

Downtown Steering Committee

Meeting Notes
June 24, 2025

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members Present: Zeke Reister, Mike Bedard, Joel Martinez, Kevin Rieke, Oliver Brulotte, Troy Campbell, Kirstie Miethe

Committee Members Absent: Sharon Waters, Laurie Brennan

Staff: Matthew “Selby”, Courtney Porter, Shannon Lemons, Maggie Boles, and Brantley Bain

Public: Jesse Wilkinson

1. Committee Field Trip to Downtown Leavenworth

The group assembled at City Hall and proceeded to the west end of Front Street & Hwy 2 with the purpose of observing identified points of interest re: to downtown infrastructure, aesthetics, and functionality in person; identify issues and opportunities; and discuss potential improvements. Discussions were had with the full group, though primarily in small groups thus documenting formal meeting notes was not feasible. The most comprehensive recounts were submitted by Kirstie and Kevin, largely contributing to the notes below.

Uptown

Arrival Arch and/or Roundabout Art

Brief discussion about Arrival Arches being observed in Bavaria. Questions regarding plans for any installation in the center of the Hwy 2/Icicle Road roundabout.

Lions Club Pollinator Garden Area to Wunderbar Building

Positive observation of Club’s garden improvements between Little Reds & Golf area. It was noted that Hans Mulder, building owner, has express interest in leasing the area adjacent to the building’s west facing wall to create additional outside seating area.

Electrical Box Near Alpenglo/Wunderbar

Noted visual clutter from stickers. Aesthetic concerns shared by several attendees. Could be an opportunity for art, but maintenance and ownership considerations are important.

Hill/Slope Between Wunderbar and Grange

Committee learned of museum’s potential plans to transform the slope into a small amphitheater. Current condition noted as “dangerous-looking” due to lack of railings or

protections. General consensus was reached that the safety risks of the exposed steep slope should be mitigated.

Grange Sidewalk & Accessibility

Significant concern about abrupt sidewalk grade changes near the Grange. Suggested interim solution: add ADA-accessible ramps at both ends where sidewalk currently terminates.

Open Areas (between parking lot between buildings and vacant lots on either side of the Grange)

Ideas floated for future activation: murals, "selfie spots", or public art. 3-D or stand-alone selfie spots received positive support. Mixed opinions on murals — general support for temporary or movable features, but concern over placing City-funded art on private property or in areas likely to be redeveloped.

Flower Boxes

Flower boxes that were built/donated by Peter James and watered by the City earned praise from multiple attendees. Even the few installed have a noticeable impact. Many shared their support of adding flower boxes to the remaining concrete blocks possibly via public donations or business sponsorship.

Front Street

Visitor's Center (Future Chamber of Commerce)

Committee toured the interior of the building. Opening anticipated for 2026 due to necessary repairs. Viewed as a "crown jewel" location, especially once the street remodel is complete.

Zipty Building & Phone Booth

Aesthetic concerns about building appearance and sticker-covered phone booth. City has reportedly moved into the fining stage due to lack of maintenance.

Business Flower Boxes

Noted that flower boxes in public rights-of-way are typically owned by the businesses. Discussed potential permitting or cataloging system for consistency and mitigating any liability for the City. It was noted that the flower boxes outside the Boba Tea location are empty — potentially unknown to the owner and a visual negative. No flower box is preferred to empty or poorly maintained flower box or barrels.

Curb Appeal / Boyd Box Design

Boyd boxes received positive feedback; seen as well-aligned with the Bavarian theme. Suggestion to ensure hanging flower baskets are mounted above 8' minimum, in line with sign height codes.

800 Block Sidewalks

Enthusiasm for curbless design in progress. Support expressed for heating sidewalk zones in front of buildings, though not in the SUP or emergency access lanes.

Front & 9th Intersection

Noted as a critical area for both vehicular and pedestrian safety. Interesting ideas discussed:

- Make street one-way to simplify traffic.
- Punch 10th Street through to Highway 2 — previously raised, but may face DOT and intersection challenges.
- Worth exploring further as part of future planning.

8th Street: Alley to Commercial

Alley Signage and Circulation

Observed confusion due to existing one-way signs and lack of clarity about dead-ends.

Suggestions:

- Remove or relocate the “One Way” sign.
- Add clear signs like “Dead End,” “No Through Traffic,” or “Permit Parking Only.”
- Possible pull-back of signs to create a clearer turnaround spot (e.g., banner with “Turn Around Here”).

Loading Zone

Discussed reassigning the current load zone (that later becomes public parking) to serve as ADA-only parking after morning hours.

Fountain Parklet & Restroom Electrical

Observed the 8th & Commercial fountain parklet; no major issues raised. Discussed removing electrical panels from the restroom building and repainting before the new community board is installed.

8th & Commercial U-Turn Issues

Narrow design limits maneuverability — not viable for roundabout. Consensus to improve signage *before* reaching the dead-end to reduce confusion.

9th Street: Front to Commercial

Integration with Pedestrian Plaza

Overall infrastructure here is in good condition. Suggestion to tie in surface treatments (pavers, planters, benches) to Ped Plaza design to create a visual and functional continuity.

Alley & Parking Signage

Support for adding clear signs at alley and/or Commercial stating “No Public Parking West of Here” or similar.

SW Corner – Commercial/9th

Discussed updating landscaping to align with other corners. Timing of such upgrades likely dependent on broader streetscape schedule.

10th Street: Front to Commercial

Sidewalk & Parking Adjustments

Sidewalk extension needed to connect to Commercial Street. Acknowledged future need for curbs, sidewalks, and adjusted loading/parking zones.

Right-of-Way/Pickup Spot

Recommendation made to shift the Paw's pickup zone one space to the right to improve right-of-way access.

Concrete Flower Blocks & Parklets

Desire to continue flower block installations in this area, as elsewhere. Parklets suggested in various strategic areas (e.g., near Festhalle, South restaurant, and other gathering areas).

Future Development

Behind Suites on Main: discussion of alley leveling due to occasional emergency vehicle use. Potential development of a parking garage by Johnson family on empty Commercial lot noted. Consideration of traffic flow changes if such a garage is built.

General Themes noted throughout all "regions" of Downtown

- **Signage:** Key across areas — especially for alley circulation, ADA access, and parking zones.
- **Art & Aesthetics:** General support for murals, flower boxes, and selfie/photo spots — but with caution around logistics of permanent art on private business property.
- **Accessibility:** Multiple sidewalk and grade concerns observed firsthand, especially near the Grange and 10th Street.
- **Traffic Flow & Safety:** Discussion about safer or controlled crosswalks, one-way streets, loading zones, emergency access, and future development impacts.

2. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:59 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Porter, Executive Assistant