



# Central City 2035 Symposium Minutes

## Public Safety – April 22, 2011

1900 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 2500A

**Facilitator:** Doug Zenn

**Panelists in attendance:** Patty Rueter, Linda Nettekoven, Patricia Gardner, Havilah Ferschweiler, Norm Sharp, Austin Raglione, Amit Kumar, Nate Takara, Jacob Brostoff, Vince Jarmer, Mark Lear, Michael Zokoych, Jeff Miller, Erin Janssens, Peter Englander

**Panelists not in attendance:** Terry Whitehill, Antoinette Edwards, Shane Abma, Lisa Donaldson, Howard Weiner, Steve Trujillo, Dave Lorati, Mike Kuykendall, Bryce Stephen, Jason Larson, Stephanie Reynolds, Michael Boyer, Frank Silva, Craig Sweitzer, Tom Shimota, Ed Blackburn, Amy Lewin

**Staff in attendance:** John Cole, Troy Doss, Steve Iwata, Elisa Hamblin, Leslie Lum, Stephanie Beckman, Kathryn Hartinger, Shannon Buono

### 1. Welcome and Participant Introductions

- Doug welcomed participants and went over the symposium agenda.

### 2. Summary of Central City 2035 Concept Plan Effort

- Troy Doss reviewed purpose of CC2035, process of plan, timeline, as well as potential scope of efforts.
  - Identified public safety as an area where scope may need to be broadened.
  - Thanked participants for attending and asked that they contact BPS over the next few months if they have additional comments.

### 3. Review of Existing Central City Public Safety Policy

- John Cole briefly discussed the documents reviewed in preparation for today's symposium; stated that he hopes CC2035 will impact City policies and investment decisions
  - Outlined scale issues related to CC2035 and the importance of focusing on central city issues rather than citywide or regional issues.
  - Reviewed 1988 Central City Plan Policy 6: Public Safety (p. 7 of background report) and highlighted the fact that 1988 plan is "crime centric." There may be room to bring new issues to the table without minimizing crime issues.
  - Posed the "threshold question" – is the Central City a unique geography that deserves its own specific policies or do participants think most Central City issues actually apply to the whole city and should be folded into the Portland Plan?

### 4. Discussion – Summary of Issues

- Erin Janssens – recognized Central City is unique now, but over the next 25 years there will be other geographic areas of the city that grow to the point that they possess many of the same density and access issues now experienced (only) in the Central City.
- Doug asked participants to focus on what *is* unique about Central City; Troy Doss provided an example (crime in Holladay Park).
- Patricia Gardner – TriMet comes through Central City, therefore if the Central City breaks down, the entire TriMet system breaks down; so, yes, Central City is uniquely important.
- Patty Rueter – One key issue for Central City is dominance of bridges and transportation system managed by different entities (e.g., county, ODOT); another issue specific to Central City is liquefaction along the Willamette River. She pointed out that the communication, fuel, and commerce networks, as well as much critical infrastructure are located in the Central City, so its loss would significantly hamper the entire city's ability to recover in an expeditious way.
- Mark Lear – Speaking from a transportation perspective, within the Central City, pedestrian crashes are most common at signalized intersections (e.g., left hook, right hook incidents); outside of the Central City they are mostly related to jaywalking.
  - CC has fallen behind in terms of creating low-stress avenues; particularly on the Eastside, it can be difficult to get around; there are too many conflicts between businesses, bicycles, freight, fire, etc.
- Michael asked if there would be subcommittees to better address specific issues, or if they would only be discussed generally.
- Troy answered that today's symposium was largely a scoping meeting, but that subcommittees might form later in the process.
- Patty Rueter commented that the safety of the transportation system be considered and that CC2035 not just consider traffic and accidents. She mentioned connections to the mobility portion of CC2035 and asked where consideration of critical infrastructure best fits into the larger plan.
- John Cole indicated that BPS defers to other agencies as experts on crime, fire safety and emergency management. He asked that those representing other agencies consider their own bureau's policy objectives during the symposium to ensure that CC2035 is supportive of their interests.
- Troy suggested that participants go around the room and each give a list of issues they are interested in discussing.
- Erin Janssens and Patricia Gardner attempted to help organize and focus the conversation. Participants are not happy with the 1988 plan. What are items that need extra attention? What is not currently addressed that we need to add?
- Havilah Ferschweiler commented that if the discussion is going to turn to crime prevention, it might make sense to wait for Commander Jarmer to arrive.

