



Central City 2035 Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – April 5, 2012, 5:00-7:00pm

CENTRAL CITY 2035 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 7A

Group members in attendance: Chet Orloff (Co-chair), Bernie Bottomly, Patricia Gardner, Heather Hoell, Amy Lewin, James McGrath, Linda Nettekoven, Bill Scott, Ethan Seltzer, Paddy Tillett, Michael Zokoych

Group members not in attendance: Michelle Rudd (Co-chair), Andre Baugh, Wink Brooks, Erin Flynn, David Knowles, Jeff Miller, Veronica Rinard, Mary Wahl

Staff in attendance: Mayor Sam Adams, Shannon Buono, Amy Chomowicz, Troy Doss, Sallie Edmunds, Elisa Hamblin, Lisa Libby, Jonna Papaefthimiou, Nicholas Starin, Nan Stark, Joe Zehnder

Public in attendance: Debbie Kitchin, Suzanne Lennard, Wendy Rahm

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review
- Update on Concept Plan Outline
- Eastbank Freeway Update
- Chapter 2: Planning Framework
- Public Input

Introductions

- Chet Orloff welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda for the meeting.
- He asked the group aim high in conversation, be productive, and focus on big issues.

Update on Concept Plan Outline

- Troy Doss introduced the storyboards on display in the room and their purpose in outlining and illustrating the concept plan. The concept plan document final form might look something like the storyboards drafted here.
- Mark Raggett talked about the storyboards, gave disclaimers regarding wording, length, and layout.
- The storyboards include graphics and text and outline:
 - The story and big vision for 2035 (perhaps a rendering of the Central City in 2035)
 - Critical moves (the big ideas here are placeholders, this spread will probably including images and photos)
 - Purpose of the Concept Plan
 - How it works (connections between CC2035, Portland Plan, and Comp Plan)
 - Planning framework (to be reviewed tonight and next meeting)
 - The design concept and quadrant directions (urban design graphics with maps, bubbles, arrows, charts, etc.)
 - Implementation (tools to achieve the vision and plan)
 - Quadrant plan testing and refinement
 - How did we get here
 - Partnerships

- How to get involved
- Troy Doss clarified this is the sort of product we will be creating, the Concept Plan will establish goals and policies and focus implementation. We want to demonstrate how the quadrants will relate to the Concept Plan, but will not include marching orders at the quadrant level – the details will be in the Quadrant Plans. The Quadrant Plan is where the rubber meets the road.
- Chet Orloff asked how this will be used as a tool.
- Troy clarified it is a broad concept plan meant to guide from a policy, land use, and urban form perspective. It will help inform and guide the quadrant plans.
- Joe Zehnder talked about audiences, including the quadrant plan participants and the general public. The CC2035 Concept Plan will also be used by BPS and other city departments and bureaus focusing on other work like the comprehensive plan. This will help write the comprehensive plan and rewrite the zoning code. With the Concept Plan we are establishing intent.
- Chet asked about how the Portland Plan will relate to the CC2035 Concept Plan.
- Joe stated that the CC2035 Concept Plan implements the Portland Plan. We will also go back and make sure we are advancing the equity agenda of the Portland Plan.
- Heather Hoell asked if this is an executive summary.
- Troy stated we should focus on sections rather than the number of pages and how it is presented and laid out.
- Heather followed-up by asking how this level of detail informs the quadrant plans and how they will feel about that.
- Joe stated that the level of specificity in this new draft will provide the clearest direction about what is important. This group will be able to say how the pieces will fit into the whole and it will be then refined in the quadrants. When we run off and do any one of those individual pieces, the piece doesn't forget that it's part of the whole. Now with N/NE Quadrant we see it is actually building on these principals and taking them down to specific things on the ground. There will be a feedback loop so when we get to the end the overall framework and the individual quadrants will have depth.
- Michael Zokoych asked how information and ideas are included in the concept plan. He states the river sections are too general. It appears as if previous work and information has been totally overlooked.
- Joe explained that the concept plan is more general and that the details will come out in the quadrant plans. He encouraged the group to comment as they review the framework. In particular, ask these questions: Are there components missing? Are the components included specific to the Central City (rather than the city in general?) Will the parts we include in the Concept Plan pass on guidance to the quadrants?
- Troy stated the goals and policies had been refined down from all the information received over the last couple years.
- Michael asked for clarification about how the decisions are made about which components are included. For instance, why is the river not included right now?
- Troy and Joe offered some clarification. They stated that this storyboard includes placeholders instead of the final big ideas that will be included. They explained that the first drafts were too comprehensive so they have winnowed it down to get to a more overarching scope appropriate for a Concept Plan. They suggested the group make suggestions and have a conversation about anything is missing to arrive at the big ideas that should be included in the Concept Plan.
- Chet Orloff asked to bring the group back on track to the storyboard discussion.

