Central City 2035 Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes – June 12, 2012, 5:00-7:00pm
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 7A

Group members in attendance:
Chet Orloff (Co-chair), Michelle Rudd (Co-chair), Bernie Bottomly, Patricia Gardener, Heather Hoell, Amy Lewin, James McGrath, Linda Nettekoven, Veronica Rinard, Ethan Seltzer, Michael Zokoych

Group members not in attendance:
Andre Baugh, Wink Brooks, Erin Flynn, Jeff Miller, Bill Scott, Paddy Tillett, Mary Wahl

Staff in attendance:
Shannon Buono, Troy Doss, Sallie Edmunds, Peter Englander, Elisa Hamblin, Steve Iwata, Lora Lillard, Leslie Lum, Mark Raggett, Nan Stark, Joe Zehnder

Public in attendance:
Debbie Kitchin, Wendy Rahm

Agenda
- Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review
- Planning Framework
- Urban Design Concept
- Public Input

Introductions
- Chet Orloff welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The aim for the day is to finish reviewing the concept and provide our endorsement so we can review it at the last meeting and we can feel comfortable standing behind it when it gets passed on.
- Troy overviewed the intent for this meeting and the following meeting as well as the final steps in the project. We would like endorsement of the policy framework tonight so that we can focus on the urban design concept at the next meeting. CC2035 will package the framework and urban design concepts into the concept plan and will seek input from neighborhoods and business associations during a month of public review. There will open houses as well. The CC2035 team will also brief numerous commissions. The CC2035 Plan will go for public review in August, in September will go to the Planning & Sustainability Commission and to City Council towards the end of October. The next quadrant plan will hopefully begin in January 2013.

Planning Framework
- Troy Doss explained the color in the policy framework. Red text is group member suggestions. Blue text is staff suggestions based on general suggestions. The urban design policies are somewhat different because they were reworked after the other ideas were fleshed out.
- Amy Lewin commented on page 1, goal 3 – asking for elaboration on "expanded," Troy explained the intent was further support for increased also page 1, goal 4 – some locations are not the places to encourage development, example historic preservation areas, so this may deserve more attention at the quadrant level.
- Joe Zehnder highlighted the fact that these policies are balancing policies. They show character, locations, and how they reinforce other policies. There is a counterbalance going on.
- There were no other comments on page 1.
- James McGrath commented on page 2, goal 8 – "optimize" has an engineering slant and is auto-oriented, it indicates that the goal is to get as many cars through as possible, maybe change the title to "Diversify Street Network" instead and keep optimize later.
- Amy Lewin commented on page 2, policy 6 – we should insert reference to historic resources.

- Troy was reluctant to highlight any one part of the urban form, but points out that page 5, goal 4 addresses historic resources.
- Chet Orloff suggested cultural resources and events be added to page 2, policy 6
- There were no other comments on page 2.
- Amy Lewin commented on page 3, goal 6 – "high-density mixed use center" should be replaced with "dense," James and Ethan disagreed – if we're going to use "dense" (and we should) this is the part of the city for it.
- Amy commented that Portland is an active city but we should point out that open space also needs to be place for rest and respite, not just activity, Chet suggested "recreation and Troy pointed out that page 5, goal 10 talks about open spaces offering "different experiences," Bernie said he likes including "recreation and respite," it's also addressed in goal 7, one of our major bureaus is Recreation.
- Amy commented on page 3, policy 3 – when we refer to "low-income affordability," are we talking about lowest or lower income? Do we need to spell out what affordability rate this actually is?
- Troy said it refers to below 120% but he commented we have been reluctant to set any kind of metrics because it becomes dated quickly. There is a need for a range of housing available to every income level.
- Joe asked for some general discussion. The distinction is what we can do through density within the Central City. Good transit in the Central City helps bring down the cost of living in the Central City even if housing prices are high. If we mean it we should be more explicit.
- Chet asked if this was a result of an earlier discussion.
- Bernie Bottomly commented that there is a huge split in housing types. There is little in between either end of the housing affordability spectrum.
- Ethan noted that the Portland Plan recently adopted affordability definitions so we can cite the policies we've already adopted and support them.
- Chet reminded the group we want to address what is specific to the Central City.
- Joe stated the unique points are in #3 and 4, where there is a significant supply of affordable housing which is threatened because the programs that make the housing affordable are sun-setting. This is a distinctly Central City issue because the housing is located within the Central City. These are making the right points, but there may be something in the Portland Plan that can make it clearer so we can and should incorporate it.
- Troy stated we were trying to keep some flexibility without our plans becoming outdated. Diversity is beyond just affordability. 80% of housing in the Central City is studio and one-bedroom apartments and that's not much diversity in terms of household structure. Policy 6 also addresses the far end of the housing spectrum – homelessness and transitional housing – to address stabilization for people who need housing security.
- Amy commented on page 3, policy 8 – the way its written it states noise as a use, rewrite to "those that create noise."
- There were no other comments on page 3.
- Michael Zokoych stated goal 10 does not need the word public since it implies free public access to the waterfront.
- Troy stated it was his own perspective working on shoreline access in the past.
- Joe noted that it could be construed as an easement.
- Patty Gardener doesn't feel the word public limits it, but it can also include commercial.
- Troy asked if overall we are excluding anything from this section.
- Heather and Michael noted that if #8 and #4 are both there we should be covered.
- Amy felt that we should be improving public access over the next 25 years. If you separate the policies from the goals it still stands.
- Michael stated he still does not like the use of the word public there.
- Ethan stated this reiterates long-standing goals of the city. He would keep it there.
- Michael asked if that meant a new goal 11 should highlight private access.
- Ethan stated that the policy is to increase public access to the river. We respect private property rights but we don't need to take private access away to increase private access to the river.
- Michael felt Ethan was making his point exactly and that the word private should be added.

