

# Bend Central District MMA - Memorandum

To: Wendy Robinson, City of Bend

From: Ben Weber – SERA Architects

Copy: Devin Hearing, Rod Cathcart - Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Matt Hastie – Angelo Planning Group

Date: 21 January 2014

Re: **Tech Memo #7 Urban Design Character of the Bend Central District MMA**

## Overview

The City of Bend has been awarded a Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) grant in order to develop a plan for the Bend Central District Multi-Modal Mixed Use Area (MMA). An MMA designation may be applied by local governments to downtowns, town centers, main streets, or other mixed-use areas where the local government determines that there is:

- Potential for high-quality connectivity to and within the area by modes of transportation other than the automobile;
- A denser level of development of a variety of commercial and residential uses than in surrounding areas;
- A desire to encourage these characteristics through development standards; and
- An understanding that increased automobile congestion within and around the MMA is accepted as a potential trade-off.

This work will build upon work previously completed for the Bend Central Area Plan (CAP) and focus specifically on an area along and on either side of the 3rd Street corridor east of the Parkway. The Bend MMA plan will look at ways to improve connections for people traveling in the area by foot, bike, bus, car, or freight truck. It will explore ways to develop the area in the future to include a combination of housing, businesses, shops and other uses to create a distinct and vibrant district. The project will define an MMA boundary and will include amendments to the Bend General Plan (comprehensive plan), Transportation System Plan (TSP), and Development Code to allow future land use changes and redevelopment in the MMA if an MMA designation is recommended. Pursuant to the Transportation Planning Rule, an MMA designation must meet specific requirements, which are listed in Table 1.

This memorandum addresses the following topics:

- Evaluate how the land use and transportation recommendations of the MMA plan could impact the urban design and built characteristics of the Bend Central District (BCD)
- Communicate a vision for pedestrian-friendly multi-modal streets and a vibrant built environment consisting of a variety of commercial, residential, industrial, and open spaces throughout the BCD MMA.

## CAP Urban Design Character Assumptions

### General Vision

The Central Area Plan prepared in 2005-2007 describes the future vision for the Bend Central District as:

*“The Third Street Corridor and the area between it and the [railroad] is a new, mixed-use, east side downtown neighborhood connecting area residents and other users to Third Street and the Downtown Core. [The District provides] a close-in location accommodating commercial, residential and other uses...This stylish, urbane district is characterized by higher density uses and taller structures than found elsewhere in the Central Area. A diversity of housing opportunities for all income levels is balanced with moderate scale employment and retail uses....”* (Bend Central Area Plan, p. 25)

Specific goals of the CAP address a range of street and urban character intention, including:

- A hierarchy of street types and well-planned intersection developments areas where streets cross;
- A thorough network of open spaces connected by inviting, tree-lined streets;
- Preserving the unique character of Bend while accommodated the taller, high-density single and mixed-use development demanded by the market;
- (Re)developing large underused sites, especially along the Third Street corridor; and
- Providing ample opportunities for light industrial, multi-family residential, office, live/work, retail/dining, and mixed-use (re)development.

The MMA project acknowledges and builds upon most of the recommendations from the CAP, while making necessary adjustment to allow for changing market conditions and public interests for the BCD. The CAP recommends converting 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from a five-lane to three-lane street with on-street parking and bicycle lanes on both sides of the street. The CAP also recommends converting 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets in the BCD into a couplet pair as a means of diverting through traffic off of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. However, other options also were considered for improving and reconfiguring 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets. All of those options are being re-assessed and considered as part of the BCD MMA study.

At this time, the project team is considering a variety of options for the design of these streets.

