

Policy Working Group Meeting #2 Notes

Southeast Quadrant Plan

November 12, 2014

Note: These notes were taken at the time of the meeting and do not represent a transcript of the meeting, but a best approximation of what was said. PWG members are welcome to ask for revisions where they feel their thoughts are misreported.

Attendance

Working Group members present:

Kevin Kearns (OMSI), Lori Livingston (Transfer Online), Peter Stark (CEIC), Daniel Yates (Portland Spirit), Debbie Kitchin (CEIC), Jonathan Malsin (Beam Development), Carrie Strickland (Works Partnership).

Working Group members absent:

Travis Williams (Willamette Riverkeeper), David Lorati (School Specialty Supply), Rick Michaelson (Bosco-Milligan Foundation).

Staff present:

Troy Doss (BPS), Alice Coker (BES), Derek Dauphin (BPS), Grant Morehead (PBOT), Geraldene Moyle (PDC).

Notes

Troy asked the group if there were any elements of the draft text that people wanted start discussing.

Dan: Comments that he feels the target mode split is very aggressive. Does calculation of amount of people who will be driving into the district based on projected 27,000 employees by 2035. Mentions that he doesn't think the structured parking is a serious proposal.

Staff: Says that structured parking is a real priority and that urban renewal areas money is being set aside for this as a part of the amendments to the Central Eastside Urban Renewal Plan.

Peter: Mentions that TPAC's parking management system is splitting parking up by uses (industrial vs. other) and allocating them differently.

Dan: Expresses more concerns about mode split.

Debbie: Notes that there will be additional households. Looking at commute trips, she feels these targets are not realistic.

Kevin: Asks about a basis of comparison for the mode splits.

Grant: Says mode split downtown is 25% transit, 10% bike, probably about 50% non-single occupancy vehicles and that this is achievable. Responds to Debbie's concern about residential development, by saying that one way to reduce impacts of residential demand on parking is reducing the permits the TPAC sells to residential users.

Debbie: Repeats concern that the target mode splits are not realistic.

Grant: Says the targets are ambitious but are part of the same model the City uses for regional transportation decisions. Not just created for this planning process. Also notes that given the

