

PHYSICAL BARRIERS



ONGOING & PLANNED PROJECTS



CIRCULATION



VALUE FRAMEWORK

A3

POLITICAL AND PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

The most prominent natural and man-made features that affect Tigard's Downtown are Highway 99W, Fanno Creek, and the Portland & Western Railroad. Each holds characteristics that prominently contrast with one another. The creek and its flood plain are green remnants of the region's rich natural character. On the other hand, Highway 99W, as a regional transportation arterial, carries more traffic on a daily basis than any other similar facility in Oregon. Over the years, adjoining urban lands have become the embodiment of the auto-dependent commercial strip. The Portland and Western railroad, though still active, is an historic remnant of Tigard that references the late 19th and early 20th century.

A3.1 Physical Barriers

1. Highway 99W

Hwy 99W is a traffic congested, regional arterial that accommodates many thousands of automobiles and trucks on a daily basis. However, for a downtown to be successful, it must be accessible to people. Hwy 99W and Hall Blvd to its east are the primary routes by which people can get to the Downtown. How traffic is managed on these arterials, and the potential development of transit facilities, will greatly affect the future of Tigard's Town Center.

In the 1950's, Hwy 99W was elevated along much of the Downtown's west and southwest boundary onto a viaduct to improve traffic movement and speeds by avoiding Main Street and crossing the railroad tracks. While traffic flow was improved, the viaduct created an impassable wall along much of its elevation.

The viaduct provides two under-crossings; one at Fanno Creek, and the other at the intersection of the railroad and Commercial/Tigard streets. Downtown users and neighborhood residents have described these places as "dark and unsafe." Many have expressed concerns about using the under-crossing, especially after dark.

Enhanced connections to neighborhoods west of Downtown are important to the City's redevelopment efforts. In the short term, this is proposed to be accomplished by connecting the Fanno Creek Trail system at the Fanno Creek under-crossing and improving amenities and lighting at the Commercial/Tigard Street under-crossing. The imposing structural barrier posed by the viaduct could be mitigated in the short-term through better maintenance of the viaduct side-slopes, and enhanced landscape treatments.

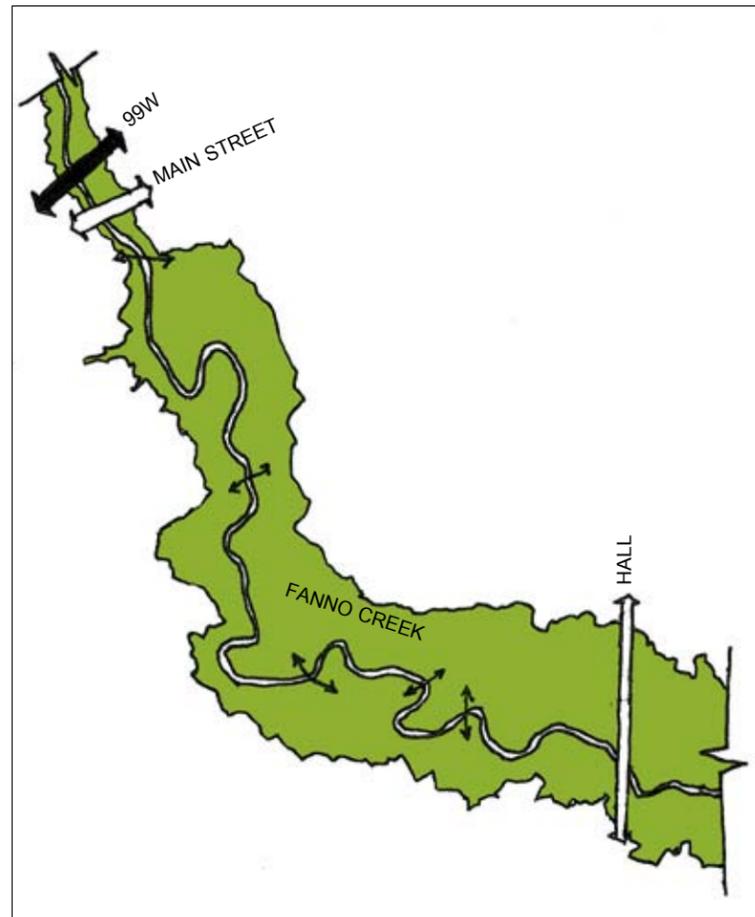
In the long term, when replacement or major renovation of the viaduct becomes necessary, additional under-crossings should be made to better connect the Downtown into its adjacent neighborhoods.