However, for illustration purposes, the team is showing the following conditions:

- All streets in the district remain 2-way
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is converted to a three-lane street as described in the CAP. <sup>1</sup>
- Maximum building heights would be six to eight stories in the Central District, with lower heights along 4<sup>th</sup> Street (compared to potential 10-12 story development as envisioned in the CAP)

Additional detail about recommendations for the MMA can be found in *Tech Memo #5 Multi-modal Level of Service and Tech Memo #6 Summary of Impacts of MMA on Land Use*. These conditions and

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<sup>1</sup> Other options would retain 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as a five-lane street with modest improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities there and more significant improvements to those facilities on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

assumptions maybe refined based on the results of the analysis summarized in Tech Memo #5 and further conversation with project advisory committees and other community members.

## **District Framework**

The MMA is a tool that will allow the Central District to meet the city's development objectives for the area and grow in a more sustainable, human-friendly manner that provides transportation, housing, employment, and recreational opportunities for a growing number of people. It will require decades of public and private investment to realize this vision. The framework for the BCD provides general guidance on land uses, transportation networks, key activity nodes, green space, and built character. Future projects of all sizes and scopes should be vetted against the vision outlined in the framework, which reflects many of the aspirations of the public and stakeholders for the District.

### **Key Corridors**

3<sup>rd</sup> Street will be the high-density mixed-use hub of the District. As noted previously, one option being considered is to reduce 3<sup>rd</sup> Street down to three lanes, allowing for the addition of bicycle lanes, on-street parking, and wider sidewalks with trees and stormwater facilities. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets are expected to have pedestrian improvements and significant greening (i.e. street trees, other landscaping, and potentially the use of natural stormwater filtration facilities, where feasible). Major east-west connections (Revere, Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin) will support pedestrian-friendly retail, office, and housing and create more welcoming and accessible connections between the BCD and downtown Bend.

### **Multi-modal Streets**

3<sup>rd</sup>, Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin in particular will be enhanced with improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections within and throughout the District. The MMA designation is intended to reduce automobile reliance for people living, working, and visiting the BCD – strengthened alternative transportation options will help people move about without cars.

