

SE Quadrant Transportation Working Group (TWG)

Meeting #1: Friday February 21, 2014, 8:30AM-10:30AM

Staff In Attendance: April Bertelsen, PBOT; Derek Dauphin, BPS; Troy Doss, BPS; Bob Haley, PBOT; Bob Hillier, PBOT; Rachael Hoy, BPS; Michael Jacobs, PBOT; Mauricio Leclerc, PBOT; Teresa Montalvo, PBOT; Grant Morehead, PBOT; Geraldene Moyle, PDC

Public in attendance: John Comery, Susan Lindsay, David Lorati, Rick Michaels, Ben Ngan, Valeria Ramirez, Peter Stark, Dan Yates

Start time: 8:40AM

Grant M. leads with introductions

Format will be open ended. The city wants to know what is working and not working with the parking code.

TWG is part of larger stakeholder committee for the SE Quadrant Plan. Grant M. discusses topics for the next couple of TWG meetings. There will be two on circulation; one focusing on freight and one focusing on ped/bike/transit. If necessary, a fourth meeting will be scheduled to wrap-up.

Grant M. goes over the overall process of the plan. The city is in the last part of the Central City quadrant planning process. This is the third and final quadrant plan. Then we will move to the implementation phase. There will be revisions to the parking code. There will be a year and a half process to identify parking issues. This would happen at the same time as quadrant plan implementation and other code changes (around late 2015).

This initial meeting is to get the conversation started. The City wants to talk about framework and policy language. This group is a sounding board for the parking revision process.

Questions and Discussion regarding PowerPoint slides:

Has there been any parking built since the current plan (1995 Central City Transportation Management Plan)?

Grant M: Some but not a lot. The first decade and a half there was only one parking project.

Why has it been like this?

Most parking was for non-office use. Not allowing the parking to be used for people who are not staying in the area.

Rick M. makes a comment about the fact that these are good questions for 2015, but what about 2035? These questions don't address the 20 year issue.

Troy D.: Looking at an increase in employment density over that time period. There won't be a massive change in zoning. It would be safe to assume a greater utilization of land in this area. This will increase demand for parking.

General Discussion: These are building-by-building solutions. The group discussed the parking and land use spectrum. It is hard to say what will happen in the next 20 years. Lets put in a midterm plan that handles parking for a smaller time period. Group feels that a midterm plan would be a good approach. Considers a mid range solution.

Dan Y.: We are talking off-street parking and development. A lot of that parking is on empty lots so every time we build something we lose parking. This worries us (CEIC). We want jobs and businesses to come in, but this is a big issue that we need to consider when buildings are coming in with little to no parking.

Another thing Dan would like to see is the purchasing of flexible parking like in Europe and Asia. There they provide lifts to small lots; they can put a car on top of it. You can move vehicles around as demand increases or decreases. He believes this is a lot cheaper than the \$55,000 coverage point. It allows us to broaden the horizon on how we use space better.

Geraldene M. mentions Globe Sherpa, the company that helps people find parking spots and looks for parking. These types of solutions could address immediate needs. District parking is going to come up. Do we incentivize people to add parking? There may be more than one solution.

Troy D: We recognize that there is not a big parking supply because it's an industrial district. Parking is a huge cost. We need to figure out how to look at uses in this corridor. For apartments off-street parking may be needed. We need to be strategic on how to do it.

Geraldene M: There are areas where there is more need than others. It depends on the uses.

Peter S: Especially in areas like west of MLK and Grand. Buildings are being converted to residential apartment use. We have to look at more significant parking around bridge heads.

Dan Y: We also have to think about trucks.

Troy D: This is a freight district and that is the primary mode. The area has plenty of loading docks. We need to find different model for this district.

Mauricio L: What type of parking demand is going in?

Peter: The district has moved towards a lot of tenants with primarily office use, where they have customers. So now there is a lot of demand for parking.

Mauricio L: Do we have mode split for this area?

Troy D: We know a lot of people are coming from the region. Clackamas, Southwest Washington. The district has a customer base that needs to be served by parking.

Rick M: Do we have information since things have changed? Where things have improved?

Peter S: We think things have improved. In the CES, people were bringing in bikes to go downtown. That added to the mode split. Now with buffer, it's not happening as much. The district picked up on-street parking, but changing permit from loading. There might have been something like 50 stalls added. Also, the district is looking at diagonal parking. The housing is the hardest part. Need to use permit, but not to residential. This regulates the type of parking use in the area.

