

Revisioning Workshop for **Franklin Arterial**

May 31, 2007

Sponsored by



Franklin Reclamation Authority 2007: Colette Bouchard, Katie Brown, Kevin Donoghue, Steve Hirshon, Bobbi Keppel, Alex Landry, Markos Miller, Oliver Miller-Nichols, Jaime Parker, Ron Spinella, Nolan Thompson, David Wilson



On May 31st, 2007 over 70 people gathered at Franklin Towers, the public high-rise on the corner of Franklin and Cumberland Avenue in Portland, to discuss the impacts and potential of Franklin Street Arterial.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

FRANKLIN STREET will be a beautiful, vibrant urban street in the center of a new neighborhood. It will:

- **be a multi-way boulevard connecting the Waterfront to Back Cove, that serves autos, existing and future transit, pedestrians and cyclists equally.**
- **be designed for lower speeds, accommodate pedestrian and cyclist safety, and lower exhaust levels.**
- **provide a positive gateway experience, connect historic neighborhoods, reconnect the street grid, provide for human scale, pedestrian-oriented development, and allow for buildings to orient to the street.**
- **be redesigned to maximize the use of space, and provide an environmentally friendly framework for mixed use development and housing.**
- **provide connections to the multi-use trails, access to greenspace, opportunities for community gardens, add land to Lincoln Park, and provide opportunities for trees and public art.**
- **In summary, the redesign of Franklin Arterial will reverse outdated planning assumptions, and reintegrate the Portland Peninsula.**

The Process



The meeting was organized by members of the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization and the Bayside Neighborhood Association, and was documented for broadcast on local access television. Publicity for the event included posters, newspaper coverage, an interview on WMPG radio, and direct contact with residents and area business owners.

The intention of the workshop was to ask, from a decidedly neighborhood-based, pedestrian-oriented perspective, “How can we make this road better?”

Many visual and informational background materials were displayed around the room. These highlighted the history and current layout of Franklin Street and its surroundings, as well as plans and photos documenting other cities solutions to similarly challenged road corridors. Additionally the 20” x 20” submissions to the “Lost Sites” exhibit, commissioned by the Architalx lecture series and recently hung at Aucocisco Gallery, were displayed around the room. These boards depict various conceptual plans for the Franklin Street corridor, as envisioned by local residents, architects, and neighborhood groups.

After opening remarks by Markos Miller of MHNO, Bayside resident Steve Hirshon gave a slideshow presentation on the history of the road and the residents who populated the area over the years prior to demolition in the 1970’s.

District 1 City Councilor Kevin Donoghue then spoke about the current political process. He lauded those in attendance for undertaking this important citizen planning effort, and strongly encouraged people to remain engaged.

Landscape Architect Mitchell Rasor then spoke on some basic urban design principles, and the challenges Franklin poses in the urban context. City of Portland Urban Designer Carrie Marsh, acting as the facilitator for the evening, then walked the group through the process of creating a vision. She specifically noted that a vision should include the entire corridor, and not just the road itself. Ms. Marsh was assisted throughout the evening by Portland Senior Planner Bill Needleman.



The Problem



View from Cumberland toward 295

The first step was to seek consensus on defining “the problem.” Participants in 5 breakout groups created group “Problem Statements.” The 5 Problem Statements were then synthesized into one, and edited by consensus, to create our final Problem Statement:

Problem Statement

Franklin Street Arterial is based on a suburban model of auto oriented design which does not accommodate multi modes of transportation. From a safety perspective, it is unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists due to high speeds and lack of pedestrian accommodations. From a health perspective, it is polluting the air which is difficult for people with respiratory ailments. From an urban design perspective, it has severed historic neighborhoods, truncated cross streets, separated the downtown from its neighborhoods, and is out of scale with the surrounding city. From a land use perspective, it is an underutilized area that detracts from urban density, limits the potential for mixed use development, and creates unusable open space. In summary, it is a barrier that is not a “place” but is somewhere to drive through.

The Vision



The next step was to create a list of priorities and objectives to use when creating a vision for the road and use the list to create a group “Vision Statement.” These 5 statements were then synthesized into one, and again edited by consensus, to create our final “Vision Statement” (see below).

Vision Statement

Franklin Street/Boulevard will be a beautiful, vibrant urban street in the center of a new neighborhood. From a transportation perspective, it will be a multi-way boulevard connecting the Waterfront to Back Cove, that serves autos, existing and future transit, pedestrians and cyclists equally. From a safety and health perspective, it will be designed for lower speeds, accommodate pedestrian and cyclist safety, and lower exhaust levels. From an urban design perspective, it will provide a positive gateway experience, connect historic neighborhoods, reconnect the street grid, provide for human, scale pedestrian-oriented development, and allow for buildings to orient to the street. From a land use perspective, it will be redesigned to maximize the use of space, and provide an environmentally friendly framework for mixed use development and housing. From an open space perspective, it will provide connections to the multi-use trails, provide access to greenspace, provide opportunities for community gardens, add land to Lincoln Park, and provide opportunities for trees (including saving – maybe moving – current trees in middle) and public art. In summary, the redesign of Franklin Arterial will reverse outdated planning assumptions, and reintegrate the Portland Peninsula.