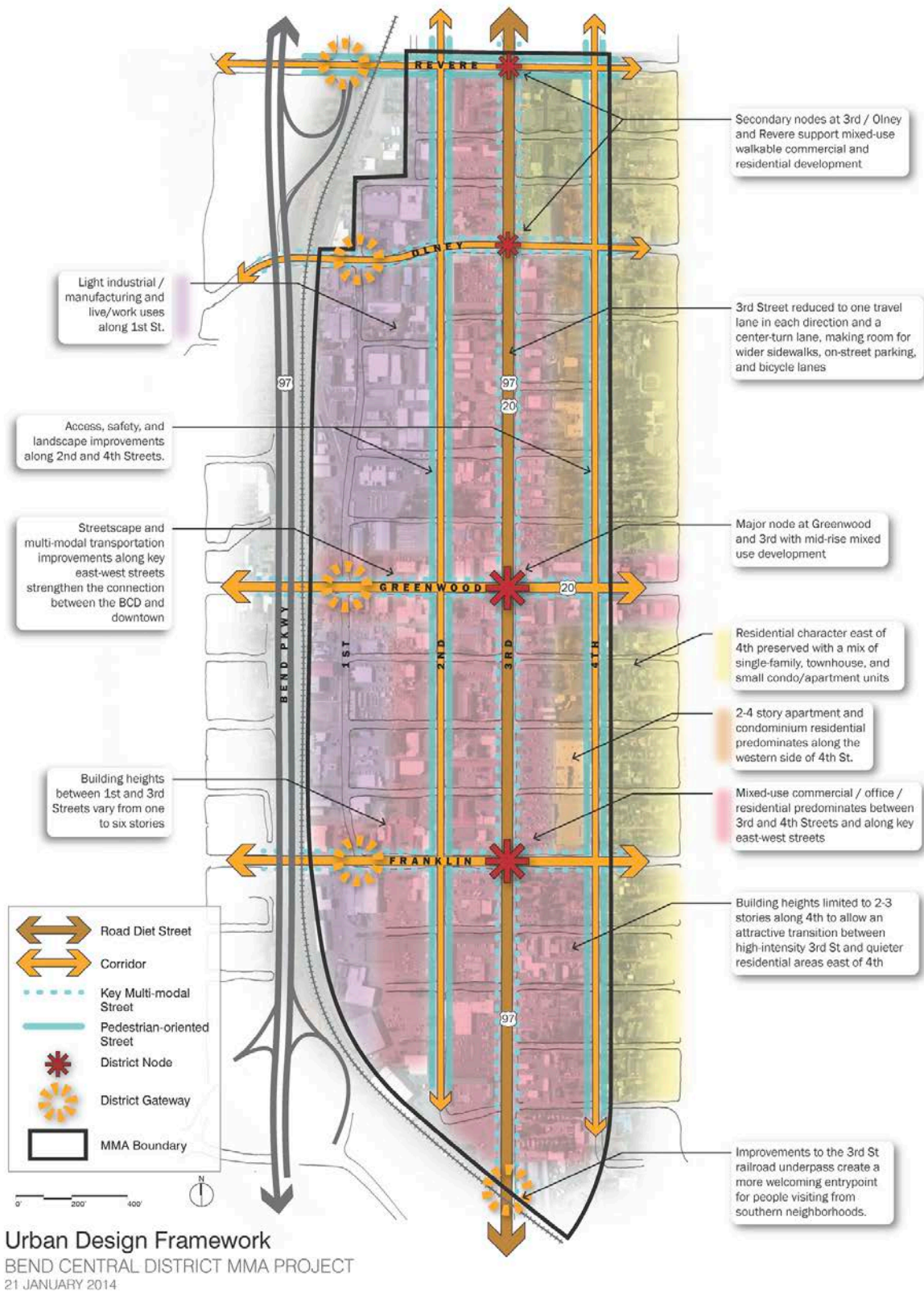
### **District Nodes**

Major (re)development and activity nodes along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Revere, Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin will host the highest-activity businesses, shops, restaurants, and living quarters. Safer street crossings, public open space, wide sidewalks, outdoor retail and dining, and other amenities will boost the attractiveness of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor. These nodes will be the heart of 18-hour-a-day activity in the District.

### **District Gateways**

The Bend Parkway and railroad track makes it particularly difficult to travel between the BCD and downtown, the riverfront, the Old Mill District, and other areas to the south and west. Key streets will continue to have to pass underneath the Parkway and tracks, but welcoming gateway features at these locations can improve wayfinding and announce to people their arrival in the Bend Central District. Gateways can take the form of well-designed streetscapes, artwork, vibrant businesses fronting the street, open space, or any other amenity that defines the unique character of the district. In addition, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities associated with these under-crossing are recommended.

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## General Land Uses

Across a mere few blocks east to west, the BCD spans a number of proposed land use and character types. Land uses in the MMA will help create new zones of activity while preserving much of the rich residential heritage that lines the eastern edge of the BCD.

- Along 1<sup>st</sup> Street, a combination of light industrial, infill, and live/work uses will provide employment lands and help buffer the high-activity 3<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor from noise, sight, and pollution impacts of the Parkway and railroad. Structures here will be predominately 1-3 stories in height.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will host a mix of office, residential, and select retail uses. It will be a transitional zone that builds up to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and provides some back-of-house access to shipping/loading and parking.
- The District's highest-density mixed-use will line 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Multi-family housing and/or office uses will occupy the floors above ground-story retail, restaurant, and service office uses. These buildings will range from 4-6 stories and will be of the best architectural detail. Most parking will be underground structured, or tuck-under. Small lots may be transformed into public open spaces and parks, providing gathering spaces along this busy commercial corridor.
- In addition to some mixed-use, multi- and single-family housing will line 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Development here will be limited to at most three stories to transition between taller 3<sup>rd</sup> Street development and existing homes east of 4<sup>th</sup>. By emphasizing residential uses, street traffic will be lighter as most commercial movements stays on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Concept Illustrations

The two illustrations shown here depict a concept vision for the overall building massing and open spaces in the District and a vision of the types of lively street activities and mix of uses possible on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street after it is reduced to three lanes.



