



PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- A. Consideration of the September 16, 2020 PC Minutes

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

**Wilsonville City Hall
29799 SW Town Center Loop East
Wilsonville, Oregon**

Minutes

This meeting was rescheduled from the regularly scheduled September 9, 2020 meeting and conducted virtually via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL

Chair Kamran Mesbah called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Those present:

Planning Commission: Kamran Mesbah, Ron Heberlein, Jerry Greenfield, Phyllis Millan, Jennifer Willard, and Breanne Tusinski. Aaron Woods was absent.

City Staff: Daniel Pauly, Zach Weigel, Kim Rybold, and Beth Wolf.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

CITIZEN'S INPUT - This is an opportunity for visitors to address the Planning Commission on items not on the agenda. There was none.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Brief Introduction of new Planning Commissioner – Breanne Tusinski

Daniel Pauly, Planning Manager, briefly introduced new Planning Commissioner Breanne Tusinski, noting she had lived in the Wilsonville area most of her life, had a passion for public service, and an interest in filling the role on the Commission.

Breanne Tusinski briefly reviewed her professional and educational background, noting she knew a lot about housing and was excited to learn about other things, like the I-5 Bridge project. She looked forward to getting to know the Commissioners.

The Planning Commissioners briefly introduced themselves, noting how long they had lived in Wilsonville and highlighting their professional backgrounds and history of service on the City's boards and commissions.

B. Consideration of the July 8, 2020 Planning Commission minutes
The July 8 2020 Planning Commission minutes were accepted as presented.

II. WORK SESSION

A. I-5 Pedestrian Bridge (Weigel)

Daniel Pauly, Planning Manager, stated this project had been interesting for the Commission and the entire community to be involved in and tonight, the project team was excited to share all the work, outreach, and additional design that had been done.

Zach Weigel, Capital Projects Engineering Manager, noted that when he was last before the Commission, the project team had gotten feedback on the last-minute design concepts for the I-5 Pedestrian Bridge and Gateway Plaza, just prior to gathering public feedback. The public engagement for the bridge and plaza was now complete, and Mr. Dupey and Ms. Howard would present a summary and analysis of the feedback received. The project team sought further feedback from the Commission, particularly with regard to the following four questions, to share with the City Council at its upcoming meeting on Monday.

- Which bridge alternative best reflects the project's themes and priorities consistent with the feedback provided in the survey and open house?
- Do you agree that custom lighting and custom safety fencing are the most important bridge design elements to prioritize?
- Do you agree with a plaza design approach that combines elements of the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow concepts?
- Are there other plaza elements to consider in addition to those prioritized in the survey and open house?

Alex Dupey, Consultant, MIG, presented the Wilsonville Town Center I-5 Pedestrian Bridge + Plaza via PowerPoint, describing the public engagement process completed in July and August and reviewing the feedback and design preferences of the community. He emphasized the importance of gathering input from the Planning Commission, so the team could consolidate the findings into a recommended path forward that would include more detailed designs for both the bridge and the plaza, and reviewed the team's questions for the Commission. (Slide 1)

Discussion and feedback from the Planning Commission was as follows with responses to Commissioner questions as noted:

- The polarized responses to the Modern Artistic design received during the public engagement were interesting; people either loved the design or hated it, which might have been due to the more whimsical concepts presented earlier.
- With regard to the considerable differences of the three open house sessions, Mr. Dupey noted the top choice for both the open house and survey was the Tied Arch design, with more of a love hate for the Modern Artistic, which was different type of bridge than what people were used to seeing. Overall, there was general alignment between the open house and survey results, the differences seen regarding the other bridge types came from the survey because it allowed for questions regarding theme and identity and accounted for a greater variation in terms of the results.
- Mr. Dupey confirmed a high percentage of people ranked lighting as an important element to carry forward. Comments heard at the open house were that the new bridge should be able to be identified as an iconic structure that fit Wilsonville 24 hours a day. Specific lighting options like the color-changing lights on the Tillicum Bridge, which might have inspired respondents to think more about lighting, or more focused white light, were still to be determined. (Slide 13)
- Mr. Dupey clarified the public engagement did not include a direct question about linking their preferred bridge with a specific plaza style; however, the recommended alternative for the plaza would be considered in relation to the recommended bridge structure. Specific aesthetic elements chosen for the bridge would also be addressed through the plaza.
- Mr. Dupey confirmed there were questions and concerns about accessing the bridge from the west side; however, the team had not focused on that area as much due to the limited space and fewer options available, but providing a strong connection to the other amenities on the west side would be an important consideration through the recommended alternative.
- Given the Tied Arch design had a 30 percent higher estimated cost, it would be interesting to see if knowing the cost estimates would have impacted the residents' preferred bridge design. (Slide 12)
 - Mr. Dupey agreed cost was an issue, so direction was sought from the Planning Commission about how to move beyond the first questions about themes and priorities. If cost was a consideration, what bridge types meet the original goals and objectives set out early in the process. Where should the team focus energies within the project?