Rick M: In the SE, there are meters that are being underutilized.

Geraldene M: It's because there are spots with no meters so people park there instead.

Peter S: We added 26 meters. Then we talked to business owners. We removed half because they were not effective. There might be other areas where they can add meters. Especially around Water Ave. Demand is high around that area. Trying to accommodate businesses whose employees need parking. Want meters but if you add too many, you will affect businesses.

David L: for the 2035 planning process, the goal is how to preserve what is working well and is positive and attractive and accommodate for some development and some growth and some density. How do we achieve that? CES has a lot of buildings and blocks without off-street parking. It doesn't make sense to me that if you want to preserve the uses then you can't add more buildings without parking or parking solutions. Number one priority is for new development to have parking. Of course, dependent on use.

Dan Y: Don't you agree that they should be on Grand, MLK, Burnside, Belmont?

David L: Meters were a compromise to make other improvements. I was only in favor of finding solutions to move the ball forward. The problem with meters is it's a sign to businesses that parking is a revenue generator. In the CES, if you want revenue from parking, then you are asking for changes in use. That is not the primary use we are trying to preserve. The investments make the economy go. Some flexibility in buildings and use is necessary. Industrial wants flexibility on loading and parking. My employees have no problem with parking. If you arrive at 10am it is much harder to find a spot. Lots of loading docks are only used as such and I want to hang on to them, but if people could park there some of the time then we could make that better for businesses. So flexibility is important.

Grant M: How about accessory parking? What does the group think of that use?

Rick M: Parking needs to be thought about in a broader scale. Not just building by building. How do we control that people in the district use it. Not just monthly paid parking lots.

Grant M: Could the Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee potentially manage permits for off-street parking?

Peter S: I have concerns with opening it up. OHSU has a TMA and they saw abuse of parking after they opened it up. Once you soften the rules then people break the rules. The permit system might be the best way to regulate. Two zones for EXD and IG1 zones. Might be a negative

impact to businesses. Don't want to regulate to point that you draw out businesses. Permits are probably the way to go.

David L: If you say, make employment more available, then you could regulate through a parking committee or city business to apply to purchase employee parking permits to have the ability to buy parking from their neighbors. Neighbors cannot go to highest bidder. Flexibility for neighbors to buy and sell their vacant space. Control it to point that they are not selling to downtown commuters. Preserve it for district use.

April B and Peter S both felt that it would be too difficult to regulate and patrol.

Dan Y: Companies can sell their parking spaces. We can do this without parking patrol. You would have to go through the parking committee. But they regulate themselves. The business can sell spots and it's up to them to regulate who parks there.

Rick M liked the idea of a parking committee being in charge. Accessory parking could change so that business can control their parking spots.

Dan Y feels that this could work as long as the change would not trigger any land use codes, like landscaping code. Those changed to code take away the parking spots you are trying to get people to use!

Mauricio L: A lot of on-street parking is permitted and mostly for employees. Don't lose sight of the big picture. We need to put a lid on parking. It affects livability. It will be a pain to get to parking spaces if traffic congestion increases substantially. We are talking about opportunity for new parking. Need to encourage other modes and in some cases we will need some special parking.

Troy D: As an industrial area, you need parking for that use and for employees. It's a different parking regime.

Dan Y: We have gotten rid of all bus parking in this area. Now there is no place to park a bus—only two spots. OMSI depends on buses and if we keep getting rid of them it hurts these areas. CES is a different beast than downtown. We have got freight and we need to think these uses. We are slowly constricting our ability to survive as a district. Stormwater swales are another factor contributing to on-street parking loss.

Troy D: We are in agreement on that. We are starting a process with BES to reach these solutions. Something like Seattle's "green factor". Looking at sustainability but not just through bioswales.

Peter S: Permit system creates the demand for structured parking. This is a permit system to allow industrial uses. Structure parking increases property values. It's not downtown or the Pearl. It's something different. Not going too far but still allows uses to be created and evolve. If you just pinch you will squash those uses. Industrial users are not like office users. As we densify we need to create multi-modal uses as we see more offices.

Dan Y: There is still job growth and parking will grow. Not as fast but there will still be a need for more parking.

Susan L: Two areas I want to discuss for parking in CES. First, look at more ways for employees to get out of cars. We should see more incentives, like increasing bus lines. Second, we must look at parking ratios. There are new apartments on Belmont and 10th and all these people will still have cars. Especially disabled people. Need to talk about ratios with new residential developments.

