



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

Deconstruction Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Time: 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Committee Members present: Bryce Jacobson, Shane Endicott, Scott Yelton, Preston Browning, Barbara Kerr, Alando Simpson, Jeff Fish, Maryhelen Kincaid, Kristin Wells, Ben Gates, Nancy Thorington, Kristin Cooper, Matthew Robinson, Kathleen Petrie (phone), Rick Winterhalter, Heather Robinson (phone)

Absent: Joe Connell, James Ray Arnold, Caroline Dao, Brandon Spencer-Hartle

Staff: Shawn Wood, Madeline Kovacs

Welcome and Introductions

Shawn Wood began the meeting with an overview of the Deconstruction Advisory Group (DAG)'s timeline, and goals for remaining meetings before recommendations are due to City Council, at the hearing on June 3rd. Shawn then introduced DAG members from the Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC), Jeff Fish, Kristin Wells, and Maryhelen Kincaid. Maryhelen, DRAC Chair, presented a new self-certification form for hazardous materials lead & asbestos, which contractors now receive when they apply for a demolition permit. Shawn also shared goals from the Climate Action Plan and the Portland Plan, guiding documents supporting deconstruction efforts.

Next Steps

The next DAG meeting will be held on May 6th, from 2:30 – 4:30 pm in the same room (7A, 1900 SW 4th). On the 6th, the group will narrow down policy options, and generate a preliminary list of recommendations for Council. These will be edited and refined at the last meeting, May 13th. DAG will reserve the option to convene two more times if necessary, on May 20th and May 27th.

Summary of DAG purpose

The Deconstruction Advisory Group has been charged with advising Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (BPS) on options to increase deconstruction activities, to provide BPS with diverse



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

input from a range of stakeholders, and to share any expertise critical to making deconstruction a success in Portland. DAG will bring a suite of policy options to City Council on June 3rd, and Council will direct DAG to move forward on those options they find to be most promising. There will also be the opportunity for public testimony concerning which options we are directed to pursue.

Concurrent projects to the Deconstruction Advisory Group include:

1. The creation of a web-based deconstruction calculator to assist contractors and others in determining carbon and energy impacts of deconstruction versus demolition.
2. Deconstruction training for City contractors, preparing them to successfully bid on and complete the removal of City-owned structures (using deconstruction). The first training is scheduled for May 29th & 30th.

Summary of discussion

Shawn presented the program overview shared previously with DRAC as a basis for discussion, and the DAG identified potential benefits and costs of a range of program options. Main points from the discussion are summarized below, according to topic. Comments are not attributed to specific Advisory Group members.

Inclusion: Project Types

- One potential drawback of structure relocation in Portland is the small number of vacant lots
- More flexible land use regulations may help encourage people not to take houses down
- Option to focus on single family residences now, exploring expansion in 12-18 months
- Another option is to consider as many building types as deconstruction applies to
- Need for clarity and consistency regarding building type definitions
 - Many older homes (some of the best for salvage) have been divided into many units, and many of those homes were never legally converted
 - Be mindful of significant differences in how our code treats building types
- Note complications/definition changes coming with concurrent projects such as MUZ
- If we start with too big a scope, we may actually end up doing less (backlash, education)

Incentives & Requirements

- One benefit of certification is the ability to ensure that contractors are well trained. There is also a built-in incentive to perform or risk losing certification and needing to re-train
- Portland prime contractor deconstruction training could serve as a jumping off point



