



LAKE OSWEGO NORTH END DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



STAKEHOLDERS

LORA
Stakeholders Advisory Group
Friends of the Lake Oswego Library
Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce
Lake Oswego Downtown Business
District Association
Lakewood Center for the Arts

STUDY TEAM

Leland Consulting Group
Myhre Group Architects
DKS Associates
KPFF Consulting Engineers Inc.
GEL Oregon Inc.
Rick Williams Consulting
Lake Oswego Library
LORA

CONFIDENTIAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY



LELAND CONSULTING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

The confidential interview process is a technique for communicating in a small and confidential format. It allows Leland Consulting Group, as strategic advisors, to understand the hopes, concerns, willingness, resistance, and other forces that must be understood in order for development and revitalization to go forward.

The purpose of the stakeholder interview process is to gather confidential information from community leaders and activists. This information is used to assure that the team develops a plan that solves the right problems and employs an approach that responds appropriately to local conditions. The interview process elicits candid, directed commentary and builds an environment that leads to trust and collaboration from the start.

Process

Using a process developed by the Urban Land Institute nearly 40 years ago, and in collaboration with LORA, Leland Consulting Group scheduled consecutive 50-minute interviews with approximately 25 community leaders divided into groups of three to four people. All commentary was documented but is not attributed to any individual and is used exclusively to encourage a thorough understanding of the community's interests and needs from a cross section of leaders.

This process aims to identify patterns among comments from stakeholders and as such, we have organized and catalogued comments related to particular topics that were of interest to each interview group.

You will find consolidated findings and patterns identified in the stakeholder interviews in the following pages.

LIBRARY

Although opinions about the library design, location, services, and character varied, the confidential stakeholder interviews illuminated the community's overwhelming support for a library that will meet the current needs of the community with the future needs of Lake Oswego's students, small businesses, community groups, and library visitors.

Stakeholders emphasized the need for an iconic civic building with the comfortable community feel of the existing downtown. Topics of particular interest were integrating technology and meeting space—elements of a “library of the future” in the development of a new facility.

Stakeholders also stressed the civic and symbolic importance of a downtown library.

With the possibility of schools consolidating, it will be very important to consider proximity to the schools so that kids can be bused to the library after school. It will also be important to remember access for school buses.

In favor of library downtown but want to understand why a library is necessary, how it will be built and how it will be financed.

The library would be a very good anchor in the downtown area because of how busy it always is.

Having the library downtown creates an important civic presence and draws for the Lake Oswego population.

It is important that if the library is built it has the iconic presence of an historic civic building, not just a privately developed and contemporary building.

The library should last 50 to 100 years in its design and construction.

It is very important to locate a library near different transit options so downtown would be a perfect location, especially with the streetcar line.

Chuck's Coffee Shop is often used as a community meeting space for PTA and because it is warm, cozy, and offers space. The library should offer similar space because there is a great need that isn't being met by enough spaces downtown.

A library is an emotionally laden place, much like a school or a church. To have a successful library experience, when a visitor enters a library there doesn't need to be that intake of breath that occurs when you enter an overwhelming or cutting-edge space. The visitor should have that outflow of breath, that sigh, that people give when they enter a place that is welcoming, a place where they feel they can find what they need, whether it is information, escape, or simply a connection with other people and other minds.

HOUSING

Interest in additional housing in the downtown area was reflected throughout the interviews and across demographic groups. Stakeholders resoundingly agreed that in order to support downtown businesses and build a stronger base for foot traffic, retail spending, and comfortable living for Lake Oswego's older population, more dense multi-family housing (owner and renter-occupied housing) would be needed. This was reflected by downtown business and property owners as well as downtown residents.

Many community members emphasized the importance of retaining Lake Oswego's older citizens who will eventually downsize but have few options within Lake Oswego for where to move affordably. They stressed that retaining those community members will help circulate very loyal spending back into the community, which would present an added benefit and support the intent of an "anchor" catalyst development.

Downtown needs more housing diversity to accommodate changing populations.

Within the next five years, many older Lake Oswego residents (55 years old and over) will be downsizing their homes. This group will need more affordable one-level apartments.

