

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

**September 19, 2006**

**5pm – 7:00 pm**

**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, Don Hanson, Bob Naito, Greg Wolley, Krystyna Wolniakowski

**Absent:** Jason Graf, Melissa Powers

**City Staff Present:** Sallie Edmunds, Deborah Stein, Steve Kountz, Shannon Buono, Marguerite Feuersanger, Arianne Sperry, Sarah Selden, Joan Hamilton (Recorder), Planning; Gregg Everhart, Janet Bebb, Parks; Roger Geller, PDOT

**Others Present:** Steve Durrant, Gary Wright, Adam Robins, Wayne Kingsley, Dan Yates, Greg Theisen, Ben Tate, Pam Arden, Marjorie Wolfe

Don Hanson convened the meeting.

### **1. Committee Business**

- Brian Campbell's motion to approve the minutes for August 15, 2006, was approved and passed unanimously.
- Sallie Edmunds confirmed that the River Committee will meet on November 14, 5-7 p.m., instead of November 21, to avoid the week of Thanksgiving.
- Edmunds confirmed the boat tour scheduled for Committee members and others on September 26, 2006, 4:30-7:30 p.m., to view key riverfront areas.

### **2. Updates**

#### **Site Design Workshop**

- Steve Durrant described the sites selected as case studies for the site design workshops scheduled for October 23-25.
  1. Terminal 2 and Cove
  2. Sites north and south of St. Johns Railroad Bridge, including the Siltronics property.
  3. PGE property north of Linnton and Time Oil property across the river, where BPA power lines cross
  4. BES property in Swan Island industrial area

Durrant noted there will be afternoon and evening open houses and studios, but no scheduled public presentations except for a discussion with stakeholders. He agreed to send an e-mail letting River Plan Committee members know when open sessions will occur. He confirmed the location as the University of Oregon architecture studio, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 722 SW 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Edmunds announced that staff will set up the materials from the site design workshops for the River Plan Committee to review in the meeting room on November 14. She said staff will provide a report on the event at that meeting.

- Edmunds reported that the River Plan Team made presentations at a River Renaissance brown bag and for the Multi-Agency Streamlining Team to describe the River Plan Committee's activities.

### **3. Follow-Up: Trail Alignment**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Documents Distributed:**

- *Summary of Comments regarding Staff's Proposed Greenway Alignment and Viewpoints*
- *Written Comments from Bureau of Environmental Services, Swan Island Trails Committee, North Portland Greenway Committee*
- *Trail Design Task Group Proposed Work Plan*

Marguerite Feuersanger asked Committee members to review the summary of comments to prepare for a later meeting when staff will ask for direction on how to respond to requests. Feuersanger summarized primary issues as either 1) setting long-term aspirational goals for a trail on both sides of the river, or 2) adjusting the trail alignment to accommodate restrictions on industrial sites because of concerns for security and safety. Regarding specific situations she reported:

- There's been a greenway trail designation on Cement Road in Albina Rail Yard for 20 years, but it's necessary to reexamine whether to maintain that trail designation or to invest resources in a bluff trail on Greeley due to concerns about safety in the industrial area.
- Staff will implement Brian Campbell's recommendations to label transitional points where bicyclists cross busy streets.
- Staff met with Coast Guard Representative Blaine Hoover and confirmed 1) there is a requirement for a 20-ft setback from a perimeter fence to a public right-of-way to secure waterfront sites; 2) modifications are allowed depending on constraints of a site; and 3) the Coast Guard places no restrictions on trails in public rights-of-way.
- Staff met with waterfront property owners representing the energy cluster. They objected to a waterfront trail near petroleum tanks due to issues of security, and they stressed that although Front Avenue is a public right-of-way with designated bike lanes, there's need to consider the impact of the trail as a public attractor. The waterfront property owners' group proposed a trail through Forest Park or improvements to Highway 30 instead. Staff will review those ideas.

#### **Next Steps**

For the Trail Alignment Group's workplan, Feuersanger proposed that staff keep suggested alignments in place for now, pending six steps to review feasibility of alignments, consider design options, and develop proposals that incorporate staff's research and public comments.

#### **Park's Recreational Trails Strategy**

#### **Document Distributed: Power Point – See link at**

<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=132045>

Gregg Everhart described the 20-year recreational trails strategy developed by Parks & Recreation (PP&R) and accepted by City Council on June 28, 2006. She said the strategy does not represent a master plan completed with substantial public involvement, but instead presents a compilation of maps and plans developed in the past, a vision, and suggested logistics for actions. She noted priorities for the next five, 10, and 20 years and provided estimated costs for acquisition, construction, and operations and maintenance (O&M). She reported formation of a Trails Marketing and Funding Project Team to develop sponsorships,

partnerships, donors, special events, and a bond measure, and she listed applications underway to secure funding for seven projects.

### **Committee \ Public Questions & Comments**

- *How did PP&R arrive at the relatively low figure (\$4.7mil.) for acquisition of land?* Gregg explained there was no appraisal, just a calculation related to costs of acquiring easements from mostly willing owners of land where easements are required.
- *How will this strategy guide public policy, considering lack of involvement by the Port or the industrial sector?* Gregg said the strategy identifies priorities that will allow the City to work with Metro to secure funding. She stressed that the strategy consolidates objectives already contained in adopted plans and maps, but it is not a literal plan of action.

