

PIONEER SQUARE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #7 – APRIL 30, 2010

Offices of ShareBuilder/ING Direct, 83 So. King Street

Meeting Summary

ATTENDEES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lisa Dixon, PSCA
Anne Fennessy, Cocker Fennessy
Rick Friedhoff, Compass Housing Alliance
Guy Godefroy, Trinity Nightclub
Kate Joncas, Downtown Seattle Association
William Justen, Samis Land Company
Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
Laine Ross, Resident
Leslie Smith, PSCA
Paul Swegle, ShareBuilder/ ING Direct
Richard Thurston, Grover/Thurston Gallery

OTHER ATTENDEES

Mark Blatter, PS ID CPDA
Don Blakeney, Saturday Market
James Grindle, Neighborhood Volunteer
Adam Hasson, Samis Land Company
Jen Kelly, The New Pioneer Square blog
Dan Lowen, Resident
Tom Pantaleoni, Distant Lands

CITY STAFFING TEAM

Captain Steve Brown, Seattle Police Department
Ryan Curren, Office of Housing
Gary Johnson, Department of Planning & Development
Allison Schwartz, Department of Transportation
Meghan Shepard, Department of Transportation
Stephanie Thomas, Office of Economic Development
Christina Van Valkenburg, Department of Transportation
Kerry Wade, Department of Neighborhoods
Nancy Yamamoto, Office of Economic Development

CONSULTANTS

Bonnie Berk, BERK & ASSOCIATES
Allegra Calder, BERK & ASSOCIATES

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nancy Yamamoto welcomed the group and thanked Paul Swegle and ShareBuilder/ING Direct for again hosting us in their space. Nancy noted that the group would hear from some of the City staff members who are thinking a lot about this neighborhood.

Bonnie Berk then reviewed the agenda and asked the group for updates on recent events, including the Main Street Information session and any other items. The group heard the following updates:

- Leslie and Lisa are going to **Main Street** training in Oklahoma City May 1-5. Following this five-day national conference, they will attend the State of Washington conference in Port Townsend later in May. Lauren Atkins was in Seattle a few weeks back and gave a great presentation on the Main Street Program. Leslie is in conversation with National Main Street office about a technical assistance contract. Under this contract, they can provide training to any neighborhood stakeholder who would like it.
- Next week, on First Thursday the Merrill Place garage will be offering **free parking** with any purchase from a store or gallery. If that First Thursday event goes well, they may consider expanding free parking to weekends in the summer.
- Laura Onstot is working on a feature story on Pioneer Square revitalization for the **Seattle Weekly**. It should come out in two weeks, and it appears to be targeted as a cover story. Don, Jen and Guy all spoke with Laura for the story.
- **Spring Clean** was held last Saturday and had 185 volunteers. The group picked up litter, removed graffiti, weeded and planted medians and replaced the media strip watering system. This last task was accomplished with BIA funds. It should make the watering much easier in the median strip and the ultimately have healthier, better looking plants there.

STREET CIVILITY TEAM REPORT OUT

Rick Friedhoff reported on the April 26 meeting and passed around a detailed summary of the group's discussion. Rick reported that the group met for two hours and had a great discussion, with divergent viewpoints represented. For a variety of historical reasons, there is a sense that a lower level of civility is acceptable in Pioneer Square than in other areas of the city, and this situation generates problems. The lack of a public restroom came up again and again in the group's discussion, as it creates issues for the whole Square. The group acknowledges that this is a complicated issue and would require a capital expenditure plus ongoing maintenance. However, all agreed that it should be a priority action for the City. Other points summarized in the presentation and meeting notes are:

- There is support to keep the moratorium in place for addition of any new or expanded social services.
- There was agreement that we are not ready for a day center in the Square.
- Citizens can call 911 about open air drug markets. As a neighborhood we could work with Superior Court Presiding Judge Bruce Hilyer on SODA/SOPA restrictions.
- Stadiums are both an asset and burden. We may need to work more to make people realize that this is a neighborhood deserving of respect using signs, videos and other communication methods. Representation on the Stadium Authority is important.
- It was noted that Charlie Royer, a resident, is on the governing Board for Safeco Field, along with another resident from the International District.
- Enforcement and how the residential portion of the neighborhood interacts with the nightclubs were also discussed.
- Action items included a focus on how to improve our image as a neighborhood with residents, businesses and prioritizing a public restroom.