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- growth expected and limited street system, there's an element of necessity that we have get the number of people driving alone to come down.
- Dan: Comments that this will mean the blue collar jobs leave the district.
- Lori: Comments that there's many things businesses can do to reduce driving by their employees. She put in showers and pays for bus passes. Feels this is very affordable.
- Troy: Notes that this is not a new thing and has been demonstrated elsewhere.
- Carrie: Expresses concern about Dan's comment that the mode splits will drive blue collar jobs out of the district.
- Dan: Says that if you look at downtown vs. the Central Eastside, the CES has significantly lower salaries. The strategies to reduce driving will drive up the cost of business and the companies who employ blue collar workers will move to other places as a result.
- Troy: Says that kind of therefore statement is secondary to the bigger policy framework; that the group is jumping to the conclusion instead of focusing on the policy.
- Kevin: Feels the parking statement neglects the growing attractions (OMSI, ORHF, PCC, Opera, etc.) and their need for parking regardless of mode splits. No reference to this other aspect of parking in the district. He doesn't have specific language he wants to insert, just wants a reference about the need for more parking for these uses.
- Peter: Feels that the district is different with regards to single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) because in addition to driving to work, employees may use their cars during the work day to make deliveries or work-related trips. Questions whether the mode splits modeled should account for this.
- Grant: Comments that these kinds of dynamics about CES job types are already incorporated in the model and mode split targets.
- Debbie: Wants to change the language of Policy 1 (Freight System) from "prioritize freight movement through the district" to something like "movement in and through" the district.
- Troy: Agrees that the plan needs to recognize that there are a large number of people coming into the district, but also important role of modes traveling through it. CES is at the center of a regional transportation system and the City needs to manage the network.
- Troy asks if there is anything else related to freight or parking the group wants to discuss. Group has no other comments, so moves the group on to Circulation and Connectivity.
- Kevin: Comments that again there needs a reference to the kind of connectivity required for attractions like OMSI and others in the area.
- Troy: Says that staff may want to add a policy about attractions in general that addresses Kevin's two comments (i.e., parking and circulation needs that are unique to attractions).
- Dan: Notes that OMSI has a big need for bus parking in addition to car parking.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Kevin: Agrees that increasingly buses are important to OMSI. Buses don't go away after dropping off visitors and need a place to park and wait. OMSI is currently using the ODOT blocks. Comments that when they are developed this will create a need for this kind of parking.
- Grant: Notes that the modeling currently has a mode split for commuters and other travelers, and that carpooling showed up as 36% because it includes some of these kinds of van/bus trips to OMSI as carpools.
- Peter: Says that he's heard industrial users express concerns about truck drivers being able to see bikes and pedestrians. He needs to understand the separation of modes concept and how it deals with these conflicts.
- Jonathan: Comments that for these conflicts, the bicyclist is the one who will get injured and that the signage proposed could help with this.
- Peter: Concerned that the safety of pedestrian and bicycle routes could undermine freight. Thinks the policies may be okay as written but staff might consider changing the language.
- Kevin: Asked about Dan's memo from the previous SAC meeting.
- Dan: Says that there was a memo included in the packet materials for the previous SAC meeting that summarized previous plans about river transportation but it wasn't comprehensive. He wrote a memo to show how river transit is possible, but takes a desire by the community to look at it. Notes that a ferry is unique over other forms of transit because you can set one up from Lake Oswego to Portland for a few million instead of half a billion for streetcar or lightrail and if it's successful you just add another one to increase capacity.
- Troy: Says staff will revise the document that incorporates those comments.
- Dan: Adds that a mode the City has rejected in the past that I haven't pushed is air transit by float plane as is done in Seattle. There are 60 right now on Lake Union (Seattle), and there was a company that wanted to refuel downtown and the City wouldn't allow it. The FAA doesn't require security checks for planes under 12 passengers, so no need for security. Lake Union guys have been very successful because of this.
- Troy: Says that staff need to look at Multi-Modal and Water Transit as there is an overlap. Moves the group on to the last two topics, green loop and green streets, and notes that it's probably good to talk about them both since we didn't get a chance to cover them at the last SAC meeting.

Notes that staff don't want to make stormwater improvements like was done on Couch and many have said reduced freight capacity on an important street. Staff think we can accommodate freight, bicycles/pedestrians, and stormwater on the same street. For priority bike/ped streets, staff want to make these routes that people want to use and open up others as better freight routes. Staff also recognize that businesses along the green loop or other bike/ped priority streets will still need to get goods in and out. Notes that sharrows (arrows that denote a shared bike and auto lane) only get you so far, so there is a need to make physical improvements to the streets. These routes are also a good place for green systems but staff don't want to eliminate freight access on any streets. Staff are trying to focus these

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

improvements to the green lines on the Transportation Strategies map presented at the last SAC meeting and view this as trying out how to do it. The policy statement is more about how to get from point A to point B than specific alignments.

Kevin: Asks if “green loop” is a special term.

Troy: Explains that it came out of the Central City 2035 Concept Plan in 2012 and has been worked on by other quadrants (i.e., North/Northeast and West Quadrant Plans). Explains the inner loop concept around the waterfront, the streetcar loop, highway loop and then the need for an outer loop for pedestrian and bicyclists to move throughout the Central City. Explains the need to provide a place for the “concerned but interested” riders that aren’t riding today.

Kevin: Asks if the proposal is for a single route or multiple routes.

Troy: Clarifies that it is a single route. Multiple options are shown, but only one would ever be built.

Peter: (And Debbie) Comment that they’re not sure the green loop needs to run through the district, and think that the Esplanade could count as part of the loop or it could be placed on 24th.

Troy: Reminds the group that the policy is the focus of the meeting, not the alignment. The group needs to focus on criteria for how the green loop would be added to the district.

Debbie: Notes that the policy doesn’t include the option of not pursuing the green loop.

Troy: Clarifies that the City fully intends to bring it through the district.

Carrie: Notes that 90% of her employees come into the district by bike and they struggle to get through the streets because it lacks this kind of system. She cannot understand how anyone can tell her employees to go all the way out to 24th to get in to her Central Eatside business and thinks that’s unreasonable.