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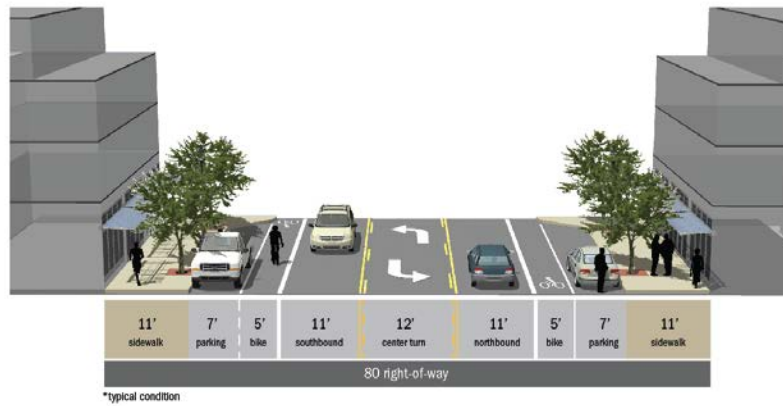
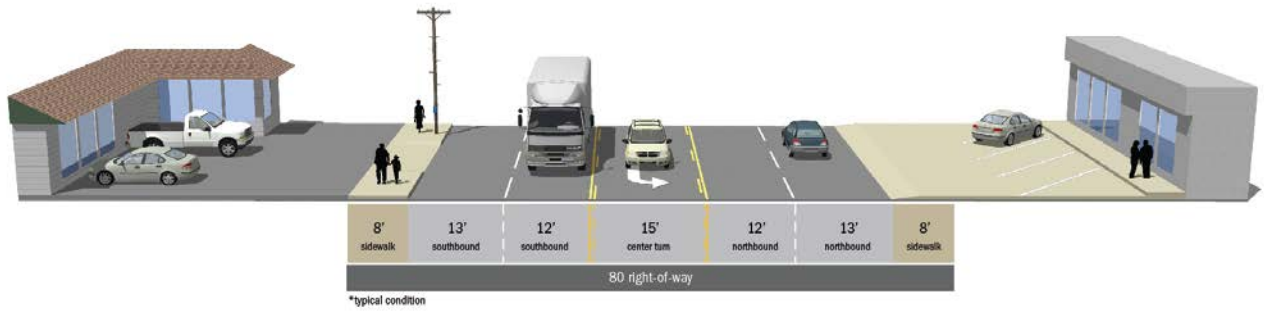


The highest intensity uses in the BCD are concentrated on 3rd Street and the main east-west streets (Revere, Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin). Building heights up to six stories are possible along these streets, with heights tapering down to 1-3 stories. (This illustration is in-progress and will soon be completed)



By reducing 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from five to three lanes, it is possible to add on-street parking, bicycle lanes, and wider sidewalks with plantings, lighting, and stormwater facilities. This will help create a more inviting and vibrant commercial corridor full of retail restaurants and provide a variety of housing options for people of all ages and income levels. Buildings come to the property line edge and entrances are oriented to the street. High levels of window coverage provide views into and out of businesses and awnings and benches create welcoming informal gathering and resting spots. It is important to note that this is one alternative currently being studied for the BCD MMA Plan. Depending on impacts on traffic mobility and circulation in the Central District, this concept may be refined as the project moves forward.

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The MMA plan supports the CAP's vision of reducing 3rd Street from five (above) to three lanes (below) and adding better walking, bicycling, and transit facilities. As noted previously, this is one of the alternatives currently being studied for the BCD MMA Plan and it may be refined as the project moves forward.