Grant M: Another thing that came up in conversation at the ULI was truck share. Someone could park their truck and then there would be a pool of trucks that people in the district can use and share.

David L: If I could purchase a truck spot that is secure, then I can afford to get to work in different ways. There needs to be some flexibility for off-street parking lots. Park vehicles for key employees, deliveries, pick-ups then you could save that space. There have been a lot of ideas that I said wouldn't work, but now people are doing them. Can people share trucks? I don't think I would use it, but maybe some smaller business can.

Rick M: I think that sometimes we are so scared of people breaking the rules that we take away flexibility.

Dan Y: This type of business model already exists. People rent U-hauls. But some businesses need tools in the trucks and things that cannot be placed in shared trucks. You can't rotate it. Maybe not so practical.

Geraldene M: Will you all talk about the shifts throughout the day?

David L: Morning shift has no problem. By 10am it's no fun and much harder. It's a problem for not just industrial. It's about companies that have off-street parking versus those businesses that don't. If you don't have it, it's your fault.

Geraldene M: With shifts, sometimes transit doesn't help. So parking can be hard with shifts. The system doesn't always work for everyone.

David L: Issues that concerns me are circulation. The bottom line, truck guys get stressed. It gets harder and harder to circulate through the district. With OMSI's plans with new mode splits, that is going to lock up a lot of streets. You name it and it will be affected. With density, the impacts to deliveries have been really affected. FedEx and UPS used to be able to pick up at 5pm, now they want to come earlier. If you ship nationwide, then west coast has to ship as late as possible. A half a day matters. Circulation matters for deliveries. How things are going to get in and out.

Dan Y: I am terrified of when light rail opens. The streets will be blocked when there is streetcar, LRT, and buses. Water Ave. is how you get to I-5. Water is going to be blocked with street crossings. During commuting hours it's going to be a nightmare.

Troy D: An idea is greater signalization on the MLK-Grand couplet. This could take some burden off Water.

Mauricio L: What is needed is a parking maximum to create as much parking that is necessary, but not kill the district by the parking. Either density or parking. Economic development is good. Look at whole picture of parking with density.

Valeria R: OMSI is poorly serviced by transit today. We have people who cannot afford a car. I have been attending planning meetings for the past 7 years. It's always glossed over just how many people cannot own cars. It's expensive to own one. We need to go cold turkey on this entitlement on employee parking. We have this huge infrastructure we are building and we aren't talking about how to build on that. Distribution area, but also business to business. Consumer aspect as well. Advance to where we are going. What is the staff's best thinking on what the district will look like if it evolves on its own? The peak is different from business to business.

Bob Haley: You have spots people could use during the day. I advocate for ways to loosen regulation. Simplify. Joint use during the day. TMA could come in and help.

Peter S: For the average users, they won't bother with it. It's supply and demand.

Rick M: Annual lease to parking commission so they deal with headache of leasing spots. Local circulator to move people around district since LRT will not help this area. Legalize joint parking and management.

Valeria R: Why not more interest in ODOT parcels. It might have to do with how those parcels are so land locked.

Everyone: They are interested, but ODOT is working at their speed.

Troy D: Short to midterm solution is how to utilize the current spots. There are spots but could be managed better. TMA could help. If we build three structures, it still does not utilize half the demand. So this is not a real solution. How is parking enforcement in this area?

Peter S: It's better. The officers are flexible. If they are needed we can call on them.

Dan Y: Ramon is retiring. Parking enforcement has a policy to rotate its officers. It's difficult because the area is so big and some areas need special flexibility for loading docks. If you move three times in two hours technically that is illegal. You can get an \$80 ticket.

David L: Enforcement is light. Just right. I worry about rigid rules that don't allow neighbors to solve problems. Cooperation is a hallmark of the district. Needs to be cooperative and productive district. Neighbors can fight but also find solutions. Enforcement is necessary, but flexibility is good in a lot of areas in the district.

Bob Haley: Zoning code is a blunt tool that does not respond to dynamic changes. It's going to be years before things get changed. TMA can get flexibility as the district changes. You don't want to amend the rules. The rules will be three/four years behind. Do not do it with zoning code. Wrong tool, no flexibility. Expensive and long to submit application.

Grant M: concludes meeting—thanks everyone for coming. Next TWG is dealing with circulation. Next meetings is during the evening. Will send doodle to find next meeting time. Dan Y might be able to provide space.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.