- Michael Zokoych asked about the “psychology of densification” in the Central City and concern that this is not addressed in CC2035.
- Linda Nettekoven asked about minimizing abrasion that occurs as we live closer together. Citing examples from entertainment districts and noise mitigation in mixed use buildings, she asked how planning can make it easier for growth to occur while maintaining livability, particularly in the Central City.
- John Cole responded to Erin’s desire for clarity. He commented that there will be a broad policy statement which will include the large items, but there is interest in being a little more specific, listing what these large items actually mean to the participants. These “lists” will not be exhaustive, but the details will be helpful for crafting policy statements.
- Michael Zokoych reinforced the need to address the psychology of density, pointing out that government and businesses, in thinking about the future, often have different visions (e.g., management of freight on lower eastside and resulting freight/bicycle conflicts). He stated that there is an environment of heightened antagonism in the Central City. Mitigating this antagonism is not just about the physical elements of a city, but about citizen awareness of living together closely.
- Mark Lear commented that Portland has better behaved cyclists, pedestrians, etc., due largely to the work of nonprofits and the education these organizations provide. He thought that this education program model might be expanded into other areas, to teach people about living in dense environments.
- Patricia Gardner disagreed, stating that she feels a strong sense of community in the density of the Central City.
- Mark Lear agreed with Patricia, clarifying that the City is doing something right and wondering if there is an opportunity to build on the transportation model.
- Doug Zenn decided to take Troy’s suggestion and go around the table, asking participants to put issues on table.
- Havilah Ferschweiler
  - Liquor licenses, citing and zoning issues; density can create problems if zoning is not carefully considered.
  - Incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
  - Can we address transient issue?
- Patricia Gardner
  - Safe Routes to School, designated bicycle lanes
  - Questioned what the 24-hour City means. What do you do on the ground floor of buildings? What do you do when you can’t have retail everywhere?
  - Graffiti issues
  - Liquefaction zones – need for evacuation plan and education
  - Education of citizens about crime realities to eliminate incorrect perceptions
- Norm Sharp
  - Car problems (break ins) are the most common crime
  - Densification issues

- Demographics are changing downtown. As new condominiums are built, neighborhoods are created.
- Extension of Clean & Safe District
- Private security uses – when it might be appropriate to help with downtown management and densification issues
- Amit Kumar
  - Concerned about the safety of buildings in an earthquake, particularly unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings
  - Interested in strengthening laws to improve safety (California examples)
  - Portland has Title 24.85, which requires some work on URM buildings, but he feels that these laws are not strong and people try to circumvent them
  - School buildings are very old and susceptible to earthquakes; any building built before 1970s is not built to standards; these need to be retrofitted.
- Linda Nettekoven
  - Friction points – how can we build smarter to live close together and not waste police time on noise issues, etc.
  - Emergency preparedness issues, particularly liquefaction – what are ways to prepare for this?
- Jeff Miller
  - Siting and neighborhood friction; neighborhoods are as important as entertainment districts
  - Emergency preparedness – the Central City needs to have a better plan
- Michael Zokoych
  - Disaster preparedness – man-made disasters (terrorists, etc.) are missing from the discussion. Mayor's office is trying to negotiate with the federal government, but there remains a chasm which is an issue for public safety.
  - Important to maintain Central City police headquarters in Central City, not SE Portland. Central Eastside does not want to be incorporated into SE district; wants to remain part of Central City.
  - Sidewalk ordinance – how to have freedom of movement on sidewalks without transients and personal property blocking the sidewalk.
- Mark Lear
  - Need more of a proactive effort to improve safety along transit routes
  - Highlighted speed management issues, especially around freeway ramps
  - Drunk and drugged driving, walking, biking issues (e.g., Burnside)
  - Homeless safety
  - Pedestrian and bike safety – non Central City residents fear going downtown and hitting pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Need to strengthen the prioritization network for different modes, as well as educate the public about prioritization. Expressed concern about a downtown bike share for this reason.
  - Need Portland-specific education programs for cyclist, pedestrian, and driver behavior.

