SW 153rd Street

Preliminary Visioning Report

October 3, 2011

BURIEN

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SW 153rd Street Visioning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the result of a collaboration, and we wish to thank the following people for contributing their time and expertise to make this possible.

SW 153RD ST. STAKEHOLDER GROUP

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Robbie Wray	*New Frontier Marketing*
Debra George	*Discover Burien*
Sherrill Miller	*EB Foote Winery*
Nancy Hinthorne	*Discover Burien*
Elena Lisle	*Triton Team Nutrition*
Jeannie Yangas	*Salon Spectrum*
Paul Fuesel	*Consultant, KPG, Project Manager*
Carolyn Law	*Visual Artist*

MEETING DATES

June 3, 2011	Stakeholder Meeting No. 1
June 20, 2011	Stakeholder Meeting No. 2
June 11, 2011	Stakeholder Meeting No. 3
August 1, 2011	City Council Update
Aubust 12, 2011	Burien Economic Development Partnership Presentation
August 30, 2011	Public Meeting

"Discover SW 153rd Street"

INTRODUCTION

The SW 153rd Street corridor is a primary commercial street at the south end of downtown Burien. It is inconspicuous relative to other areas of downtown, such as SW 152nd Street and 4th Avenue SW, and the City desires to look at ways to support and enhance its economic vitality. Opportunities to give the corridor a stronger identity and clearer wayfinding are important to its economic vitality within downtown. With over 90 businesses located between 1st Avenue S to the east and Ambaum Boulevard SW to the west, the corridor is ready to be discovered as its own unique destination in downtown.

"Create a strong, unique identity for SW 153rd Street as a destination corridor in downtown Burien."

As a preliminary step, the goal of this study was to identify whether there is support from business and property owners for enhancements and to discuss what direction those enhancements should take. This study does not identify actual solutions but is meant to provide the context for enhancements. The next step will be to convene a stakeholder group, along with designers, to develop concepts and a budget.

DESIGN GOALS

The initial stakeholder group meetings found a consensus around the need to improve the corridor. As a result of this process, the following design goals were identified for the corridor.

- Create a unified commercial corridor that supports businesses.
- Strengthen the business environment by supporting the full range of businesses.
- Provide clear wayfinding to the corridor at key locations.
- Provide pedestrian amenities to encourage a more friendly business environment.
- Provide parking management for both the corridor and downtown.
- Create a strong, unique identity for the corridor that the businesses can associate with.

CREATING A UNIQUE IDENTITY

The group recognized that the corridor is distinct from other parts of downtown and should not try to mimic these other areas (i.e. SW 152nd Street). Because of this, creating a unique identity for SW 153rd Street is a primary goal for any enhancements.

Creating a unique identity for SW 153rd Street is supported by the City's Vision:

Vision for Burien: A vibrant and creative community, where the residents embrace diversity, celebrate arts and culture, promote vitality, and treasure the environment.

This vision allows creative expression of diversity, arts, culture and the environment, which fits the needs of creating a unique place. To help the group discuss possible identities for the corridor, they first reviewed the existing conditions, opportunities, and limitations of the corridor.

"SW 153rd is an auto-oriented Street."

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing corridor is an auto-oriented commercial/retail street that was developed for convenient automobile access. There are over 90 businesses along the corridor between Ambaum Boulevard SW and 1st Avenue S. The majority of the buildings are single story and are set back from the right-of-way with private parking lots between the building faces and the street. This creates a very wide street realm, which diminishes the presentation of individual storefronts.

This auto-oriented commercial/retail street is also defined by multiple driveway curb cuts that access private parking lots, many of which are connected to neighboring private lots. In addition to the private parking lots, the street has parallel parking. The street has narrow 6' sidewalks, underground utilities and street lighting on tall poles. Additional sidewalks are located on private property adjacent to the building storefronts.

There are 5 intersections along the length of the corridor at 1st Avenue S, 2nd Avenue SW, 4th Avenue SW, 6th Avenue SW and Ambaum Boulevard SW. Ambaum Boulevard SW and 4th Avenue SW are signalized; the remaining intersections are stop-controlled at the side streets. Left turns are restricted from SW 153rd Street to 1st Avenue S, limiting access onto this arterial.

