



Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update

Existing Conditions Analysis

October 14, 2016

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1. Purpose

In 1995, the City of Gresham adopted the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan that outlined a vision of a transit-supported and walkable neighborhood, with convenient places to live, work and shop. After nearly 20 years of change, the City is working with residents, businesses, property owners and other interested parties to update the envisioned future of Civic Neighborhood. Through this project, the City will:

- Revisit the vision and goals for Civic Neighborhood;
- Update development rules to remove obstacles to development;
- Create design guidelines and standards specific to Civic Neighborhood consistent with the vision/goals;
- Develop new rules and processes that are clear to staff, applicants and the general public; and
- Set rules that balance the need for clarity, flexibility, quality design and financial feasibility.

Design Districts

The city's Development Code defines Design Districts as: *Provides guidelines and standards for development activity in clearly defined special design areas. It can be used to ensure the conservation, continuity, enhancement, and continued vitality of the identified scenic, architectural, and cultural values of each design district and to promote quality development in centers, near transit facilities, and similar areas.*

This Existing Conditions Analysis provides a baseline of information to build the future vision. It summarizes key considerations that impact existing and future development in Civic Neighborhood through a series of maps and images. The planning team will use information from this document to shape conversations with the community during the course of the project, including meetings with stakeholders, the community visioning workshop and public survey.

Planning Area

The Civic Neighborhood planning area is bounded by Burnside Street to the north, Eastman Parkway to the east, Wallula Avenue to the west and Division Street to the south (planning area boundary). This project will also explore parcels within the larger Civic Design District area that includes land uses north of Burnside and south of Division, as shown in Map 1 (Planning Area). Article 3 of the Gresham Development Code defines the purpose of Design Districts, provided in the sidebar at left.

2.Planning Foundation

Background

With adoption of the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan (1995), the City of Gresham designated the neighborhood with its own plan district. The plan called for development that supported walking, transit use and improved connections to other destinations within Gresham. Civic Neighborhood was intended to “demonstrate that development of mixed uses at relatively high densities is not only feasible in Gresham, but can offer advantages not found in conventional suburban development.” The 1995 Plan also set many goals including:

- Reduce automobile trips (quality transit and an environment that encourages walking).
- Promote safe and efficient access by and between all travel modes (car, transit, walking, biking, etc.).
- Allow a wide range of uses and activities developed to urban densities. Uses should complement those already established nearby.
- Investigate and implement cost-effective measures to reduce automobile travel.
- Provide effective connections to adjacent neighborhoods with bike routes and footpaths.
- Maximize potential transit ridership through an appropriate mix and density of uses developed in Civic Neighborhood, and by providing easy access to transit.
- Set a precedent for sustainable development in regional centers.

That 1995 vision was translated into development standards and regulations that were incorporated into the City of Gresham’s Development Code.¹ Section 4.1200 of the Development Code allows a wide variety of uses and sets minimum and maximum standards for how much development is required or allowed on a site in Civic Neighborhood. The Civic Neighborhood Plan District includes four sub-districts, as described in the current Development Code. The Land Use

¹ (Section 4.1200 Civic Neighborhood Plan District of the Development Code implements the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan District)

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and Zoning section in this report summarizes the four sub-districts, the various uses and the development regulations for each sub-district.

Civic Neighborhood has evolved since 1995. In 1997, the City constructed Civic Drive in an effort to stimulate private investment to the area. In 1999, the City partnered with Center Oak Development (now CenterCal) to develop Gresham Station Shopping Center over much of the south portion of Civic Neighborhood. Metro, along with a private sector partner, helped in the creation of the Crossings, which was able to meet and exceed the standards envisioned in the Civic Neighborhood Plan. Today, around 21 acres of vacant land (including about 13 acres owned by Metro) provide additional development opportunities.

Relevant Plans, Studies and Policies

Civic Neighborhood has a strong planning foundation in the 1995 Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan. Since then, the City has been continuing to address the challenges and opportunities in Civic Neighborhood. The following section provides a brief overview of the currently applicable plans and studies for the planning area.

One Gresham

One Gresham is the City of Gresham's economic, urban redevelopment, and social strategy to strengthen and link the city's three mixed-use centers which include Civic Neighborhood, historic Downtown, and Rockwood. One Gresham identifies Civic Neighborhood as a living/shopping village with a community plaza, with a grocery store and entertainment options, and mixed-use housing. The initiative highlighted many implementation strategies including a Vertical Housing Development Zone, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Program Funds and other funding strategies.



Metro Development and Implementation Strategy

In 2010, Metro commissioned the Development and Implementation Strategy report to address the challenges facing the four Metro-owned properties in the neighborhood. The report identifies the significant opportunities and challenges facing each of the four sites and proposes a preferred alternative to meet Metro's expectations for transit oriented development and to offer attractive development opportunities for private sector developers. This includes high quality rental housing for at least the two Metro properties in the west (11 acres), and to subdivide the larger parcels to be pursued by a wider variety of developers.

Notable to the vision update, the report also recommends modifying development regulations related to retail ground floor requirements and structured parking requirements, especially for the two west parcels facing Civic Drive, and to invest in the streetscape to strengthen the appearance of Civic Drive or to make other public right-of-way improvements near or within the sites.

City Hall Park & Ride Redevelopment Feasibility Study

In 2014, the City commissioned a feasibility study to explore market-driven solutions for redevelopment of the three-acre City Hall park and ride property located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Division and Eastman. The study found that if existing parking were accommodated elsewhere, the site could be redeveloped with the development intensities envisioned for the neighborhood without a significant investment in structured parking. The analysis also found that sufficient capacity exists in other nearby park and ride facilities.

Multi-Family Design Guidelines and Standards

Adopted in April 2010, the Multi-Family Design Guidelines and Standards (Section 7.0100 of the City of Gresham Development Code) apply to most multi-family developments citywide. New multi-family developments, additions and remodels are subject to a design review process to check for consistency with these guidelines and standards. Projects subject to design review are either brought before the Design Commission or reviewed by City staff.