Troy: Clarifies that the City wants it to be in the district as evidenced by City Council approving the idea as a part of the Concept Plan and that the other quadrant plans have affirmed the need. This group needs to identify what the issues are that need to be addressed when it is developed.

Debbie: Asks if the policy language for the green loop can be changed from “establish” to “consider”.

Carrie: Believes it is completely unreasonable to exclude the district from the green loop.

Debbie: Says the district already has the Esplanade.

Troy: Notes that this is not the same thing as the green loop.

Grant: Notes that the Esplanade is already at capacity and having conflicts already.

Debbie: Suggests bicyclists can travel onto nearby streets if there is congestion on the Esplanade and that she doesn’t believe the route has to be a single line.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Dan: Says his only concern is that backing up and getting into loading bays is terrifying currently because bikes travel through so quickly and don't act differently at loading areas. If there's a loading bay it's incredibly difficult.
- Lori: Asks how often these kinds of conflicts between bikes and loading trucks occur.
- Dan: Says every 15 seconds.
- Lori: Questions that this actually happens every 15 seconds.
- Troy: Reminds the group that they are not picking a route, but identifying the policy needed for the green loop in the Central Eastside. He said staff have noted that loading bays are a big concern and asks what other issues the concept needs to address.
- Debbie: Says that she doesn't want to have the policy say that it will definitely go through the district.
- Jonathan: Argues that the CES is a Central City District and that stopping Central City-wide infrastructure from coming into the district will disadvantage it.
- Peter: Comments that he thinks the green loop could reinforce mixed use development if located in the areas where the City wants it, specifically the MLK/Grand mixed use corridor.
- Carrie: Reminds Peter that MLK/Grand is a state highway.
- Peter: Suggests then that we should re-route the state highway.
- Carrie: Comments that this seems much more difficult than making bike improvements on 7th Ave.
- Grant: Discusses Peter's idea of changing MLK/Grand to be a bike/ped oriented streets and that part of this idea was to re-route freight onto 7th Ave. PBOT studied this idea and found that the highest demand for freight going through the district is to get onto Highway 99 (which currently runs along MLK/Grand through the Central Eastside) and that it seems unlikely that truck drivers would go out of their way to 7th Ave through the Central Eastside because they'd have to come back at either end of the district. Notes that a good green loop facility would require two lanes on Grand Ave, which greatly reduces capacity for freight. He noted that PBOT didn't model the new highway interchange (between I-5 and I-84 at the northern end of the district) Peter had proposed.
- Peter: Says his idea is trying to separate uses.
- Grant: Notes that staff also attempted to bike Grand and found the traffic volume made it a very scary option for cyclists.
- Troy: Reminded the group again, that they are not here to engineer the green loop. All alignments require a lot of work and new infrastructure. That it is a big idea, not a guarantee.
- Dan: Asks if the policy language could be changed to add the caveat that it would be established when the bridge over I-84 to Lloyd District has been built.
- Troy: Says he would be happy changing the word "establish" to "pursue".

