

## MEMORANDUM

To: Technical Advisory Committee,  
Project Advisory Committee

Topic: Tech Memo 4: Land Use and Community  
Designs

Date: 10/25/2016

From: Ken Pirie

Project: Hood River Westside Area Concept Plan

Project #: P3298

Distribution:

Attachments:

Precedent Imagery

## Tech Memo 4: Land Use and Community Designs

### Introduction

This memo provides information and imagery showing smart growth implementation, using precedents from communities of similar scale and geography as Hood River. A description of smart growth as it already exists in the Hood River area is also included.

### Smart Growth Implementation: Tailored to the Westside Area

On October 5, the project Committees reviewed information about “smart growth”. The following describes how smart growth planning could be tailored to, and implemented in, the Westside Area. The project’s draft Guiding Principles are cited below in **bold** text, followed by descriptions of concepts for the Westside Area.<sup>1</sup>

**a. Create livable neighborhoods that make good use of the Westside’s limited land supply.**

In order to use land efficiently and protect natural features and valuable agricultural land, new neighborhoods should be planned and built as compact, connected neighborhoods. This form of growth also promotes safety, livability, and opportunities for social connections between neighbors.

**b. Create well-planned and commercially successfully mixed use districts in the Westside gateway area**

New districts should also incorporate a mix of land uses, including commercial, civic and residential uses. These uses can be concentrated in key nodes along busier streets, or dispersed in appropriate locations easily accessible, including by foot or bicycle, from nearby residents. Their site designs should strive to locate parking at the rear or side of structures.

<sup>1</sup> Please see memorandum titled “Vision, Guiding Principles and Evaluation Criteria”, October 26, 2016, by Angelo Planning Group for additional information.

**c. Create a plan that works for all ages and abilities of the community.**

The district should accommodate housing types for many different potential residents, including a range of ages, cultures and family composition, to encourage diversity and allow residents to ‘age in place’ and remain in a cherished neighborhood. This should also apply to mobility, creating safe streets for children and accessible streets for the elderly and impaired populations in particular.

**d. Provide a range of densities and housing types, increasing affordable housing choices in Hood River.**

A variety of housing types should be provided in order to: create housing options for a wide range of incomes, ages and families; support housing affordability in Hood River; embrace inclusiveness and diversity; and add interest to the built form of the Westside Area. These types include:

- large and standard-sized lots
- small lot single family housing
- cottages
- attached single family housing
- apartments

The concept of **Missing Middle Housing** refers to a range of housing types that are not widely provided by developers in the current market but which could provide a level of density that is context sensitive, responsive to changing demographics, and more affordable than standard single family lots. Some of these middle density housing types include live-work housing, duplexes, triplexes, and small-scale apartments in courtyard arrangements, all of which can be well-integrated with single family neighborhoods.

The variety of housing types should ideally (but not strictly) be arranged in a ‘transect’ of density, with lower density types located at the outer, rural or natural edge of the planning area, and highest densities located closer to urban services and transportation networks.

**e. Incorporate natural features and promote a sense of place.**

The development of the Westside Area should protect natural features as elements that provide character and definition to its neighborhoods and districts, while reminding residents of the regional landscape, and providing places for residents to explore and enjoy. The layout of new neighborhoods should also consider the potential for views to regional landmarks to further connect residents to their environment and provide an amenity that defines the area. The protection of dark skies through careful street and home lighting policies can also provide a subtle connection to the natural world and reduce the impact of urbanization.

**f. Include open space and parks integrated in neighborhoods.**

Open space and parks should be fully integrated into new neighborhoods, as central amenities that can be accessed on foot or by bike, minimizing potential conflicts with automobiles. Trails should connect parks. The parks

should be in easily accessed locations and faced with homes, not relegated to leftover parcels at a neighborhood's margins. A variety of park sizes should be provided, for different users, from quiet contemplation in nature, to active sports. Parks should also incorporate natural features in their siting and design, and consider maintenance requirements in the future.

**g. Provide a connected transportation network with walkable, bike-friendly and green streets.**

The streets in the Westside Area should connect to existing streets, minimizing cul de sacs and aligning with existing intersections. New streets should be as narrow as functionally possible, for economic reasons but also for efficient use of land. These streets should balance allocated space for multiple users, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit and autos. Street design should include provision for shade trees and storm water treatment.

**h. Promote active and healthy living through community design.**

New communities that meet the above principles will have taken measurable steps towards encouraging a healthier daily life for residents, primarily by encouraging safe and easy walking and cycling for commuting to work and school, recreation and a range of daily activities such as kids sports events, grocery shopping and social visits.

