

# Memorandum



9/29/2016

**To:** Hood River Westside Area Plan Project Management Team (PMT)  
**Cc:** Consultant team  
**From:** Joe Dills and Andrew Parish, Angelo Planning Group  
**Re:** Task 1.4 - Stakeholder Interview Summary

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## OVERVIEW

Angelo Planning Group conducted a series of interviews with property owners and stakeholders on August 30, 2016 at Hood River City Hall, plus 2 telephone interviews on September 28 and 29. The following stakeholders were interviewed:

- Andy von Flotow, property owner, with Claudia von Flotow, and Carlos Garrido, PE.
- Alex Podolack, Creekside Phase 1 PUD HOA President, and Jeremy Ziegler, resident of the Hawk Meadow neighborhood at 30<sup>th</sup> and Red Tail Loop
- Mark Fuentes, property owner in the study area
- Doug Beveridge, developer, and Mike Kits, builder
- Linda Maddox, former planning commissioner and HOA representative of HOPE Terrace, with Anna Cavaleri, resident of the Hawk Meadows subdivision
- Alice Wilson, resident and family member of property owner in the study area
- David Ryan, property owner and owner of local food processing company, with Hal Ueland, employee.
- Rich Hanners, orchard owner (via telephone)
- Rick Brock, irrigation district representative (via telephone)

## KEY THEMES HEARD FROM MULTIPLE RESPONDENTS

1. Interviewees were generally very interested in **transportation connections** and looking at **alternatives**, both in terms of overall connections and the **Mt. Adams extension and the Mt. Adams / Cascade intersection** specifically. There was general support for the Mt Adams connection, but concern regarding its alignment and impact on properties and existing streets.
2. There was strong support for a **high level of connectivity** overall, and for **safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian connections**.
3. Stakeholders expressed an interest in **safe and livable neighborhoods**, in terms of traffic safety and having a tight-knit community of neighbors. **Diversity of people and diversity of housing** were mentioned multiple times as a means to achieve a vibrant neighborhood.
4. Maintaining and building upon the **existing, unique character of Hood River** was mentioned several times.

5. The portion of the study area near Cascade was suggested by stakeholders as being more appropriate for mixed use/multifamily development and attached housing, primarily because of proximity to transportation facilities and other services.
6. The **need for more housing** within the city was clear to stakeholders.
7. **Communication by email and through existing groups** such as the Hood River Valley Residents Committee were suggested as good approaches for public involvement.
8. Stakeholders had mixed opinions about whether a locally-serving commercial node was appropriate for the area.

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY QUESTION

The bullet points below are selected responses from the interviewees. Responses from all interviews are grouped under each question.

### What are the key issues and concerns for you or your organization regarding the plan?

- Owner of several large properties in the study area who has essentially “paused” their development in order for this process to figure out some big issues.
- Transportation and affordable housing.
- Slope of roads is a concern in the winter – it is a safety hazard.
- Managing roads and traffic – particular concern of safety of children in the neighborhood.
- Proposed connection of Mt. Adams, or any major street through the area, sounds like a high-traffic road that is not needed.
- Not enough parking provided as part of new housing.
- There are no sidewalks on many roads today, such as May St.
- There are no bike lanes on several roads that are otherwise good connections.
- Congestion/safety at intersections along Cascade.
- My main issue is the use of my property.
- Long, straight streets are easy to speed on, even though signed limit is 25 mph.
- We build affordable housing, small pockets at a time, and want to continue to do so.
- Move away from open space set-asides for developers (especially of small projects), create real public parks.
- Preservation of orchards is important to this neighborhood.
- Our property is a prime location for a few nice homes, with fantastic views. A major road would spoil a great piece of property.
- Storm water and the need for a pump station is a concern.
- The town is so attractive for multiple reasons, everyone wants to move here.
- Two concerns about road extensions such as Mt. Adams: (1) how they affect the ability of property owners to develop their land; and, (2) how such roads will be paid for.
- Perception that there is not much land left to grow on – why do we need more roads?
- Density brings problems (e.g. people who live next to an orchard want to walk their dogs in it)
- Urbanizing lands that are served by the Irrigation District account for about 75% of all calls for service and information.
- When multiple homes are served off the same irrigation tap, conflicts can arise and are complicated by folks not knowing who is responsible to fix them.

## What do you love about Hood River? And about the Westside study area?

- Calmness, relaxed feel. Low crime rates. Access to nearby trails, bike paths. Tight-knit neighborhoods with young families.
- Walkable and people-friendly character of downtown, would love to see some of that in the Westside area.
- Great pedestrian connectivity, slow speeds through downtown.
- Study area has interesting topography, great views, trees.
- Potential to be better than a series of standard residential subdivisions.
- This is a real town, not just a vacation town.
- Diverse incomes – I lived with loggers next door. The diversity helps everyone.
- There is a huge 150 year old oak on our property – needs to be saved.
- Community feel, not urban feel. Weather. Access to recreation. 40 minutes from skiing, 3 minutes from parks and swimming. It's easy to sell this town.
- Everything.

