

CITY OF
GRESHAM
OREGON

**Civic Neighborhood Vision and
Design District Update**

Policy Framework Plan

Draft | April 2017

Prepared by:



www.migcom.com

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Neighborhood Vision 3

Development Principles 7

Goals and Objectives 14

Next Steps..... 23



MAX
METROPOLITAN AREA EXPRESS

RADIO HELP

DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS

Introduction

In 1995, the City of Gresham adopted the Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan that outlined a vision of a walkable neighborhood with great access to transit and convenient places to live, work, and shop. After nearly 20 years of change, the City initiated a new chapter for the future of the neighborhood, working with residents, businesses, property owners, and other interested parties.

Document Purpose

This document presents an updated, community-supported vision for Civic Neighborhood. It describes general directions that will guide new development, growth, and change. The graphics, visuals, and narrative describe key physical elements of the vision and major opportunities for city leaders and potential developers. The document also provides context for the community and parameters for staff to pursue specific policy changes and guidelines for new development. Specifically, the Policy Framework Plan supports:

- Existing goals and policies that remain relevant to Civic Neighborhood;
- A clear and cohesive vision of future change based on community and stakeholder involvement;
- Development of design guidelines and standards specific to Civic Neighborhood that are consistent with the community's vision and goals for a high-quality built environment; and
- Development rules that balance the need for clarity, flexibility, quality design, and financial feasibility.

Background

The City of Gresham designated the Civic Neighborhood with its own plan district under the first Gresham Civic Neighborhood Plan. 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.” Civic Neighborhood has evolved since 1995 and the City has continued to address the opportunities and challenges facing the area.



One Gresham

The One Gresham initiative focuses on mechanisms that will attract quality development and activate, strengthen and connect the city's three core commercial centers; Rockwood, Civic, and Downtown. One Gresham identifies Civic Neighborhood as a living/shopping village with a community plaza, grocery store, entertainment options, and mixed-use developments.

Gresham Civic Neighborhood Vision and Design District Update

Today, Civic has excellent access to public transit, regional accessibility, good visibility from busy streets, large developable parcels, successful businesses, and an established residential community in a variety of housing types. With these opportunities, the Civic Neighborhood is poised to become a more urban, complete, and connected part of Gresham.

Planning Process

Beginning in the Spring of 2016, the Civic Neighborhood Plan update process included three primary phases of outreach and visioning. This report represents the outcomes of these phases. In the fourth and final phase the City of Gresham will develop policy updates to implement the Policy Framework Plan.



Community Involvement Opportunities

- Issues and Opportunities Community Forum
- Issues and Opportunities Survey
- Neighborhood Association Meeting
- Civic Neighborhood Vision Survey
- Stakeholder Focus Groups
- Community Visioning Workshop
- Student Workshop
- Design Preferences Workshop
- Visual Preference Survey
- Project Website
- Social Media and Emails

Community Involvement

Gresham residents shaped the development of this Policy Framework Plan during community outreach activities throughout the planning process. This project connected with over 1,000 people (in-person or online) through meetings, workshops, questionnaires, and through social media, generating a substantial number of ideas, comments, and opinions from across the community. In addition, the City conducted earlier outreach to gauge interest and opinion on the project scope.

Neighborhood Vision

The vision conveys how Civic Neighborhood will look and feel in the future. It is inspired by the neighborhood's existing advantages and opportunities as well as the interests and ideas of the community.

“Gresham’s Civic Neighborhood is a distinctively urban mixture of uses and people. Inviting, tree-lined streets lead you past lively storefronts and high quality buildings with convenient places to live, work, and shop. The neighborhood’s parks and plazas provide great places to gather, while its active transportation network provides easy access to regional trails, Downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and the greater metro area.”

Expanded Vision

The following six general vision components, or neighborhood values, further describe the envisioned future of Civic.

DESTINATIONS

A place for employment, education, shopping and entertainment: Civic Neighborhood offers a range of options for employment, health care, and higher education. It has a great variety of shops to explore, large and small, with dining, family entertainment, and night life.