Recent Efforts

The City solicited public input related to Civic Neighborhood as part of the Urban Redevelopment project (of which the Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update is a part) for the 2016 City Council

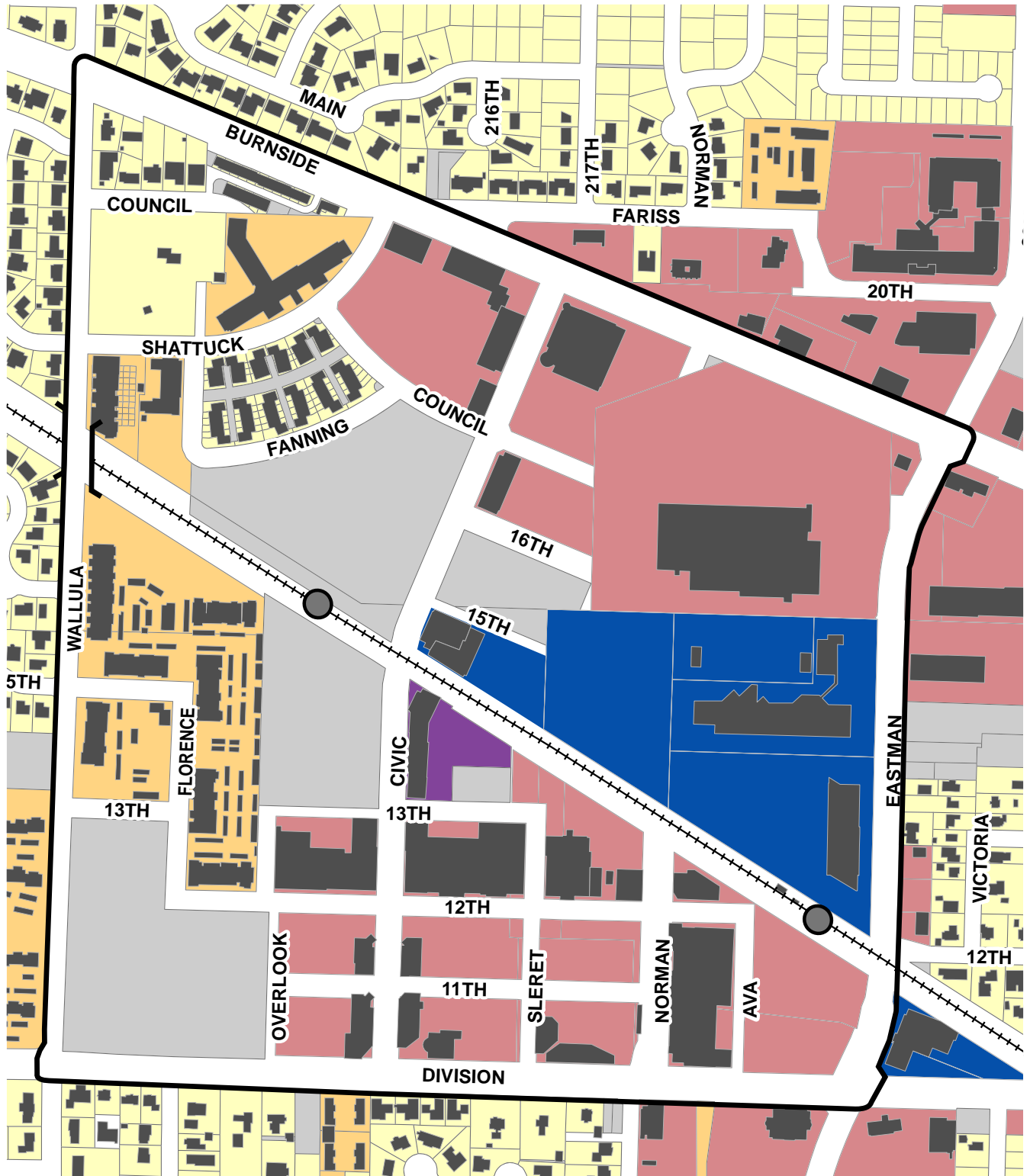
Gresham Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update

Work Plan. The summary document includes input from the Northwest Neighborhood Association meeting held in January 2016, a community forum held in February 2016, and an online survey. Some of the themes that emerged include:

- A desire for more retail and entertainment uses in the neighborhood, including grocery store and pharmacy;
- Additional development in the neighborhood, particularly in the vacant parcels and future redevelopment of the Kmart site;
- Support for landscaping (paths, trees, plants, plazas) and streetscape elements (light poles, benches and brick paving in the intersections and crosswalks); and
- Support for revisiting the district vision and looking at density and height requirements to encourage desired development.

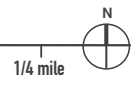
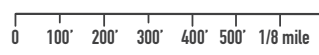
Land Use

Map 2 (Existing Land Use) shows current land uses in Civic Neighborhood. Commercial uses are the predominant type of land use in the planning area and include a regional shopping center (Gresham Station) with around 50 shops and restaurants. Vacant parcels are also noticeable, including the Metro-owned parcels (approximately 13 acres) along Civic Drive. Civic and institutional uses, including City Hall, a public safety complex and a school district administrative office are also prominent uses. Housing is predominately apartments and townhomes found mostly along Wallula. A small percentage of single-family residential development can found at the intersection of Burnside and Wallula.



-  Civic Neighborhood Planning Area
-  Building Footprint
-  MAX Line
-  MAX Station

- Existing Land Use**
-  Single Family Residential
 -  Multi Family Residential
 -  Commercial
 -  Institutional
 -  Vacant
 -  Mixed-use



Zoning

Sub-districts and their respective zoning designations in Civic Neighborhood allow a variety of uses and more intense development than many other parts of Gresham. There are four sub-districts in the Civic Neighborhood Plan District (Map 3: Zoning) in addition to zoning outside of Civic Neighborhood also shown in Map 3:

- Transit Development District – Medium Density - Civic (TDM-C)
- Transit Development District - High Density - Civic (TDH-C)
- High-Density Residential - Civic (HDR-C)
- Moderate-Density Residential - Civic (MDR-C)

Current zoning allows townhomes and apartments but prohibits single-family detached homes and duplexes within Civic Neighborhood. Permitted non-residential uses include commercial and retail, office, and service uses including medical. Existing zoning prohibits industrial uses.