"There are approximately 95 businesses to be rediscovered on SW 153rd Street."

Overall the corridor is not a pedestrian-friendly place. The entire corridor is filled with pavement, either street, sidewalk or parking lots. The continuous 6' sidewalks are merely adequate for pedestrian access, however the adjacent parking lots make the sidewalks feel exposed and uncomfortable. There are no street trees or planters and very little landscaping to soften the streetscape; no street furniture exists.

CORRIDOR DESIGN ISSUES

The examination of existing conditions identified a number of design issues, which would guide any corridor enhancements. These issues addressed the fundamental attribute of the corridor, namely that it is developed as an auto-oriented commercial/retail street.

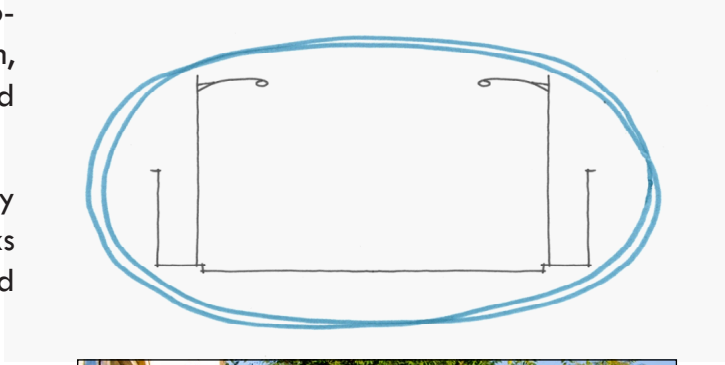
In addition, it is apparent that the corridor is visually and intuitively seperated from downtown. Though it has 5 roads connecting to it, it is not apparent to visitors as a destination shopping street. This led to identifying the following design issues:

- Scale - The size of street realm (the space that corridor enhancements need to enhance).
- Visual Focus - The legibility of the place and ability to see and make sense of the businesses.
- Wayfinding - The ability to find the corridor and integrate it with downtown.
- Corridor "Curb Appeal" - How the place and the businesses appeal as a place to shop.

"Most businesses are set back far from the street."

SCALE

The SW 153rd Street corridor is a very wide, auto-oriented commercial/retail street. In comparison, SW 152nd Street is a narrow, pedestrian-oriented commercial/retail street.

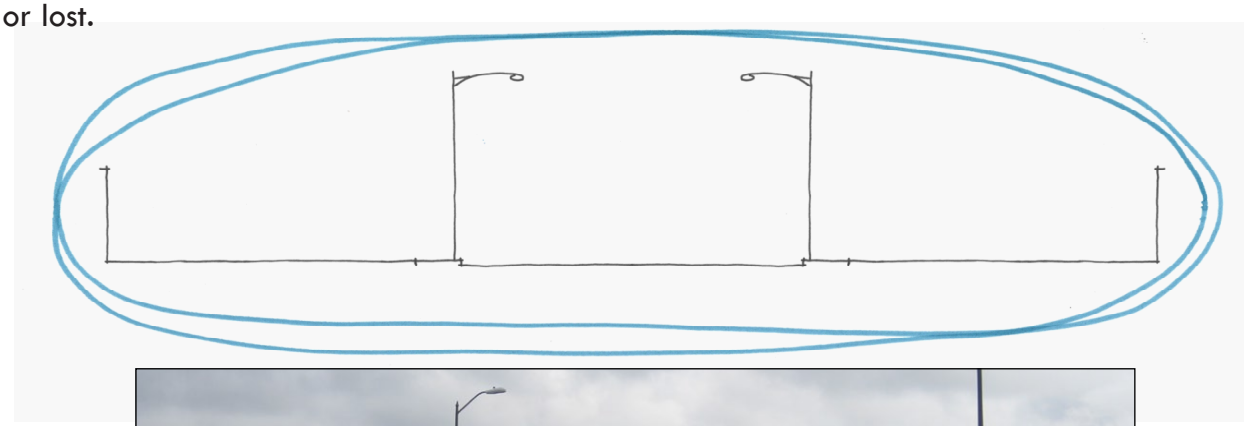


The buildings along SW 153rd Street are generally about 180' apart. The street is 60' wide (6' sidewalks on both sides, 8' on-street parking on both sides and 2-16' travel lanes).