- Patricia Gardener talked about the original Central City Plan being a relevant document for reference. Starting at this scale helps to make discussion easier. This Concept Plan doesn't need to have all the detail because there is a place for it in the final document.
- Chet stated this is the tool to get the process going.
- James McGrath appreciated the format, structure, and visual layout. The idea of Central City as a layer of the Comp Plan helps to refine its scope and topic and liberate the Central City 2035 Plan from including everything. This document amplifies some of the aspects of the Comp Plan. He stated the hierarchy of information is confusing. Let's have big sections for clarity and not use numbers over and over.
- Patricia stated this is a big, fat multi-neighborhood plan and all the neighborhoods will need to relate to the Portland Plan.
- Amy Lewin appreciated the work that has been done and likes to see it presented graphically.
- Bernie Bottomly asked to include "you are here" in a timeline with key milestones, so people can graphically see how it would help related to other efforts.

Eastbank Freeway Update (moved to later in agenda)

Chapter 2: Planning Framework

- Joe Zehnder started the discussion of the revised planning framework. It has been simplified and gets to the heart of the issues that we have heard about. It is organized through overarching goals and supporting policies. We have integrated some of the original components throughout the document. Let's focus on high-level goals that can guide the quadrant plan participants.
- Patricia Gardener started the conversation with Regional Center. She stated goal 3 didn't need to be a goal and was weak. It should be replaced with last meeting's goal about economic competitiveness.
- Chet asked for other comments.
- Bill Scott and Paddy Tillett agreed.
- Heather Hoell felt the word sustainability should be included as a term and be added and included as part of the green economy and industry.
- The group agreed.
- Joe stated the group needs to go through each item and get general agreement or make modifications.
- Amy Lewin felt that Green Central City covered the green economy needs. Including green and sustainable everywhere may not make for a lasting document since these words are buzz words right now but other words may be used more in the future.
- Others suggested that we need to be sure that green doesn't address just environment but also economic sustainability.

Eastbank Freeway Update

- Mayor Sam Adams arrived at the meeting and gave an update to the steering committee regarding a proposal to trench and cap a portion of I-5 in place through the Central Eastside Industrial District. The Mayor explained that he decided to present the proposal to the Central City 2035 Steering Committee because it would impact the N/NE Quadrant of the Central City and because he promised the Central Eastside he would pursue the idea while he is in office. He stated it was a reference alternative and a feasibility and massing study exploring geometry, access, grade, connection, and alignment.

- Right now I-5 acts as a barrier now between the river and the industrial, residential, and commercial areas of the Eastside. Because there is talk but no plan for removing the highway the area's future is uncertain and investment has been stalled.
- The challenge was to come up with an alternative to address the issues of geometry, alignment, grade, and connection.
- One element of the proposal is an arterial connection. We would either knee-cap or build a new bridge and the Central Eastside would get an on-ramp at Stark.
- The initial feasibility study shows that trenching and capping I-5 could work.
- Joe stated there is a long list of challenges, but also to creating a connection to the river, and not having significant impact to the built character of the Central Eastside. It's an alternative that wasn't shown before in previous work and explored whether it is possible.
- Amy Lewin asked for an explanation of color. Light blue is above ground. Plum is underground.
- Chet asked for reference on location and geography.
- Joe stated this has implications for the other side of the freeway and is built on engineering analysis. He explained the pieces of the proposal.
- Michael asked about capacity.
- Capacity would be maintained but not increased. Access would be improved.
- Bill asked where the freeway was underground. From the Hawthorne Bridge to Broadway?
- The proposed underground I-5 freeway would follow roughly the same alignment. A new surface street (Water Avenue) would follow the river and go underneath the Hawthorne Bridge, Morrison Bridge, and the Burnside Bridge. One of the benefits would be the ability to reclaim land along the waterfront. There would be potential opportunity for new south-north access while maintaining access to I-84. It would work with improvements to other streets as well. This project would likely be 10 years out, depending on funding. The surface street has not yet been designed but there's potential for green streets.
- The Mayor stated this may be out of sync with this process, but its important to get it out now for public comment since it's related to the Central City Plan.
- Michael asked what the reclaimed land would be used for.
- The area could be a park, employment space, etc. The City has the first option to purchase the land. There would be challenges but there are also opportunities.
- Chet asked about timing.
- This plan is going out to the Central City Steering Committee, the eastside ecodistricts. The Mayor stated he would get the proposal out on the City website tomorrow so that it is open for public comment.
- Joe said the previous Central City Plan considered burying the I-5 freeway and a number of options were considered but it never moved past the dotted line stage. The preference was to both connect to the river and retain the functionality of the freeway. This would be a big project requiring city, regional, state, and federal collaboration. ODOT has not signed onto this project.
- Chet asked about the relationship with the Central City Plan, particularly the SE Quadrant, and what leverage is available to push this plan forward.
- The Mayor stated his personal opinion is that the Central City Plan could have a big impact on pushing the tunneled freeway plan forward. The improved freeway access could be beneficial for employment and the route of the streetcar is zoned for increased residential unit. The steering committee can offer suggestions and direction for the project. There are opportunities to activate the waterfront the way other major cities such as Vancouver have activated theirs.