Group Discussion: Street Civility Issues and Strategies

- There are a lot of regulations on the books that are not being enforced. This is separate from the Police. It includes other City and County agencies, like Parks and SDOT, both with regulations that they are not enforcing.
- Do we have any idea how much a public restroom would cost? It would be expensive and need staffing in order for it to feel safe.
- King Street Station is a possible site for men's and women's basic restrooms with no showers. The attendant is what costs the long-term money.
- There has been some discussion of this, and indications that perhaps Amtrak is reluctant to open up restrooms there to the general public.
- Did we learn anything from the recent City experiment with public restrooms? They were not attended, which led to them be used for drugs and prostitution.
- Staffing does not solve all the problems. You don't want it to feel unsafe for other design reasons – it can't be cave-like, for example. It needs good ingress and egress and big open spaces and density of people. Such as we have at the Pike Place Market restrooms.
- Fifteen years ago I was asked to enforce public urination and my reply was "where can I tell them where to go?" To this day, we still haven't found a place for people to go. I'm happy to sit on a committee and also talk to our Council members to figure out how we can do this.
- There is an old existing restroom underneath the pergola. It's in bad repair, but it's on public land.
- The location of the restroom is really critical. We have the infrastructure here and maybe we need more than one restroom in the Square. I think there are a lot of options.
- I think the stadiums are doing what they can do. When we (the nightclubs) meet with the Liquor Control Board, they ask us why we can't be more like the stadiums. They stop serving at half time and generally make it difficult for people to be over-served. They also suspend peoples' tickets for bad behavior.
- I'd like to see a Human Services forum added to the Plan – how can we improve things, police, nightclubs etc.

CITY UPDATES AND PLAN DISCUSSION

Nancy started the conversation by noting that each department would take a few minutes to provide some context about what they are doing and how they are thinking about Pioneer Square.

Gary Johnson, Department of Planning and Development

- Livable South Downtown is the big issue currently. It was sent to City Council recently as legislation, and we can't overstate its importance. The action the City Council takes will set the table for what development looks like in the future. This type of review of zoning only happens about once a decade. So we should be supporting it every chance we get.
- The focus of the Livable South Downtown Plan is on density and height, and some people don't think we have gone far enough in that regard. It's not an exact science and it will be a challenge

for the Council to think about the balance and evaluate the incentives. Will they work? Do they go far enough?

- Currently under review is a historic transfer of development rights (TDR) program that would give property owners a new source of funding. We are also looking at height incentives for affordable housing. The Council will take all of this year and potentially into next year to consider the adoption of Livable South Downtown.
- The Green Building team has agreed to look at performance-based energy code provisions.

Meghan Shepard, Department of Transportation

- We are working on a center city parking strategy related to customer parking under the Viaduct. We are also doing an on-street parking study to see who parks there, for how long, and why.
- An electronic parking inventory will be developed with the parking operators, so there can be real time information on spaces available in the neighborhood. That will be a great step forward, in terms of parking management and communication.
- There will be a lot of questions related to transit routes as the Viaduct project goes forward. King County Metro will be providing additional support during Viaduct-related construction for people who currently drive.
- The Streetcar alignment with the Pioneer Square loop is going forward.

Kerry Wade, Department of Neighborhoods

Kerry began by passing out brochures that explain what the Department of Neighborhoods does and explains their programs related to their mission of connecting people, communities and government.

- People downtown tend to be pretty well connected and know who to reach out to in the City. Neighborhood district coordinators work to keep people connected. There is potential here to reconvene a neighborhood council. The Dept. of Neighborhoods could really support that and help it align with the new organization.
- The Dept. of Neighborhoods has neighborhood matching fund grants that can support projects. Small Sparks grants are \$1000 grants that are available all year round, with no deadline. The grants can be used to jumpstart a new idea or a new program or initiative that hasn't been developed yet.
- The larger grant is up to \$20,000 and the PSCA has taken advantage of this in the past.
- The largest grant is up to \$100,000. The Trails to Treasure program just applied for this funding. Projects need to demonstrate enhanced community and support revitalization.
- Genna Nashem from the Dept. of Neighborhoods is also available as a historic preservation resource. Genna worked as a coordinator for the Main Street programs around Washington.

Ryan Curren, Office of Housing

- The Office of Housing primarily functions as a bank, but we are pretty hands-on with the developers we work with. The Frye and the Morrison have high needs populations and we work with the property managers if there are any tenant issues. This is one way that we can help – helping managers to be better neighbors.
- We also do policy work related to incentives to create affordable housing to meet a spectrum of needs. We use a lot of the money generated through incentive zoning to support development of workforce housing (60-100% of area median income (AMI)). There is a fair amount of very low income housing here already, but we would be interested in doing more affordable housing units for artists.
- We are also supportive of a mix of unit types, and are trying to encourage families to live in this area.
- We are interested in convening the development community to better understand the economics of development and redevelopment, and whether the current proposal will generate the sort of revitalized development that we are hoping for.