DESIGN

Well-designed buildings and places at a human scale: Civic Neighborhood is characterized by a range of high quality businesses and buildings. The design of buildings is timeless, durable, and appealing, at a pedestrian scale and easily accessible. Sustainability is part of this design, with buildings, sites, and public spaces that integrate nature and environmental systems.

PUBLIC SPACES

Integrated public areas and green spaces: Civic Neighborhood features accessible, fun, and welcoming places to gather, play, and relax. Green spaces are interwoven throughout the neighborhood and can be seen along streets and sidewalks and in public parks, small plazas, and natural areas.



An urban neighborhood and community gathering place for all of Gresham: Civic Neighborhood is a place to celebrate Gresham’s most valuable asset: its people. As a true urban center the neighborhood has a range of public spaces and amenities that promote social connections and gathering, and offers places for local art and culture.



Streets, trails, and transit stations that are connected and welcoming: Civic Neighborhood provides safe environments and connections for all modes of travel, with welcoming streets and trails that are direct and easy to navigate within and around the neighborhood.



A convenient place to live, close to amenities: Civic Neighborhood is a great place to call home. Nearby transit connections support a walkable, active community with proximity to jobs and education. Civic is family friendly, with proximity to a range of convenient amenities that are accessible to all ages. A range of housing options are located throughout the neighborhood.

Vision Concept

The following graphic illustrates the Civic Neighborhood Vision, highlighting key opportunities and important relationships that will influence future investment. Specifically, the Vision Concept shows:

- Connectivity through existing and proposed primary and local connections, streets, paths, and light rail. Together, this system links activity areas, public spaces, land uses, and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Design elements, including major and minor gateways into the neighborhood, and green edges/tree canopy that frame streets, paths, different land uses, and public spaces;
- Existing and proposed public spaces, including urban plazas and green parks of different sizes and characteristics. Public spaces include transit stations where there is high potential for mixed-use development and transit-oriented design; and
- Significant land uses, including existing residential to the west and commercial along Division (Gresham Station). The commercial edge highlights the opportunity to expand commercial uses along streets with high visibility. Opportunity sites show the location of large underdeveloped or undeveloped parcels with good potential for redevelopment/development.

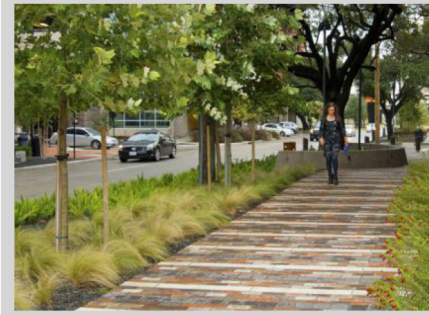
Public Spaces



Multi-Modal Connectivity



Green/Sustainable Design



LEGEND

Connectivity

- Existing Primary Connection
- Existing Local Connection
- Proposed Primary Connection
- Proposed Local Connection
- Existing Streets
- Existing/Proposed Path

