



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
FOR OCTOBER 29, 2025

PRESENT: Vice Chair Christen Sacco, *Council President Valerie Pratt*, Beth Dittman, Cathy Holland, Chris Brune, Janet Steiger Carr, Janine Wilson, Jilian Sourage Felton, Kelsea Ashenbrenner, Susan Noack

ABSENT: Chair Frank Bubenik (covered by alternate Valerie Pratt), Aaron Welk, Armando Serrano, Cosi Slider, Skip Stanaway

STAFF: Aquilla Hurd-Ravich, Cody Field, Quin Brunner, Rachel Sykes, Sid Sin

GUESTS: Arav Shah, Michele Reeves

Italicized members are alternates. Alternates are invited, but not required, to attend every meeting. Alternates are listed when present but not when absent.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Sacco called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ORGANIZATION (CCIO) RECOMMENDATIONS

Cathy Holland, representing the Commercial Community Involvement Organization (CCIO), [gave a presentation](#) outlining a slate of short-term downtown improvements recommended by CCIO members. Cathy defined four general objectives:

1. Identify the downtown area
2. Increase awareness and use of the Lake and the Commons
3. Help visitors and customers find the Lake, public parking lots, and businesses
4. Increase business visibility and economic viability

Then proceeded to outline four specific requests for action:

1. Improve lake maintenance
2. Improve signage
 - ODOT signs along the freeway and entering downtown
 - Replace inadequate monument signs and add directional signage on SW Martinazzi and SW Boones Ferry
 - Upgrade public parking signs

CCIO RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

- Add wayfinding signs
- Allow “A”-frame signs
- 3. Allow food carts in the Lake Grove area (east of I-5, north of the Tualatin River)
- 4. Define the geographic area of Downtown Tualatin

KEY FINDINGS OF THE DOWNTOWN IDENTITY STUDY

Michele Reeves of Civilis Consulting [gave a presentation](#) summarizing the key findings and recommended actions outlined in the [Downtown Tualatin Identity Study](#). She structured her presentation using the CORE story framework: characterization, objective, relationship, and environment.

Characterization – everything Tualatin presents to the world physically that communicates the purpose of downtown; this includes both the built environment and traditional marketing.

In analyzing downtown revitalization survey responses, Michele found the words respondents submitted to describe downtown “were not downtown words.” Examples she highlighted included “parking,” “empty,” “underutilized,” “hot,” “lack of foot traffic,” “no congregating,” and “few businesses.”

Michele concluded that the physical story projected by downtown Tualatin is not aligned with what people intuitively understand to be a downtown. She identified eight physical elements that should align to tell a coherent downtown story: roads, sidewalks, parking lots, art, buildings, windows, signage, and marketing. Michele then shared a series of examples from downtown Tualatin where physical elements signal uses inconsistent with those of a downtown, creating confusing and uncomfortable experiences for users.

In analyzing responses to the survey question, “What words do you want to hear describe downtown in the future?” Michele identified frequent responses as “walkable,” “vibrant,” “place,” “fun,” “live,” “active,” and “friendly.” She highlighted that these are words largely describing how people want to *feel* rather than what they want to see or do. One of the big tasks of the CAC, she identified, will be translating these feeling words into the physical story.

Michele revisited the characteristics of successful downtowns she shared during previous meetings, which are: a critical mass of existing buildings, buildings built right next to each other, buildings built up to the sidewalk, 18 hours of activity, intensity of ground floor activity, great district experience, continuity, and spectacular lighting.

Some specific projects suggested by Michele include making improvements along Boones Ferry Road, facilitating cross-pollination between Community Park users and downtown businesses, and connecting the greenway trail through downtown. She also suggested increasing building density, exploring elevated/active ground-floor uses to mitigate flood plain challenges, considering allowing distinctive taller buildings on specific larger sites, and promoting opportunities for site intensification.

Objective – a clearly-defined purpose for the downtown district that provides an implicit guide for what the community stands for and how users should interact with the space.

In response to the survey question, “what is Tualatin passionate about?” Michele shared that common responses included, “parks,” “sports,” “water,” “nature,” “outdoors,” “summer,” and “active.” Responses to a question asking about the type of experiences people want to see offered in downtown Tualatin centered on activity and people. Michele described ideal downtowns as having naturally occurring activity and places that attract and showcase people, without having to program those into existence.

