



Central City 2035 Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2012, 5:00-7:00pm

1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 2500B

Group members in attendance: Chet Orloff (Co-chair), Michelle Rudd (Co-chair), Bernie Bottomly, Wink Brooks, Patricia Gardener, Amy Lewin, James McGrath, Linda Nettekoven, Veronica Rinard, Bill Scott, Ethan Seltzer, Mary Wahl, Michael Zokoych

Group members not in attendance: Andre Baugh, Erin Flynn, Heather Hoell, Jeff Miller, Paddy Tillett

Staff in attendance: Shannon Buono, Troy Doss, Sallie Edmunds, Elisa Hamblin, Steve Iwata, Kevin Kilduff, Karl Lisle, Mark Raggett, Nan Stark, Joe Zehnder

Public in attendance: Wendy Rahm, Mary Vogel, 2 unidentified citizens

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review
- Planning Framework
- Public Input

Introductions

- Chet Orloff welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.
- People in the audience introduced themselves.

Planning Framework

- Chet Orloff described what would be discussed during the meeting including: Housing and Neighborhoods, Willamette River, and Green Central City. The section on Urban Design will be discussed at the next meeting with the Urban Design Concept Diagram.
- Troy Doss explained the color coding in the draft policy framework: red reflects comments already heard, blue reflects suggestions with changes to be made.
- Chet asked for any corrections to the last meeting's minutes.

Housing and Neighborhoods

- Troy explained there is a housing policy in the Central City Plan and the neighborhood plans. It has historically focused on getting housing built but hasn't specified what type of housing. There is an increasing need for diverse housing stock with changing demographics (more families, more student housing, more seniors).
- Michael Zokoych asked about health services and how they are provided in the city.
- Troy stated that what we've heard in outreach efforts is that health services should be better coordinated.
- Amy Lewin commented on livability and wanting to see it more throughout the document. She stated we should be supporting people's ability to live in the Central City throughout their lives, rather than just a 5 year timeframe.
- Chet asked for additional definitions of what livability means.
- Amy commented that housing and neighborhoods should be places where people thrive, meeting places and community places, plazas. Let's be sure to include those places.
- Bill Scott stated there needs to be more attention to not just walkability but street amenities. This includes parks and recreational facilities (places to sit, walk), not just open space. Urban public spaces will be different from district to district. This could be addressed in the Park section or the Urban Design section.
- James McGrath stated one of the ideas present throughout the document is the ability of the Central City to adapt to change. Many of the successful buildings in the Central City are old

buildings that were flexible enough for adaptive reuse. Current building technologies are too prescriptive. We should be considering a building stock that is flexible, not just housing diversity, but flexible buildings and architecture on a larger scale. Perhaps this could be included in the diversity of neighborhoods section.

