

Minutes of the River Plan Committee – North Reach

February 21, 2006

5pm – 7pm

Portland Bureau of Planning, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 4a (4th floor)

Committee Members Present: Pauline Anderson, Brian Campbell, Jason Graf, Don Hanson, Greg Wolley, Krystyna Wolniakowski

Absent: Bob Naito, Melissa Powers

City Staff Present: Roberta Jortner, Deborah Stein, Mindy Brooks, Sallie Edmunds, Joan Hamilton (Recorder), Peter Ovington, Steve Kountz, Mike Reed, Dawn Uchiyama, Tom Liptan

Others Present: Bob Short, Steve Durrant, Greg Theisen

Hanson convened the meeting.

Committee Business

- Committee members approved meeting minutes for January 17, 2006.

River Concept and Planning Commission Resolution

- Sallie Edmunds reported on comments received regarding the River Concept, including confusion about the orientation of the cover image and concerns of the River Industrial Economic Advisory Group that the report does not use the words “industrial sanctuary.” She acknowledged concerns about the need for revisions to the Greenway Code and said staff will soon start interviews about problems with the Code. Don Hanson noted concerns from the St. Johns neighbors, who desire a new bridge.
- Hanson announced that the Planning Commission will hold a hearing on the River Concept on February 28, 2006. He reported that Edmunds and Brian Campbell will make a presentation that emphasizes the River Concept as only the first stage in the project. Hanson recommended that they emphasize the amount of public outreach and the work and membership of the task groups.
- Campbell invited committee members to forward any additional comments for the presentation.

Watershed Health Task Group

Handout: *Draft Scope and Work Plan*

Deborah Stein reported that the Watershed Health Task Group will help develop criteria and eventually propose solutions for integrating various priorities in the North Reach, including ways to optimize watershed health but continue to support economic development. She listed potential discussion topics and criteria for choices, including regulatory certainty, equitable treatment, cost-effectiveness, clarity, flexibility, optimization of watershed function, key North Reach goals, and advancement of City compliance. She listed potential tools including Greenway Code amendments, Greenway design guidelines, a strategic restoration and land acquisition program, amended Building Code provisions, and promotion of education and best practices such as pollution prevention and innovative site design.

Willamette Fish Survey Results

Mike Reed, Bureau of Environmental Services fish biologist, narrated a Power Point (attached) that described the background of the City's program to respond to requirements of the Endangered Species Act. He explained goals to provide certainty for planning and permitting by 1) determining whether and how fish use the lower Willamette River; 2) applying technology and research to develop data on any requirements for habitat, security from predators, and dietary needs; and 3) identifying areas where protection and restoration of habitat would provide opportunities for preserving young salmonid populations (particularly subyearling Chinook and yearling Coho). Reed listed ways the City can support protection, restoration and creation of beach habitat by providing alternative passage routes and refuges from high flow events, determining future needs for seawalls, exploring ways to remove abandoned pilings and reduce pilings in dock/pier structures, and exploring alternative bioengineered approaches to riprap. He concluded with recommendations to 1) encourage creation and restoration of beach habitats and functions, 2) encourage bioengineered alternatives that meet multiple objectives, and 3) monitor the results.

Questions and Comments:

- Do subyearling Chinook congregate in shallow areas because of shore structure or currents? Mostly because of shore structure and food available there.
- What are bioengineered bank treatments? There are a variety of options – preserving natural beaches, creating structures to accommodate or slow down flows, engineering for flood and bank protection.
- What is the reaction of regulating agencies? Agencies are supportive of data. This is the synopsis of a 4-year study, but the largest data gap is the subyearling group.
- What are the predators? Pike, perch, walleye, Asian shrimp – and outfalls.
- What aspect of seawalls requires review? Decisions relate to allocation of funds and justification for decisions based on balancing of competing interests.

Natural Resources Inventory Project

Roberta Jortner and Mindy Brooks narrated a Power Point (attached) that provided background on the project to incorporate previously adopted inventories, but also to apply new research and multiple objectives in a new inventory for the Willamette Corridor. They stressed an approach to develop a scientific foundation and ecological principles for riverbank and watershed restoration. They cited regulatory obligations based on the Federal Clean Water Act and CERCLA (Superfund) provisions, statewide land use goals, Metro's Title 3 and Nature in the Neighborhoods program, and the City's adopted plans and strategies, including the *Framework for Integrated Management of Watershed Health*, *Portland Watershed Management Plan*, and *River Renaissance Strategy*. They described the regional role of the North Reach at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers and how it interrelates with natural systems.

They described how data supports accurate stream remapping, helping identify center lines, culverts and connections as well as adding stream segments to maps. They said data supports Metro's regional vegetation maps, correlates to fish studies and key landscape features, and provides ability to rank riparian functions according to features and proximity of water. They concluded that the inventory will help maintain and improve watershed functions in relation to development priorities such as brownfield reclamations to support industrial land supply.

Natural Resources Inventory Task Group

Deborah Stein distributed a handout (attached) that lists discussion topics, opportunities and constraints to be considered on a task group working on the natural resources inventory update. She announced selection processes for the group and invited recommendations for possible members. She indicated the inventory will include new maps, descriptions of key functions (hydrology, pollution control, shade, and habitat), a mapping model that provides easy access to information, descriptions of methods to rank relative value of resources, and a strategy for updating information over time.

Sustainable Stormwater Management

Tom Liptan, Bureau of Environmental Services, narrated a Power Point (attached) that described the City's program to reduce the flow of pollutants by managing water before it reaches the sewer system. He stressed goals to reduce maintenance costs for infrastructure, reduce basement flooding, and improve neighborhood livability. He advocated training landscape designers, architects, and civil engineers on alternative approaches and offering technical assistance at every opportunity. He displayed examples of stormwater management features at new development and retrofitted structures and parking lots. He stressed that natural features such as swales, ecoroofs and innovative drainage in parking lots can be less expensive than traditional pipe projects, which require maintenance and eventual replacement. He cited stormwater discounts for permit applicants who apply sustainable site designs (SSD) and lower costs in general for projects applying SSDs. He praised Portland's approaches, including regulations, for keeping Portland green and livable compared to more developed cities such as Los Angeles.

Portland Watershed Management Plan

Dawn Uchiyama, Willamette Watershed Manager, reported that BES has just completed the Portland Watershed Management Plan, which provides a series of strategies. She noted that each program presented at this meeting represents a strategy related to the watershed plan. She announced that City Council will hold a hearing on the plan on March 8, 2006. She concluded that watershed planners are interested in the outcome of the River Plan process for impacts on watershed management and health.

Public Comments

There were no comments from the audience.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Next Meetings

March 21

April 18

[Minutes approved at meeting
on April 18, 2006]