**i. Plan land uses and transportation facilities so the area may be served by fixed route transit in the future.**

Medium and high density housing can help support transit if located near transit routes and supported by safe and comfortable walking routes to bus stops. Fixed transit can help home buyers and commercial land uses invest with confidence that there will be transportation options beyond only private automobiles.

**j. Integrate Westside Elementary School and future new schools as key community places.**

New schools are significant civic investments that can drive real estate development, particularly for affordable 'starter homes' marketed to young families. These facilities should include open public recreational space that can serve as community amenities during evenings and weekends. The design of schools should engage with the community, minimizing parking lot impacts on nearby residences and avoiding tall fences or blank walls.

**k. Promote human-scaled building designs.**

Development should strive to include features that contribute to an attractive streetscape and a sense of community. Residential examples include designs such as front porches, garages set back from the street and facades with generous windows. Commercial/mixed use examples include pedestrian-scale lighting and signage, buildings and entries oriented to the street, and architectural details. Provide bicycle parking that is secure and convenient. For multifamily housing, care should be taken to ensure ample

landscaping, on-site play grounds and gathering spaces and minimized parking if possible.

**l. Plan for efficient water, sewer and storm water infrastructure, utilizing green practices for storm water management.**

Coordinated infrastructure investment is a crucial component of smart growth, ensuring that new growth occurs in a measured, efficient and affordable way. Given the existing drainage patterns in the study area, new development should include Low Impact Development approaches to control and treat rainwater runoff in naturalistic ways, avoiding erosion and pollution in sensitive waterways on the Westside.

**m. Provide a realistic infrastructure funding strategy**

A comprehensive and realistic funding strategy provides certainty for all parties involved in land development. Efficient infrastructure ultimately translates to savings for home buyers and commercial investors.

**Smart Growth in Hood River**

The above principles have been written for specific application in the Westside Area Concept Plan. Smart growth concepts should always be tailored and adjusted to individual communities; what works in larger urban areas may not be applicable to smaller cities. In general, settlement patterns from the first 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in many small cities, including Hood River, offer good examples of smart growth. The local history and geography of a community such as Hood River also presents some unique opportunities and constraints to new development.

In particular, the elements found in Hood River (as well as White Salmon and Stevenson) that can inspire future Westside Area development include:

- A historic plat featuring a regular, consistent and walkable street grid, adjusted for topography;
- Orientation to the river (the original loci of transportation and commerce);
- Visual connections to local landmarks such as Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood and the Columbia River, but also less dramatic points like Underwood Mountain or nearby active agricultural fields;
- A thriving downtown, with a mix of uses in a walkable, compact core, as well as more dispersed, smaller scale commercial nodes;
- Efficient streets that are walkable and offer opportunities for reconfiguration with enhanced landscape, bike facilities and other amenities;
- Easy access to the open spaces and recreational activities that draw many new residents to this area; and
- Recent examples in the area of smart growth and human-scaled design that can provide economically viable 'proof' that smart growth works well in the local real estate market.