Design Elements

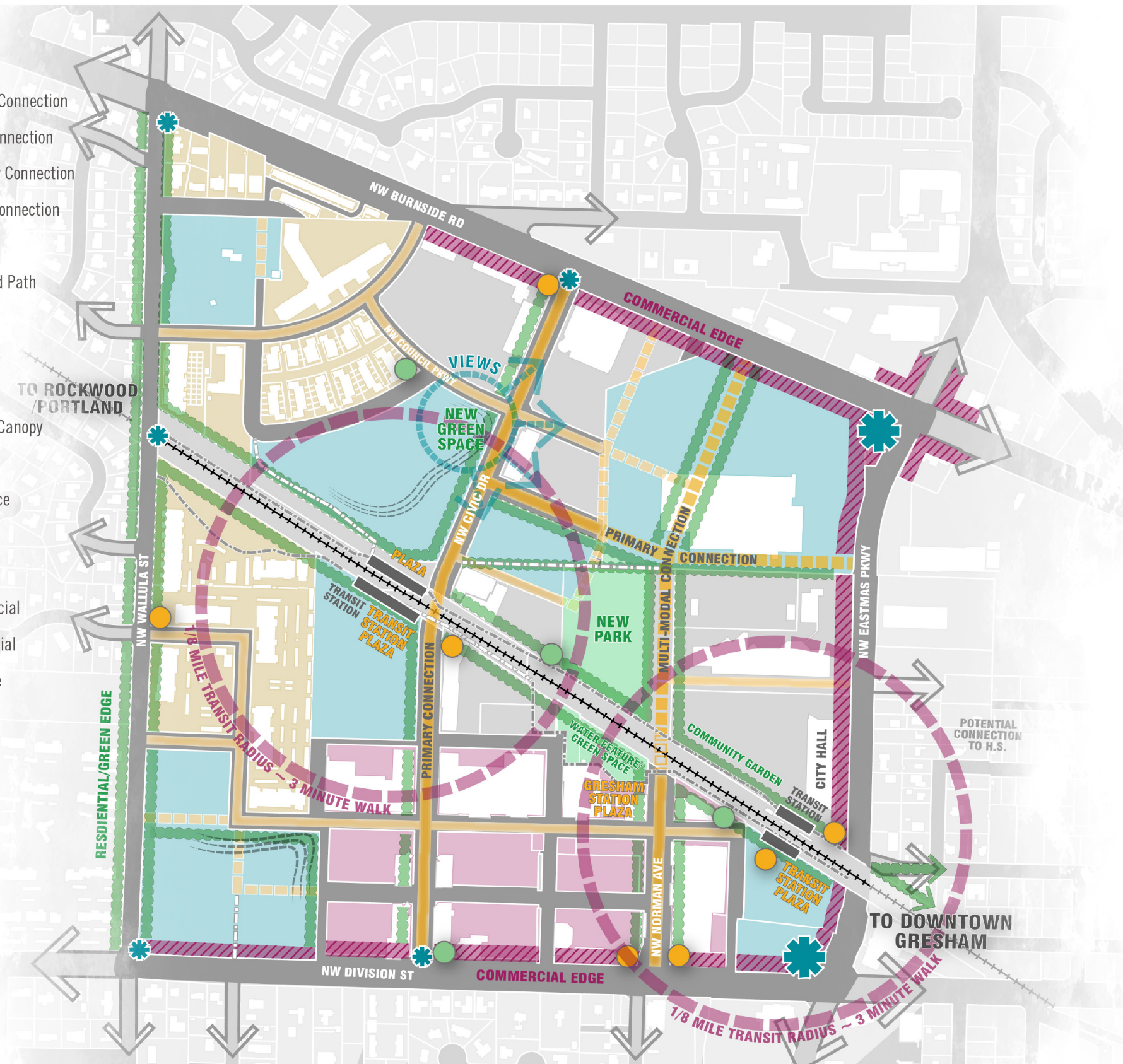
- Major Gateway
- Minor Gateway
- Green Edge/Tree Canopy

Public Spaces

- Small Green Space
- Plaza

Land Uses

- Existing Commercial
- Existing Residential
- Commercial Edge
- Opportunity Sites



Gresham Civic Neighborhood | Vision Concept



Primary Streets/Connections



Local Streets/Connections



Transit-Oriented Focus



Major and Minor Gateways



Development Principles

The following Development Principles provide the fundamental direction to guide future development in the Civic Neighborhood. Based on the Neighborhood Vision, the principles establish comprehensive direction for future design and development and set the tone for more specific goals and objectives. Accompanying photos and visualizations provide illustrated examples to convey the intent of each principle.