Captain Steve Brown, Seattle Police Department

- Open air drug markets are my primary concern. I've been doing this for a long time and I'm really frustrated. Many of the human services clients are victimized while they are trying to rehabilitate --this is a terrible situation.
- On the civility element, we all saw what happened with the aggressive solicitation ordinance. We won't get more staff given the current budget situation. I'm at the highest level of officer staffing on the street that I've ever had, but we will have to get more efficient.
- The street population is not going to change much, we have to adapt to this – activate the space and take care of their needs.

QUESTION: Is there a way to make crack the highest offense instead of the current twelve strike program? This is the main fear in this neighborhood and our number one priority.

- Answer: It's complicated because even if you have treatment services, addicts have to want to go into that treatment. The judges don't like imposing SODA orders. It is not appropriate for drugs to be happening out in the open. Alcohol is a problem too.

Nancy Yamamoto, Office of Economic Development

- Our core mission is supporting businesses and we have business services available citywide. We help businesses to navigate government, secure permits, etc. We have someone on staff whose job it is to do outreach every day, all day. We also work on business attraction and have financing available – small business loans and also larger funds for development projects.
- We can help advocate for economic development data – why it is needed and how it can help neighborhoods.

- Seattle City Light and the City's Information Technology group are working on internet availability and how connectivity is hampering some businesses' ability to grow. We are working to figure out the problem and how we can help solve it.
- We have a neighborhood business district program that operates citywide. We focus on several neighborhoods for a few years at a time. Right now we are focused on Pioneer Square.
- At the last meeting, Steve Johnson mentioned that we need to hear from the community about the transition to new Main Street model. The Mayor's office is supportive and we will be supporting the PSCA until the new Main Street program is up and running.

PROCESS AND PLAN DISCUSSION

Group members asked questions related to what happens after the meetings are over this month and before implementation begins. Who will implement the Plan? How will the Plan be adopted? Where will the Plan go in the City? Many group members expressed a desire to stay involved and meet to oversee implementation.

Nancy Yamamoto explained that the purpose of these meetings has been to develop a set of recommendations and to figure out the path forward. As the transition to the Main Street model occurs, we will need to figure out what strategies this new organization will implement. There will be other groups that need to take on implementation and ensure that the work continues. OED will continue to shepherd this work and work on implementation on the city side.

This larger group could spin off into smaller groups and work directly with city staff. The next meeting after this we need to think about how to present this to the Mayor's office. We envision presenting it to the Mayor and the City Council sometime in June.

Leslie Smith commented that PSCA will reorganize as an economic development organization. PSCA can't continue to do everything for everybody. Part of the Main Street model is a huge reliance on volunteers and that will be a sea change for this neighborhood. We have to have people in the community that are committed to implementation, but we won't know for a few months what will be implemented.

Process Discussion

- On the city side, the coordinator's role can be a real resource to convene the community and city people on things like task forces.
- In this setting we have all been very committed. The Pioneer Square Community Council was very successful as an advocacy organization and this was 10 years ago when we had far fewer residents than we do today. If we could resurrect it, we might have enough volunteers. But we must have a partnership between the neighborhood and the city.
- Main Street and a Community Council could handle the implementation, but how is the City going to handle it so we know where to go? We need to get the communication and response piece together.

Kerry Wade provided the following information on Neighborhood Districts and Neighborhood/Community Councils:

- District coordinators staff the Neighborhood District. The City has 14–20 neighborhood councils. It needs to be coordinated by a central person to coordinate city people and help with agendas. DoN doesn't staff the council per se, usually there is a chair that pushes the agenda and works with the council. There is city support, but we don't drive the process.
- PSCA is currently a member of the Downtown District Council. It's a lively group with many other organizations.
- It seems like this group is focused on developing the plan, but then there is a gap between development and implementation.
- My inclination would be to get input from an ever broader group than we have now.
- There is a lot of organizational uncertainty which is compounding these questions. But this makes me think that this group should continue to meet to oversee and weigh in on implementation. A lot of what is unknown is being worked on and it's clearer on the City side.