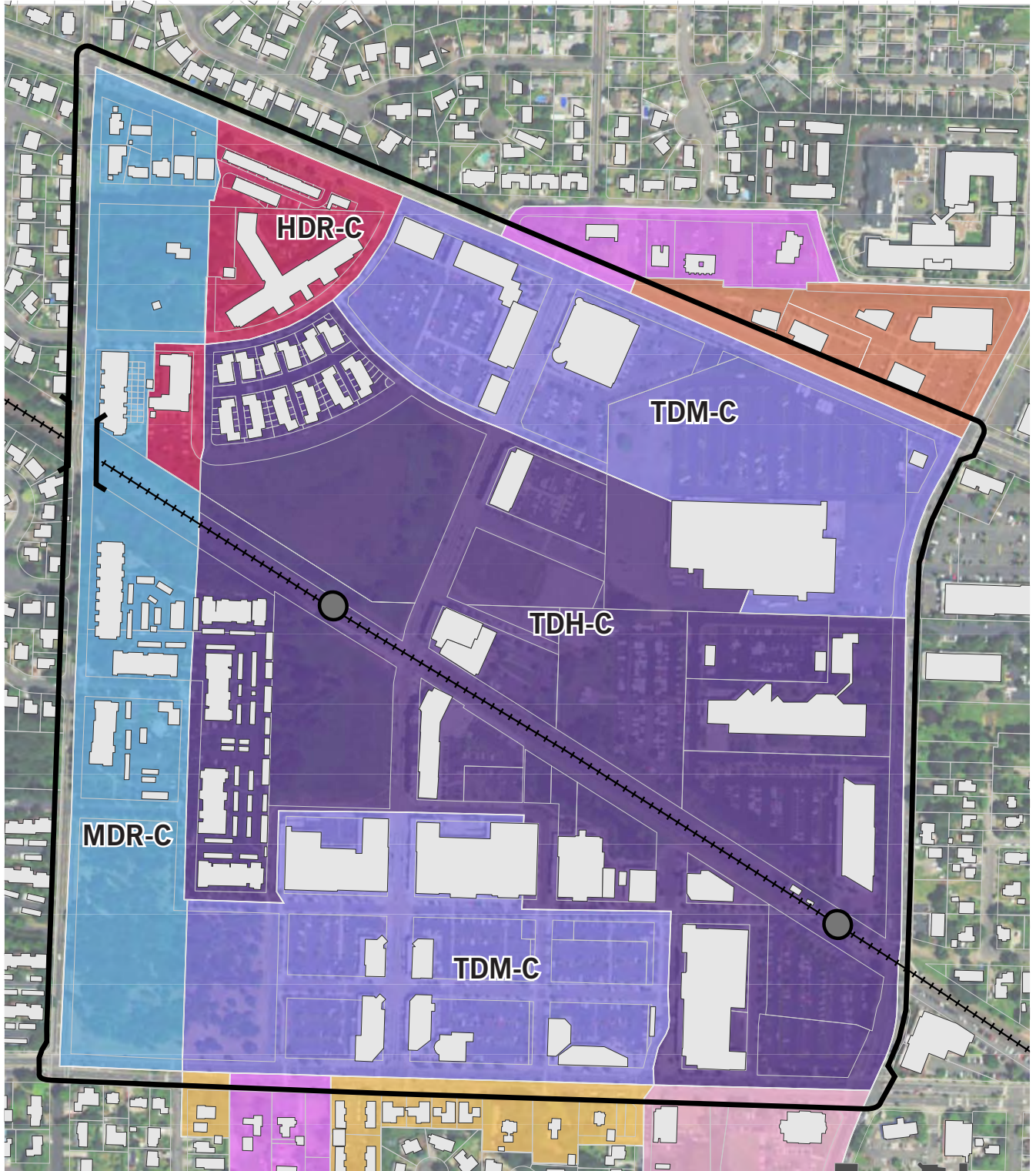
Table 1 summarizes the development regulations for the sub-districts within Civic Neighborhood. The TDH-C sub-district (extending from the City Hall MAX station to the Civic Drive MAX station) calls for the most intense development in Civic Neighborhood. It has a minimum floor-area ratio of 1.1 to 1. In general, the current required development intensity decreases along the bordering arterial streets (Burnside, Eastman and Division). It is lowest in MDR-C along Wallula, where the maximum height is 40 feet.



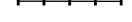









Table 1: Development Standards in Civic Neighborhood (Excerpt from Table 4.1230 of the City of Gresham Development Code)

Development Regulations	ZONING				
	TDM-C (North)	TDM-C (South)	TDH-C	HDR-C	MDR-C
Minimum Floor Area Ratio	0.6	0.4	1.1	None	None
Minimum Residential Density	24 units/acre	24 units/acre	30 units/acre	24 units/acre	17 units/acre
Minimum Height	22 feet	22 feet	22 feet	22 feet	22 feet
Maximum Height	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	40 feet

Floor Area Ratio

The city's Development Code defines Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as: *The amount of floor area in relation to the amount of site area, expressed in square feet. For example, a floor area ratio of 2 to 1 means two square feet of floor area for every one square foot of site area.*



- | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
|  | Civic Neighborhood Planning Area | Civic District Zoning |  | Other Zoning |
|  | MAX Line |  | HDR-C: High Density Residential- Civic |  |
|  | MAX Station |  | MDR-C: Moderate Density Residential- Civic |  |
|  | Building Footprint |  | TDH-C: Transit Development District- High Density- Civic |  |
| | |  | TDM-C: Transit Development District- Medium Density- Civic | |



