**Downtown Revitalization**

**Civilis Downtown Walking Tour on 5/26/25**

**Summary of Observations**

**Attendees:**

* Mayor Frank Bubenick
* Councilors Valerie Pratt, Bridget Brooks and Cyndy Hillier
* Planning Commissioners Allan Parachini and Randall Hledik
* Susan Noack, CAC Member
* Michele Reeves, Civilis Consultants
* Sidaro Sin, City of Tualatin Urban Renewal / Economic Development Manager

**Note:**

The summary is intended to provide general observations not attributed to any one person, order, or priority, but collectively made during the tour. Nothing about these observations should be construed as a final finding or recommendations.

**Summary:**

“Downtowns” are built along a “street grid system” with store fronts facing outward toward sidewalks which run parallel with the streets. By this definition Tualatin has a limited amount of “downtown” exposure. We have more of a “plaza” which has an inward orientation around the lake, as well as some adjacent small shopping areas.

There are at least four distinct activity areas of the city core that currently do not facilitate walkable connectivity: 1) the Tualatin Commons around the lake, 2) the New Seasons/Bass Pro Shop store cluster (including city hall and library), 3) the Floor & Decor/Staples store cluster, and 4) the Tualatin Community Park. (Maybe a fifth and sixth area would be the Fred Meyer cluster and the former Shari’s restaurant/Starbucks cluster.)

The city’s “Main Street” runs along Boone’s Ferry Road between the Tualatin River Bridge and the VFW building, and perhaps on to Tualatin-Sherwood Road.

People aren’t aware that Tualatin has a “lake”. Additionally, motorists passing through Tualatin on T-S and Boones Ferry roads don’t have a clear idea that they have entered the core area. (Tualatin’s current city monuments are not particularly visible.)

Residents have mixed feelings about the “lake”. Outdoor eating space is popular on nice days, but limited. Lack of shade makes lounging on benches or playing in the children’s water feature uncomfortable on hot days. The Pumpkin Regatta draws big crowds, but otherwise the lake is underused.

Development of vacant land and redevelopment of existing buildings rests primarily with private owners. But public funds can provide infrastructure improvements as well as financial incentives for upgrading and vitalizing the core. Key to success is a public/private partnership; if one doesn’t already exist, the formation of a “downtown business association” might be worthwhile to promote collaboration.

Examples of communities that have had levels of success with mixed use development in recent years include West Linn, Corvallis, Eugene and Salem. Perhaps ideas and lessons learned can be gleaned from their experiences.

Some viewed Orenco Station as a good mixed-use model that could apply here.

Need to provide visual cues to let people know that there is a “downtown”.

There are opportunities to improve that will require the cooperation and/or participation of property owners in the area that may not currently exist.

It’s important that this study balance work of eating away at the problem from around the edges---creating a food truck court; using existing parking lots for things like car and craft shows, creating a farmers market event so large and comprehensive it would draw people from all over the city and working harder to create more of a sense of activity around the lake—especially in the evening hours—and ginning up more events and similar things—to use as leverage with property owners.

Induced teenagers to see the downtown as a desirable destination, that would do a great deal to shift the momentum.

Challenge in the nature of the buildings in the downtown area, which doesn’t lend itself to the tasks at hand.

Need connectivity for all modes and to abutting developed areas.

It was observed on Saturday people need more shaded areas as people were congregated under the shady areas around the splash pad.

We need to focus on all youth in the community – make this a multi-generational active area.

Frontage improvements would make the area more attractive to people and businesses.

The Commons are self-contained and the sea of parking lots which are empty most of the time are not inviting and do not draw people to the Commons.

It was noted the possibility of the Sweek House one day being an attraction.

The gravel lot could be redeveloped.

A lot of time, money, and effort is spent on one-time events at the Lake of the Commons that don’t necessarily bring people back throughout the year.

We have to have foot traffic in this area. One idea is to add paddle boats that look like pumpkins. We need something to make people show up and walk around.