Plan Development Discussion

- I think there are items missing from the Plan based on information from subgroups. For example, we want to add items from the Street Civility team.
- We need more specifics than what is in the Plan with short term and then long term actions. The City side could be a lot more targeted. Many of these strategies are components of a lot of plans. We don't need to recreate the economic development of a community plan; there are some things that need to come first.
- Much of what we are doing here is already here in our neighborhood plan – but there are some overlaps here.
- We need a timeline so that we can set priorities, and maybe that needs to happen in the fall.
- We need to identify the priorities. Let's identify what we can do now and get working on it now. If we can't get something done, it should not be in the Plan.
- On the historic preservation component, I think we need to look at the code again with respect to street use. The Historic Board approves what goes on at street level. Up to 25% of street level can be office or services and preferred uses are preferred, but discouraged uses can be allowed. This conflicts with our goal of having a vital retail district. The Morrison has almost no retail left and the code allows it.
- This is something I have brought up over the years with Stella Chao. The Preservation Board says they don't do enforcement.
- The Seattle Weekly writer went to a Historic Preservation Board meeting and clearly thinks it's disconnected and not helpful to the neighborhood. She feels that development is being hindered due to onerous restrictions, such as the shade of green on a sign to match the character of the neighborhood.

- We need to trust Leslie and Lisa to form their organization and decide how to move forward. We can't do everything by committee. We should pick one thing out for the City that we want them to do so that we can get a win and then go to the Council with a proposal and a budget to get funded.
- We need one difference that these meetings made. We need to pick one win – show us your commitment.
- Maybe we should identify what some of the winners are, and what the priorities are for City action.
- We came here to implement things that haven't been done in the last 10 years. City departments should be identified as a lead or a resource but the framework here is still pretty generic and we want to focus on implementation.
- This is Pioneer Square. I'm sure there will be no shortage of opportunities to provide your opinion. But the idea of finding a few things that we can accomplish right away is really key, because we have done this a few times now. We have ample opportunities to express ourselves but let's find something that can be done and doesn't cost much money, and then we can move on to something that will cost money.
- Upholding the moratorium on social services should be in the Plan.
- I would suggest we add the following to the Plan: human services forum that meets on a regular basis; a nightclub work group; and a taskforce around public restrooms.
- Circulate the document for a track changes review and then send it back to the City.
- The document is on the Pioneer Square website. It can be downloaded and resaved with comments. If we could have changes by next Friday, we could send out the new document in advance of May 13 meeting.
- Once we bless this Plan, we can put it into a matrix to show who owns what.
- We need buy in from OED to really get the departments signed on. We need the Department Directors to buy off and direct their staff to implement.
- On some of these issues we need to do some small group due diligence. For example, we recently learned that the Archdiocese drops people off at 7am at a center that doesn't open until 11. Why is this happening?
- Including revitalization in the Plan title starts us from a negative point and a perception that something is wrong. All the plans that have traction seem to have a date attached like 2030 or 2040 that imply moving forward. I want to make sure we start from a positive place.
- Let's focus on highest priorities, no cost items, low cost items, and ownership. We also need a Plan name and tagline that is forward thinking.

ROUNDTABLE REMARKS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

- Let's call it a 2011 plan. I believe in implementation
- This should be a living document that we interact with and change as time goes on.
- We will work on more specificity on the city side. I support your prioritizing what you want us to do.
- I'm still uncertain about the flow and the process going forward.
- There should be some continuity after the plan.
- I second the idea of more specificity and costs for different things. We should think through what we want, who should do it, and what it will cost.
- I second those comments. We are in one of the most difficult economic climates in forever, so where will get the money? We will have to lobby the Council and if it's going through a formal adoption phase we need to have some level of budget attached. Otherwise it will always be something to be addressed down the road. I know that the Mayor and the Council want to do something for Pioneer Square, but we will need to help them.
- I think we should start with the no cost action items to start meeting and getting some work done.
- We are moving forward with a parking study and would like to reach out to this group through the email list. We work with neighborhoods all year long and it works best when we have a community group that interacts with DoN regularly – it makes it really easy for us to plug in.
- Sounders confetti is made from Mylar and it is messing up the drains, and is hard to clean. Sounders are trying to figure out whether this is just one person complaining and they want to hear from others. I can't wait to hear more about transit plans for viaduct construction.
- I know that things seem unsettled but I'm really encouraged because we were worried about the organizational structure and now we've got a structure. However these other pieces are supported, we at the City want to support you.
- All the comments made today were brilliant, but people are free to express themselves. Transiting back to the City as planning outreach specialist so response time may be slow, but we have posted the position.
- We need to be a team and work together as a community, this should not get territorial. There is always some tension between community and the City but we have been meeting to think about how to help you.
- I'm encouraged by the City people and their ownership; they are moving forward. For the community we had three things and then they went into PSCA. We need to form another community group and we need to have a much bigger group to rally around.
- Preservation of King Street station – you can still vote online and you can go to the Open House this weekend.

NEXT STEPS

The next meeting will be May 13 and will focus on the specific strategies and priorities for the Plan.