

## **Minutes of the River Plan Committee – North Reach**

**April 18, 2006**

**5pm – 7pm**

**Portland Bureau of Planning, 1900 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 4a (4<sup>th</sup> floor)**

**Committee Members Present:** Pauline Anderson, Brian Campbell, Jason Graf, Don Hanson, Bob Naito, Melissa Powers, Greg Wolley, Krystyna Wolniakowski

**Absent:** None

**City Staff Present:** Sallie Edmunds, Mindy Brooks, Steve Kountz, Michael Montgomery, Chris Scarzello, Arianne Sperry, Joan Hamilton (Recorder), Planning; Kip Wadden, Parks; Dawn Uchiyama, BES; Seth Hudson, PDC

**Others Present:** Greg Theisen, Bob Short, Amy Dvorak, Tim Myer

Hanson convened the meeting.

### **Committee Business**

Campbell's motion to approve the minutes for February 21 and March 21, 2006 was seconded and passed by an Aye vote.

### **1. Water Recreation Task Group**

#### **Document Distributed: List of Task Group Members**

Kip Wadden, Parks & Recreation, described formation of the Water-Based Recreation Task Group. She reported sending invitations to stakeholders representing user groups on the Willamette who promote interests of tourism, kayak and canoe groups, yachting associations, business services, retail boat sales, moorages, environmental organizations, the University of Portland and shore-related activities including fishing, walking, and bird-watching. She listed federal, state, and local public agencies that will serve as adjuncts and reported searching for one more task group member representing commercial vessels on the river.

Wadden reported that the group will meet weekly for four weeks starting Tuesday, May 9, Portland Oregon Visitors Association (POVA) will provide a meeting room, and the group will cover topics including 1) current and potential future users, facilities, and demand; 2) access points and waterway management issues; 3) opportunities and constraints; and 4) future needs and improvements.

Wadden agreed to contact native American fishery groups, per Powers' suggestion.

### **2a. Preview of PowerPoint for City Council Hearing on April 26, 2006, 2:00 P.M.**

#### **Document Distributed: PowerPoint**

Sallie Edmunds provided a preview of the draft presentation she and Gil Kelley would provide in seeking City Council's endorsement of the River Concept on April 26. She covered:

- River Renaissance strategy;
- project team members and bureau partners;
- purposes of the River Plan;
- reasons for updating the Greenway Code;
- relationship of the project to previous plans and studies;
- relationship of the River Concept to river planning;

- organization of study areas into the North Reach, Central, Reach, and South Reach;
- public outreach efforts including establishment of the River Plan Committee;
- Planning Commission's endorsement of the River Concept on February 28, 2006
- intentions for initial focus on the North Reach of the river;
- assignments for task groups who will review issues and develop proposals;
- River Plan products, including an image of the river in the future, design solutions, integrated policies, implementing Code and guidelines, and recommended public investment and partnerships.

Edmunds also reported a proposed amendment supported by Waterfront Organizations of Oregon (WOOO) that relates text about floating home moorages, marinas and water-related businesses to text in the River Renaissance Strategy.

## **2b. Updates on Task Groups**

Edmunds reported upcoming meetings through June for the task groups on bank design, watershed health, water recreation, and working harbor reinvestment. She reported the trail group will reconvene in June.

## **3. Harbor Reinvestment Strategy**

**Documents Distributed:** (see link at [Industrial Harbor Interviews PowerPoint](#))

Steve Kountz, Planning, and Greg Theisen, Port of Portland, reported on meetings with harbor business owners and focus groups to conduct interviews about challenges and opportunities on the working harbor. They recited project goals to keep districts competitive and to coordinate capital investment by the Port, PDC, and City. They displayed maps and provided data documenting recent private investment in harbor sites, the need for investment and operational strategies to improve service on overcommitted rail lines and street systems, and the need for investments and strategies to provide land to meet market demands for expansion and new development.