- Chet Orloff added that historic preservation should probably be in this section, too. Troy pointed out that it is in the Urban Design section.
- Michael explained that there are many people camping on the streets in the Central Eastside. He asked if camping should be addressed in this section.
- Troy directed the group to view other sections related to transitional housing, security, and safety in Regional Center (page 2) and Goal #6 (pg 3). This level of policy direction can be teased out further in the quadrant plans.
- Bernie Bottomly believes the title of #5 (Development Without Displacement) should be adjusted. He believes we should not try to eliminate displacement but to minimize and mitigate it. Also, he believes the notion of density was lost in this draft. He would like to see density brought back to this draft. We should also work to maintain overall building affordability and manage the cost of doing business. We won't necessarily be able to build more parks, but we can think creatively about providing park-like experiences in small areas and intensify the use of the spaces available, including hardscapes.
- Patricia Gardener echoed the point about density.
- Amy would like to see more specificity about parks, plazas, and open spaces to catalyze civic engagement. What will density look like here? What do we want to see? What will be our "hot spots" for density?
- Bill addressed creativity and flexibility of the right-of-way. He noted there are places in the Bay Area where streets are open during the day then closed in the evening and restaurants put their tables out in the streets.
- Michelle Rudd suggests that seismic upgrades also be included wherever historic preservation ends up in the document. She points out maintaining and increasing economic diversity is also important to support equity. She asks about the distinctions between at-risk and low-income populations in #3 and #6.
- Troy explains that #3 should probably be low-income and #6 address at-risk populations and this can be clarified for the next version.
- Amy asked where historic preservation is reflected in the policy
- Joe Zehnder clarified that historic preservation is included under Green Central City and will also be addressed in Urban Design
- Bernie commented on the statements about mixed use and immediately adjacent uses in #8. Do they reflect the reality of what the Central City is? Are we saying something about industrial uses? Part of the vibrancy of a city is the density and activity day and night.
- Troy explained that this section is about ensuring that we use appropriate technologies to create vibrant mixed-use areas.
- Patricia says people need to understand that noise levels will be higher in the Central City and sound proofing of buildings isn't likely to happen unless it's in the code. She explains that in the Pearl District people move in and think it should be silent, so shops and eateries now close earlier and it's draining the life out of the area. People need to know life in the Central City is not going to have suburban quiet.
- Joe asks if there a different feeling regarding being within the Central City or on its edge?
- Amy agreed we need to manage expectations. She commented that a noise officer helps to make a mixed-use area livable without pushing shops out of business.
- Mary Wahl points out that the most expensive fix is the after the fact fix. We can avoid building in conflict by mixing compatible uses.
- Joe notes that it's sometimes easier to mix appropriate uses in new development.
- James points out that there are many combinations of uses that may be in conflict. He says we may be setting ourselves up for a fight if we place the full responsibility for noise mitigation on the noise producer. He suggests taking this piece out of the housing section and placing it elsewhere.
- Troy says staff will take another crack at this section, placing it within the Urban Design section because it applies to various adjacencies.

- Ethan Seltzer suggests we be careful to try not to legislate the golden rule. The noise ordinance can handle these conflicts, too. This kind of policy could say something more about prevention and avoiding conflicts.
- Michael asks if we will need more ordinances with increased density.
- Troy explains that in some instances we can reduce the need for regulation through good design.
- Amy agrees the prevention principle is key. She suggests adding “livable” somewhere within this page.
- Chet asked the group to move on.
- Joe clarified that we have a good list here to work on. If there is something missing let us know, otherwise we will work with what we have heard.

Willamette River

- Troy introduced the section and overviewed changes that have been made at this point. There was a suggestion to increase employment and commercial along the river. There was a counter proposal to capitalize on the land in transition along the river. A third proposal asked to incorporate urban uses and river uses. There was a conversation with Central Eastside representatives and Portland Spirit today about how Portland is missing out on opportunities to bring people to the city and through the city (ferries, cruises, etc.) It could be good for tourism as it has been for other cities.
- Joe explains that some of our policies have unintentionally prevented these sorts of uses. We need to balance endangered species and environmentally fragile areas with commercial uses. Tom McCall Waterfront Park is a success, but there are lots of ways to activate the waterfront.
- Michael talked about public, private, and commercial access to the river. The recreational strategy relies on thriving natural habitat. We need more interplay between both sides of the river by using the river. We’ll need to take a look at zoning along the river to improve that access.
- Chet reminds us that zoning will come later and asks if the policy framework addresses what
- Veronica Rinard would like to include the word “recreation” and points out that connection and activity on the river are important. She is glad Centennial Mills has been mentioned and she would like to keep human access to the river in addition to commercial.
- Michael mentioned there is talk about a ferry from Downtown to Lake Oswego to replace the streetcar that has been shelved. We have the potential to make our waterfront friendly. We could modify the seawall and allow ships to tie up so that our river can be accessed. We need a plan to be able to cross the river if there’s a seismic event.
- Patricia suggested the blue goals be added (Goals #6, #7, #8) and the middle red goal should become a subheading for Goal #4.
- Ethan stated he was not comfortable with these as goals, but is comfortable calling them policies to reach the goals. He doesn’t see the case for privileging one commercial use in a goal. He would like to see something along the lines of “creating an open approach to commercial uses of the river.”
- Mary suggests we protect the river and integrate the uses as we go. That way we won’t have to do the expensive fixes later.
- Joe says tourism is part of Goal #6.
- Bernie suggests that the goal should encompass the river as part of the economy of the Central City. The Willamette River is swimmable and fishable now so let’s make sure the language doesn’t make it sound like it’s not usable for recreation. Let’s move from “achieve” to “maintain” or “enhance”
- James McGrath reminds us the river plays a key role in Portland’s history, including the economic pieces of the river
- Michael believes in the commercial development of the river there is a custodial duty to maintain the river as a place for human access. The river is a lower carbon and more environmentally-friendly method of transporting materials needed by a Central City. We can make the river a beautiful place joining the two halves of our river.