This statement is a snapshot of the sentiment of the assembled group, and reflects well the goals and visions of many of those who have looked at the road from the standpoint of walkers, bicyclists, children, the elderly, handicapped, and others. Additionally, many of the participants had knowledge of the principles of urban design, and “Placemaking,” which were also reflected in the statement. The vision reflects not only a desire for a safer, more pleasant interface with the road, but a sincere and well-founded belief that there is a “higher and better use” of the Franklin Street Corridor.

To conclude the evening Mitchell Rasor spoke about each of the Architalx boards that were displayed around the room. The discussion of these specific visions was a productive conversation starter, as many of the themes talked about throughout the evening were included in the various designs.

Themes that came up consistently throughout the process included:

- Re-connection of the street grid
- Development along the edge
- Much better pedestrian accommodations
- De-emphasis of the automobile
- emphasis on public transit
- Creation of real “Places”
- Need to decrease vehicle speeds through better road design
- increase developable land
- improved access to open space
- important link in public transportation
- improved land use, and street design according to urban design principles

In many ways this last portion of the evening was the most exciting for the participants, and many conversations continued well after the end of the meeting at 9pm. It was clear that people felt this was the beginning of an ongoing process, and that the conversation was to be continued. There seemed to be a general feeling of optimism; that if the community could come together and present a clear, tangible vision, and work together to advocate for this vision, then it was entirely possible to realize change for the better.

Outcomes

- Documented the process. This Report, delivered to citizens, local media, transportation agencies, city staff, and city councilors will serve to document this effort to define a community vision for Franklin Street. It represents a demonstrated and documented dissatisfaction with the status quo, as well as the “solutions” offered in the Peninsula Traffic Study. The large number and varied interests of the participants gives this report real meaning and should begin the formal discussion about how to proceed with plans for the corridor.
- Formed a working group, consisting of the planners and participants of this event, that will continue to work towards meaningful progress in finding solutions and realizing the vision.
- Gave voice to underrepresented constituencies
- Created an educational tool (in the process, as well as this report) which will serve to inform citizens, city staff and policy makers.
- Demonstrated a model for citizen-based planning
- Raised community awareness of the problem, and potential changes to the road.
- Introduced “Context Sensitive Solutions” as a design model for a local project. Such a model must incorporate citizen involvement, land use planning, housing, class issues, development, safety and aesthetics into any planning efforts.

Next Steps:

- Pursue Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (PACTS) funding for a Franklin study
- Focus attention on land use planning for the Franklin Street corridor
- Continue a parallel community design / discussion process (separate from city efforts)
- Bring media attention to issue, and keep the process in the public eye
- Get amended traffic study approved, so as to dis-avow the perception that widening has been recommended, or is acceptable to the community
- Import alternative designs from other cities to show there are many proven ways to solve the problems that Franklin presents
- Continue educational and outreach efforts
- Implement immediate, tangible steps towards the vision of a more functional corridor
- Install signage on Franklin advertising the Problem and Vision Statements
- Identify and engage the broad base of constituents for the corridor

Appendix A: Minutes from breakout groups

Franklin Street Arterial Workshop Problems & Visions - 31 May 2007

Team A Members: Markos Miller, facilitator; Ron Spinella, Devin Platte, Steven Scharf; Paul Niehoff; Ed Democracy; Bobbi Keppel

Team A Problem: It creates a psychological and physical barrier that consumes valuable real estate that divides 2 parts of the city. It creates health concerns and lacks ped or bike infrastructure or scale.

- Speed
- Gridlock/lack of turnoffs
- Divided the city
- Pedestrian intersection [at] Marginal Way
- No sidewalks
- Ped crossing difficult – no infrastructure
- No access to Back Cove
- No access to commercial areas of Bayside
- Franklin Arterial – not a place – it is just something to drive through
- Losing taxable real estate
- Creates a non-bike area
- 2 neighborhoods do not interface East & West Bayside
- Health concern exhaust, etc.
- [If we] Do nothing/will just get worse
- Completely auto-based
- Ped – huge barrier between East & West
- City-owned sidewalks not always cleared [of snow]
- Psychological barrier
- Students getting across for school
- Franklin Arterial is unsafe for peds, bikes, cars and indicative of an auto-based trans plan

Team A Vision: To slow down Franklin Arterial, make it safe for bike & ped. Address land use issues with mixed uses, with buildings fronting the road, knitting back the cross streets and create activity nodes; create usable green space (Lincoln Park).