High traffic speeds also make Hwy 99W a daunting crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists. Future underpasses and pedestrian bridges could provide additional connections to northern Tigard residential areas and blur the sharp boundary Hwy 99W has created in the heart of Tigard.

2. Fanno Creek

Fanno Creek and its floodplain obstruct access to and from neighborhoods south and southeast of the Downtown. However, unlike the Hwy 99W viaduct, Fanno Creek and its associated natural areas present an attractive natural landscape that people gravitate to. It represents a wonderful amenity that contributes significantly to the Downtown's character and uniqueness. However, the Creek also presents a dilemma for Tigard's citizens and elected officials. Successful downtowns are often dependent upon unobstructed access to surrounding residential areas. Nearby neighborhoods, as "markets," are often important contributors to a viable downtown economy. Easy access to nearby neighborhoods, and the transportation system as a whole, allows people to conveniently make use of the downtown.

The issue of crossing Fanno Creek with a bridge to connect the Downtown to South Tigard has been a controversial issue over the years. As the Downtown redevelops, the City should continue to critically evaluate the need for this connection. In the short term, it is recommended to enhance pedestrian and bike connections to and from South Tigard and Downtown. In the long term,



(15 – 30 years), the importance of a vehicular connection (bridge) will likely be determined by the level of urban redevelopment of the Downtown and adjacent lands, and perhaps by changing community values and attitudes.

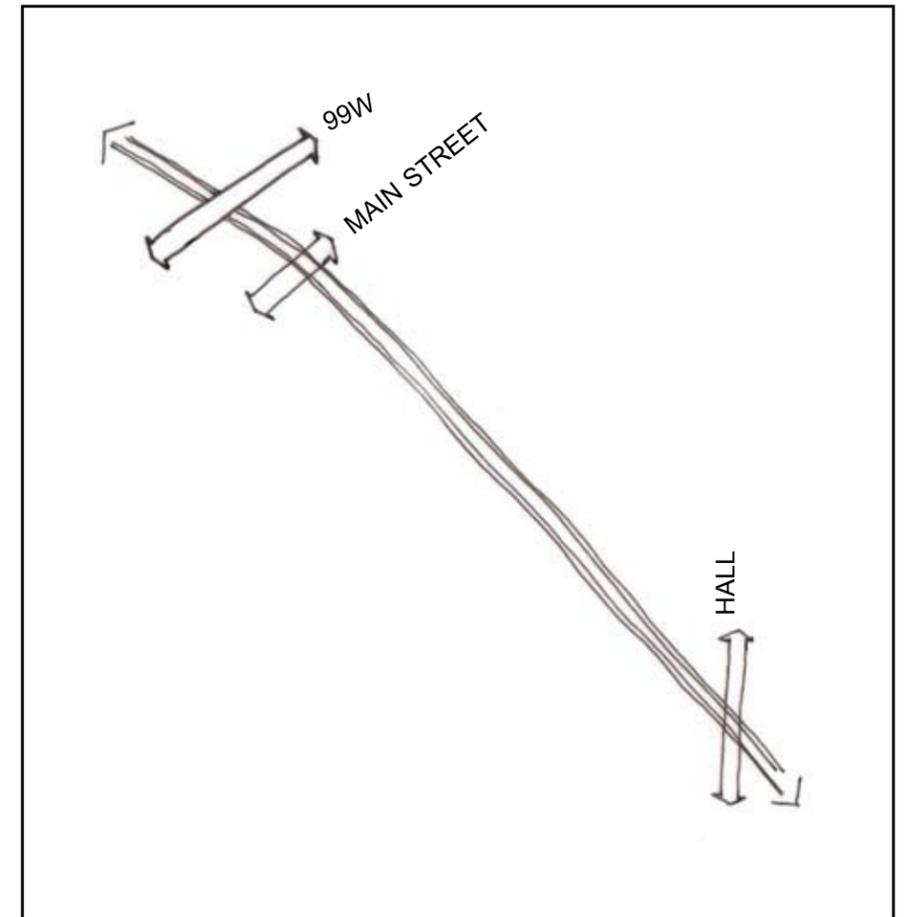
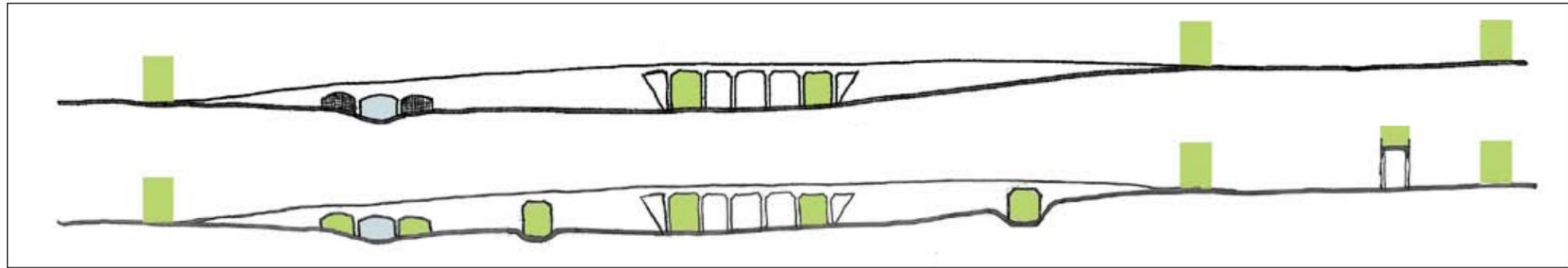
Fanno Creek creates a river of green through Tigard. As the Downtown's main existing amenity, it holds the most potential for short term improvements with long term benefits.