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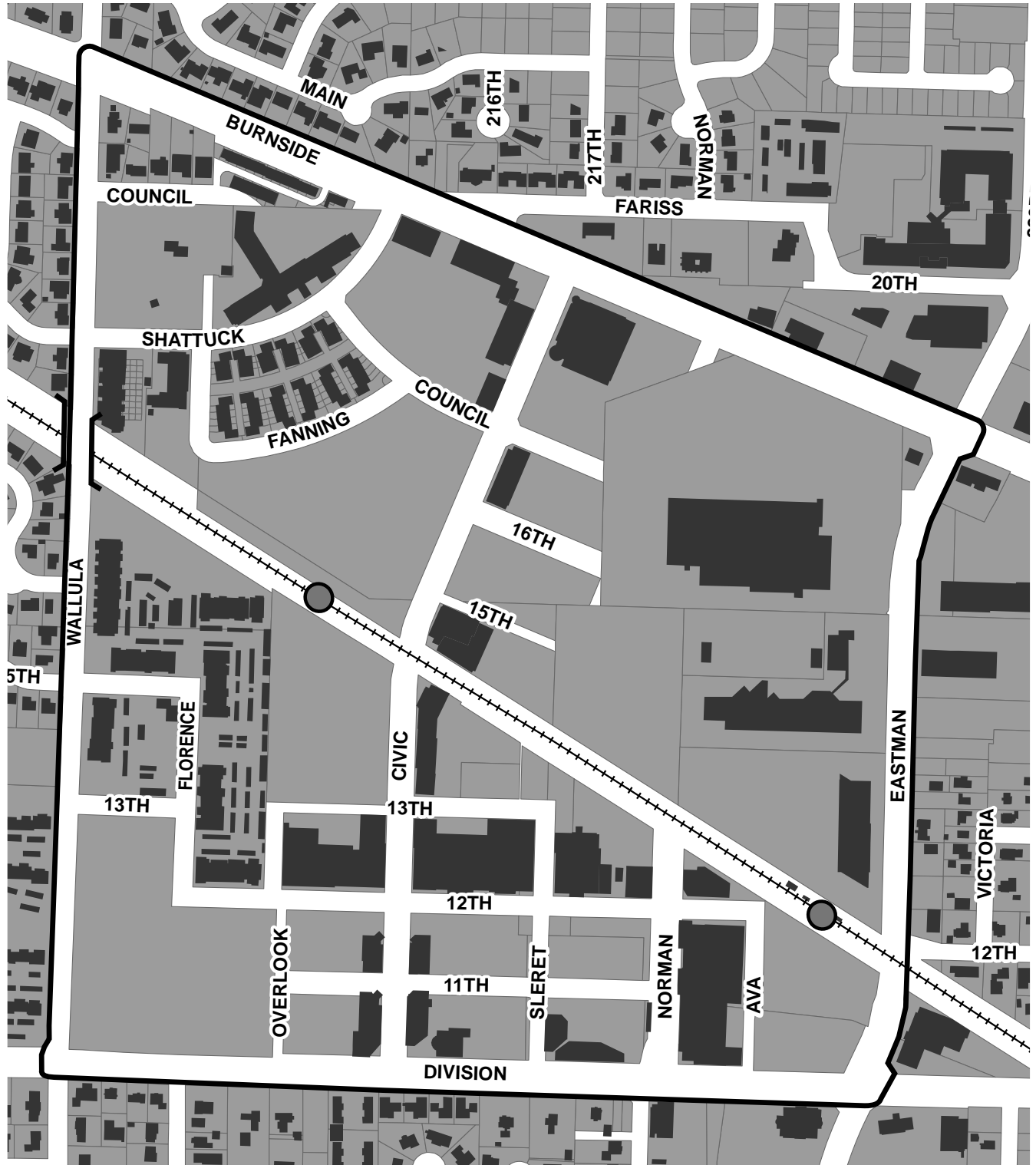
3. Existing Conditions and Design Considerations

This section provides a descriptive and visual summary of existing assets, issues and opportunities related to transportation and connectivity, building design and streetfront, and natural features and public spaces within Civic Neighborhood.

Transportation and Connectivity: Moving To and Through the Neighborhood

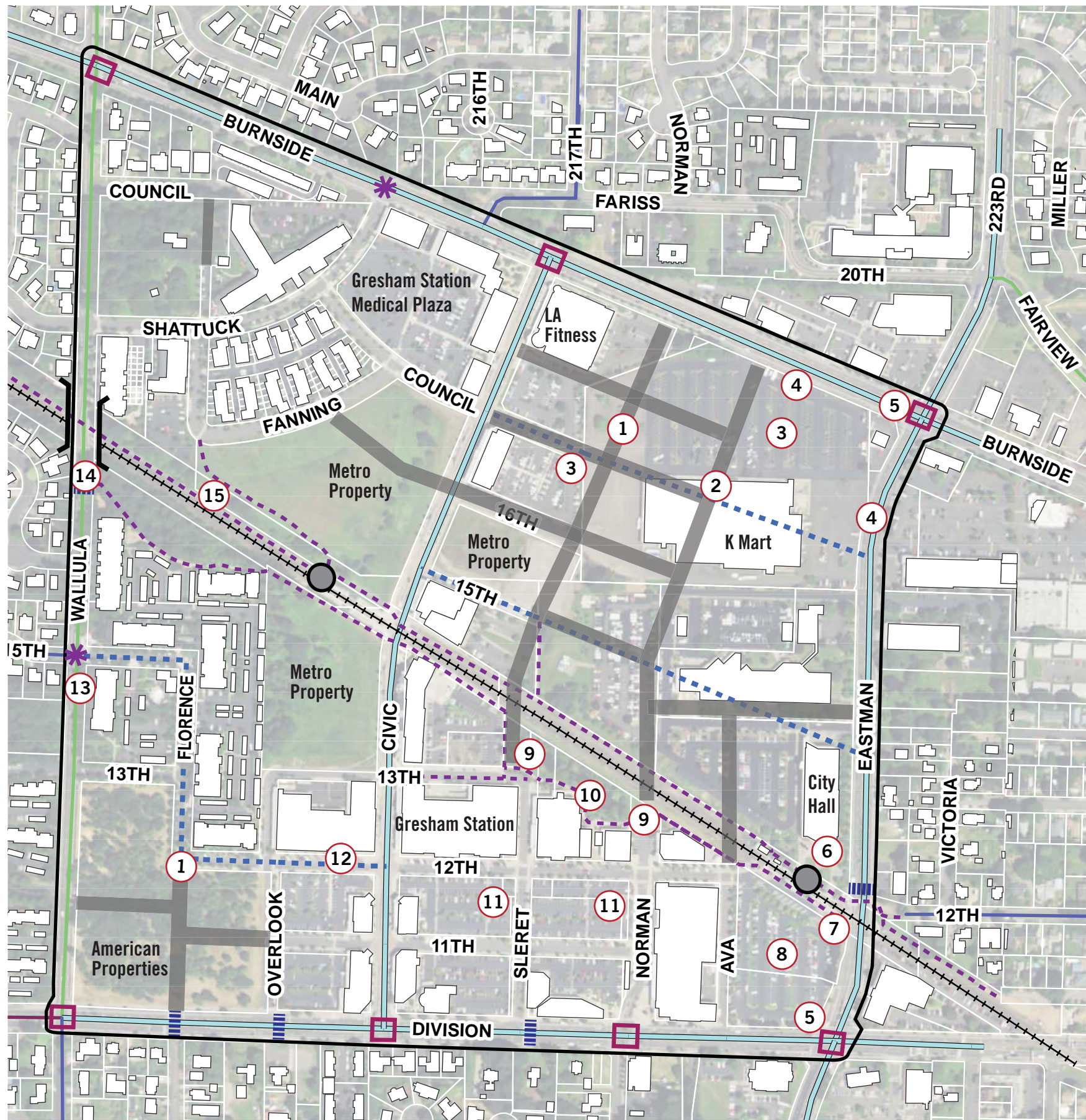
The existing Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan has several goals related to circulation and connectivity for the neighborhood, including safe and efficient multimodal access, reduced automobile trips, increased transit use, a pedestrian-oriented environment and effective connections to adjacent neighborhoods by bike routes and sidewalks.