- Franklin Arterial is a vital role in a larger transportation system
- Ultimately make Franklin Arterial a series of places that connects 2 destinations
- Franklin Arterial needs to be redesigned to create more efficient use of the space
- Increase pop[ulation] of penn[insula]?
- Create more housing
- Mixed use
- Don't increase capacity of surface streets
- Maximize use of street
- Make it a "place"

- Buildings face the street
- Multiple places to cross that are ped & car friendly (more than what we have now)

Team B Members: Dee Clarke, facilitator; David Wilson; Patrick Banks; Susan S. Davis; Elise Wilson; Bonney Ryder; Sue Landell; June Stevenson; Dan Skolnik; Nan Cumming; Heather Curtis.

Team B Problem: Franklin Arterial is a dangerous, insidious, interruptive barrier to the cohesiveness of the city as interconnected communities!

1. What we don't like about Franklin Arterial – It's there.
2. Crossing – a s wither a pedestrian or cyclist
3. No sidewalks
4. Poor use of some of the space
5. Speed of traffic
6. Timing of the lights is illogical for drivers
7. Lack of usable green space
8. Not family friendly
9. Divides the city
10. No connections to neighborhoods
11. Gentrification
12. It's dangerous

Team B Vision: Our Franklin Boulevard will be built on a human scale with accessible green space, mixed use development - housing, shopping, recreation – public transportation, wide sidewalks, separate bike lanes, parking, eliminating all but 2 traffic lanes and reconnecting historic east-west streets.

- All buildings face the Boulevard!
- Mixed-use of housing, business, recreation
- On street parking one side (on each side of boulevard) drivers stop due to there are destination along boulevard to stop, park, shop, play, live
- 2-way boulevard – 2 medians
- Hop on trolley/ narrow gauge railroad metro trolley
- Reconnecting historic street patterns
- Parking on a service road on one side
- Expand green space / access to green space
- Tunnel it underneath
- No 2 lanes
- Reduce auto traffic using other transit, i.e. public transportation
- Traffic circle slowing traffic at each intersection
- Contains green space/skate park
- Park within greenspace with sidewalks, farmers' market
- 2 entrances for auto at ends - trolley to get to to/fro each end
- 2way Boulevard (left turns) lots of trees – not arterial – water to water, with separate sidewalks and bike lanes

Team C Members: Nolan Thompson, facilitator and scribe; Gerry Soule; Jeanne Twomey; Dan Jenkins; Nan Soule; Rob Levin; Sarah Cushman; Cedar Levin.

Team C Problem:

- Hazardous for Peds
- Not enough sidewalk
- Too Divisive
- North side of Cumberland very little store frontage
- Not enough time to cross
- Traffic sped – faster than necessary
- Not really consistent with the rest of the city
- Not enough true cross street/points
- Newbury, Federal & Oxford; not clear that they continue
- Waste of useable greenspace/recreation space
- The idea of it being expanded sends the wrong message...
- Somewhat of mental barrier to walking
- Minimizes commercial space dev.
- Increase in use of each end will create more issues, as listed above
- Gridlock at Franklin & Congress and Franklin & Cumberland
- Better synchronized traffic lighting
- Inhibits better use of public transportation
- It is just too wide!
- Cannot see children able to walk “it.” (Wants to see children able to walk it)
- No biking lane

Team C Vision: An environmentally and pedestrian friendly transportation zone that includes all forms of transportation, such as walking, biking, trolleys and cars. It would reconnect artificially separated neighborhoods and would maximize greenspace, while being safe and welcoming.

- Uninterrupted ped traffic between Munjoy Hill and downtown Portland
- Better and more public transportation via Franklin
- Reconnect cut off streets
- Lower the “design” speed
- Trolley connecting Amtrak-Brunswick to Narrow gauge
- Strategically capture the greenspace already there
- A bike trail that connects Back Cove Trail, Commercial Street Trail and Bayside Trail
- Close the space between the lanes to make better use of green space
- More user-friendly for children, younger people
- More crossing points

- Landscape for pedestrians' comfort (and a windbreak)
- More traffic lights
- Making Lincoln Park w/Munjoy Hill
- I-295 more directed towards Marginal Way
- Accommodate traffic subordinate to the other pedestrian & space friendly goals
- Incorporate city housing needs with the redevelopment of Franklin.

Team D Members: Elizabeth Trice, facilitator; Christian McNeil, scribe; Colette Bouchard; Gail Kesich; Bill Needelman; Ann Kearsley; George Aponte Clarke.