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

- Earth Advantage does a certification (they are already a partner, helping us devise a training program)
 - Explore maintaining a City list, accepting training & certification through EA or CCB?
- Signage at work sites has both benefits and potential drawbacks
 - Drawbacks include possible trespassers and stealing a possibility when deconstruction is advertised, and injuries pose a liability concern
 - In DRAC discussions, door hangers and mailers were preferred notification method
 - Deconstruction mailers a different color than those for typical demolitions?
Key for neighbors: Longer process
 - Currently, mailers go to people within 150 feet of a demolition site
 - Both marketing tool/ educational tool, and good communication
- Benefits include the opportunity to showcase a city program, provision of a hotline for the public, and assistance with enforcement from passers-by (not just residents.) Contractors are interested in being good neighbors, demonstrating how deconstruction differs from typical demolition.
 - Can we have a voluntary sign, with mailers and door hangers required?
 - Helpful to post any signs the day deconstruction begins, with fences etc. in place?
- Should disposal prices simply be raised, making reuse and recycling more competitive?
- Any added cost makes affordable housing harder to accomplish: Raising fees drives up housing prices, not just for builders but also for surrounding homes
 - Taxes on property, bank lending on mortgages... these aren't as major
- If the cumulative cost of deconstruction begins to approach that of demolition and the playing field is more level, that makes a big difference.
 - If the costs are comparable, then a \$500 fee waive becomes an incentive
- What clientele wants and looks for also a significant factor
- Shortening the demo delay timing is actually not a huge incentive
 - Neighbors wanted an even longer, 60-day notice
- If we require clear outcomes, methods can differ in how to meet those objectives.
- We have the luxury of scaling: We can begin with key incentives, and say in three years, they may become requirements

Measurement & Compliance

- The lead/asbestos self-certification form newly required for all demolition projects will help governing agencies with enforcement.



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

- Issues regarding wording and code can be brought to attention of BDS staff during the next 18 months (eg: “remediate”)
- OSHA is more concerned with worker safety than public/ neighbor safety issues
- Clarity regarding jurisdiction, and linking language back to appropriate regulator
- Vancouver, BC has a deposit-based system:
 - Drawbacks include administrative burden inventorying all materials, the permit fee acting as a tax (which industry may challenge in court), and potential for backlash
- Green Halo system allows for real time tracking rates, but this is administration-heavy
- Random and/or complaint-driven inspections would be through BPS
- How do we measure deconstruction project value? Who will measure, and identify breaches?
 - Just like asbestos/lead certifications, having pledged to meet certifications, and keeping this on file should help serve as a deterrent
 - Public education opportunity: eHow videos on every line of deconstruction requirements
- Best sorting of materials happens on-site
- Need to consider people who work on their own homes, as owners usually won’t be certified
- Possible to make the inspection method an inventory of materials at re-use centers & retailers?
 - How do you track back receipts or otherwise inventory what wasn’t re-used?
 - Tie back to date and address through IRS?
 - Is knowledge of potential audit a real incentive? If audited, they may need to demonstrate total volume of materials, and show receipts.
 - Random audits also have the benefit of not needing to be real time
- Need to think about final determining body over what should be re-useable material?
 - Paying a crew to disassemble by hand and then throwing that material in a dumpster is inherently not economical
 - Reputation is a good motivator to re-use already here in PDX
 - Maybe we need to simplify/ bring down requirements, but set goals and tools high

Other Items to Address at City Council

- DAG may want to share case studies with City Council
 - People respond to personal stories coupled with hard examples of dollars and cents
 - Jeff Fish’s company is undergoing case study projects now, and he offered to keep the DAG informed, and to share main takeaways



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

- Wider benefits, such as job creation, community benefits, and positive environmental impact should be emphasized and clearly articulated (triple bottom line)
 - If Metro won't charge for waste, then it's society paying for that waste
 - Wider shared responsibilities exemplified by the bottle bill: We all share the expense of the state having a facility we take our bottles to
- Green building starts with green demolition
- Regarding clarity and communications with the public, it is important to arrive at a common definition and understanding of "deconstruction" versus "demolition"
 - "Recycling" according to industry definitions can be problematic/unclear

Other Main Points

- The Portland Recycles plan, and the four goals listed on the County Commissioners website may have some more key framing options and insights for DAG work
- Is there an opportunity to collaborate with Metro and others who have a stake in the outcomes? Metro used to fund infrastructure grants.