- **Transportation assets:** The Wy'East Way multiuse path running parallel to the MAX line links various destinations within the district and city. Gresham Station is another example of a walkable development.
- **Development Rules:** City development rules for future streets put constraints on their location and limit flexibility for future development. Updates could require development to meet access expectations while allowing for greater flexibility.
- **Connectivity:** Large vacant parcels in the heart of Civic Neighborhood and light rail tracks prevent efficient connections for biking, walking and driving (Map 4: Block Pattern). As new development or redevelopment opportunities arise, best practices in building, site and street design should be used to establish a comfortable pedestrian scale and increase connectivity and accessibility to and within the neighborhood.
- **Edge conditions:** Burnside, Eastman and Division are busy arterials classified as “Boulevards” in the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and are envisioned to support adjacent intense development while encouraging commercial activity. Implementing streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian environment can improve access for people walking and biking.
- **Wayfinding and signage:** Added wayfinding and signage in the district would direct users to various destinations and amenities in the neighborhood.

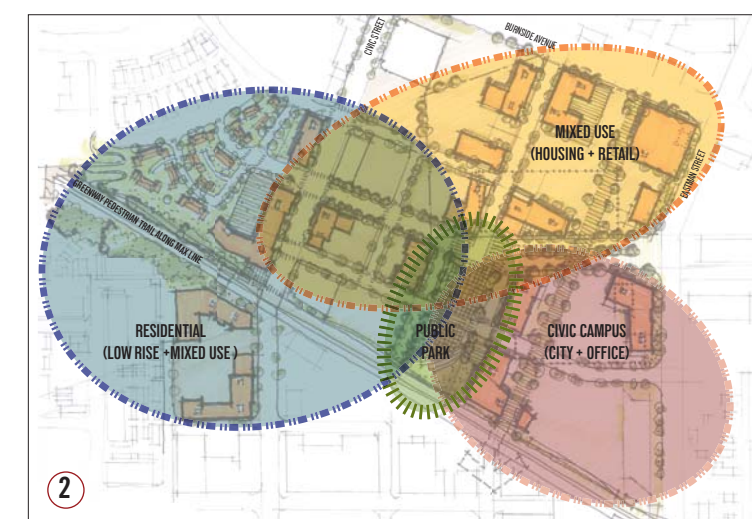


-  Civic Neighborhood Planning Area
-  MAX Line
-  MAX Station
-  Building Footprint
-  Parcel





At the American Properties site (left) and Kmart site (right) there are opportunities to create continuous or connected streets as new development/redevelopment occurs and to reconsider the street grid as required by the Development Code.



This conceptual sketch of the northeast corner of Civic demonstrates how different uses could relate to one another and enhance connectivity.



Large off-street surface parking lots and few through streets limit safe pedestrian connectivity and create uninviting and underused spaces.



4 Frequent curb cuts, narrow sidewalks with no buffers from traffic and a lack of pedestrian-oriented streetscape (shade, wider sidewalks as well as more pedestrian amenities) on Eastman and Burnside (Boulevards as per the TSP) create an unpleasant pedestrian environment.



5 Crossing the multi-lane arterials (along Civic Neighborhood boundaries) at intersections is challenging for pedestrians. Intersections lack improvements such as median island refuges, curb extensions, ADA compliant curb ramps, planters and street trees that improve pedestrian safety and comfort.



6 The City Hall plaza and outdoor spaces can be underused and can appear as uninviting when not programmed. There is an opportunity to activate these spaces, such as by adding seating, shade, art and by hosting events and activities.



7 The City Hall light rail station has a well-marked crosswalk north of the tracks but lacks a south side crossing. It also lacks wayfinding and signage that helps connect with Downtown and that creates a strong gateway or arrival experience.



8 The City Hall Park and Ride site provides commuter parking at Division and Eastman intersection. However, it misses an opportunity to locate jobs and housing close to the light rail stations and near Downtown Gresham.



9 Sleret, Ava and Norman are dead-ends at present. There is opportunity to extend streets and/or sidewalk connections to establish safe crossings across the light rail line and to enhance connectivity.



10 This trail north of Gresham Station offers pedestrians an opportunity to connect with the neighborhood as well as MAX stations. There is an opportunity to enhance wayfinding and signage and add more pedestrian amenities similar to this existing asset.



11 Along Norman and Sleret, there are many infill development opportunities. With infill, streetscape improvements and shared parking strategies can be implemented to enhance pedestrian connectivity and also create two-sided retail streets.



12 Along 12th, store front parking is well-used and the continuous building frontage offers a welcoming pedestrian environment that encourages shoppers to walk.



13 With buffered sidewalks and row of mature conifers, Wallula offers a pleasant pedestrian environment. There is opportunity to complete missing sidewalks in some parts of the Civic Neighborhood to create a similar streetscape.



14 When this trail connection is completed to the light rail station below, there is opportunity for better signage and wayfinding to promote use of this amenity.



15 The multi-use path along the MAX line offers an opportunity to promote biking around Gresham and to promote walking and biking in and around the Civic Neighborhood and its retail destinations.

