

## Minutes of the River Plan Committee – North Reach

August 15, 2006

5pm – 7:30pm

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

**Committee Members Present:** Brian Campbell, Jason Graf, Don Hanson, Bob Naito, Greg Wolley

**Absent:** Pauline Anderson, Melissa Powers, Krystyna Wolniakowski

**City Staff Present:** Sallie Edmunds, Deborah Stein, Joe Zehnder, Michael Montgomery Marguerite Feuersanger, Mindy Brooks, Steve Kountz, Arianne Sperry, Sarah Selden, Joan Hamilton (Recorder), Planning; Kathleen (Kip) Wadden, Parks; Roger Geller, PDOT;

**Others Present:** Steve Durrant, Tim Brooks, Trey Carskadon, Wayne Kingsley, Bob Short, Dan Yates, Greg Theisen, Blaine Hoover, Clark Balcom, Adam Robins, Peggy Murphy, Francine Royce, Paul Maresh, Robert Schuff, Lenny Anderson

Don Hanson convened the meeting.

### 1. Committee Business

Bob Naito's motion to approve the minutes for April 18 and May 16, 2006 was approved and passed unanimously.

### 2. Updates

*Documents Distributed:*

*River Plan North Reach Timeline*

*Urban Waterfronts Conference materials*

- Steve Durrant, Alta Planning & Design, distributed information and registration materials for the Waterfront Center's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference, which will draw about 300 visitors to Portland September 28-30, 2006.
- Durrant provided an update on the River Plan-related Site Design Workshops scheduled on October 23-25, 2006, which will focus on design solutions for local test sites. He described potential sites that need cleanup or mitigation and have potential for restoration, but he declined to provide specific locations pending further discussions with property owners. He said he expects to publish results of the workshops in November, 2006.
- Edmunds reported that the River Plan Committee will hear two reports at the meeting on September 19: Bank Design & Permitting and Watershed Health. {Editors note: the Bank Design & Permitting report has been postponed until October to allow time for trail follow-up.}

### 3. Water-based Recreation Task Group

*Document Distributed: Water Recreation Report & Recommendations, Draft*

<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=126512>

Kip Wadden, Parks & Recreation, described the task group's role analyzing user groups, facilities, conditions, issues, and trends to develop recommendations for promoting and preserving water recreation and access on the river. She provided statistics and information from research and surveys that indicate robust use of the river by recreational boaters, with decreasing numbers of permits for motorized boating, but increasing numbers of rowing and paddling activities. She listed the Task Group's findings on waterway situations that should be addressed such as user conflicts, directional signage, impacts of motorized boat wakes on

rowers, environmental impacts, and public safety and conduct issues, as well as infrastructure needs that will require both improvements to existing facilities and construction of new ones. She reported long waiting lines at the city's limited number of boating ramps and needs for launch lanes, short-term tie-ups, parking and restrooms. Wadden noted remaining questions about how to prioritize and finance maintenance, improvements, and new development at various locations on the waterfront. She listed the Task Group's general recommendations to develop strategies for capital improvements, water recreation and design. She concluded with the Task Group's recommendations for highest priorities in the South, North, and Central Reaches of the Willamette:

1. Return Ross Island to the public and provide opportunities for public access.
2. Focus on investment at sites to be developed by the University of Portland and at Cathedral and Kelley Point Parks; and
3. Develop the east side of the river for community boating and small ferries.

*Task Group Comments:*

- Trey Carskadon, State Marine Board, confirmed that the report accurately reflects the Task Group's work. He reported that although Oregon ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in the number of registered boaters, Oregon ranks No. 1 in the amount of federal dollars received for boating infrastructure.
- Bob Short, Glacier Northwest, expressed concerns about possibilities for conflicts between recreational boaters and commercial shipping lines; he stressed that shipping can extend from the harbor area down to the Broadway and Steel Bridges.
- Dan Yates, Portland Spirit, objected that the River Renaissance document fails to balance financial benefits of commercial uses with recreational goals. He said commercial boating could raise significant revenue for the city, yet Portland lacks infrastructure for boats over 60-ft, cruise ships, or floatplanes. He said the Waterfront Park Master Plan fails to cover opportunities for commercial boats.
- Greg Theisen, Port of Portland, recommended a river trail similar to the greenway trail and referred to Oregon State Parks' draft *Willamette River Water Trail Guide* as an example for developing a guide to viewpoints and amenities on the river.