Kountz, Theisen, Seth Hudson (PDC) and Arianne Sperry (Planning) summarized highlights and provided examples from interview findings:

### *Growth in Relation to Demand for Land*

- Portland's Working Harbor represents a half billion dollars in private investment.
- 90% of demand for industrial land relates to relocation or expansion of existing businesses, reports show growth in all five major industrial clusters on the harbor, and industrial brokers report increasing demand for heavy manufacturing sites close to the city (unlike other cities with industrial sites in suburban areas).
- Distribution uses account for 60% of industrial land demand in the region. One company has expanded its facility four times since 1994 to 800,000 sf (3 levels on 100 acres), employs up to 500 full-time and part-time employees, and will spend \$40 million on a streamlining project to improve efficiency. Another marine terminal that employs 170 people has expanded operational uses beyond distribution of autos to accessory manufacturing activities.
- There's market demand for industrial flex space close to downtown (flex space refers to a variety of users in one spot, with uses in buildings changing over time – industrial or business parks, with offices, storage yards, industrial shops or galleries). Higher buildings would accommodate uses in limited space, but close-in districts such as Northwest have height limits.

- Sufficient industrial land supply depends on efficiencies and brownfield cleanup – there’s divided opinion how much public investment is appropriate, whether cleanup costs incurred by polluters should come out of the price of land, and how to control liability for innocent new owners.

*Transportation – Rail and Truck Freight*

- All 3 railroads (Class 1-Union Pacific, Burlington Northern; regional -Portland & Western) currently strive for efficiencies – longer trains, parallel spurs – due to lack of land and capacity. Overcrowded rail lines create costly delays for industries all along the line (long trains that block crossings incur fines; switching issues cause gridlock; sometimes it is necessary to summon engines from other cities.)
- Congestion increases costs for trucking companies –Because the company passes on costs of reduced trips to the consumer, there’s a choice between the City’s saving money for improvements or consumers’ paying more for products.
- Freight bottlenecks occur at I-5 intersections and other key spots – Delta Park, Columbia River Crossing, Swan Island (only one way in and out); backup of traffic from I-5 on Greeley due to Interstate Avenue Light Rail); St. Johns Bridge, NW Yeon (Guilds Lake District at shift time; diversion of traffic from Naito to Yeon).

*Transportation – Commuting, Conflicts*

- Swan Island can encourage transit use because of employment density, but Rivergate lacks sufficient number of jobs to support adequate transit service, particularly during late-night shift hours. Construction of parking garages to intensify use of existing land and shared parking arrangements represent partial solutions with numerous issues for resolution.

*Regulations*

- Industrial realtors and developers report substantial improvements at BDS, but everyone complains about waterfront development processes and costs; however, there’s recognition that waterfront regulations all over the country reflect federal, regional, and state requirements.
- Large companies and property owners who handle their own permits complain more about expense and difficulty of permit processes than developers who lease properties to smaller businesses.

River Plan Committee members, with audience member Bob Short of Glacier Northwest and River Renaissance Manager Michael Montgomery raised issues for further discussion as staff analyzes data and summarizes major themes and conclusions.

- Analyze assumptions and data about shortage of blue collar workers to replace retiring industrial workforce. Is it a question of workforce supply or recruitment? Explore challenges to attracting workers and whether there’s adequate transit.
- Consider recruitment efforts such as a recent metal industry consortium; analyze whether resources and funding are effectively and efficiently allocated.
- Consider convening a workforce development conference.

Hanson invited the task team to return for more discussion with the Committee.

Kountz and Theisen reported that they will prepare a public report, which will take time because they interviewed almost 60 people who had a variety of comments from complaints to exciting news. Kountz said it will be helpful for River Plan Committee to provide input on the team’s findings and identify implications for river planning.

#### **4. River Renaissance: Status of the River Report: Documents Distributed:**

- State of the River Report
- Power Point (see link at [State of the River](#))

Michael Montgomery, River Renaissance Initiative Manager, Planning, reported on achievements made by City of Portland and its partners to revitalize the Willamette River and Portland streams. He noted that adoption of the River Renaissance Strategy in 2004 requires an annual report to Council, and the report will serve as a management tool for measuring accomplishments or need for improvement. He emphasized Portland's national reputation for innovative projects, announced Portland's hosting of the Urban Waterfronts Conference in September, and reported that the Willamette Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study is underway.

#### **5. Public Comments**

Tim Myers, retired Navy captain, distributed brochures and reported on his efforts to raise funds to negotiate a lease agreement with the Port of Portland or City of Portland to moor USS Ranger CV61 for use as a museum and regional public attractant. He explained that the decommissioned aircraft carrier is the length of three football fields and could be stored at Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 and could serve numerous uses, including tourist attraction, ballroom, disaster shelter, vocational training center, and other uses. He explained he's seeking startup funds and public support.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

#### **Next Meetings**

**June 20**

**July 18**

[Minutes approved at  
meeting on May 16, 2006]