Building Design and Streetfront: The Design and Function of Buildings and Streets

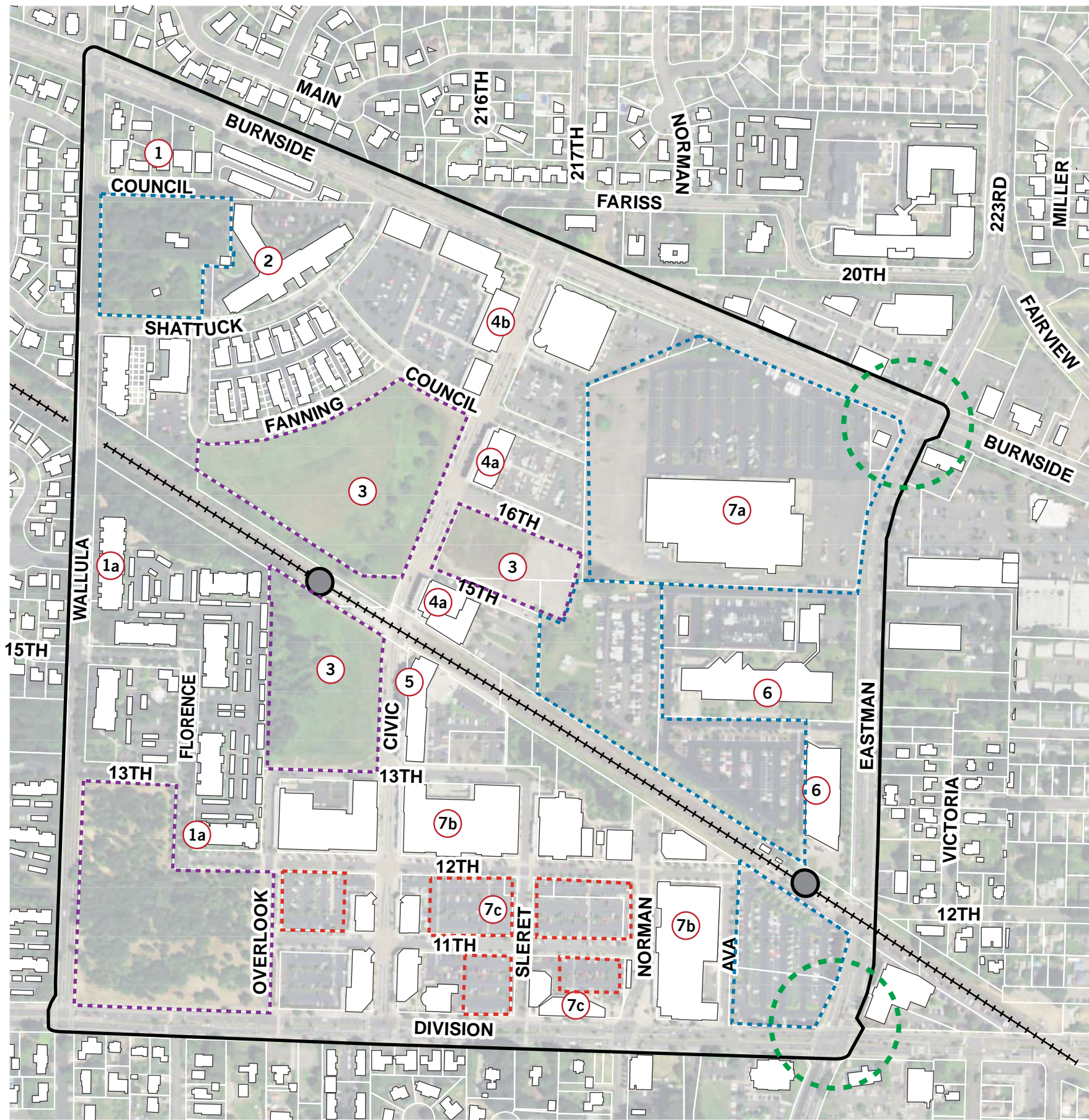
Streetfront

The streetfront can be defined as the space between building facades or uses adjoining the street, and the street edge, providing a separation from the street and a space for people to walk, interact and move between and along streets and adjoining uses.

The existing Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan envisioned a wide range of uses and activities developed to urban densities. With this vision, the design of buildings and streetfronts should include a positive and complementary relationship between building development patterns, development intensity (height, scale, massing), natural features and open spaces, and transportation corridors.

- **Transit-oriented development:** The Crossings, a mixed-use multi-family residential development along Civic Drive is an example project built to the required transit-oriented development intensity. It exemplifies development that allows for people to live, work and shop near transit, while providing urban architecture, contributing to neighborhood pride.
- **Design Guidelines:** Civic Neighborhood lacks its own complete set of context-specific design guidelines and standards. The citywide multi-family standards apply to Civic Neighborhood, but the district does not have design district standards for commercial and other non-residential uses. This could lead to different parts of a development project following different sets of guidelines and regulations. Future design standards and guidelines could support the community emphasis on quality design while addressing market conditions and context.
- **Placemaking opportunities:** Prominent intersections with high traffic visibility (such as Burnside and Eastman, Eastman and Division) present placemaking opportunities, or improvements that create memorable and distinctive places. When these sites are redeveloped, there is an opportunity for gateway features to be added to create a sense of arrival and the identity of a unique neighborhood.
- **Infill opportunities:** There are many infill opportunities in the neighborhood that would support the development intensity to establish Civic Neighborhood as an attractive, stimulating, active and safe environment. The Gresham Station retail area was designed for infill with city streets serving potential new development on parking lots if the property owner decides to add more buildings.
- **Development code requirements:** Development code requirements around building heights, density standards and allowed uses should be revisited to resolve existing issues and promote desired development in Civic Neighborhood.

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Zoning allows multi-family residential development such as uses along Wallula and 13th (left) while prohibiting single-family residential development, such as uses along Wallula and Burnside (right), to encourage more intensive use of land in this centralized location near transit.



Multi-story senior housing along Shattuck and Council is another example of an existing intense development that provides an opportunity for people to live and work near transit and adds vitality to the Civic Neighborhood.



Vacant and undeveloped properties owned by Metro (left and right) offer an opportunity to increase public spaces, parks, small plazas and natural spaces into the neighborhood in addition to providing the desired development opportunities near transit stations.