The buildings on SW 152nd Street in Olde Burien are 60' apart. The street is 60' wide (10' sidewalks on both sides, 8' on-street parking on both sides and 2-12' travel lanes).

SW 152nd Street (Old Burien)

SW 153rd Street has a very wide street realm (building to building). This creates a very large visual scale because the buildings don't visually contain the space. It also diminishes the presentation of individual storefronts. Any design solution needs to take this into account, otherwise enhancements will be visually weak or lost.



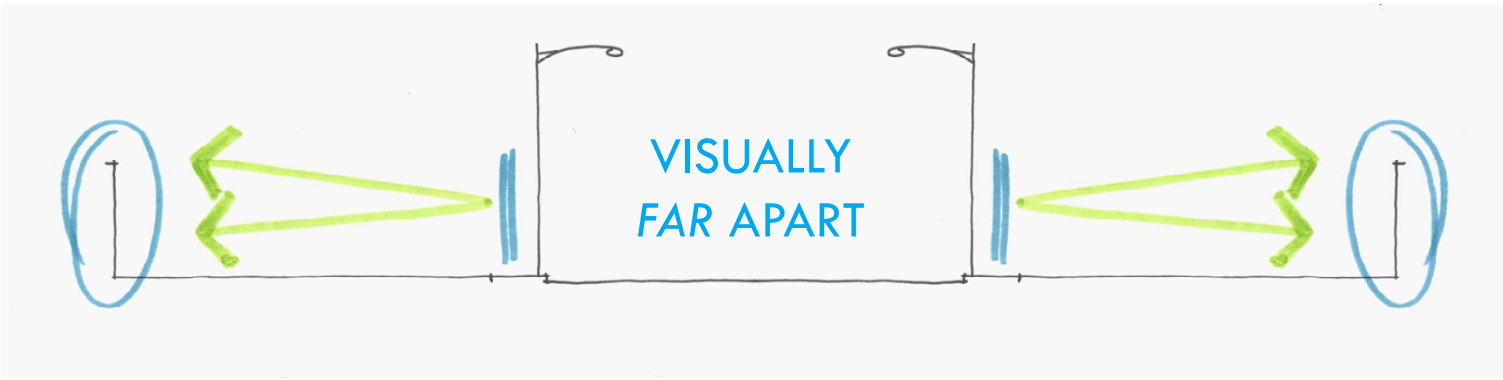
SW 153rd Street

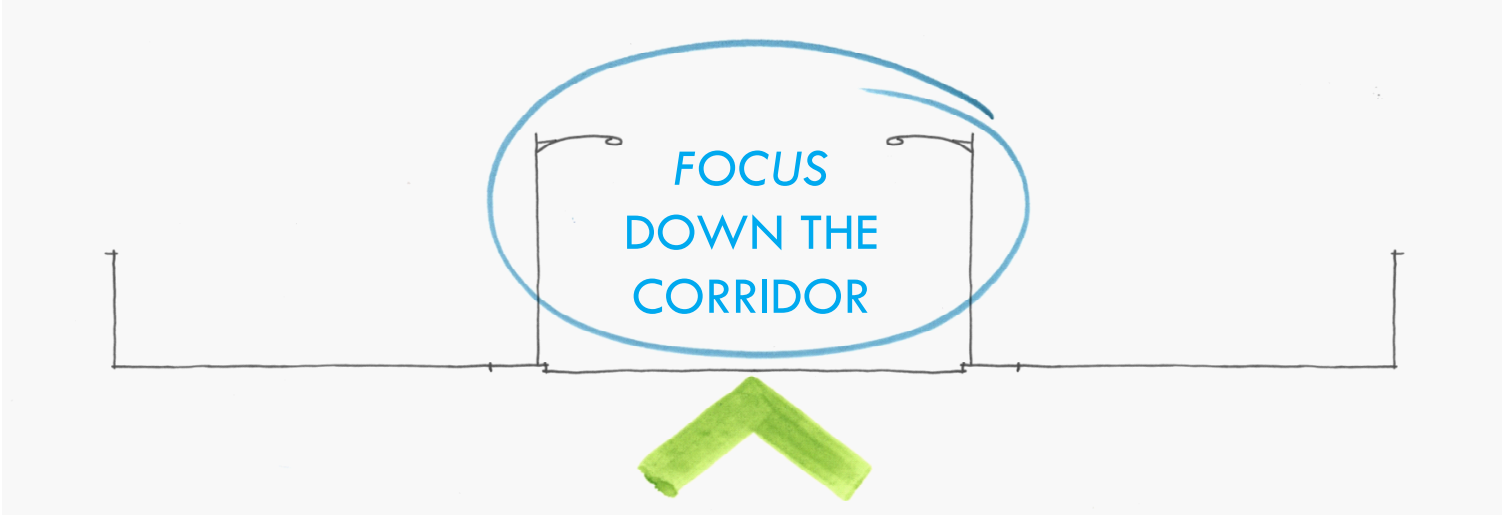
"Draw visitors along the corridor in an exciting visual way."