Green Central City

- Troy introduced the section, and how the built form of the Central City affects environmental health.
- Patricia says the policy framework is missing how food fits into the Central City. She emphasizes our location and that we can be reacting and preparing on an individual and citywide level.
- Amy reflected that maybe 'green' isn't necessarily an enduring term. Maybe 'healthy' is the correct term – environmental and human health. And in the Portland Plan we use the term "healthy."
- Patricia says that food production is important, but it's also access to food, supporting the agricultural industry that surrounds us, both from a business and livability point of view.
- Ethan Seltzer suggests we keep it simple and say what we mean. Decide whether we mean "green" or mean "healthy." We should also be careful not to cherry-pick specific issues, and instead address foundational issues we're trying to serve.
- Troy asked for specific suggestions since we've tried out lots of different terms.
- Joe suggested we say what we mean and then jump back to picking the most descriptive word.
- Bill feels that the way to build the biggest constituency is to address environmental, resource efficiency, human health.
- Mary says people need daily access to nature, it is important to put it in here – more health than nature. It's resource efficiency, health, etc. She offered to play with the wording.
- Chet stated these three goals do touch on various aspects of this concept.
- Michael says "green" and "sustainable" are overused words. He suggests using "ecology" or "ecological."
- Bernie worried about the document setting reduction of energy use as a goal. We may actually increase energy use in the Central City as more people live here and there are more jobs. What we really want is to increase efficiency.
- Troy explains ecoroofs encourage on-site treatment and have multiple advantages.
- James asks if we are setting the bar high enough. Are we just addressing the low-hanging fruit right now?
- Ethan says how we frame things and how we innovate in a dense built environment really matters. We can reference the climate action plan and think about what that means for the Central City to lead achievement of the goals.
- James states that we need to meet intensity but there's been a negotiation between eco and urban systems, allow some tradeoffs and flexibility.
- Bill suggests we state explicitly that it is our goal to challenge ourselves to go beyond. We could say that we want to maximize the contribution of the Central City to the region's climate impact as opposed to minimize the climate impact of the Central City.
- General agreement that this is a cool idea.
- Michael suggests we encourage investment in research for coordinated efforts.
- Several people mention Portland as a living laboratory.
- Mary says one of the ways the Climate Action Plan has the potential to be more effective than most plans is that we are in the mess because of emissions and energy use and degradation. The Climate Action Plan actually addresses these two problems and suggests we can create a more resilient city. Not just the emissions but also the natural environment.
- Michael suggests using the word "implement" for Goal # 13.
- Bill mentions the peak oil task force. He notes that there Portland has a competitive advantage because we aren't using as much energy per unit of output.
- Next meeting is scheduled for June 12th
- Chet and Troy overviewed expectations and what is coming next (there will be a new annotated version of this document at the next meeting and we'll also be addressing the Urban Design concept piece)

Public Input

- Mary Vogel applauded what we're doing. She asks the committee members to project their voices during the meetings so the public can hear. As a member of the Downtown Neighborhood Association Mary was the Sustainability Chair and she's drafted a Downtown Vision which she

would like the committee to consider. She would like to see more integration of the natural world into urban design and built environment. She recommended *The Nature Principle* by Richard Louv who says we bring more people into downtowns also need to bring more nature into downtown, including native plants.

DRAFT