- Austin Raglione
  - There is much more collaboration today than there was in the 80s, and any CC2035 recommendations should build on that collaboration.
  - Address livability and nuisance issues (e.g., homelessness, panhandling, drug dealing, entertainment district, social service concentration in Central City, mental health issues).
  - Fear reduction is an issue that must be considered because it impacts behavior
- Patty Rueter
  - Wants to look at areas which are vulnerable to different hazards, as well as specific properties.
  - Expressed need for URM building study. What are they used for? Who is in them?
  - Climate change-related insulation updates to existing buildings in order to care for the most vulnerable populations during both periods of heat and cold.
  - If there is a disaster, FEMA dollars will only pay to build to pre-existing standards, not upgraded – this is a concern. Change zoning to require higher standards for rebuilding.
  - Property managers are not responsible for telling inhabitants whether or not buildings are safe; however they can cut the lease. This is unacceptable. Lease agreements should protect the tenants, must incorporate damage assessment to help citizens recover economically.
  - Need to focus on the economic impact of disasters – incorporate continuity planning for govt. and private business.
  - For social services, government needs to determine the areas of highest risk (e.g., homeless, elderly).
  - Need to focus on critical infrastructure (e.g., water, communication lines, and gas lines).
  - Analyze resource availability (e.g., hospitals, parks, clinics, schools), which could be used as community centers if communication is lost.
  - Mitigation plan referenced in background report is now called the Risk Reduction Strategy per the Mayor's office.
  - Look for actions that would reduce risk from many hazards.
  - Concern about bridges and commuters. If there is a disaster, people are going to want to get home to their kids. Expressed a need to educate the public about what the government is capable of doing post disaster; establish and inform them of hotel agreements and potential delay times
  - Expressed happiness that emergency management is getting attention in CC2035
- Nate Takara
  - Concern for critical infrastructure (e.g., access roads, water supply).
  - Expressed importance of prevention, particularly as Central City densifies.
  - Smoke alarms and sprinklers need to be updated.
- Erin Janssens
  - As city densifies, emergency response routes become congested. How can these routes be maintained? How can access to buildings be maintained?
  - In high density areas, prevention becomes even more important. The City needs to have strong requirements for smoke alarms, etc.

- Increased density will require additional fire stations; need to secure space for these stations.
- Supports separating modes of transportation because fewer crashes occur
- Concerned about earthquake liquefaction and URM buildings
- The expansion of entrepreneurial businesses (i.e., food carts) into neighborhoods (possibly with liquor licenses in the future) could cause additional policing and emergency response issues which should be considered.
- John Cole revisited the question of whether or not CC2035 should specifically consider acts of terror. The internal BPS discussion led to not including it as a separate type of occurrence. Referenced Patty's earlier point that the City needs to have a response plan in place regardless of the cause of the crisis.
- Troy Doss raised issue of considering homeless services as a public safety issue. On one hand, it puts a negative connotation on homelessness, which BPS wants to avoid. However, police are regularly called to respond to issues.
- Patty Rueter stated that there are currently issues that pertain to any disaster (e.g., population protection, health, medical). Maybe this is the best way to approach CC2035. How do we protect ourselves from all different hazards?
- Patricia Gardner agreed somewhat but sees some need for separate planning, particularly for earthquake response. Advocated for seismic upgrade to downtown bridges.
- Patty Rueter commented that currently only two bridges in Portland have been earthquake retrofitted to the minimum standard #1 – Marquam and Burnside. ODOT is currently conducting a prioritization study. Portland has a prioritized list for overpass and ramp upgrade and repair.
- Troy Doss reinforced the need for different entities to coordinate activities. He stated that these entities should review their own individual issues, but always with an eye for areas of intersection – working with the County or State, etc.
- Commander Jarmer commented that the Portland Bureau of Police recently instituted a new dispatching system which is significantly different from the old one. There is a need to elevate the idea of deliberately doing and funding things now so that we are prepared; it is also easier to learn new systems when not in the midst of crisis.
- Linda Nettekoven expressed the need for more micro-level, "fine grain" coordination

**Break 10:45-10:55**

- Doug reconvened the participants.
- Peter Englander
  - Commented that PDC is actively working with property owners to update URM buildings and that PDC has helped fund a number of completed renovations.
  - Stated that the public needs to be educated about issues and risks facing the Central City; need to get community and nongovernmental groups more involved and figure out the best way to get the word out.
- Patricia Gardner clarified that CC2035 was not just a land use plan

- Doug Zenn outlined several topics to arise in earlier conversation and asked participants to consider them one at a time.