- 1 Challenges/Opportunities
- Civic Neighborhood
- +—+—+ MAX Line
- MAX Station
- ▭ Infill Opportunity
- ▭ Gateway Opportunity
- ▭ Redevelopment Opportunity
- ▭ Development Opportunity



Building Design and Streetfront: The Design and Function of Buildings and Streets

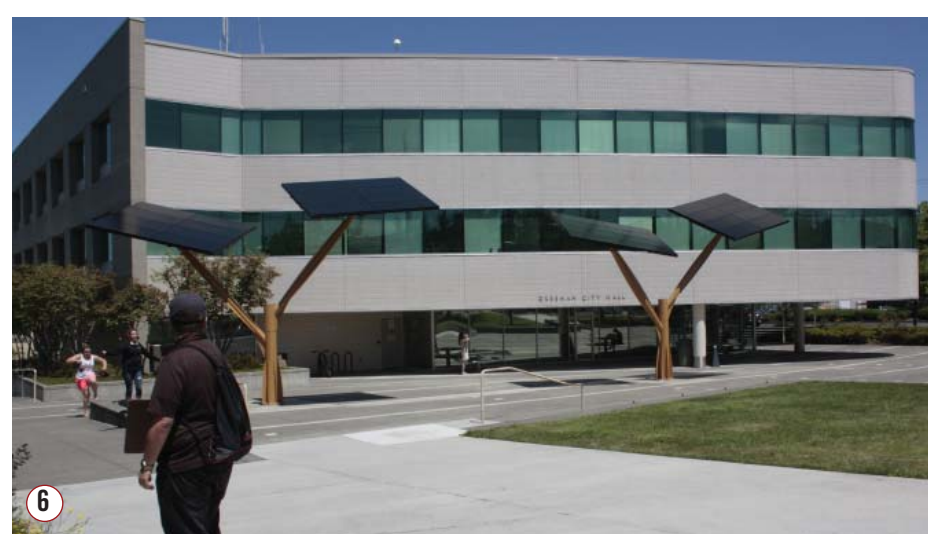




Two- to three-story buildings along 16th and Civic (left) and Council and Civic (center and right) provide examples of potential future multi-story developments in the Civic Neighborhood.



The Crossings is a mixed-use, multi-family residential building with ground floor retail uses. Intense development similar to the Crossings is desired near MAX Stations to provide opportunities to live and work near transit.



The Civic Neighborhood is home to many institutional and civic buildings, notably City Hall (above). The surrounding public spaces (such as plazas, outdoor spaces) can be designed to support these institutions by hosting events/activities and become inviting gathering spaces.



With its good visibility from the street, the Kmart site (12.5 acres) offers an opportunity to incorporate gateway features to the Civic Neighborhood, including distinctive architecture, pedestrian connections and efficient use of space.



Gresham Station features differentiated facades for each tenant space and faux second stories to meet the minimum building height requirements of 22 feet and/or two stories in the entire district. There is an opportunity to revise development regulations (such as minimum height requirements that apply to every street).



Smaller-scale retail development with pedestrian-oriented amenities such as street trees, landscaping and on-street parking or shared parking facilities promote a walkable, vibrant, attractive retail district.

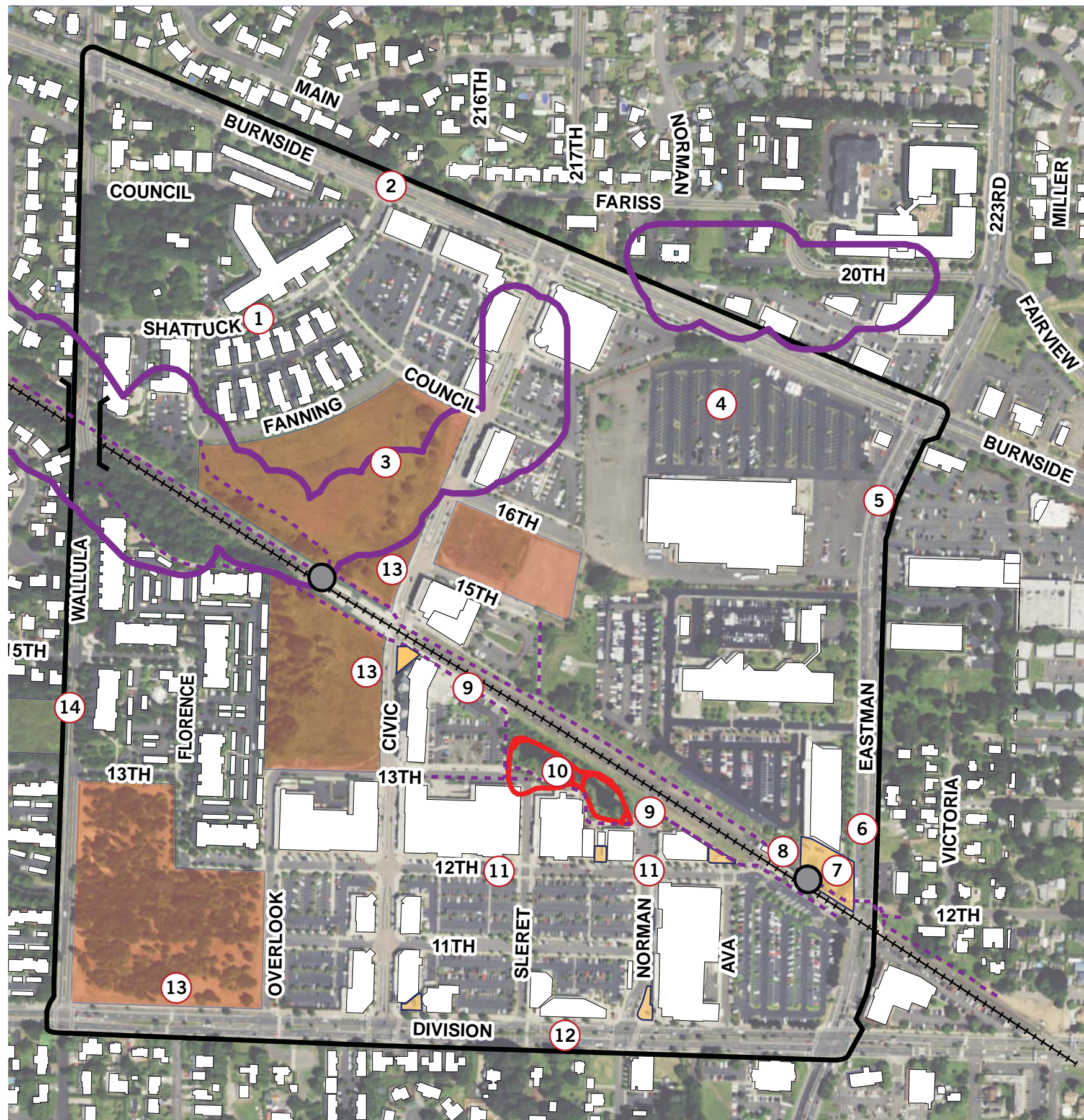


Natural Features and the Public Spaces: Places for People and Green Spaces/Systems.

The Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan envisioned open spaces and natural features that would complement the building development intensity in the neighborhood. The Plan envisioned the public realm to include enhanced pedestrian spaces including plazas, arcades, galleries, courtyards, outdoor cafes, widened sidewalks, benches, shelters, street furniture, public art and kiosks.

- **Smaller parks, plazas and new trails:** There are currently few places for people to gather so they can celebrate, enjoy a quiet moment, play or interact. The existing Wy'East Way path that runs through Civic Neighborhood and along the City Hall plaza is a model for future projects, with its connection to multiple uses and linkages to the larger pedestrian system. New spaces should be distinctive and unique but form a cohesive network of places that are welcoming, easy to navigate, functional and connected. Developing more pedestrian paths, small parks and plazas will create a more complete neighborhood, while providing green space and encouraging social interaction among workers, residents and visitors.
- **City Hall plaza:** City Hall plaza does not serve as a major public space in the neighborhood and city. The addition of amenities such as benches, shade, protection from rain, landscaping and smaller areas to gather would encourage more use throughout the day and during different seasons.
- **Development code requirements:** The Habitat Conservation Overlay, as required by the Development Code, protects the wildlife habitat that is adjacent to the Gresham Station retail area while protecting urban green space for the neighborhood. These requirements should be examined to ensure that they are consistent with community expectations for green and natural areas and the latest approaches to stormwater management and sustainability.
- **Street Standards:** Current street and sidewalk design standards (Section 4.1247) included in Civic Neighborhood development code provide minimal design features that contribute to a pedestrian-oriented streetfront and welcoming public space. Future refinements could reflect the new vision and provide specific recommendations related to public spaces that address and strengthen existing conditions in the neighborhood.

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Streets such as Shattuck and Fanning are designed as neighborhood streets with street trees, on-street parking and pedestrian-scale lighting.



Burnside changes in character towards Eastman, which lacks trees and has frequent curb cuts. Streets with more trees and landscaping, wider, buffered sidewalks and fewer driveways are more inviting to pedestrians.



The Hillside Overlay on Metro-owned property may create development constraints (>15% land slope or higher landslide risk area).



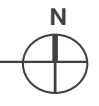
There is an opportunity to enhance the public realm near Burnside and Eastman with pedestrian amenities such as street trees, street furnishings and smaller blocks to improve pedestrian connectivity.



There is an opportunity to implement Boulevard improvements on Eastman (designated as Boulevard in the TSP) in the north towards Burnside with street trees, wider sidewalks with landscaping to buffer pedestrians from traffic.



Parts of Eastman feature street trees and planter strips that improve the walking and biking experience.



Natural Features and the Public Spaces: Places for People and Green Spaces/Systems

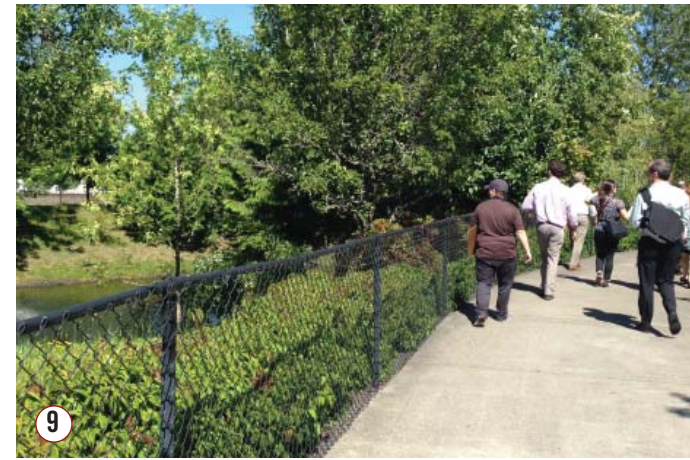




7 With its proximity to the MAX station and trail, City Hall plaza could be revitalized as an inviting gathering space, with a design that would lead to more activities, informal gatherings and events, festivals and programs.



8 The multi-use trail along the City Hall plaza and the City Hall MAX station provides connectivity within the neighborhood and to adjacent neighborhoods and surrounding retail establishments. The trail currently lacks wayfinding and signage information to surrounding destinations.



9 Multi-use trails (above) along with amenities and connections to retail and housing destinations (right) could be replicated in other parts of the neighborhood.



10 This water quality pond (part of a Habitat Conservation Overlay) north of Gresham Station, serves as a neighborhood green space adjacent to a public trail.



11 Streetscapes in Gresham Station retail area include amenities such as street trees, hanging baskets, signage and lighting. These streets and their material palette could serve as the foundation for the district's streetscape design guidelines.



12 Division boulevard improvements such as lighting, street trees and median landscaping which enhance the pedestrian environment. However, the street lacks landscaping between the curb and the sidewalk near Eastman.



14 Wallula offers a streetscape that integrates well with surrounding residential uses. There is an opportunity to add mid-block crossings and other pedestrian amenities.



11 Planters and bulb-outs in the Gresham Station streetscape offer a pleasant pedestrian environment and physical buffer from parking.



13 Vacant land owned by Metro and other property owners could provide opportunities for intense development, integrated natural habitat (left) and streetscape enhancements (right).



4. Next Steps

The City will use this document to provide a baseline of information to inform next steps in this project, including conversations with the community and development of a Design Preference Package. During late summer and fall of 2016, the City held a series of meetings with business owners, education leaders, local government officials and neighborhood representatives to discuss opportunities and challenges in the neighborhood. The City also held a public workshop in September and will hold a second public workshop in November (as well as online surveys) to develop a new vision for the neighborhood and discuss design preferences.

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