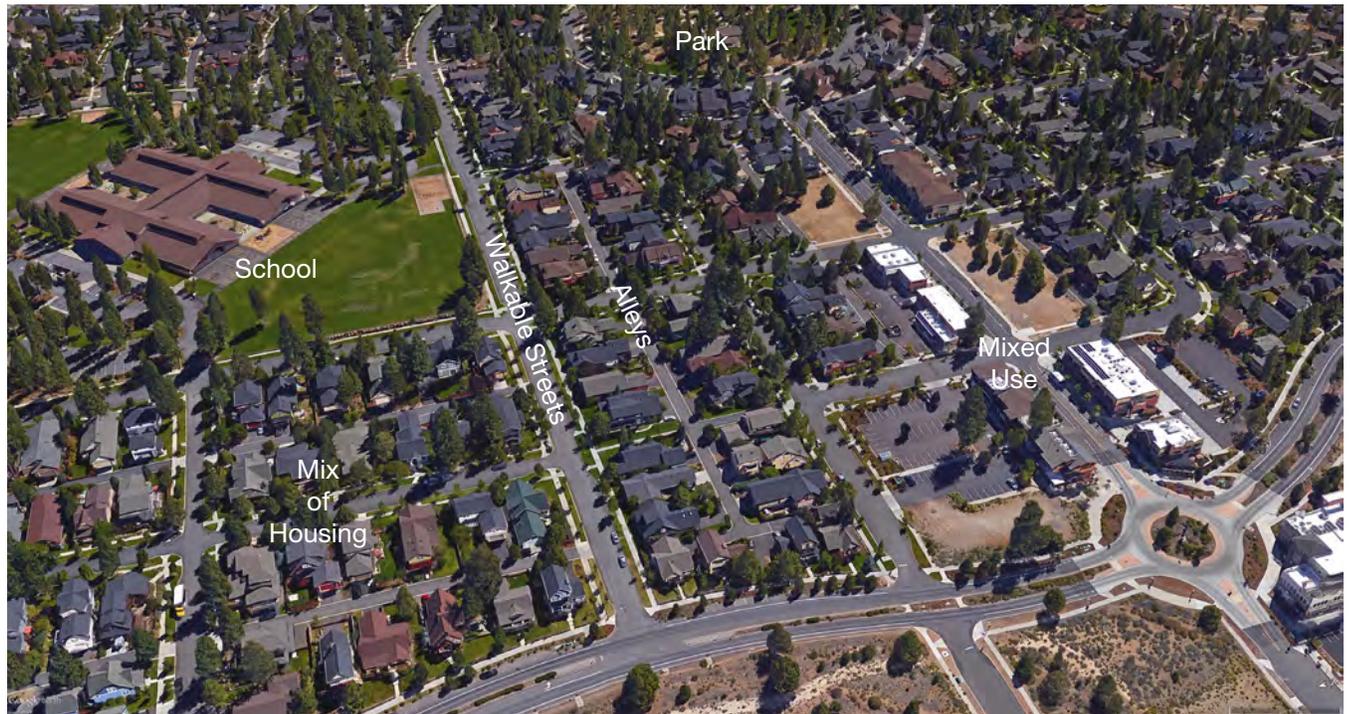
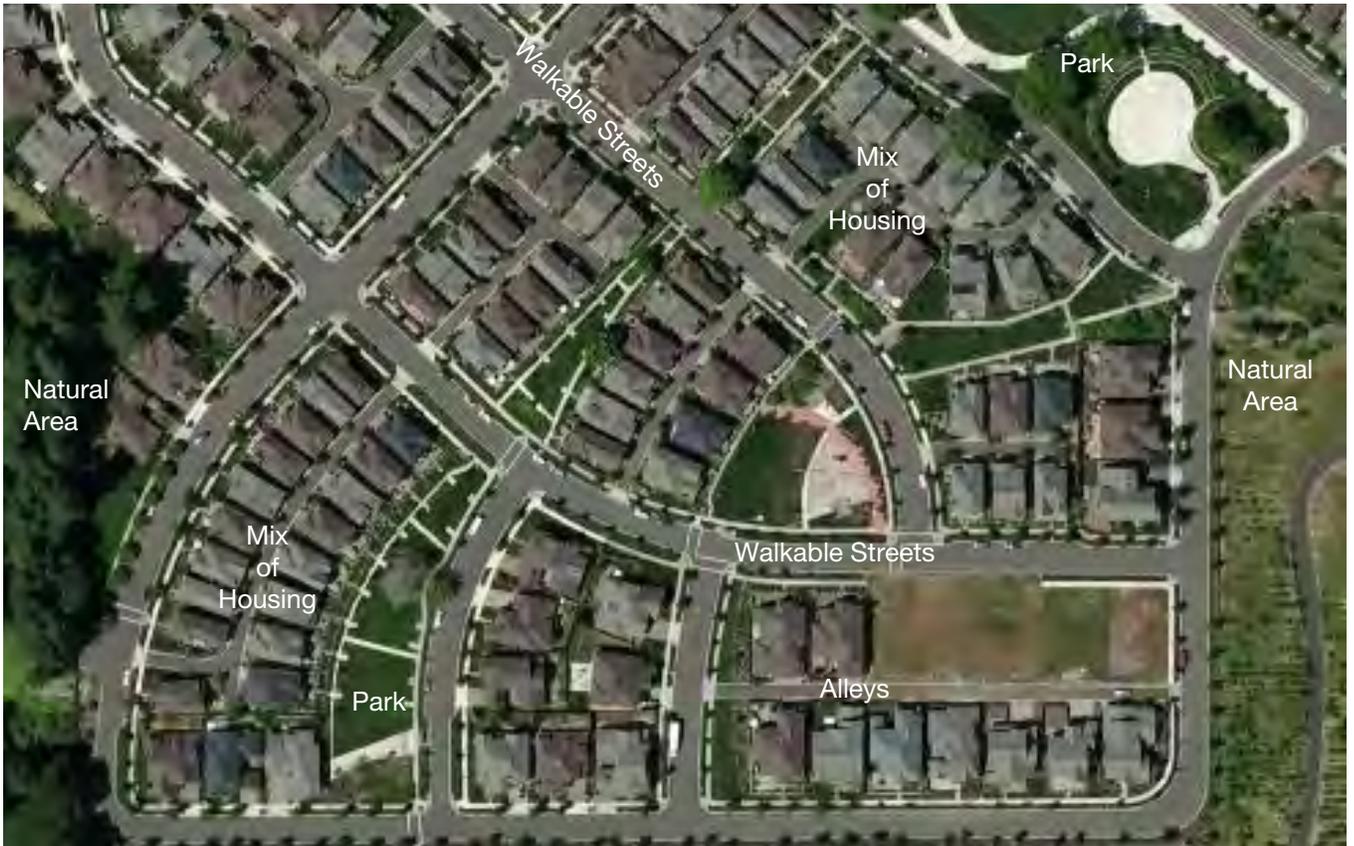
The Westside Area has certain unique qualities that can facilitate the implementation of smart growth principles. These include:

