awareness
  - Downtown/Civic Neighborhood Architectural Review Committee
  - Mayor’s Institute visit
  - Public demand
  - Recognition of development impediments
Design Priorities: Internal

- Renamed the Department
  - Urban Design & Planning

- Developed Departmental Goal focused on Design Excellence in the built environment

- Hired staff with Architectural and Design background
Design Priorities: External

- Engage Citizens
  - City Council
  - Planning Commission
  - Advisory Committees
  - Neighborhood Associations
Design Priorities

• Establish Design Commission
  – Advising subcommittee to City Council
  – Approval body for development applications
  – Contribute to the development of various Design Standards
Design Priorities

• Design Commission
  - 7 members
  - 1 Planning Commission liaison
  - 1 City Council liaison
  - Current Make-up:
    • 2 Architects, 1 Landscape Architect, 1 Urban Designer, 2 Developers, 1 Business Owner
Design Priorities

- Two Track Design Process
  - Prevent poor design
  - Provide design flexibility and encourage innovation
  - Track 1: Clear and Objective track
  - Track 2: Discretionary track
Design Priorities

• **Visual Preference Survey**
  Transitions – Street to Building

  - 50.0% Like + 15% Strongly Like
  - 3.68 Average Rating (out of 5)

  - 5.7% Like + .9 Strongly Like
  - 1.85 Average Rating
Design Values

- Design Excellence
Design Values

- Innovation and Creativity
Design Values

• Sense of Place
Design Values

• Site Design
  – Implement sustainability measures
Design Values

- Site Design
  - Integrate community safety into design principles
Design Values

• Site Design
  – Foster a pedestrian friendly environment
Design Values

• Building Design
  - Encourage architectural design excellence
Design Values

- Building Design
  - Highest quality materials
Design Process – Downtown

- Code Organization

Introduction ‘How to use’

Design Principles

Downtown District Characteristics
- Use Standards – Height, FAR, Density, Setbacks
- Bonus Elements

Street Type Design Standards
- 8 Street Types

Guidelines & Standards
- All Downtown
- Sub-District Specific
Design Process – Downtown

• Principles

1. Provide a **vibrant mix** of uses/housing types
2. Promote **excellence in design & architectural expression**
3. Create a unique & exciting **public realm**
4. Create strong **connections** between sub-districts & plan districts
5. Incorporate **sustainability**
6. Provide **context** sensitivity
7. Preserve & enhance **historic character**
8. Create appropriate **height, bulk & scale transitions**
9. Increase transportation **accessibility** (all modes)
Design Process – Downtown

Site Design
- Integrated Site Planning
- Publicly Accessible Open Space
- Walkways
- Parking Lot
- Landscaping

Building Design
- Massing
- Façade Composition
- Ground-Level Details
- Sign Design
- Transparency
- Prominent Entrances
- Roof Lines
- Corner Features
- Gateways
- Blank Walls
- Materials
Design Process – Downtown

- Two-Track Review Process
  - Discretionary
  - Encourage Creativity

Public spaces shall incorporate features that advance sustainable principles...
Public spaces shall incorporate the following:

... One element with sustainability attributes (rain garden, solar powered lights or equipment, pervious paving, container for recycling, or benches made with recycled materials).
Design Future

A well-design built environment that encourages investment and attracts new people to live and work in Gresham.
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Director, Urban Design & Planning  
mike.abbate@greshamoregon.gov

All documents available at:  
greshamoregon.gov/udp
Design Values

• Site Design
  - Provide a network of functional, attractive open spaces