## One of the City's objectives for the Westside Area is to increase the city's housing supply, and particularly affordable housing choices. What comes to mind for you regarding how we might accomplish that?

- Looked for a home recently, struck by the low inventory. Plenty of very high-end or low-end needing lots of work, but no inventory in between.
- Townhomes or cottages would not have been a good fit for us, we are a growing family. I believe people will quickly outgrow a lot of these smaller homes.
- Transportation and services are in the northern part of the area. That area is more appropriate for attached/multifamily homes.
- Pockets of higher density within neighborhoods. Buffers between commercial and residential are good areas for higher density. ADUs on large lots. Bonuses for providing higher density.
- There isn't a shortage of just affordable housing, there is a shortage of all housing. Few opportunities to move up from a starter home.
- Building multifamily housing on commercial land doesn't pencil.
- Create "Affordable PUD" process in the city. Streamline ADU process and lower fees. Expedited processing for affordable projects.
- Mixed use hasn't been working well in town.
- Don't put all the lower income people in one spot.
- Clusters of small lots like Hope Terrace are nice, they have a diversity of ages and incomes and we help each other out.
- In addition to these you could have apartments, patio homes, condos, townhouses. Think about aging in these houses, build some single level.
- We need to start building homes already.
- Build cottage homes on our property.
- Multifamily is better close to stores, transportation, churches, other services.

## Do you see an opportunity for neighborhood-serving commercial?

- No, we're just a mile away from Safeway / Wal-Mart, etc. Having something in this neighborhood would make it feel too urban.

- Commercial services are close by on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Not really. *(the majority of interviewees responded this way)*
- Yes, there is an opportunity for a very pedestrian-connected commercial node with good urban form (built to street, parking in back). Especially if there is a school in the area.
- It would be nice to have a corner store to walk to in this neighborhood.
- A neighborhood coffee shop is as good as a park.

### What opportunities do you see?

- Opportunity for my property as residential land.
- Opportunities for off-street bike paths like Sunriver.
- Opportunity to do something different and exceptional with urban form in this area.
- More diverse set of housing types, with a diversity of incomes living there.
- Mixed use to the south of Cascade.
- Pockets of affordable PUDs scattered throughout the neighborhood
- Opportunity for a park outside the UGB (site worked on by PSU students), rather than using land inside the UGB that could be additional residences.
- As a mom I would love to see open space, affordable housing, connectivity, sidewalks and bike lanes are imperative. Sidewalks and bike lanes are lacking on the west side. Safe travel for families and seniors that will be living here.
- It's better to have fewer, larger parks.
- This area could be a nature reserve, there are quails here.
- A gravity line could be provided in the northwest portion of the site with minimal drilling. Other storm water treatment strategies should be looked at.
- Opportunity for cottages for workforce housing.
- Phelps Creek. If the current water diversions can be changed to Irrigation District service, it will help the environment of the creek. This can be a joint project of the multiple land owners working with the District.

### How can the City best communicate with you and/or your organization during the process? What are some “do’s and don’ts” of public involvement in Hood River?

- Involve folks early, don't bring them a finished plan.
- Email communication is good. Mailers are good. We came today because construction around 30<sup>th</sup> made us think it was being extended.
- We don't have a functioning HOA.
- Let people get to know the planning team.
- This isn't Portland – make the information and recommendations tailored to Hood River.
- Provide as much information prior to meetings as possible.
- Neighbors talk to one another, and see each other in restaurants and grocery stores. Word of mouth is an avenue of communication.
- The Punchbowl Falls process was a good example.
- Make involvement fun. Try to be creative.
- Newspaper articles, post signs, focus groups.
- Involve the Spanish-speaking community. They are 1/3 of the population here.
- Use groups (like the Hood River Valley Residents Committee) to get the word out for you.

- Do open houses on a Saturday.
- People like to have heard about a project before they get a scary letter from the City.

### This project will be a success if \_\_\_\_\_?

- We can maintain the small-town neighborhood feel that Hood River has and keep our communities and families safe with access to the outdoors.
- Maintain level of safety and tight-knit community that we have now, while still looking for opportunities for affordable housing that don't diminish outdoor opportunities. Doesn't turn greenery into miles of houses. Also this kind of project maintains existing trail networks or add new trail networks once it's developed.
- Communication with homeowners throughout the process for buy-in.
- If we maintain the existing character of hood river's unique and attractive nature. Capitalize on the unique topography and other features. Provide pedestrian access.
- If people feel their concerns are heard and addressed and they have opportunities to contribute to the plan. Especially property owners who will be affected by this plan.
- If it makes sense. If the traffic flow makes sense. If zoning is laid out well, public housing and affordable housing near highway.
- I think of mixed use in transportation corridors would be positive. Blending commercial with apartments near shopping areas. Down near cascade.
- If the community is behind it.
- If we don't chop up anyone's property. If the Mt. Adams extension doesn't get built.
- This plan serves the next generation. Full utilization of the school district property.
- If we are able to utilize Country Club road.
- The remaining parcels are developed in a cohesive way that works for the parcel boundaries and ownerships, and, doesn't require taking out existing homes.
- It helps provide affordable housing.