1. Design at a Human Scale



2. Support a Mixed-Use Community



3. Enhance Connectivity and Create Active Streetscapes



4. Integrate Public Amenities and Green Spaces



5. Utilize Sustainable Development Practices



6. Promote Excellence in Design and Architectural Expression



1. Design at a Human Scale



Promote development that is welcoming to pedestrians, creates a strong relationship between the building and the street, and creates enjoyable spaces for people to occupy. Designs should result in development that is oriented towards pedestrians, with the right level of detail and interest, and at a scale to draw people and provide a reason to stay and explore.



2. Support a Mixed-Use Community



Land uses should allow for a convenient, urban lifestyle, with a rich mixture of complementary uses including a variety of commercial, residential, and institutional uses. Development intensity should support a neighborhood that is attractive, stimulating, active, safe, and accessible. An inviting mix of uses and variety of housing types will support a diverse population, generate 18-hour activity, and provide options for jobs, housing, shopping, and services.



3. Enhance Connectivity and Create Active Streetscapes



Provide convenient and logical transportation connections within Civic and to surrounding neighborhoods. The design of these connections should promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, supported by active uses and designs, lighting, views, and surveillance. Pedestrian-oriented designs should support and encourage multi-modal transportation including walking, biking, transit, and other modes in a functional, safe, and attractive manner.



4. Integrate Public Amenities and Green Spaces



Integrate public areas, green spaces, and landscaping within and adjacent to developments which connect to streets and trails, create a sense of identity, and serve as centers of activity and social interaction. Designs range from places for families to play, to smaller-scale seating areas, to extensive landscaping and natural areas. Building and site designs will promote fun and healthy public spaces at a comfortable pedestrian scale, encourage interaction between neighbors, and increase opportunities to gather, play, and experience nature.



5. Utilize Sustainable Development Practices



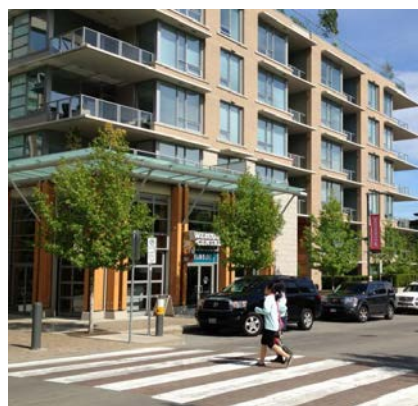
Promote dense and efficient use of land and resources while taking advantage of trees, water, topography, and other natural features to enhance site and building design. A project’s design approach should result in development that makes great places by incorporating environmentally and socially sustainable components into an economically successful project. These strategies can enhance sense of place, support residents’ health, and have a positive impact on the neighborhood’s sustainability and marketability.



6. Promote Excellence in Design and Architectural Expression



Create aesthetically pleasing, durable architecture with diverse, innovative designs that enliven the public realm and contribute to sense of place, neighborhood character, and pride in the city. Use building materials that are high quality, durable, visually attractive, and exhibit the permanence and quality appropriate to an urban district.



Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives inform future policies, projects, and programs to fulfill the neighborhood vision. They provide more specific direction based on the Development Principles.

Neighborhood Identity

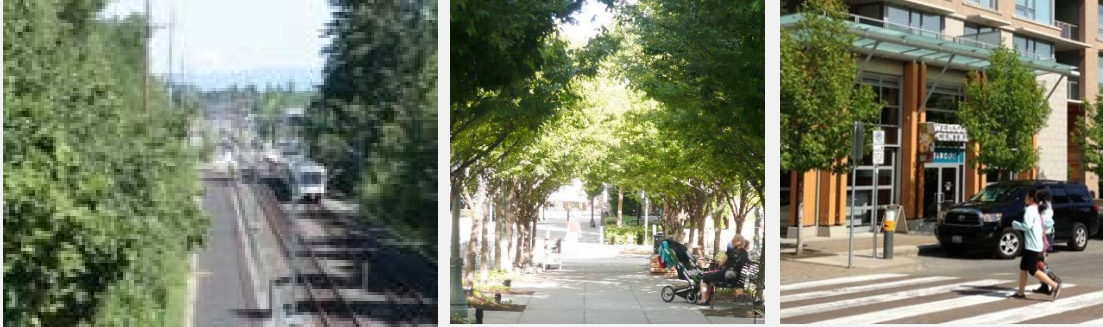
Natural features, public spaces, active streetscapes, and high-quality developments create a strong neighborhood identity and sense of place.