VISUAL FOCUS

The SW 153rd street realm is about three times wider than most commercial main streets. This results in storefronts that are very far from the roadway. This diminishes the presentation and legibility of individual storefronts, with their storefront signs being less clear.

Also, the roadway itself "floats" in this wide street realm, and the focus (which should be the storefront signs) gets fuzzy with competing visual cues. There is no apparent place to focus along the corridor because of its expansiveness. In big box retail design, this focus is found in taller buildings and very large signs to draw attention. With 90 businesses, that ability to focus on larger signs becomes obtrusive and would not enhance the corridor.

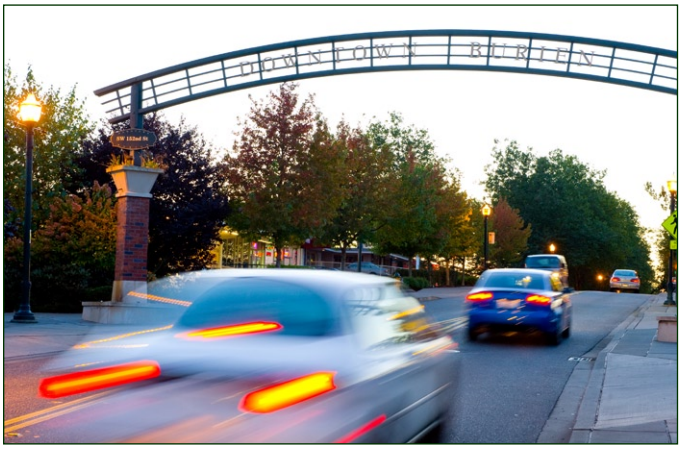


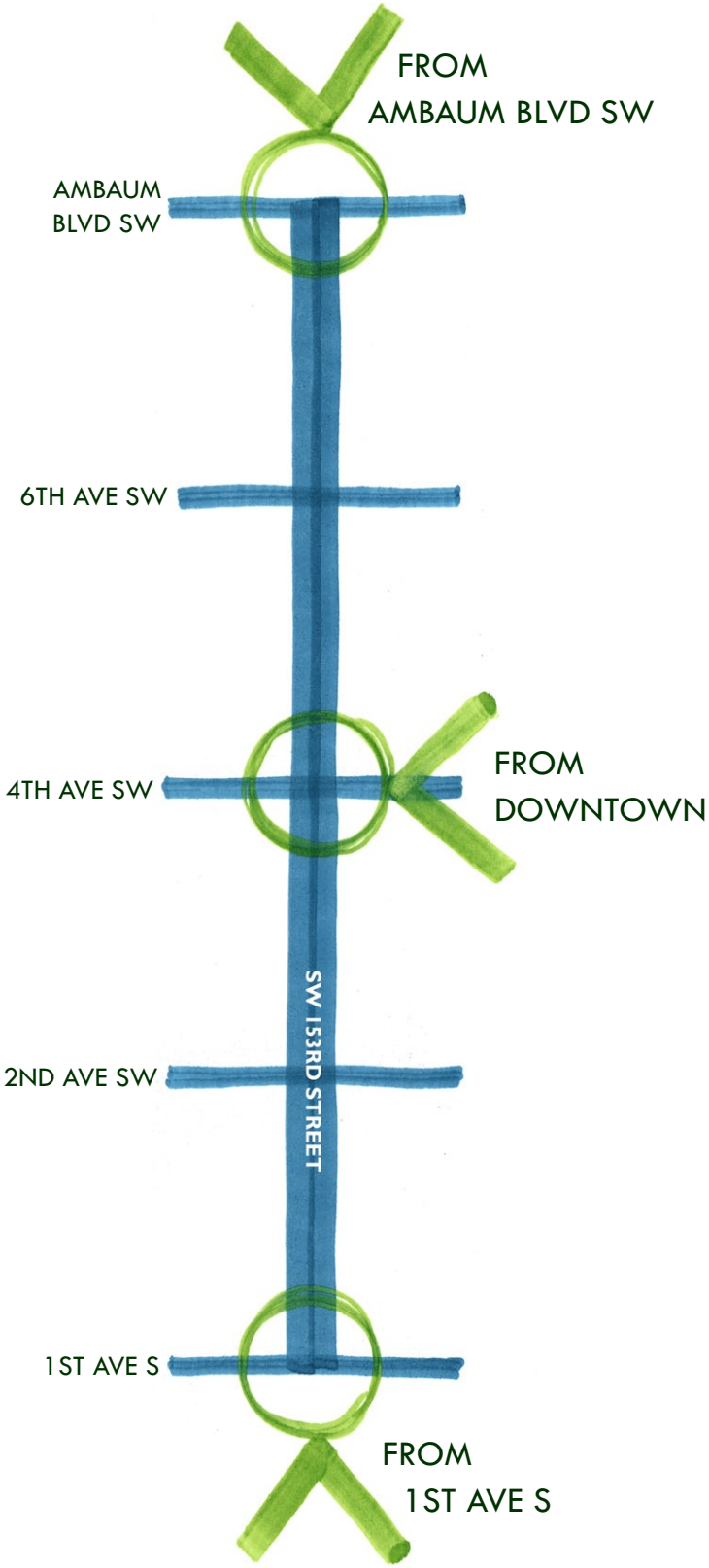


"Discover SW 153rd Street & the businesses along it."

WAYFINDING

Within downtown Burien, the corridor is relatively difficult to find. There is access from 1st Avenue S, but the intersection is visually weaker than SW 152nd Street (which is a fully signalized intersection). At 2nd Avenue SW and 6th Avenue SW there is stop-controlled access. At 4th Avenue SW, the intersection is signalized (as it is at SW 152nd Street). At Ambaum Boulevard SW, the intersection is