- Bob Goodrich, DOWL, explained the anticipated maintenance cost between the three bridge styles was not expected to be significantly different in terms of material durability. However, the Cable Stay and Tied Arch designs were higher above the deck, so the ongoing, required inspection cycles would be more involved when accessing the different bridge elements that were higher in the air. The weathering of the aesthetic features attached to the Modern Artistic design was a bigger variable to be considered long term, such as the anticipated fading of the bright blue color shown in some of the visualizations.
 - He confirmed the Modern Artistic bridge style could be modernized or given a facelift in the future, resulting in a longer-term cost for renovation, rather than maintenance, compared to the other two designs.
- The public engagement results indicated that any of the three bridge styles would represent Wilsonville well. All three options met the general themes and priorities.
- The Modern Artistic design might not look modern in 25 or 50 years. Choosing a trendy design could be risky; however, the aesthetic was more flexible as a result of its amenability to updates and changes.
- The Tied Arch seemed to be a timeless aesthetic and design and gave the impression of quality and strength in its construction. A color change might be the only option for aesthetic flexibility on the Tied Arch.
- Mr. Dupey summarized some of the Commission's feedback by confirming that the areas of custom lighting and safety fencing would be moving forward during the continued process of bridge design and planning. Requirements would have to be met regardless of those, but time would be spent to design some of the specific customization features.
- Mr. Dupey confirmed the Commission wanted customized lighting and safety fencing features to move forward as the bridge design and planning process continued, noting that while certain requirements would have to be met, the team would spend time designing those features.

The general consensus of the Commission was that the Tied Arch design was the preferred design in terms of aesthetics, though the added cost was a concern. Additional comments continued as follows:

Commissioner Greenfield noted that when the amortization was considered over the long term, the additional cost was not so significant.

- Mr. Goodrich confirmed that the Tied Arch option had a generally more complex construction sequence, which resulted in additional costs.

Commissioner Heberlein agreed with the comment regarding amortization but noted the 30 to 40 percent higher cost associated with the Tied Arch option was a big difference compared to the other two options. While the Tied Arch was still his first choice, he would not be disappointed with another design if it made more fiscal sense.

Commissioner Willard said that although she liked the Tied Arch better, she did not believe it connected with the identified themes. How important to the bridge design were the themes of harmony with nature, family-friendliness, emphasizing Wilsonville's proximity to the river, inclusive and welcoming. The Modern Artistic design had many more levers to pull out those emotions and connect with those themes. The Commission needed to decide how important those themes were to the bridge design.

Commissioner Millan stated she was not swayed because of the extra cost of the Tied Arch. She likened the decision to the process of building or remodeling a house and deciding against certain upgrades due to the cost, which was often regretted. While the Modern Artistic design might bring out the themes, she suggested incorporating the themes of connectedness, nature, etc., might play out better in the landing area. The Tied Arch was simply something to see.

Commissioner Tusinski said that even if the Tied Arch did not necessarily represent the river and nature, those design themes could be brought in via the lighting or custom fencing.

Chair Mesbah:

- Stated as far as an iconic bridge, people driving under it at 60 to 65 mph would only see the bridge for a split second. Additionally, people would not linger on the bridge to ponder its details because of the pollution generated by the interstate below. The place for any experiential, aesthetic, and educational motifs would be in the plazas. The Tied Arch shape was a classic aesthetic that would be imprinted as one went by very quickly; there would be no need to slow down and look at the details. He also shared concerns regarding whether this project was something Wilsonville wanted to invest in as an iconic project for the city, and that it would not become an example of people sitting around and choosing an expensive project just because somebody else would share in the cost; everyone would share in the cost. The 30 to 40 percent difference could become an issue, especially since local units of government were starting to have problems with revenues. He was not sure where the money for the bridge would come from and whether those revenues were being impacted right now or had already been firmly established. Despite those unknowns, he preferred the Tied Arch.
 - Mr. Weigel explained the design team had considered including questions about cost but were concerned that the public outreach questions were getting quite long. With only \$2 million more on a project that would outlive everyone, the team wanted to make sure they discovered what the public really wanted to see and what they felt would represent Wilsonville without the influence of the cost.
 - As far as funding, the project team was looking at a combination of upcoming grant opportunities and transportation system development charges (SDCs).
 - He clarified the Estimated Cost Ranges shown on Slide 12 were not the total cost estimates for the bridge types. It was not accurate to say there would be a 30 to 40 percent difference between the Tied Arch design and the two other options, but the Tied Arch would cost more. Because there was not a lot of design yet, general cost estimates were used for the bridge structure itself, and then the cost differences were estimated for the other elements, based on the bridge type. The Estimated Cost Range represented the cost difference between each bridge type, given the costs for everything else would be the same for each bridge. The Estimated Cost Range allowed for cost comparison between the bridge types, but it was not the total cost of the project.
 - Mr. Goodrich explained the Estimated Cost Ranges represented the anticipated construction costs for the two main stands shown in each picture, plus the additional approach stands and approach retaining walls that would lead up those two main stands.
 - Cost differences were captured in the totals because the Modern Artistic, for example, would have additional bridge structure because it was deeper, requiring it to be higher in the air to provide the needed freeway clearance. The Tied Arch cost range included the construction of the elements to get from the ground on one side, up into the air, over the roads, and back down to the ground. The note on Slide 12 explained what the cost range did not include. Many pieces of the project were not far enough along to understand the costs.
- Asked what percentage of the total cost the comparative estimates would represent. If the total cost was twice the cost range listed, then the \$2 million difference would really be a 10 percent difference.
 - Mr. Goodrich said he did not believe the total project cost would be double. The full cost of the Tied Arch would probably be in the \$12 million to \$16 million range when the other elements were added. However, the plaza was the other big piece of the project costs and many decisions remained that would affect the total project cost. He believed the Estimated Cost Range figures represented more than 50 percent of the total project cost. (Slide 12)
- Asked if it would be helpful for the Commissioners to give their first and second choices based on the total cost, for example.
 - Mr. Weigel responded any information the Commission wished to convey to the City Council was welcome. For example, the Commission: preferred the Tied Arch, but was concerned about costs; liked the Modern Artistic bridge because it would be easier to modernize and change in the future; shared its ranking of the preferred bridge types; or believed all three bridge types would work.

Chair Mesbah confirmed the Planning Commission's preferred bridge design was the Tied Arch because of its strong iconic and aesthetic message. The Tied Arch was more expensive, and some Commissioners said they

would like to ensure the community was willing to spend that much more to get that kind of an iconic structure. If not, the other options would also work given they had some flexibility and strength as well. However, the Tied Arch was the Commission's first choice.

Casey Howard, Consultant, MIG, continued the PowerPoint presentation, reviewing the results of the recent public engagement regarding the ramp and plaza design alternatives, as well as the team's plaza questions for the Commission. (Slide 26)

Discussion and feedback from the Planning Commission was as follows with responses to Commissioner questions as noted:

- As discussed in July, the more whimsical Drops and Ripples plaza design seemed to fit with the Modern Artistic bridge style. The classical feel of the River Oxbow plaza design paired well with the Tied Arch. However, using elements of both the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow made very good sense.
- Public engagement feedback regarding the trees and planting was consistent with the Tied Arch style. The voting results favored more timeless and classic elements, which was also heard from some of the Commissioners.
- Ms. Howard explained the process to combine the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow designs would begin with teasing out the elements prioritized by the public, and then considering the design form to see what could realistically fit in the space given the budget and size of the site to arrive at something that had the clean lines of the Drops and Ripples combined with the more environmental elements of the stormwater planters and things people were drawn to in the River Oxbow.
- Using the Drops and Ripples plaza design would be a good way to incorporate nature and river elements if the Tied Arch bridge design were chosen.
- Earlier, the Commission had discussed safe spaces, which might be why Multiple Smaller Spaces and Transitional Spaces were highly ranked. (Slide 22) People want to feel safe, which was important considering the plaza was envisioned to be used at all times of the day and into the evening. Transitional spaces were preferred to vast open spaces, especially since the plaza would connect with the Emerald Chain through Town Center.
- Any of the bridge types would complement the proposed combination of Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow elements.
- The Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow design elements were very contrary to each other in concept and feel, so it would be difficult to combine them in a natural way. The sterile, manufactured look of the Drops and Ripples did not match Wilsonville's general sense of itself. It was somewhat like the simple, but quite formal plaza designs in Town Center Park and Memorial Park. The River Oxbow design had more of a natural feel, like parts of Memorial Park, and would be a nice relief from the formalism of Town Center Park and much of Villebois' park areas.
 - Being able to visualize the plaza designs at ground level rather than from above would be helpful.
 - Locating intimate spaces would be easier in River Oxbow than Drops and Ripples. Because there would be more privacy in River Oxbow, it could potentially be less safe, especially at night, than Drops and Ripples.
- Seeing a combined design of the River Oxbow and Drops and Ripples would be helpful to visualize and understanding how that combination would work.
- One element that needed to be considered was how important sound and visual blocking was to the plaza.
 - If blocking sound from I-5 was a priority, more work would need to be done to find viable solutions for the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow designs. While the River Oxbow included a grove of trees near the edge of the property closest to I-5, Drops and Ripples did not appear to block sound from the freeway. The Gateway Loop seemed to be the best option for blocking I-5 sound because of the larger mass around the loop and that part of the design.
- Populating the proposed designs with people might be useful, though the actual spaces could become sterile spaces.