Older demographics would prefer taller residential buildings with elevators, one level units with views at somewhere between \$200,000 to \$300,000. This demographic is very committed to Lake Oswego and would prefer to stay in Lake Oswego as they downsize but there is currently nowhere for them to go.

Aging downtown residents are also big downtown spenders, purchasing on average 25 percent of toys.

Although the City is considering development in the Foothills, this should not preclude development in the North End of downtown. The views are different and residents might also be different.

RETAIL

Discussions of retail within the proposed library site inevitably resulted in greater discussions of retail within the downtown core. The prospect of creating an anchor was inextricably linked to the effect it would have on downtown retail and what type of retail development stakeholders were interested in seeing. Among the numerous priorities for downtown retail were to preserve the unique character of the downtown, offer more diverse options for dining and entertainment at different price points, and encourage retail development that meets the growing needs of different demographic groups like Lake Oswego's young people and aging populations.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of preserving affordable services and local businesses in the downtown core, but also improving upon the look of and function of downtown buildings.

Unique Retail for Lake Oswego's Downtown

Downtown needs more art galleries and artsy shops to create a more unique impression and draw people in from other areas. We do not want to mimic Bridgeport Village or downtown Portland. By offering something unique and special and capitalizing on Lake Oswego's focus on art, downtown can create its own identity.

Lake Oswego should bring a mix of national retailers to help attract people from across the area but focus more on local neighborhood shops.

Local business owners are the ones who support the community by donating to school clubs and organizations. Dollars spent at national retailers leave Lake Oswego. Focusing on unique, local businesses will help dollars spent in downtown recirculate downtown.

This project needs to consider creating affordable retail space that encourages local businesses to grow and offers rents that more unique local tenants can pay.

We do not want everything to look like Lake View Village and Bridgeport Village—the North Anchor can have its own character and make downtown diverse.

The farmer's market does a wonderful job at pulling people from across the area to downtown, but those dollars don't stay there. In a new development, we need to create opportunity for local businesses as well.

Preserving Existing Services

Everything that someone might need is readily available downtown. For example, a key-making shop, a hair salon, a pharmacy. Other downtowns become so fancy that they eliminate some of those basic convenience services that are very important to the Lake Oswego community. Those must be preserved.

Although the physical building isn't attractive, Rite Aid provides an important function in the downtown. Would Rite Aid consider moving nearby and free up their building for redevelopment?

Lake View Village

Despite a down economy, activity at Lake View Village is up because of the unique and social character of the Lake Oswego community.

Lake View Village has had an enormous impact on downtown businesses and more development like that would be very good for the downtown.

Restaurants have been especially successful at Lake View Village and it is wonderful to see people out on the streets meeting with their neighbors.

Need for Additional Specialty Grocery Uses

Trader Joe's would be a huge draw to downtown. Many people already drive to the location off of I-5 instead of shopping at the downtown grocery stores.

Existing downtown grocers do not all have enough of a selection to satisfy our needs.

Often go to nearby grocers outside of downtown because it is more convenient.

Need for More Restaurant Uses

Downtown needs another sandwich shop.

Downtown needs more breakfast and lunch shops and a deli.

Chuck's Coffee Shop is a great location and is always full. More shops like Chuck's would complement their business and give people diverse places to go for coffee.

We need an inexpensive burger place where young people can grab a meal. There is no such thing in the downtown and people have to go down Macadam for 10 minutes.

Lake Oswego needs more diverse restaurants at different price points.

Need for more Men's and Women's Apparel Stores

There are currently no men's shops other than Pendleton's.

A mid-range men's shop would help people to continue coming to downtown.

The Glass Butterfly attracts teenage and older women but we need more women's apparel that accommodates younger generations than Chico's.

Need for More Entertainment Uses, Particularly for Younger Populations

Young people currently have nowhere to go, eat, or shop downtown. There are no clothing shops that young people would want to use.

Young people really enjoy resale clothing shops—it might be good to consider some of those as you find in the Hawthorne area in Portland.

The Lakewood Theatre would be great to have downtown, as it might attract some younger audiences.