- Heather Hoell asked what the feedback was at the N/NE Quadrant.
- The Mayor stated they were shocked but they saw the opportunity of better connecting various areas. They liked the surface street connections and arterials.
- Paddy Tillett felt the timing of this proposal is perfect. In 1988 there was paranoia that a tunneled freeway on the eastside would compromise the industrial sanctuary and the ability to get federal funding for light rail. The project was taken on as an exercise by the Harvard School of Design and they came up with four design options. It's amazing we haven't gotten there yet, but it's nice to see that it's being considered again.
- The time horizon is important to consider. We would be 10-20 years from building the project anyhow.
- Chet asked if there was an economic plan component to this. Could the project help recoup some of its costs by generating economic development?
- The Mayor replied that rebuilding of the freeway will be required in any case but rather than just maintaining this project could improve the area. The amount of land opened up isn't a lot, but it creates a main street and could increase the value of the whole neighborhood. He explained that any time a major project is proposed someone has to take the questions about why we would spend the money. He is willing to put the project on paper and take those questions because he believes there are opportunities.
- The Mayor thanked the Steering Committee for their time and work.

Chapter 2, Planning Framework (continued)

- The group continued the conversation about the planning framework.
- Ethan Seltzer felt it is a bad idea to name specific industries, especially those that are not there already.
- Several committee members agreed.
- Heather Hoell asked about Central City's districts and what that means.
- Troy Doss responded they are referred to as subdistricts right now (such as South Waterfront). We are making a move to calling them districts instead of subdistricts.
- Joe talked about the common usage of the term district.
- Heather asked about having government as an important hub of the Central City. Maybe this needs to be included and called out. Also, in #5 what does "evolution of industrial districts" mean?
- Troy and Joe responded, explaining there is a changing definition of what industry means. It's not just manufacturing but more mixed-use, more variety of industries. It refers to industries evolving, not suggesting that the Central Eastside Industrial District will become the Pearl District.
- Bernie Bottomly brought up a few themes that seemed to him to be missing. He noted that there is nothing in the Concept Plan about affordability and ease of doing business. He would like to see something that talks about minimizing barriers and hurdles for business development. If we want to promote and nurture density we may need to acknowledge trade-offs (perhaps less open space).
- Joe asked, from Heather's point, do we want to bring the Central City as the center for government back into the next draft?
- The steering committee agreed we do want government in the Central City in the next draft.
- Joe asked, from Bernie's comment, do we want to include something about the cost and ease of doing business?
- Amy Lewin read a few points regarding affordable business accommodations. The steering committee suggested we bring the cost of doing business component back into the next draft, but keep it general rather than including specific implementation elements.

- Michael asked about the role of freight.
- Joe explained we're emphasizing freight above private transportation in both the Portland Plan and CC2035. Bill asked for clarification about whether vehicles are autos or other types of vehicles.
- Patricia noted that emergency preparedness dropped off the list.
- Troy explained that emergency preparedness will be addressed in the Comp Plan but because of the density of the Central City, it could be mentioned here.
- The committee agreed that because of the concentration of bridges, masonry buildings, and people warrant some mention of emergency preparedness.
- Heather suggested including something in the Concept Plan about fostering social interaction that stimulates creativity and innovation.
- Bill Scott asked about the phrase "street hierarchy" and wondered about implications for multi-use streets. What sort of transportation is prioritized?
- Mark explained that some street character will encourage certain types of transportation but not prohibit others.
- Paddy Tillet also expressed concern about losing the variety of transportation options and street character available with the current grid.
- Joe explained that "hierarchy" refers more to classification and capacity, the character and design of a street, rather than prioritizing auto-intense streets over pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- The committee agreed that rather than using the terms "hierarchy" or "classification" they would be more comfortable using language that talks about optimizing street design and use to increase efficiency and safety since we're not really inventing a new street hierarchy.
- James stated that among those he's representing there is interest in the street and its edges, not just the streets themselves. He also suggested we not discuss streets (or anything else) in several different places but things at a similar scale together. He said he'll write up and share some additional notes. There was general agreement that the pieces that are integrated throughout be organized consistently so that they can be found easily.
- Heather and Amy reminded the steering committee that we keep the economic competitiveness element in the Concept Plan because it matters for business success.
- During the next meeting will move on to Housing & Neighborhoods. Joe encouraged everyone to read through the document so we can move quickly at the next meeting and keep our eyes open for missing critical pieces and organization.
- The next meeting will be in three weeks and the next three weeks after that. We need to telescope our schedule so we can get the Concept Plan wrapped up in June.

Public Input

- Suzanne Lennard suggested moving the point about exceptional and unique into the first goal: "an exceptional and unique center" since that's the essence of it.