1. Highlight major and minor gateways to convey a sense of arrival to the neighborhood through varied building scales, massing, details, and articulation, as well as landmarks, public art, and signage.
2. Connected parks, plaza, open spaces, and natural areas are located throughout the neighborhood, providing active and iconic spaces for people to gather.
3. Celebrate key views from within the neighborhood to Mt. Hood and the surrounding buttes. Encourage context-sensitive design which minimizes the impact of new development on these views.
4. Promote high-quality mixed-use developments within the neighborhood to catalyze new investment and strengthen the district's identity.

Connectivity

Interconnected streets, sidewalks, transit routes, and trails form a transportation network to and within the neighborhood, which is convenient, safe, and accessible by multiple modes of travel.



1. Create clear and easy-to-access multi-modal connections between activity centers in Civic as well as to Downtown Gresham and the regional system of streets, trails, and transit.
2. Provide walkable site and building designs which place the pedestrian first.
3. Encourage walking, biking and transit use with reduced travel distances within the neighborhood by limiting block lengths and unbroken building façades and creating safe and frequent street and rail crossings.
4. New streets are located to provide clear and convenient access throughout the neighborhood. Updates to proposed future streets follow a simple process similar to that for other areas of the city, and maintain connectivity and performance goals for the neighborhood.
5. Provide clearly identifiable wayfinding systems through the designs of streets, public spaces, and buildings and the use of public art and directional signage.



Streetscape Design

Streets support multi-modal users, are scaled appropriately for their location, and include frontage designs which support active and engaging public spaces at the pedestrian level.



1. A hierarchy of street types support a range of uses and intensities, from primary vehicle routes across the neighborhood to local multi-modal routes and connections unique within the neighborhood.
2. Flexible streetscape designs maximize accessibility and safety for all users and allow for alternative uses such as outdoor dining, public plazas, storefront displays, and residential stoops.
3. Enhanced sidewalk spaces provide pedestrian amenities which blend the public and private realm to create active, vibrant streetscapes.
4. Establish a strong connection between primary building facades and the streetscape through strategies such as locating buildings close to the street edge, orienting primary building entrances to streets, and providing pedestrian scaled details and transparency at the sidewalk level.



Natural Features and Sustainability

Best practices for sustainable urban development are thoroughly integrated throughout the neighborhood, with the area's natural features preserved and highlighted as part of its character and identity.



1. Develop buildings and sites with innovative and best practices for green building and sustainable urban design. Utilize climate responsive design strategies such as solar access and orientation, transit access, east-wind protection, rain protection, etc.
2. Protect, enhance, and celebrate natural features unique to Civic, such as slopes, mature trees, and habitat areas, and integrate them with new developments.
3. Use natural features and man-made elements, such as landscaping and stormwater facilities, to enhance sites and create passive and active green spaces which encourage social interaction on site.

Public Spaces, Green Spaces, and Landscaping

Parks, plazas, open spaces, paths, and other landscaping features form interconnected public spaces and support an urban tree canopy, enhance recreation opportunities, community health, and social interaction throughout the neighborhood.



1. A series of connected plazas, open spaces, and paths are integrated throughout the neighborhood, providing opportunities for social interaction and encouraging visitors to stay and explore.
2. Public gathering spaces at a variety of scales are provided, which support a range of social and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
3. Well-defined gathering spaces provide high levels of visibility within programmed spaces, creating a safe and welcoming environment.
4. Landscaping is prominently incorporated into the design of sites and pedestrian areas, with spaces sized to support passive and active outdoor recreation opportunities for the uses on site.