*Public Comments:*

- Paul Maresh, North Portland Greenway Committee, asked that the report refer to the river as a transportation corridor.
- Francine Royce, North Portland Greenway Committee, asked to extend the review to the Columbia River.

*River Committee Discussion:*

- Bob Naito cited potential problems for big ships making turns in the waterway, but noted that the Coast Guard and State Marine Board have not presented objections to recreational uses. Naito suggested that issues listed on page 22 of the report could be cured by changes to the Zoning Code and a streamlined permitting process that would allow flexible uses in open spaces for building marinas and moorage space. Naito questioned why Portland can't host a seaplane terminal like Seattle's. [Yates noted that the Army Corps of Engineers would manage any joint permitting process, and it would be necessary to talk with neighboring property owners].
- Greg Wolley requested references to demographic changes in Portland and goals to provide recreational opportunities for minority and immigrant populations.

River Plan Committee members questioned whether to categorize cruise ships and other commercial boating as a recreational or economic development issue. They agreed that economic benefits to the city should be reviewed in relation to the need to fund recreational improvements. Consultant Steve Durrant noted that from the perspective of the customer, commercial boating represents recreation. The Committee directed staff to review commercial uses on the river.

Wadden agreed to research the history behind Portland's restrictions on use of waterfront space. She noted that Parks & Recreation does not collect significant fees, but it would be worthwhile to consider higher fees as a way to raise revenue for improvements. Edmunds and Zehnder confirmed that the final River Plan will weave together issues from the different task groups and will address commercial recreational use of the river.

#### 4. Trail Alignment

*Document Distributed: Greenway Trail Alignment and Viewpoints, Draft*

<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=126553>

Joe Zehnder and Marguerite Feuersanger, Planning, reported that the alignment on the proposed greenway map illustrates the debate and compromises among task group members, who included trail advocates, property owners, and industrial interests. They explained that the report covers alignment choices and policy implications consistent with the River Concept. They explained that eventual trail development will require innovative design to make proposals workable and create a connective transportation system. Feuersanger said proposals recognize both aspirational goals and existing land uses. She reported that the document does not address how to regulate trails and whether to use alternative approaches to acquire property owners' cooperation.

Feuersanger described proposed policy principles to apply in deciding appropriateness of trail locations, provided examples, and reported that the Task Group reached consensus on only two proposals: 1A and 3:

1. River-dependent Industry
  - A. Off-street riverfront trails should *not be required* between the river and river-dependent industry (Example: Cascade General, ship-building).
  - B. Off-street trails located landward (between river-dependent industrial development and land) *may be required* depending on impacts to public safety and feasibility of operations (Example: Cement Road in Lower Albina).
2. Non-River-dependent Industry – Off-street trails between river and industrial development *may be required* depending on impacts to public safety and feasibility of operations (Example: Siltronic Headquarters on east bank).
3. Office, Commercial and other Non-industrial uses – off-street riverfront trails are appropriate and *should be required* (Example: U. of Portland expansion site).
4. Viewpoints and trail spurs – Viewpoints integrated into industrial development *should be encouraged*.

Zehnder acknowledged that policy No. 2 for non-river-dependent industrial uses needs fine-tuning, because there would be legal issues of proportionality in requiring a non-river-dependent industrial user to provide a trail. He also said there's need to consider provisions for new industries locating on a site, not just existing ones.

### *River Committee Comments*

River Committee members Greg Wolley and Brian Campbell reported they toured the alignments with Sallie Edmunds and recognized a well-balanced effort, with the need for a few changes.

- Campbell made recommendations for four areas:
  - Swan Island – provide more detailed map of streets to show connectivity from Greeley to Basin and Lagoon.
  - St. Johns – highlight connection under the bridge and reconsider alignment on Decatur in relation to the existing trail designation on Edison.
  - Kelley Point Park – Provide accurate trail location.
  - Linnton area – consider trail crossing at a signaled intersection, because crossing Hwy 30 would be dangerous for bicyclists.
- Graf requested changes:
  - Depict Going Street in its correct location farther south on the map.
  - Provide more map detail to identify locations for the alignment and connections.
  - Explain up front the reasons for choices, bringing explanations out of the Appendix and closer to the map.
- Hanson commended the effort in the report and recognized compromises with the Working Waterfront Coalition. He noted the need to balance benefits with legal challenges, and noted there will be challenges in locations such as St. Johns because rail activity is increasing everywhere.