fully signalized and has better presentation to the corridor. In all locations, no signage, urban design elements or artwork identify the corridor as unique. One way to make the corridor easier to find may be to unify it with a theme and identity, which can be expressed at these locations. An example of this is the gateway just west of 1st Avenue S on SW 152nd Street or the smaller-scale signs located in Olde Burien.





"Provide vitality & pop to SW 153rd Street"

CORRIDOR "CURB APPEAL"

There is very little curb appeal to the businesses along the corridor. The visual expression feels like a large, inconsistent parking lot. With wide travel lanes and no landscape, street trees or definition of the pedestrian space, the only curb appeal is the individual storefronts.

CREATING COST EFFECTIVE "CURB APPEAL"

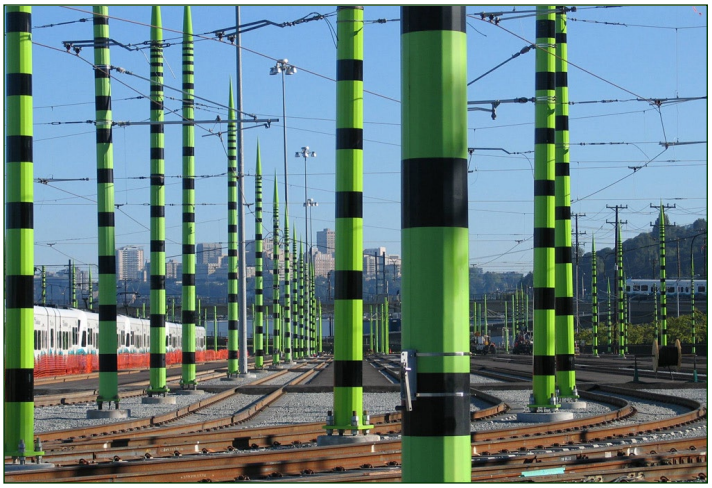
Rebuilding the entire street (like SW 152nd Street) with wider sidewalks, narrower travel lanes and new utilities, would not create cost effective curb appeal. This is because the new improvements would likely be visually lost in the wide existing street realm, since the storefronts would still sit very far back. The cost of a multimillion dollar project would not be justified unless the private property owners started to redevelop.