Mixed Uses and Density

Commercial, residential, institutional, and office uses all fit together at different scales and development intensities to support a diverse population and provide multiple options for jobs, housing, shopping, and services.



1. Develop both vertical and horizontal mixed-use projects with the most active uses located at the street to support an engaging public realm.
2. Provide an active, pedestrian-scaled first floor capable of supporting a wide variety of uses and which allows for transitions between public and private spaces.
3. Include building floor plates at a variety of complementary sizes and scales to support varied functions including residential, commercial, office, entertainment, food, education, medical, institutional, civic and mixed-uses.
4. Support convenient urban living opportunities by providing multiple housing types with a variety of scales, intensities, and ownership structures to encourage a mix of residents, including attached townhomes, live-work units, condominiums, and multi-family apartments. Housing is provided as both multi-family developments and integrated as part of mixed-use projects.
5. Welcome a mix of office uses including start-ups, co-working environments, information services, traditional term-lease office tenants, and business headquarters.
6. Provide family and community-oriented uses which include urban service amenities such as micro food production and brewing or distilling venues with dining and entertainment.

High-Quality Design

Site and building designs create aesthetically pleasing, durable architecture with diverse, timeless designs that enliven the public realm and contribute to a sense of place, neighborhood character, and pride in the city.



1. Provide high-quality urban architecture which promotes a unique sense of place in the neighborhood.
2. Provide rhythm and depth in building massing and articulated facade details which are designed at a pedestrian scale.
3. Include pedestrian-oriented features on street-level facades such as large areas of transparency, weather protection, canopies, and architectural elements that increase visual interest, safety, and activate the public realm.
4. Utilize materials that are high-quality, durable, timeless, and attractive and create a sense of authenticity in the building design.
5. Locate and design signs such that their materials and detailing complement the design of the building and the use to which they relate.

Building Height and Setbacks

Building heights and setbacks support a wide variety of building types, reinforce the urban character of the neighborhood, and provide for active, pedestrian-scaled streetscapes.



1. Minimum height requirements support desired development patterns and uses while maintaining the urban character and human scale of the neighborhood.
2. Allow for greater height in new development to support desired uses, functional building designs, and urban amenities. Taller building heights are transitioned when adjacent to existing lower-scale residential neighbors.
3. Setback requirements are related to adjacent street classifications and street-level building uses, and are designed to establish active commercial streetscapes while also allowing for transitions to first floor residential uses.
4. Building frontage and location is sufficient to activate streetscapes and corners while also allowing for building articulation and active outdoor amenity spaces at the street level.
5. Allow for flexibility in building location where public spaces are provided and/or natural features are protected.

Parking

The presence of parking is visually minimized, with its location secondary to that of buildings and public spaces. Parking area designs are focused on pedestrian safety, connectivity, and landscaping.



1. Support innovative and shared parking strategies to maximize access to parking and reduce site area dedicated to parking.
2. Locate parking behind buildings and minimize the presence of parking near public spaces and streets.
3. Prioritize pedestrian connectivity and safety in the design of new parking lots and structures.
4. Provide landscaping and green infrastructure design in parking lots to minimize the impacts of paved areas.

Next Steps

For the past several years, the City, its residents, and neighborhood stakeholders have imagined a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhood with a mixture of uses. Building on these ambitions, and re-energized and renewed through the update process, a new vision will guide future investment and change:

“Gresham’s Civic Neighborhood is a distinctively urban mixture of uses and people. Inviting, tree-lined streets lead you past lively storefronts and high quality buildings with convenient places to live, work, and shop. The neighborhood’s parks and plazas provide great places to gather, while its active transportation network provides easy access to regional trails, Downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and the greater metro area.”

Although visionary and forward-thinking, the desired future of Civic Neighborhood will require continued and ongoing leadership and wide-reaching support, as well as clearly defined policies that implement the vision. Through this Policy Framework, the City will craft new development regulations and design guidelines and standards to implement the vision and to shape the future of Gresham’s Civic Neighborhood.