Downtown would benefit from a movie theatre, a club, or entertainment facilities that draw young people downtown.

Currently, young people have no need to come to the downtown area unless it is to get ice cream. A library would be a great draw but it would need to be supported by other retail.

Retail Development Between A and B on First

Blocks between A and B are greatly underdeveloped. As we consider this anchor project, we should be thinking in the larger context of how that impacts the entire block between A and B as well as State Street and First.

Developing the block between A and B will intensify the diversity of retail. It is very important that the downtown has a more diverse mix of stores and services.

The study group should investigate using the alleys as another shopping district between the library and Lake View Village.

DENSITY AND BUILDING HEIGHTS

Stakeholders who were interviewed strongly favored density and raising building height limits to accommodate more residential development and therefore more foot traffic to the downtown area.

Downtown needs more density in order to support downtown retail.

The First Addition Neighborhood wouldn't be bothered by building taller as its views aren't impacted by taller development.

Strongly supportive of taller buildings particularly for downtown residents as they would want nice views of Mount Hood.

Downtown Lake Oswego cannot stay at a small scale if it wants to grow.

Four stories isn't tall enough! Build eight!

Other development projects have previously proposed taller building heights and met some opposition from the neighborhood. Lake Oswego needs to go with the times and break away from 50 year old building heights.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING PLANNING

While stakeholders would like the project team to investigate traffic impacts of higher density development, the prospect of greater traffic to the downtown area was more welcome by interviewed stakeholders, as it would support downtown businesses.

Some people find it hard to find on-street parking while others find parking in the downtown abundant.

A streetcar would be very convenient to draw people in from downtown Portland and additional parking would be helpful.

We want ample parking but not so much that it creates the perception that downtown isn't busy. Northwest 23rd is a great example. People circle for a long time before finding a parking spot, but it does not stop them from shopping there.

Parking lots are located at all 100 percent corners. We would like to see redevelopment there such that there is enough space to park but that downtown feels walkable and that you want to shop throughout the downtown.

PUBLIC FINANCE

While stakeholders overwhelmingly support efforts to create a strong library in the downtown area, many stakeholders expressed great interest in how the project would be financed and expressed strong interest in investigating and developing creative financing options including but not limited to: public-private partnerships, employing LORA funds, and raising private funds through the library's endowment.

People appreciate development but feel as though that development and public dollars need to be handled responsibly.

A bond measure may be a tough sell in this economic environment and/or in the near future.

Other projects such as City Hall, the West End Building, and public utilities expenses might make this project a challenging sell for a bond measure.

There is concern that a public facility would take additional potentially private dollars off the tax rolls.

The project should use LORA funds to help contribute to development costs.

Would be supportive of a lease-back option for funding the library.

The library endowment should be used to fund the project or additional funds should be raised through private fundraising.

Although a bond measure could be a tough sell, it encourages public input and approval, which would help in building interest and support for a library.

WEST END BUILDING

Questions regarding the West End Building were raised. While few stakeholders raised the question of filling vacancies in the West End Building with library facilities, many stated that the West End Building would be an inappropriate location for the City's central library. The discussion did encourage further review into financing options in light of the current economy and the status of public facilities such as the West End Building and City Hall.

The West End Building remains an important issue that needs to be resolved.

The economy hasn't played favorably to holding the West End Building.

The West End is not the center of activity.

That the City continues to owe a lot of money on the West End Building may compel people to oppose another new project with public money until the West End Building concerns are resolved.

Downtown residents and nearby East side residents would never go to the library at the West End Building because it's too far and isolated for the library.

Residents of the First Addition Neighborhood would be pleased to retain the library in the downtown area instead of moving it to the West End Building.

There is a great deal of money being invested in a small area. This may become a concern for Lake Grove residents where rent is cheaper and parking is abundant. Additional education as to the need for a library downtown might be necessary.

PROPERTY EAST OF STATE STREET

The property is difficult to access, parking is a challenge.

This property should not be used as retail because it is difficult to access. It could instead be an ideal location for employee parking for downtown employees.

This site could also become an ideal gateway into the Foothills project, using the intersection of B and State Street as a crosswalk with a staircase below.