

Plan offers vision for Hillsdale's center
Neighborhood Beat • Hillsdale 2020 has urban plazas, new streets, public spaces

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The Portland Tribune, May 28, 2009 (4 Reader comments)

Urban plazas, multi-story developments and a master street plan are headed for the Sunset Triangle in the Hillsdale Town Center in coming years. At least, that's the dream, according to a new 100-page document released last month] by the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

Ardys Braidwood, whose family owns much of the commercial property in the Hillsdale Town Center, said she supports the plan, but she doesn't see many of the recommendations happening without grants and other funding.

"The way the times are, you try to do what you can afford, and who can afford all that they want?" Braidwood said, adding: "It would be nice if these different changes can happen. There's some real good ones, but they can't put it all on the landlord."

Braidwood is planning a new four-unit retail building near the intersection of Southwest Capitol Highway and Southwest Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway and said the Town Center plan didn't influence the design very much.

The plan, a result of three community meetings and numerous stakeholder discussions, is an update to a 1996 plan for Hillsdale's commercial core.

Planners envision the area bounded by Capitol Highway, 18th Drive and Sunset Highway – known as the Sunset Triangle – with tree-lined streets, mixed-use developments and several public gathering spaces.

Brian Sheehan, of the Portland planning and sustainability bureau, worked with SERA Architects to develop the plan. He said it will be a marketing tool to get a buy-in – literally and figuratively – from local property and business owners.

"That's what this document really is: a vision for what this place could be for the next five to 10 years," Sheehan said. "It's a blueprint for near- to mid-term improvements that increase access to and use of the Town Center."

Solar comes first, then a plaza

The first recommendation to come out of the plan is already under way: The 100-kilowatt solar installation is on Portland Public Schools property near Rieke Elementary, on Southeast Bertha Court. The installation, to be built by a public-private partnership, is expected to break ground this summer and be completed by September.

Supporters say the solar panels will supply up to 60 percent of nearby Rieke's power needs and provide an edu-



COURTESY OF THE PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
The Dewitt Street extension, part of the Hillsdale Town Center plan, shows one possibility of a "curbless" street design that is 60 feet wide and provides wide sidewalks, landscaping and parallel parking.

cational opportunity for students to see how energy is made from sunlight.

The next step forward in the Town Center will likely be to work with the Braidwood family – whose former dairy land makes up much of the commercial core and who still owns much of the land – to develop a public plaza on a sliver of land next to the Casa Colima Restaurant.

Braidwood declined to comment on the likelihood of such a plaza, but wondered aloud if there would be grants for such a project.

'Nodes' to provide focal points

The Casa Colima plaza is part of four “nodes” in the design that planners see focusing outdoor activity.

One is at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Capitol Highway, near Wilson High School. The other two are for streets that don't exist yet.

Planners see DeWitt Street extending west into what is now a medical office complex and joining with what will likely be a private street heading north from Capitol Highway. The resulting street plan would look like a Y in the center of the Sunset Triangle.

That is one of the recommendations that will take the longest, Sheehan said, noting that property owners will have to agree to change the area's codes, covenants and restrictions before the city can come in to change the zoning.

In all, Sheehan said, the 100-page Hillsdale study was a bargain at \$23,000 as it will provide a blueprint for development in the area for years to come. “This really represents a low-cost, high-value fix for the town center,” he said.