

Minutes of the River Plan Committee – North Reach

December 12, 2005

5pm – 7pm

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

Committee Members Present: Pauline Anderson, Don Hanson, Brian Campbell, Bob Naito

Absent: Jason Graf, Melissa Powers, Greg Wolley, Krystyna Wolniakowski

City Staff Present: Joe Zehnder, Sallie Edmunds, Marguerite Feuersanger, Peter Ovington, Steve Kountz, Joan Hamilton (Recorder), Planning; Kip Wadden, Parks;

Others Present: Bob Short, Steve Durrant, Greg Theisen

Hanson convened the meeting.

Committee Business

- There was no vote on minutes due to absence of a quorum.
- Hamilton distributed a list of future monthly meeting dates on 3rd Tuesdays.

Trails Task Group

Marguerite Feuersanger announced her new role as coordinator of the Trails Task Group since Diane Sullivan left. She reported that the task group recently conducted a field survey and held its last meeting pending staff's drafting a conceptual proposal for the task group's review in February and subsequent forwarding to the River Plan Committee (Committee).

Comments: Committee members cited comments in the River Concept that reflect different perspectives on the greenway trail. Feuersanger confirmed there's lack of consensus in the task group, and the Committee will have the opportunity to review maps showing alternatives related to widths of right-of-way and property ownership.

North Beach Task Group

Feuersanger reported formation of the North Beach Task Group, which will focus on the area from the University of Portland to Cathedral Park. She said task group members will include representatives from the university, DEQ, the railroad, the community, public agencies, and relevant property owners.

River-Dependent and River-Related Industrial Uses Task Group

Document Distributed: Task Group Process Outline

Kountz described the task group's process and noted that it will be a quick process because of previous research completed for the Portland Harbor Industrial Lands Survey and discussions by the River Industrial Advisory Group (RIAG). He reported there will be three meetings beginning in the next two months. Kountz confirmed participants will represent property and business owners, harbor and economic development agencies, real estate developers, and public agencies.

River Concept

Documents Distributed:

- **Public Involvement Summary**
- **List of Commentors**
- **River Concept Comments and Responses: A – Discuss with Committee**

- **River Concept C&R: B – Suggested Amendments by RC page number**
- **River Concept C&R: C – Comments by Topic to Address in River Plan**
- **River Concept Comments and Responses: D – Other Comments**

Edmunds described public involvement efforts, including presentations in the community, contacts by e-mail and telephone, articles in newspapers, meetings with various public staff, and outreach by mailing lists and Web sites. She explained that she organized comments into four groups, with most significant issues presented on List A for the Committee's discussion. She categorized themes on List A as the River Plan, Industrial Issues, Linnton, North Beach/University of Portland, Central Eastside, the Environment, and Transportation.

Edmunds and committee members discussed proposals and staff responses on 18 items on List A. Zehnder stressed that the Committee needn't spend time with specific language, but might confirm whether staff's assessments and responses are accurate and appropriate. In most cases the Committee agreed with proposed responses, but stressed the need for further clarification in the report. The Committee made these recommendations:

- Clarify that the River Concept summarizes adopted and unadopted policies, but will provide guidance for drafting of the River Plan; the River Plan will not become adopted policy until reviewed by the Planning Commission and adopted by City Council; and the River Plan and subsequent regulations will refer back to and be based on the River Concept.
- Provide the Committee with a list of suggested measures for evaluation of success.
- Clarify that the Working Harbor Reinvestment Strategy is a component of the River Plan, covers the same area of land in the North Reach, and supports industrial interests; reread the River Concept from an industrial perspective and change language for more balance, if appropriate.
- Recommend flexible criteria to preserve industrial land rather than a strict no-net-loss-of-industrial land policy, because a strict policy would limit the City's options (Zehnder and Kountz reported the City has lost 400 acres of industrial sanctuary land since 1990, mostly on a case-by-case basis rather than strategy, and more changes in use have been requested).
- Clarify the context of the recommendation to support circular, sustainable new economy by explaining the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Willamette Industrial Urban Renewal Area (WIURA) and provide direct acknowledgement of efforts to retain and recruit for existing industries, particularly harbor industries in metals, transportation equipment manufacturing, and distribution.
- Adopt staff's proposed revised language regarding the Linnton/Willbridge area to indicate flexibility for subsequent decisions about a proper mix of uses with opportunities for the waterfront as well as consideration for the industrial uses.
- Modify language to refer to opportunities rather than projections for development in the University of Portland's waterfront transition.
- Adopt staff's revised language that clarifies how reconfiguration of the I-5 freeway loop leaves options open to 1) make minor modifications; 2) develop I-5 and 405 into one-way freeways; or 3) bury the freeway. (The Committee agreed with staff's assessment that regardless of subsequent long-term plans, the River Concept should add language about needs and opportunities on the Central Eastside).

- Resolve agencies' differences and stress importance of maintenance dredging in the River Concept based on policies including support for a prosperous working harbor, industrial zoning, legal commitments to maintain a channel and berths on the seawall, and responsibilities for maritime infrastructure. (The Committee stressed that dredging is an appropriate issue for the River Plan to advance as policy).
- Respond to concerns about cost effectiveness by saying that modification of the riverbank should result in an approach that increases habitat function but does not create an overly burdensome requirement on property owners.
- Support the Planning Commission's recommendation to study the appropriate street designation for Naito Parkway south of the Morrison Bridge as part of the process for the Central City Transportation Management Plan (CCTMP). (The Committee noted the importance of Naito as a freight and transportation link to I-5 South, but also for hybrid purposes including access to new residential districts and Waterfront Park.
- Create a diagram to highlight when Code changes will be completed in relation to development of the River Plan.

The Committee concluded that staff organized information well, responded to legitimate concerns, and conducted impressive outreach, which should be stressed in presentations to the Planning Commission and Council. Edmunds said staff will amend the document based on proposed responses, present the revised report and draft Planning Commission resolution at the River Committee's meeting on January 17 and then forward the report to the Planning Commission for a hearing on February 28.

Other Comments from Committee Members and Audience

- Theisen noted complaints from industrial interests regarding the timing and prioritization of work on regulatory changes regarding the greenway and river-related uses. He suggested the need for better communications about outcomes expected of the process.
- Short added there's anxiety that the project has drifted, not addressing specific issues for the industrial community about retention of industrial land and how and in what context the greenway code will be rewritten.
- Campbell recognized frustration over the lengthy process and the changing direction, but acknowledged the need to establish concepts before drafting Code language. He stressed that the City has decided on this process.
- Anderson noted discussion about a possible river ferry system from St. Johns to Vancouver, WA. and Columbia River cities and said there have been previous feasibility studies that project the system would need substantial public subsidy.

Edmunds concluded that the River Plan will contain both policy and regulatory elements, and staff will attempt to do a better job of communicating that. The Committee recommended that absent members be advised to comment on any problems with the River Concept in preparation for voting at the next meeting.

Next Meetings

January 17, 2006 – Adoption of River Concept/Resolution; Environmental Issues

February 21, 2006 –Environmental Issues (continued), Recreation

[Minutes approved
at meeting on January 17, 2006]