- When choosing between the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow designs, the size of the plaza area was the issue. For a natural, meandering path like that in the River Oxbow, the area needed to be large, otherwise it would look like a playground labyrinth. The Drops and Ripples design created smaller, intimate spaces for people to sit without being in a large crowd in a no man's land type area.
 - Although the plaza area was not very large, combining the Drops and Ripples and River Oxbow designs would mix the elements of a small, natural, open landscape with small areas to provide or define more intimate spaces to create a level of privacy and separation even if a lot of people were there. Adding natural areas and plantings would prevent a fake, Disneyland kind of design, which Drops and Ripples had the potential to become. The mixing would result in a functional area for both small and large groups without looking like a desolate, large lawn area no one was using.
- The noise abatement issue seemed to be a lost cause. The side of the plaza adjacent to the highway was very small, so even a wall there would not sufficiently block noise from coming in on the other sides. Having softer plantings and surfaces to buffer some of the sound and fumes might be helpful, but the reality was that the plaza was located adjacent to a bridge over an interstate.
 - Given its proximity to the freeway, how active would this space be? Were there examples in other cities where a space this close to the freeway was active?
 - Being so close to the highway, the plaza would not likely be a place where someone would spend any significant time having a conversation; however, some design elements could help that. For example, in the pockets of the Drops and Ripples design, sound editing kinds of materials could be used to allow people to sit in kind of a cubby and not be as exposed to the highway noise, depending on orientation, etc. The plaza might be a place for a rock concert, perhaps, but not a Shakespeare play.
- Mr. Dupey believed the team had gotten good direction from the Commission about looking at some combination of the Drops and Ripples, and thinking about what specific elements would work well together, but also to identify the types of gathering places. As stated in the Town Center Plan, the plaza area was envisioned to be a key place for gathering, but also a transitional space as part of the Emerald Chain, so as more of a refined plaza alternative, the design team would start thinking about what those key intimate spaces included.
- The worst that could happen was if the plaza became a pass-through element where nobody wanted to spend time, and yet, all this time was being spent trying to design it so people would rest, have intimate seating, etc. If it was just a pass-through area, River Oxbow would be the best design because it was low maintenance and designed to just pass through. It did not have any areas to sit, and it would look good because it looked natural.
 - Mr. Dupey responded it was a balance because this project was the first step in terms of redevelopment in Town Center, so the ultimate form of this should support adjacent redevelopment as it occurred over time, so he believed the plaza served a variety of uses. One was pass-through for people crossing the bridge and the plaza where people hit ground in Town Center. But, it was also important to consider that people would want to gather in these spaces to sit in the afternoon, for example, and enjoy the sun, which was something the team had heard was important to provide. The balance regarded being next to a freeway while also providing people some peace in key spaces that were integrated with other components of Town Center.
 - One thing discussed during the Town Center design was that the first floors of the adjacent redeveloped areas could have restaurants or coffee shops with outside seating, and the plaza would be a great place for that. Someone sitting with their earbuds in and a cappuccino, reading the paper, would not have any problem with the noise. However, this plaza would not be an area where congregations would be enjoying the outdoors.

Mr. Dupey stated the project team was meeting with City Council on Monday, so the Commission's direction would help with their conversation with Council and also on how to move forward with the specific elements. He thanked the Commissioners for their time.

III. INFORMATIONAL

A. City Council Action Minutes (July 6 & 20, August 3 & 17, 2020) (No staff presentation)
There were no comments.

B. 2020 PC Work Program (No staff presentation)

Daniel Pauly, Planning Manager, noted that due to a couple of things stacking up, it made sense to hold a November meeting; however, due to Veteran's Day, that meeting would be held on an alternative date. Staff appreciated the Commissioners' flexibility on being available to hold the November meeting and for the change moving last week's regular meeting to this week and holding the meeting completely virtual.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mesbah adjourned the rescheduled meeting of the Wilsonville Planning Commission at 7:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

By Paula Pinyerd of ABC Transcription Services, Inc. for
Tami Bergeron, Administrative Assistant-Planning