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Jonathan: Asks if the different modal strategies are dependent on the others, for example, are freight and the green loop are related.
- Troy: Says the green loop is separate. Describes how the current freight district lacks classifications to prioritize streets and how the result is that it bikes are dispersed everywhere and it isn't good for anybody. The proposed priority street system would create safe routes for bikes and improve things for freight/autos. Not a clear system right now and it's not working work. Signalization and infrastructure improvements will help you do that better. Thinks this should be an easy box to check because it helps freight movement.
- Debbie: Says that in these policies, we are adding in other stuff like trees and bioswales.
- Troy: Clarifies that the City already has a green street policy. This isn't new. The proposals are just trying to make it work better for the district in the context of freight.
- Peter: Adds that the proposals are based on a new freight district hierarchy.
- Debbie: Comments that this is what it says in this section, but then other policies say that stormwater improvements would be added.
- Dan: Suggests that it's not important that the green loop goes through the middle of the district because it can't get out the bottom. Asks where it is trying to get people to.
- Grant: Makes the correction that there is a crossing over Powell and a rail crossing near the Clinton Station. They exist already, so this is not a limitation.
- Troy: Adds that the route in and out of the district is clear, the part that needs further analysis and engineering is whether it travels on 6th, 7th or 9th Avenues in between.
- Kevin: Responds to Dan's question by saying that the goal of the green loop is to safely get pedestrians and bicyclists wherever they want to go.
- Peter: Agrees with Kevin's statement and suggests that one way to fix the alignment issue in the policy statement is to say that it would be based on freight district hierarchy similar to the green streets.
- Grant: Notes that might result in excluding 7th Ave even though it already has bike lanes.
- Peter: Suggests that the City needs to take another look at the Bicycle Plan for 2030.
- Dan: Expresses concern about Peter's comments which he feels calls for separating freight off some of these streets.
- Troy: Says staff need to come back with more evidence about why achieving the mode splits is obtainable.
- Geraldene: Says she thinks that the blend of companies that are coming into the district could help achieve the mode splits because many of the new companies have much higher transit and bicycle mode splits. Notes that Carrie's business and others like it will have employees that bike more. This might mean that the traditional industrial users don't need to switch to bikes.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Jonathan: Says that his company's newest project has only a few parking spaces for the whole building and it works.
- Troy: Moves the group on to Open Space and Green Systems, starting with Open Space.
- Debbie: Asks if the Esplanade counted as open space? The group then discusses the existing conditions map included in Bulletin 6 from the previous SAC meeting packet.
- Peter: Says that we need to create better connections to the Esplanade.
- Dan: Comments that a lot of the area next to the Esplanade is grass and just used by the homeless. Asks if there is more that we can do with this land.
- Troy: Notes that a lot of that land is ODOT property and briefly discusses what purposes this grass might be serving such as stormwater remediation. Says that there may be a way to better utilize public lands for open space uses.
- Debbie: Says she would like to have the Upland Open Space focused on the EX land only (excluding new open space on the industrially zoned land that makes up 70% of the district).
- Carrie: Believes that this is not a standard approach – focusing open space improvements to only one kind of zoning.
- Debbie: Asks why this can't be done since that's where the housing is going to go.
- Peter: Comments that if you want to have private property developed into public plazas, the EX zoned areas seem like a natural fit.
- Jonathan: Notes that those developments pay into Parks SDCs already, so requiring them to build open space on top of this creates a second burden to development.
- Carrie: Expresses concern about the statements made by Debbie and Peter. Asks if they are really saying that they don't need or want more open space in the CES.
- Debbie: Responds that it should be in the EX zoned parts of the district.
- Carrie: Notes that people outside the EX zoned areas are using the open space.
- Troy: Summarizes the discussion by saying that it sounds like the highest density development is who's using it, so it should follow density, even if this is up against the freeway or along Water Ave. Describes the process to develop open space guidelines for the Pearl District.
- Kevin: Asks if there a formal designation for the area around the station areas, referring to the circles shown on the Green Systems and Open Space existing conditions map from Bulletin 6.
- Troy: Says that there is not, that a quarter mile radius circle doesn't work well for these kinds of systems because the rail and viaduct cut off access. Says that staff will change the wording to highest expected density of use, because it works elsewhere.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Debbie: Says she thinks that makes sense because then it won't be dropped in the middle of the industrial zone.
- Troy: Says he wants to come back to the utilization of public lands discussion. Says Open Space policy number 3 tries to get at that already, but wording can be improved.
- Kevin: Suggests that staff just expand policy 3. Asks if staff can explain what is meant by amenities. What the spectrum of amenities is.
- Troy: Says he may want to go back to Parks on this (PP&R were not able to attend the meeting). Difference between amenities and services is a big thing. Explains this to the group.
- Kevin: Says he is trying to understand the implications of the wording and asks if it has to do with prioritizing dollars.
- Troy: Responds that yes, it could mean prioritizing funding to make station areas safer.
- Alice: Notes that in Chicago there are examples of incentives to create open space on roofs of buildings where there are ecoroofs.
- Troy: Add that the Multnomah County building on Grand Ave is an example. We already have a bonus for that in the code that hasn't been utilized already.
- Dan: Asks why the existing bonus for ecoroofs is not being utilized and whether this is due to costs of the improvements.
- Troy: Says that it's not costs, but that other bonuses are used first.
- Peter: Says he thinks liability insurance would be an issue for open space on green roofs.
- Troy: Asks the group if they have any other comments on the Open Space policies...
- Peter: Asks that the policies in Green Systems make sure that tree canopy is not on corners where it impacts visibility for drivers. References comments made by Rick Michaelson via email on the policy language.
- Alice: Notes that currently the City works with willing property owners to add trees wherever they are located, so we can't limit it to just a few areas on the map.
- Dan: Says he thinks it should be limited around corners and wayfinding signs.
- Grant: Notes that the City already does this, and in fact, a member of the SAC recently commented that they'd prefer we did plant trees in these areas.
- Troy: Says he will look at Rick's comments. Much of these issues are basic landscape architecture issues.
- Alice: Notes that there aren't too many living walls in the city yet, so we're still learning. Lots in Europe and elsewhere.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