3. Rail Crossings

The commuter rail, which is set to start in February of 2009, will provide a transportation mode to Downtown that harkens back to days of the interurban electric rail.

While providing desirable access to and from Tigard, the railroad still restricts interurban circulation within the Downtown

area by limited crossings. Similar to the Hwy 99W viaduct, the more crossings that are provided, the more this boundary fades, and the two halves of downtown become whole. A new at-grade crossing at Ash street for vehicular and pedestrian movement is desired, and will be subject to future discussions with the railway.



A3.2 Planned and Ongoing Projects

The City of Tigard and citizen stakeholders are engaged in several projects that will affect the Downtown's future physical form. It is important that these efforts be carefully planned and coordinated because they will set the stage for future design and development decisions. These efforts are both short- and long-term in scope. Most will occur in multiple phases, over time, as conditions change. Changing conditions could include available funding, redevelopment potential as key sites become available, or the development of high capacity transit through Downtown. It is important for the City of Tigard to be flexible in its approach to implementing City initiated projects because community values, market conditions, and consumer preferences all change over time. Initial design expectations often have to adjust accordingly.



5. Green Street at Main Street

The City of Tigard received a grant through the Metro Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) to redevelop the part of Main Street south of its intersection with Burnham as "Green Street." This will involve reconstruction of the street's piped storm drainage system, to one that emphasizes on-site water quality treatment and retention.

Choices between engineered and passive systems will require a balance of cost, maintenance, and visual benefit, to the look of Main Street.

Incorporating green concepts into traffic calming treatments, intersections, parking lots, and other commonly impermeable surfaces, will extend the treatable surface area of the green street, reducing the impact on non passive systems.



4. Park and Plaza Design

The City worked with a consultant and citizen advisory committees to develop a Master Plan for Fanno Creek Park intended to develop the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational potential of the Park. The proposed design includes a community gathering place and plaza in the vicinity of the Burnham and Main Street intersection. While much of the project is already on public land, the Plaza area is proposed on private property. Implementation of the Plaza portion of the Fanno Creek Plan is dependent on the acquisition of private property, the timing of which is unknown at this time.

Regardless, of when the Plaza is developed, or what form it will take, it, and an enhanced Fanno Creek Park, is a centerpiece of the Downtown redevelopment efforts. Therefore, the Fanno Creek Plaza is viewed as a catalyst that promotes private sector redevelopment in the following ways:

- Establishing an amenity rich context for private sector investment.
- Creating a signature place for the Downtown to attract Tigard residents and visitors to events, programs, and festivals.