After reviewing a series of responses describing downtown Tualatin as a person, Michele emphasized that respondents generally expressed ambivalence when describing downtown, which leaves room to introduce a new positive impression without having to overcome stigma or animosity.

Specific actions Michele suggested to improve activity include showcasing existing uses, installing a food cart pod, adding temporary retail spaces, and incentivizing, building, and controlling ground floor retail space.

Relationship – the users of the district, who is/is not relating to downtown, as well as those who have literal or emotional ownership.

When asked, “who relates to downtown?” Michele shared that survey responses centered on families, kids, and the splash pad. When asked, “who does not relate to downtown?” the most frequent response was “anyone.”

From a list of downtown’s most beloved downtown businesses, generated from the survey, Michele identified three common threads: these businesses are local, food-focused, and community-oriented. She recommended both incentivizing local, food-focused, and community-oriented businesses and creating a festival street.

Environment – the largely unchangeable context in which downtown Tualatin exists.

Michele shared that Tualatin is widely perceived as suburban, often confused with its neighbors Tigard and Lake Oswego. Outside of the region, it is identified as an extension of Portland.

The Lake, Michele flagged, is a key piece of downtown's context. People love it or hate it, there is no sound of water, it is clearly built to enter yet no one does, and it creates circulation confusion. Michele posited that it is way too early to consider changes to the lake, while suggesting the CAC eventually study options for improving its functionality and integration. Some possibilities she recommended include converting the Lake to wetland, changing it to be a water feature, restoring vehicle or pedestrian circulation, and reducing surrounding hardscape.

Concluding Remarks – Michele ended her presentation by framing the Identity Study as a dynamic document, produced to give CAC members ideas to consider, rooted in the current community context. She urged the group to “never stop iterating”, acknowledging that throughout the entire life of the urban renewal district, projects will need to be prioritized and reprioritized as conditions evolve. Finally, Michele highlighted the power of tax increment financing to build momentum in the short-term and to advance transformational projects in the long-term, suggesting that CAC members organize their recommendations with these time-bands in mind.

A CAC member flagged that the land across from the library, which Michele had identified as a possible “100% corner” was park land and asked for clarification on her recommendation. Michele suggested exploring potential park uses (like a boat or bike rental facility) that could be positioned along the road to simultaneously support park functions while creating a gateway to downtown.

A CAC member asked how to determine the optimal amount of parking for downtown. Michele described the ways in which a downtown parking toolkit differs from a suburban one, in that the target number of spaces are significantly lower. She outlined how, as demand for parking spaces increases, the City can, in turn, add time limits, meter parking, and public spaces in structured parking.

A CAC member, referencing a map of all the parking and vacant space downtown, asked whether the sites where Michele suggested for taller buildings corresponded with publicly owned parking lots. Michele clarified that they did not. The CAC member offered that building on publicly owned lots, while leasing parking from adjacent malls, seemed like a good way to begin addressing the parking surplus.

PRIORITIZING THE CIVILIS RECOMMENDATIONS

Sid Sin, the City's Urban Renewal/Economic Development Manager, reviewed where the CAC stands in its 24-month process. He outlined three phases of the project, the first of which is focused on defining what this community really wants to be. Sid emphasized the importance of this phase of work, sharing how a clear community vision guides decision-making throughout the implementation

process. The second phase, partnering with the Sustainable City Year Program, adds depth to the CAC's deliberations and the third phase translates the community vision into design standards, so the development community can understand what to expect downtown.

Sid framed the initial scoring of the [Civilis's recommended actions](#), completed by the group ahead of the meeting, as their first cut, emphasizing that the group would revisit the recommendation list throughout phases two and three. He shared that he hopes to present to Tualatin Development Commission with a prioritized list of recommendations at the conclusion of this process, outlining the short, medium, and long-term priority projects for the urban renewal agency.

Sid thanked CAC members for completing the ranking exercise in advance, sharing 11 members had submitted responses. CAC members reviewed the rankings and provided rationale to support how they voted. Members expressed confusion about the recommendations and the ranking process. Several were unsure whether they could discuss the recommendations based on their merit, as the agenda did not permit such discussion. The CAC did not vote on the recommendations or rankings.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Sacco provided closing remarks, noting this meeting was functioning as the November CAC meeting. Vice Chair Sacco shared the CAC would not have a regular meeting in December, instead inviting CAC members to attend the December 8th meeting of the Tualatin Development Commission or one of the final presentations given by University of Oregon students in the Sustainable City Year Program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Quin Brunner
Policy Analyst