- An immediate adjacency to existing neighborhoods, allowing for an efficient extension of existing streets to provide a connected grid and reduce reliance on major new arterials or collectors;

- Adjacent new development that provides good evidence of a market for smart growth land use planning;
- A direct relationship to nearby agricultural uses, especially on the southern edge of the study area, which provides a strong sense of local history and the region's economic underpinning. Some remnants of this agriculture can also be incorporated within neighborhoods as pocket gardens or farm-to-school programs;
- A strong natural setting, including groves of native trees, wetlands and views to Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood and the Columbia Gorge; and
- An existing trail through the study area that can be extended and connected.

**Please see the following pages for images that illustrate smart growth principles**

**A. Create livable neighborhoods that make good use of the Westside's limited land supply.**



**B. Create well-planned and commercially successfully mixed use districts in the Westside gateway area**



Restaurants/cafes with outdoor seating



Retail building with strong architectural identity



Small-scale retail



Well-landscaped commercial district



Cohesive mixed use district; offices over retail



Example of small-scale retail in Hood River

**C. Create a plan that works for all ages and abilities of the community.**



**D. Provide a range of densities and housing types, increasing affordable housing choices in Hood River.**



SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED



SINGLE FAMILY ATTACHED

**D. Provide a range of densities and housing types, increasing affordable housing choices in Hood River.**



COTTAGES



APARTMENTS

**E. Incorporate natural features and a sense of place into each neighborhood and district**



Orient homes and streets to volcano views



Provide access to nature for all ages



Celebrate and incorporate agricultural heritage



Protect mature trees

**F. Include open space and parks, integrated in neighborhoods**



Neighborhood park



Community gardens



Pocket park fronted by homes; oriented to regional landscape context



Agricultural building repurposed as community facility in neighborhood park



Mature trees incorporated in parks

**G. Provide a connected transportation network with walkable, bike-friendly and green streets.**



Narrow but functional neighborhood streets



Integrated stormwater treatment



Safe bicycle facilities



Generous sidewalks with homes oriented to street



Walkable neighborhood



Street trees

**H. Promote active and healthy living through community design.**



**I. Plan land uses and transportation facilities so the area may be served by fixed route transit in the future.**



**J. Integrate Westside Elementary School and future new schools as key community places.**



Example of neighborhood-integrated school

**K. Promote human-scaled home designs**



Front porches, interesting facades, well-landscaped



Front porches



Front porches, generous windows, garage setback



Positive street relationship



Green buildings, generous windows

**L. Plan for efficient water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure, utilizing green practices for stormwater management.**



Stormwater planter



Linear drainage swale



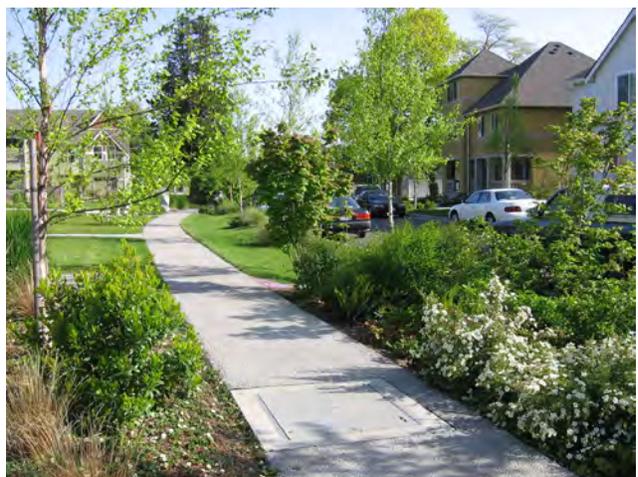
Retention pond



Detention pond integrated with streetscape



Swale in roadway median with pervious paving



Porous paving on sidewalk



Eco-roof