Team D Problem: The costs of Franklin – its disruption to the urban fabric, its lack of connections to surrounding neighborhoods, and its failure to integrate with other transportation modes outweigh its benefits as a rush hour commuter link/artery. Franklin is a hazardous barrier that divides the city, and creates an inflexible single use.

Single use inflexible hazardous

- 1 No sidewalks
- 2 Designed for peak hour traffic, but underutilized most other times
- 3 Single use – auto only
- 4 Anti-urban
- 5 Doesn't serve adjacent neighborhoods
- 6 Primarily serves non-resident suburban commuters
 - a Any solution needs to address server commuting population
 - b
- 7 Poorly designed for drivers (poor sight lines)
- 8 Stuck in paradigm of single occupancy transportation
- 9 Creates a barrier to all modes of cross-town traffic
- 10 Hazardous for pedestrians
- 11 Too big in scale:
 - Prevents urban, small scale commercial development
 - Unusable open space (inaccessible)
- 12 Difficult to change/improve/ameliorate because it is so large

Team D Vision: Franklin should be a beautiful, vibrant urban street in the center of a new neighborhood. This new neighborhood will have businesses, housing & open space integrated with the historic street grid and accommodating new trail systems, expanded transit, pedestrians & bikes as well as the commuter arterial. The new street will also be designed to accommodate future transit technology & opportunities.

- We'd like to be able to get across

- Bike lanes & sidewalks
- Broken into smaller blocks/ restore historic street grid
- Make underutilized space usable
- Storefronts on Franklin
- Housing on Franklin
- Active uses on the street/sidewalk
- Maintain some greenspace
- Scaled to the pedestrian
- A functional urban transportation corridor
 - Transit integration
 - Link to trails
- An economical, practical solution – Improve the corridor as soon as possible
- Functionally connect waterfront/downtown to Bayside & I-295
 - i. Use existing connecting streets better
 - ii. Integrate with a broader trans. Plan for the whole city
 - iii. Accommodated freight from working waterfront & Bayside industrial

Team E Members: Jaime Parker, facilitator; Steve ; Anne Pringle; Luke Macfadyen; Alfred L Norton; Hillary Bassett; Karl Gregor; Charlie ____; _____ (3).

Team E Problem: Franklin is an ill-conceived project, based on a suburban model, which emphasizes auto over all other modes. It is based on the assumptions that the best way to manage traffic is a straight, high-speed, high volume road. It best served industries which are no longer on the peninsula. Problems could have been solved in better, more creative ways. The net effect was to divide the city in an aesthetically and functionally disruptive manner. In addition, many roads and Lincoln Park were truncated. For the pedestrian and bike it creates a hostile environment, due to speeds, width, lack of infrastructure (sidewalks...) and crossing points. Its design induces auto to drive at highway speeds in an urban environment. It creates a lack of positive sensory stimulation, and makes the pedestrian feel unwelcome.

- “Highway” not productive for many purposes
 - Getting to [P]
 - Creates rush hour jams – perpetuate widening
- Divides City/ isolates neighborhoods
- Cuts off neighborhood of recent [arrived] residents
- Not friendly to walkers/bikers/kids
- Dangerous for autos (high speeds, backups)
- Hard to cross, dangerous
- Hostile to pedestrians
- Cuts off historic grid
- Cuts Lincoln Park

- Visually un-appealing
- Lack of development on major road eats up space
- “Lost space” could be better – visually, recreationally, socially
- No sidewalks (not brick)
- Inconsistent with city scale
- Not attractive gateway

Team E Vision: Create an urban gateway, which is heavily treed, with open spaces, public art, a transportation hub, possibly meandering to slow traffic. The road should be a multi-use public space, which encourages alternative transportation, by providing sidewalks, bikeways, lighting, safe access, public art stopping points and real places. Reverse faulty planning assumptions that created Franklin Arterial: Planning for peak hour and I-295 traffic dictating transportation choices and subsidizing [P]. Re-establish historic street grid and Lincoln Park. Reduce speeds of autos by designing road for actual desired speeds – 25 M.P.H. Encourage residential infill on edge.

- Neighborhoods
- Re-connect grid
- Human scale
- Trees
- Alternative transit
- Park-space
- Pond
- Connect nature
- Urban gardens
- East west bikeway/trail
- Don’t plan for peak hour [traffic], provide alternatives – dis-incentives to driving o.k.
- Knit together parks...
- Reduce speed
- Ped-friendly
- Create hubs at both ends
- Public art
- Gateway experience
- Mixed-use
- Stop subsidizing [P] thru development
- Comprehensive transportation plan

Appendix B: List of Attendees and Contact Information

Franklin Street Arterial Workshop

31-May-07

Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Email
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