### *Task Group & Public Comments*

- Bob Short objected to the suggestion that a trail could be appropriate on Cement Road in Lower Albina as suggested for proposal 1B. He cited heavy truck traffic due to the expansion of Ashgrove Cement, continued unwillingness of property owners to allow legal access, lack of curb cuts, and insufficient width for trucks, bikes and a rail line running down the street. He requested careful crafting of aspirational language that will not constrain industries operating in the transportation hub in the future.
- Dan Yates expressed concerns about properties covered by Marine Transportation Security Act regulations at 33 CFR 105, noting that the U.S. Coast Guard has defeated efforts to require trails on protected sites in other cities. He contended that industries abutting water would be covered, regardless of river-dependency. He urged exceptions for industry and warned against raising expectations. He suggested review of the State's Goal 15 for treatment of commercial, dependent uses because waterfront owners will challenge the plan as it is now written.
- Greg Theisen noted differences between aspirations and reality at Lower Albina and advised 5-year and aspirational 20-year trail options to incorporate differing perspectives. Theisen noted challenges at different sites because of increasing rail activity, but appreciated solutions for Terminal 4 and commended the staff's cooperative incorporation of input.
- Clark Balcom commended the balanced presentation, despite his preference for riverfront alignment on Front Avenue rather than on Nicolai /St. Helens. He described possible alignment on an abandoned trail and railroad line along those two streets, but suggested a policy statement that a trail might be developed on the waterfront in the future if land uses change. He endorsed a balanced policy that also would allow for the needs of an industry that might locate on the waterfront in the future.

- Roger Geller stressed that Swan Island is an employment center needing alternative commuter routes, and the Albina Rail Yard route is preferable to traveling on Interstate and Going for many people. He noted that cities such as Rotterdam have successfully built trail systems over railroads and industrial areas. He urged aspirational goals.
- Kip Wadden spoke for absent Task Group member Gregg Everhart from Parks & Recreation. She listed Everhart's concerns:
  - Include more detail on maps, including street names.
  - Don't abandon historical aspirations for a continuous, riverfront trail.
  - Advocate green industrial options.
  - Use all available tools to achieve results (developing options before design creates problems).
  - Consider fewer policy categories – require easements and work through issues case by case (success of trails requires conviction, although it might take 20 years).
  - Consider the Parks Bureau's recently adopted Trail Strategy at a future meeting. Parks sees trails as linear parks serving many demographic users.
  - Create a public process for trail groups and allow public review of this plan.
- Lenny Anderson stressed trails as transportation corridors to link North and Northwest Portland, and he contended that bike riders already use Cement Road rather than risk Going and Greeley Streets. He considered the nature of operations more relevant than river-dependency for determining appropriateness of a trail.
- Francine Royce expressed frustration with proposals that don't require a trail; she urged that the vision be maintained.
- Paul Maresh noted that the St. Johns Lombard Plan approved by City Council recommended a waterfront trail that would connect Cathedral Park to the East Bank Esplanade. He urged recognition of a post-petroleum economy.
- Blaine Hoover presented a letter from Patrick Gerrity, Captain, U.S. Coast Guard. He cited the Maritime Transportation Security Act, which would require the trail to go around secure facilities, and he identified areas on the map that are regulated.
- Wayne Kingsley asked whether there would be an Environmental, Social, Economic, Energy (ESEE) process. Edmunds confirmed the City would comply with State requirements.

Hanson granted additional time for written comments from Ashgrove Cement and Bureau of Environmental Services. Hanson asked that the Park Bureau's presentation on the Trail Strategy be scheduled for a future meeting. Hanson and Edmunds confirmed there will be continued discussion at the next meeting, with public comments limited to additional written testimony and questions from the committee.

### **Next Meetings**

- September 19, 2006
- October 17, 2006

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

[Minutes approved at River Plan Committee meeting on September 19, 2006]