- Dan: Notes that he was part of a group that pushed during the Tilikum Crossing for it to have vertical gardens.
- Troy: Adds that the City of Seattle is using a tool called the Green Factor that is intended to create landscaping that has dual functions. Demonstration projects are really impressive and still doing great. Notes that when staff did the Central City Concept Plan, people wondered how we could do something similar, and he thinks the CES is the best place to try it. Could be small setbacks with swales and green infrastructure set into it.
- Debbie: Notes that the shorter buildings in the district means there more light and better chance for green walls to survive.
- Troy: Says he thinks people would see a dramatic increase in air temperatures and air quality.
- Debbie: Adds that if it was set up as an incentive it would be a great benefit.
- Kevin; Asks about the phrase “support” in the policy statement and why it’s used.
- Troy: Says the statement would be around a long time, so what that means may change over time, so need to use a general term. It may be that this is a break on an SDC for a while and then could become a subsidy – there are lot of different tools. The City could do a partnership with the Federal Government or the State. Zoning tools only get you so far.
- Kevin: Says that in Vancouver, BC, different words had very specific meanings. Support there is very different from encourage. Asks if that is true in Portland.
- Troy: Says they are more interchangeable here. There are tons of options, so language is purposely broad.
- Dan: Asks if staff have an economic model for the ground floor industrial zoning tool they proposed. If so, how much does it cost to put an ecoroof on one of these buildings? How much more expensive would it be in the CES to have a building with a green roof vs. going out to Gresham?
- Troy: Notes that there is a known premium for being in the Central City.
- Dan: Asks what the cost of the ecoroof is.
- Troy: Says the cost is nominal.
- Geraldene: Adds that it only costs more if you want to get certified (LEED Platinum, etc.).
- Carrie: Comments that her firm keeps value engineering them out because it’s still cheaper to meet stormwater mitigation requirements through ground infiltration than ecoroofs.
- Lori: Asks if the costs could be offset by policies that support these; that there’s a benefit of putting a strong statement in the policy to overcome cost issues.

Southeast Quadrant – Policy Working Group Meeting #2 (11/12) Summary

Alice: Says BES has learned a lot through their ecoroof incentives work and costs vary a lot based on how you want it to look. There are very expensive ecoroofs in the pearl, but there are more utilitarian ecoroofs that are lower cost.

Troy: Says the City is trying to figure out the bang for the buck. Not sure about building energy, but also heat island and other multiple benefits. The Multiple/Dual Uses policy statement gets at this. They may not hit the bottom line yet, but they will soon and there will be lots of benefits.

Kevin: Asks that Green Systems policy number 3 be amended that projects add habitat or some equivalency. Says that his experience is that birds and other wildlife are already there and when we think of the additional value, it's one of the things that should be valued.

Staff note: Habitat was already listed under policy 1 (Green Infrastructure).

Troy: Asks the group if they have any other issues to discuss. They don't.

Lori: Asks what is the next step for the Policy Working Group?

Troy: Says there will be at least one more meeting, probably in early January.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.