## **A. Police and Crime Prevention**

- Vince Jarmer
  - Communication infrastructure is key; nothing can get done if police and fire cannot talk to each other.
  - Isolation between east and west sides of river requires duplication of infrastructure and services.
  - Raised question of how to handle post-disaster criminal conduct (i.e., looting) if there is no jail.
  - Police will become information dissemination body and we need to ensure they have the information people need.
  - Expressed interest in taking advantage of technology advances (e.g., cameras, video, links, and satellites). These types of advances are not currently funded but could prove valuable in a crisis.
- Austin Raglione commented on the importance of building partnerships to strengthen community policing.
- Michael Zokoych commented that there is a need for crisis response leadership at the neighborhood level
- Erin Janssens stated that these exist already (Neighborhood Emergency Teams) and that citizens should check with their neighborhood associations to get information.
- Patricia Gardner asked the Commander what he would need in the future if the population doubled, absent of a disaster. Will there be a need to split precincts?
- Vince Jarmer responded that the Bureau of Police needs the formal recognition of responsibility and commented that as population growth benchmarks are hit, police numbers should increase. He stated that they do need a new facility for a Central Precinct as well. Tentative plans are in place to purchase a building (47<sup>th</sup> and Burnside) to possibly split central and east precincts, moving staff at some point in the future.
- Mark Lear asked Vince Jarmer how he saw police resources being used in the future for crime versus social services.
- Vince Jarmer responded that the social services system is broken; there are not enough mental illness beds in Oregon, so these individuals gravitate toward Central City for services. Police are regularly dealing with mentally ill individuals, sometimes in dangerous situations.
- Austin Raglione commented that police relationships with community partners might help the situation because the police should not have full responsibility for dealing with the mentally ill on Central City streets
- Mark Lear asked if the social service system is broken, should improvements not be included in the CC2035.

- Vince Jarmer discussed a new program in which some police cars manned with a police officer and a mental health care professional. While this is currently a pilot program, these sorts of programs will need to be a priority moving forward: eight of the last nine police-involved shootings involved mentally ill individuals.
- Patty Rueter asked if there was a cap on social services in a particular area within the Central City
- Troy Doss explained that the Comprehensive Plan states that services are supposed to be spread out across the city but this has not always happened; consolidation has occurred.
- Patricia Gardner stated that in the Pearl District, they have been trying to attract more low income projects, but they are being turned down, told that these projects need to be in Old Town, closer to social service agencies. Another factor that promotes consolidation of human services is their funding mechanism through Urban Renewal Districts that requires them to be within an urban renewal district.
- Patty Rueter commented that her major concern is the current location of social services in the most vulnerable areas (i.e., in the flood plain).
- Erin Janssens cautioned that moving social services out of the Central City would have a major impact on police and fire services, many of which are currently focused on the Central City.
- Patricia Gardner stated that she was not talking about pushing services out of the Central City, only spreading them around more within the Central City.
- Havilah Ferschweiler commented that while fear of person-to-person crime is up, actual crime is down. She felt that part of this perception gap might be due to the prevalence of nuisance crimes, which may be felt more broadly. She reiterated her question about addressing some of these issues through zoning, siting, and CPTED.
- Jacob Brostoff asked if written comments would be helpful to send after this meeting.
- John Cole and Troy Doss encouraged him to do this.
- Michael Zokoych commented on importance of early education (anger management, etc.) for the City. These types of classes could help our population become less criminally prone. A greater partnership between law enforcement and schools is needed.

## **B. Private Security and Property Maintenance**

- Patricia Gardner questioned whether this should be incorporated into the Central City plan.
- Norm Sharp commented on the Clean and Safe program's partnership with the police and highlighted the importance of communication. He raised the issue of conducting an "autopsy" of our past to better identify areas in which the City is "falling down."
- Troy Doss stated that maybe the policy statement related to private security should simply say that these partnerships/collaborations should be continued.



- Steve Iwata asked if participants felt that the Clean and Safe program should be used as a model for the Eastside.
- Patricia Gardner expressed concern about expanding these types of collaboration because it encourages self-taxation to provide services that the City is not currently providing, letting the City off the hook. She feared that the success of these collaborations could create an excuse for the cutting of police and other services.
- Troy Doss stated that perhaps the language should simply endorse collaboration in general.