- Michelle Rudd asked whether increasing public access precludes commercial development, but believes that goal 8 addresses commercial access.
- Patty felt strongly it should move forward the way it is written to protect public access to the river.
- Joe suggested we move forward with the plan as it's written. This discussion can continue when others have a chance to read the plan, too.
- Michael thanked city staff for including policy 4.
- There were no more comments on page 4.
- The group skipped over page 5.
- There was discussion about the title of the goal area (Green Central City was the prior one). Now recast as Environmental Health. Joe suggested we focus on the content and fix the title later.
- Bernie Bottomly stated the word "transform" should be "enhance the Central City's role as" to acknowledge that the Central City has already accomplished a lot.
- Joe stated it was picked up because of the Central City taking on the living laboratory role
- Heather Hoell stated high-density was kept before but this section says dense. Do we need to differentiate? Do they have different meanings and do we want them to be consistent?
- Bernie commented that he is not a big believer in district energy and wonders if it will become dated. He's not sure why this particular strategy is highlighted.
- Patty stated maybe the concept is good but the term is too specific.
- Ethan suggested using something like "increase the energy efficiency of buildings and the use of innovative low, carbon energy systems." That leaves it open to whatever technology may be available in the future. Public investments and working at the district level may be useful whatever the strategies.
- Chet asked if it was an issue to use "green" in policy 2 since it was taken out of the title.
- Michael suggests defining "green" if we're going to use the term.
- There was discussion about the definition of "green" as living or low-impact, high performance, energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly, etc.
- Troy called for an endorsement for the Policy Framework.
- Wendy Rahm offered public comment regarding high-density versus dense. She wished Suzanne Lennard was there to be able to talk about livable cities. Density and height are two different issues that need to be separated when talking about livable cities. The Planning Commission needs to define the difference between density and height. High-rises are not necessarily considered livable. The height of buildings should be related to the location – tall buildings are merited in some areas but not in all areas. Building height might be best addressed at the quadrant level.
- Chet suggested the group might talk about this more in the urban design discussion. The group stated that "high-density" does not mean "high-rise" but they acknowledge Mary's comment that some people will associate the two.

Urban Design Concept
- Mark Raggett introduced the urban design concept, its purpose and major features. The purposes are to provide a physical plan for a place, the character and experience of the place, identify key connections and corridors (how will people move into and out of the area), and to guide public investment in pedestrian and transit corridors, etc. He briefly discussed the history of the Central City's design concepts. 1988 Central City Plan expanded the core to include the east side of the river, but the focus was still on Downtown.
- Lora Lillard overviewed the background work, including Design Central City, which was prepared in 2010. The document lives online on the Central City website as a background document. Design Central City highlights important ideas (relationship to the river, parks, etc.). It was used in conversations with the design community and used at hosted workshops.
- James McGrath talked about the charrette that occurred last week. The Urban Design Panel that originated in the AIA now includes architects, landscape architects, and planners. A group of 40 designers and people came together to work on tightening the concept. Teams tackled concepts like "How do we show the river is the heart of Portland?" There were a few outliers but in general there was a collective agreement about what sort of urban design would benefit Portland and the participants have an ownership stake in helping to achieve it.