Another kind of curb appeal that could be developed addresses the scale, wayfinding and visual focus of the street as well as the need for a smaller budget. Most importantly, a theme and a strong, unique vision can be created to unify the 90+ businesses and brand the corridor. These businesses could share in this identity and express themselves as they choose. Most importantly, this curb appeal will attract new visitors to explore the commercial/retail businesses and can be achieved with a smaller budget.

"CURB APPEAL" IDEAS

The following photos are examples of artwork and urban design that fit the scale of SW 153rd Street. None are provided as solutions for the corridor, but mainly as inspirations for future discussions. More discussions are needed to identify SW 153rd Street's theme and physical expression.

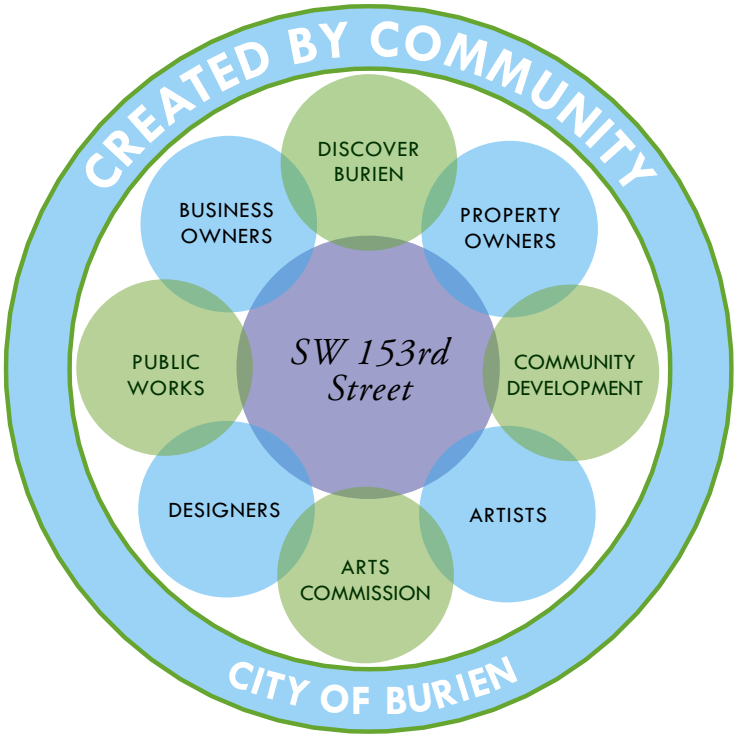
LIBEST
(206)583-8759
百事達
760 DEARBORN ST



"Stakeholder synergy creates authentic placemaking."

CORRIDOR STAKEHOLDERS

The following group of stakeholders were involved in this study and supported the need for corridor enhancements. These groups also include the Burien Business and Economic Development Partnership, Parks Department, City Council and other related groups.



WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

There is support for enhancements to SW 153rd Street from the businesses and property owners along the corridor, as well as the City, Discover Burien and the BEDP. The next steps are:

1) Visioning - Create a Stakeholder Group, including a designer and artist, to develop themes, concepts and a budget.

- Envision appropriate corridor themes (e.g. "children" - many kids businesses, "many cultures" - many ethnic businesses) and possible ways to reflect those themes.
- Identify alternative concepts for review.
- Select a preferred design, confirm feasibility of design (structural, electrical, stormwater etc).
- Identify a budget and funding sources.
- Continue public involvement to show the concept(s) and promote implementation.

2) Design

3) Construction

"Discover SW 153rd Street"