### **Watershed Health Progress Report**

#### **Document Distributed:**

*Watershed Health in the North Reach: Summary of Work in Progress*

Deborah Stein reported that during the first phase of the Watershed Health Task Group's work, they have developed principles to guide evaluation of potential actions to protect, conserve, and restore watershed health in the North Reach. She summarized the task group's progress report and highlighted key assumptions underlying the group's efforts:

- There are natural resources worth protecting and opportunities to enhance watershed function in the North Reach that should not be ignored.
- The North Reach will continue to function as a working waterfront, and actions to improve watershed health must consider industry and transportation as key priorities.
- Improvements to watershed health in the North Reach will best be accomplished through active development and redevelopment of sites over time.

Stein summarized contents of the progress report, which includes a map of resource conservation opportunity areas and tables that propose potential future actions and identify regulatory protections in place at different sites. She described potential solution concepts covering consolidation and clarification of regulations; streamlining of review options and permit processes; coordination of multiple regulatory agencies; development of a mitigation program that offers alternative options; and development of a greenway handbook. Stein reported that the Watershed Health Task Group will develop recommendations for presentation to the River Plan Committee in December or January.

Stein stressed the importance of testing feasibility of solutions, developing a handbook to guide agencies before they make decisions on methods of mitigation at contaminated sites, determining appropriate approaches for floodplains, and addressing concerns about the effectiveness of restoration efforts as well as unintended consequences of regulations.

### **Committee Questions**

Stein responded to questions from the Committee.

- *Are actions ranked? Where will work start?* The Natural Resources Inventory will identify high-priority sites for acquisition and mitigation.

- *Will the Task Group analyze costs relative to feasibility?* Costs will be evaluated as well as short-term versus long-term benefits.
- *Will the Code update reflect a cooperative approach regarding mitigation?* There's consideration of a master plan tool that would involve agencies such as Department of State Lands.

### **River Plan Committee Comments**

- Code updates look good – it's important to apply concepts to the ground and evaluate feasibility.
- Consider that required stormwater and site design treatments can create unintended regulatory issues if they turn sites into wetlands or wildlife corridors.

### **Watershed Health Task Group Comments**

Greg Theisen, Port of Portland, summarized the Task Group's support for proposals, but also criticism of the approach and evaluation to date:

- The Task Group strongly supports off-site mitigation and enhancement opportunities, pragmatic approach to functional habitat restoration with assistance of industry, continuing functionality of businesses, Code changes to streamline activities, consolidation of design guidelines into Code, and a greenway process that produces measurable and more effective outcomes.
- The Task Group strongly objects that the effort so far does not define targets and desired attributes to define what constitutes watershed health. Does watershed health depend on fish in the water or the land use types or functions on the waterfront? Task group members object that the assumptions on page 3 do not prioritize the economic role of the harbor, the report does not reflect that the industrial community in the North Reach is struggling economically, and there's no consideration that reviewers at BDS and elsewhere share the perspective that floodplains make no contribution to watershed health, but relate instead to harm, liability, and insurance. Task Group members say there's continued confusion regarding watershed functions for terminal sites in the North reach section of the Willamette, where channel dynamics are fixed, and hydrology does not support a nutrient system.

### **Public Comments**

Dan Yates and Wayne Kingsley expressed support for mitigation options, but criticism of regulations and review processes.

- Develop alternatives to current mitigation requirements, such as a mitigation fund into which land owners can contribute funds for acquisition and development of land. Replace ineffective requirements for replacing trees or plants that get washed away in high water. They noted that Deborah Stein discussed regulating industrial activities for businesses located in the floodplain to prevent contamination in the event of a flood. They noted that floodplain areas cover 5-, 10- and 100-year levels, and regulation, if any, should carefully consider the probability of floods and the economic damage caused by the regulation.
- Consider that waterfront businesses say regulations make them noncompetitive and feel the City is trying to force them to move.

- Recognize that BDS reviewers lack expertise in scientific or engineering solutions in applying greenway regulations.

Greg Theisen questioned scheduling site design workshops before work is completed by task groups focusing on riverbank design and permitting, the Harbor Reinvestment Strategy, and river and industrial zoning. He noted that the River Plan process is moving into workshops before the majority of work has been completed, and the focus has all been recreational and environmental, not economic.

- Hanson explained that the site design workshops will inform later activities by reviewing existing zoning, maximum development allowed, and feasibility of ideas. He said workshops provide an opportunity to test premises by looking at the business district first-hand.
- Steve Durrant and Sallie Edmunds added that future work will continue to test premises, advocacy by the industrial group has created awareness of their issues, and logistics of meeting arrangements necessitate scheduling the workshops before the approach of the holiday season.

Pam Arden, North Portland Greenway Committee and 40-Mile Loop Land Trust, supported keeping the trail on the river, stressed that Greeley is not a good alternative for bikes because of traffic, and said the idea for a trail on the bluff does not recognize trails as transportation routes.

### **Next Meetings**

- October 17, 2006
- November 14, 2006

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

[Minutes to be approved at River Plan Committee meeting on October 17, 2006]