A3.3 Circulation

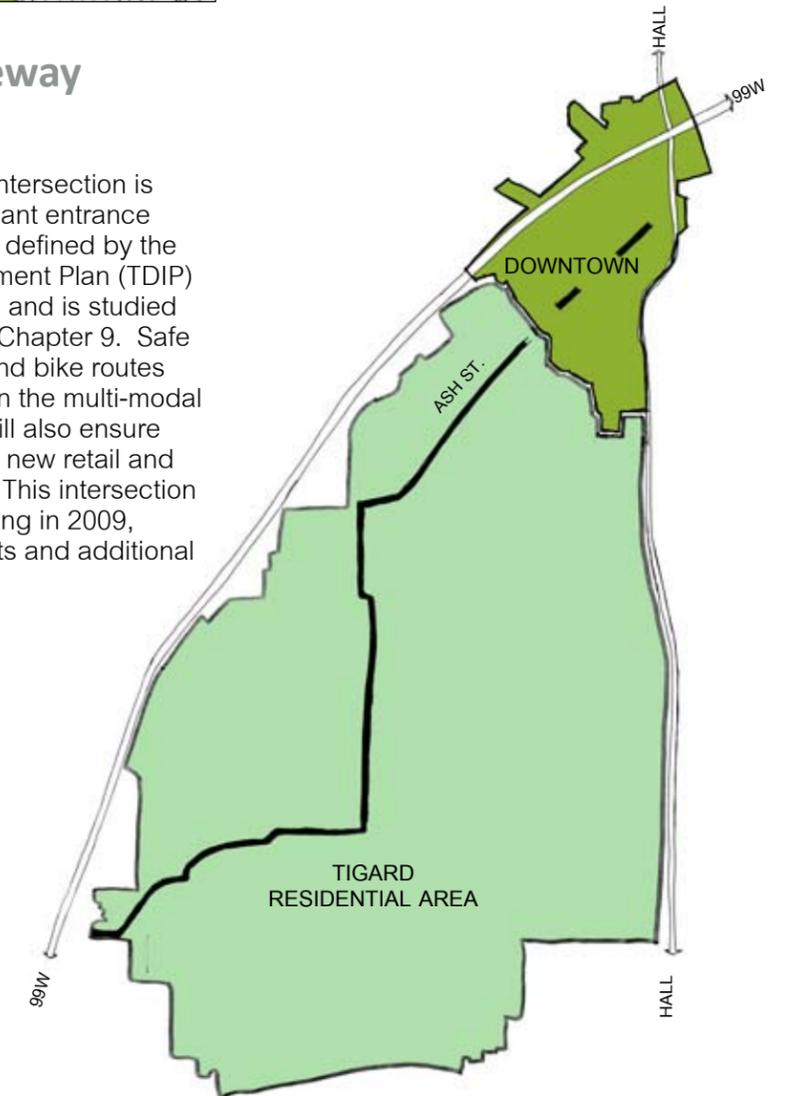


6. Hall/99W Gateway Improvements

The Hall Blvd & Hwy 99W intersection is potentially the most significant entrance to Tigard. This gateway is defined by the Tigard Downtown Improvement Plan (TDIP) as one of the catalyst sites, and is studied in greater detail later on in Chapter 9. Safe positioning of pedestrian and bike routes will be important to maintain the multi-modal goal for Downtown. This will also ensure vibrant activity for sparking new retail and commercial development. This intersection will be re-constructed starting in 2009, adding safety improvements and additional turn lanes.

7. Ash Street

Ash street is discontinuous. Truncated at Fanno Creek and the railroad, Downtown Tigard is without an interior east/west connector, which limits these directional movements to Main Street and Hall Blvd. An at grade crossing of Ash at the rail would benefit connections to Fanno Creek and establish a more internal, community street that should be designed for residential activity and could potentially connect to the residential areas west of Fanno Creek.



A3.4 Established Values



Sustainable Green Urban Network [Extend the green]

The TDIP places emphasis on environmentally sensitive “green” projects that promote community livability and create a unique identity for Downtown Tigard. The plan sets out to “extend the green” from Fanno Creek Park throughout the Downtown. There are various features and methods for extending the green beyond street-side landscaping. Water features, nodal parks, green roofs, sustainable green streets, and pervious paving can be used to extend the green features beyond traditional landscaping. The type of landscaping used can also help to distinguish the Downtown from surrounding areas. Additional framework should be put in place to ensure landscapes in the Downtown use appropriate native plants with historical significance and seasonal characteristics which are appropriate for Downtown.

New Businesses and Industry

There are numerous budding and unique businesses in the Downtown. As Downtown attracts more residents, additional businesses, such as restaurants and grocery stores, will locate there to serve them. New employers may be drawn to Downtown because of the new amenities and its proximity to major transportation routes.

Live/Work/Play in Downtown

A prominent theme in the TDIP is developing Downtown into an “Urban Village” where people can do all the daily tasks of life. Qualities that were defined as essential to a successful Tigard Downtown are listed below:

1. Activity beyond the hours of a workday
2. Mix of employment, retail, housing, and cultural/entertainment
3. Providing a unique community experience
4. A sense of place
5. The center, or “heart,” of the community
6. Vibrant, compact, and multi-modal
7. Accessible and safe
8. Accessible through the year and seasons