### **C. Fire and Medical**

- Erin Janssens raised numerous issues under this category.
  - She commented on the issue of density and congestion impacting response routes and stations.
  - In addition, there needs to be a focus on prevention education. The public is becoming more dependent and many of the calls coming in are not emergency calls. Fire is there to help, but resources are wasted when response teams go on calls when citizens have other resources. Moreover, responding to these calls can make teams unavailable when true emergencies occur.
  - A large focus should be placed on sprinklers, adequate water supply, and upgrading buildings; this will reduce the need for emergency response in a crisis situation.
  - There is a concern about access back and forth across the river; currently heavy rescue is located downtown and if bridges go down, they do not have access to the Eastside.
  - There needs to be a focus on the preservation of “surge sites” for evacuations. These will likely be in parks and green spaces.
- Patricia Gardner asked Erin Janssens about the usefulness of motorcycle or other alternative forms of transportation for emergency response workers and medics.
- Erin Janssens responded that they are looking at these alternatives.
- Steve Iwata commented that Fire and Rescue might partner with private development as density increases.

### **D. Disaster Preparedness**

- Patty Rueter revisited the importance of collaboration, but also the importance of mapping these collaborations, which is part of the Mayor’s current project. This mapping might help services better fit the demographics of their area, and also identify “islands” where services and collaborations are lacking.
  - Work is being done to identify community gathering places for information dissemination. Setting up signage systems today, so that communities are aware of where these spaces are located will be critical for the future.
  - Highlighted the existence of a business and homeowner communications alert and warning system, “First Call,” (like a reverse 911), which helps the public get information faster. There is a need to continue improving communication networks, both internally and externally to government.
  - “The identification of resources that if improved now will have greater applicability and resiliency under duress” is important.

- Patricia Gardner asked about role of a broadcasting system, which might be effective in a high density area, particularly if cell towers go down.
- Patty Rueter commented that this option has been studied through HAZMAT and people could not agree on what the alert should be. It might be an option for the future, but what would be more likely is staff with megaphones on the street.
- Amit Kumar agreed that partnerships are important because they simply can't fix all of the Central City buildings in a timely manner. They need help evaluating and prioritizing efforts. Organizations like the Port of Portland could evaluate their own buildings. Nongovernment organizations might also be able to help.
- Patty Rueter described the state certification process for individuals to be able to declare whether or not a building is safe to re-enter after an emergency. The problem is that certified individuals are all over the state and in a crisis, may not be able to come to Portland's Central City. There is a need for individual property managers to take a larger role in this process.
- Amit Kumar thought there might be an opportunity to partner with national organizations.
- Erin Janssens asked if BPS had looked at other countries to see what they are doing
- Michael Zokoych asked for a clarification on crime map (Appendix B in background report), as to whether these were convicted crimes or reported crimes.
- John Cole commented that they were reported crimes.

## **E. Transportation**

- Mark Lear commented on the current systems for dealing with traffic/mode conflicts. He stated that first, we need to learn what's going on, and then get community groups involved as partners. He expressed the need for more planning akin to Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes for Senior. Since Central City is well-suited to senior living, it provides a unique planning opportunity.
- Patricia Gardner commented that there are enough transportation plans, but we need to implement them.
- Patty Rueter commented on importance of collaboration in interdependencies of transportation modes.

## **5. Next Steps**

- John Cole stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to gather information for the development of the policy statement with supporting goals to flesh out that policy. This discussion is the first step. BPS will prepare a draft report and take it to the Central City Advisory Group and today's participants are welcome to attend that meeting. John encouraged participants to send additional comments or documents to BPS to help in the process. Today's participants will have an opportunity to review the policy language before it is brought to the Central City Advisory Group.
- Troy Doss commented that there is a format the Advisory Group has asked them to follow which will appear incomplete – but this will morph into a policy statement with bullets underneath it summarizing goals. He commented that BPS is looking at other

cities nationally and internationally, but most of these look at the entire city in scale or focus on one or two issues. He plans to take these into consideration but is thinking Portland's language will be more expansive.

- Mark Lear asked how CC2035 relates to Portland Plan.
- Troy Doss responded that the Portland Plan is a strategic plan which may inform the Comprehensive Plan. Ideally, CC2035 would follow the Portland Plan, but the start of CC2035 actually catalyzed the development of the Portland Plan. The Portland Plan is very broad while the CC2035 is a district plan.
- Michael Zokoych reiterated that the Central Eastside wants to stay connected to the Central Precinct and not be grouped into SE.

## **6. Adjourn**

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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