- Michael noted that there was a lack of vision for private development but good vision for public development. There weren't many suggestions for private development, but we should be foreseeing and planning for private development. We can get more out of the private sector if we work with the private sector.
- Mark stated that we are prepared to look at both public and private development.
- Michael said that instead of setting it up as "what can private developers do for us?" we should be focusing on how public development can inspire private development.
- Chet stated that most development is really private and this plan intends to drive private development.
- James stated the spirit of the charette was to focus on how the framework plan can drives private development. How can we recreate the success of the river district or the streetcar district? What are the minimum public developments that will set the table for private development?
- Bernie believes we're entering a new era because urban renewal has played an important role in shaping the landscape and encourage private investment. That tool and those resources won't be available so it's important to keep in mind that won't be able to fund streetcars and esplanades like in the past.
- Mark oriented the Steering Committee to the graphics. How can we support the idea of innovation and exchange in the urban design? Big ideas are goals 8, 9, & 10: 1) Central River and Reorientation east/west to it, 2) Distinct Districts, and 3) Bookends (Pearl to OMSI) for a connected public realm. A big shift has been the light rail line in downtown (and we expect the same with the new streetcar on the east side). Another suggestion is a bike/ped loop.
- Joe pointed out that thinking ahead about transportation can help us to prioritize infrastructure investments like cycle tracks.
- Mark described The Shoelaces (areas around the bridgeheads) as an area for redevelopment opportunities. The quadrant plans will bring the abstraction down to the ground.
- James pointed out that although it may not be perfectly accurate geographically, the abstract concept is a circle, a loop around the river at the heart of the city, with orientation to the center and bookends at the extents.
- Mark pointed out that the dark areas are the places we expect more development.
- Joe asked for a walk-through of the urban design framework, the table, and the urban design diagrams.
- Patty asked about the names being used and the boundaries designated. She noted that the neighborhoods often think of themselves as larger than the areas designated.
- Heather said the same is true of business associations.
- Mark explained the names are there for orientation but there's an understanding that delineating the boundaries might create unnecessary conversations about where one neighborhood ends and another starts.
- Patty asked why we don't have bridgeheads on either side of the Morrison and Hawthorne Bridges.
- Joe stated this conversation is making him looking at the urban design in a different way. The bubbles relate to districts of more change, some change, or less change.
- Patty asked why the Central Eastside isn't a darker color.
- Mark stated that we're encouraging development on the MLK/Grand corridor.
- Troy felt that there won't be that much change. There has been change recently with lots of job creation and there will continue to be change, but we should utilize existing vacancies and infrastructure as we intensify. How can we utilize what we've already got before going to major land use changes?
- James commented there are examples of times we have made public investment that has not spearheaded private investment
- Patty says she foresees more intensification in the Central Eastside than is indicated on the urban design concepts
- Joe commented that there is a lot of capacity available in the Central City
- Amy asked whether intensification of these areas will require zoning changes as well.
- Troy stated that this will be determined at the quadrant level.

- Joe stated that in creating the balance of public and private investment it's a matter of both looking at where development is likely to occur and deciding where we would like it to occur
- James said that the most interesting pieces are the connections between the investments we've already made rather than necessarily how intensely developed various areas might be – he's interested in connecting the dots.
- Michael agrees with the map's concept for the Central Eastside, OMSI, and the post office. The Central Eastside will continue to grow incrementally through small business growth and development and a livable area.
- Ethan says the maps help tell the story, but thinks that it's too detailed. The names are important. This is a hand-off to the quadrant plan – here's where we see the areas of high change, medium change, and low-change. We should make sure that people view these as communication tools, not maps.
- Troy says the interest is in the colors and intensity and if we overlay these over the existing areas we can see the directions we're considering going.
- Heather suggests that if the point is development intensity level, we use the street names for orientation and remove the neighborhood and business association labels.
- James says he likes the idea of the heat map, but doesn't want to lose the lines – the connective tissue and infrastructure between the districts.
- Mark stated the team will remove the neighborhood labels and work on simplifying the maps. He directed the group to page 5, a reconfiguration of text – the three goals.
- James comments that there are places for looking in and looking out – there are vantage points throughout the city
- Chet notes that the porosity of the central city boundaries are important
- Mark pointed out policies 1 & 2 are about goal 8 – how could we bring more people to the bridgeheads where there is redevelopment opportunity? How can we create visual connections? We have lots of opportunities for street diversification. We have iconic open spaces – how can we connect them? Are there opportunities for new recreation? How can we implement master plans? How can we highlight transitions with gateways? How can we improve connectivity?
- Patty comments that there are places with established zoning and we can protect their character, but there are also places with nothing there that we should be bold about and maximize
- Amy is curious about the context of the use of the words "neighborhood" and "district" – if neighborhood is associated with residential rather than commercial corridors will it adequately include business districts?
- Ethan congratulated the urban design team – this work is useful and valuable! He encourages the team to get rid of all the jargon before it goes to public so that it doesn't distract or confuse. This is exciting and it helps people to imagine what it will be like to be in Portland in the future.
- Michael would like to include something that helps to mitigate the greenway isolating the river and the access to the river
- Joe suggests that this issue be addressed at the quadrant level
- Amy commented that #5 seems to be addressing both residential and business districts and she thinks that's a good idea because it helps the edges of the Central City to feather into the rest of the city

Public Input
- Wendy Rahm commented on the need for parks in the open space in the West End, the more changed part of Goose Hollow. She would like to see new or reconfigured open spaces turned into pocket parks to increase livability in the area.

Last Steps
- The group voted unanimously to endorse the Central City Concept Plan with its amendments.
- Troy reminded the group we would be meeting on July 10th for final endorsement. It will likely be a short meeting with a review of the Concept Plan and an outline of the schedule for work throughout the fall.
- Bernie did not vote because he has additional comments and would like to share it with his constituents before endorsing the plan.