



# City of Seattle

## Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

---

### Memorandum

October 31, 2013

**To:** File, and Public Review

**From:** Gary Johnson  
Geoff Wentlandt

**Re:** Stadium District Study Advisory Group Member Feedback on Staff Recommendations

This memorandum summarizes the range of opinions expressed during the Stakeholder Advisory Group process that was conducted as a part of the Stadium District Study. It provides a broad overview of the process that was conducted and the input that was received. For more detailed review of Advisory Group meeting notes and materials please see the Get Involved tab of the project website: <http://www.seattle.gov/dPd/cityplanning/completenesslist/stadiumstudy/getinvolved/default.htm>

### Purpose

The purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Group was to provide general advice and guidance to assist DPD with its formulation of a set of Stadium District Study recommendations. The Advisory Group functioned as a sounding board that DPD could engage with to receive a range of opinions and ideas from a knowledgeable set of stakeholders. The Stadium District Study recommendations are solely the recommendations of DPD, but DPD staff carefully considered the range of opinions expressed when formulating the recommendations.

### Process

The Advisory Group met a total of 7 times between March and October of 2013. Meetings were held between 4 and 6PM at the Seattle Municipal Tower. Dates and times of meetings were posted on the website and the public was invited to attend. Typical meeting formats included a presentation by DPD and/or consultant team, followed by opportunity for Advisory Group Member to provide input and reactions to the material. On each agenda there was also time for public comment by members of the public and City and agency staff attending who were not on the Advisory Group. Advisory Group members were also invited to make comments on all draft materials to DPD project staff following meetings. And DPD staff met separately with Advisory Group members on occasion outside of the Advisory Group to receive more detailed information and input on specific topics.

### **Group Composition**

The 23 member Advisory Group was assembled to encompass a broad range of stakeholders with direct knowledge of the area and the surrounding neighborhoods. A complete list of advisory group members is available on the project website. In general the composition was intended to include representatives of the public boards that own the professional sports stadia; representatives of the sports teams the stadiums host; representatives of each of the three adjacent neighborhoods (Duwamish Manufacturing Industrial Center (MIC), Pioneer Square, and Chinatown/International District); other area property owners and/or business owners within or adjacent to the proposed Stadium District; and representatives of the City's Planning and Design Commissions.

### **Range of Advisory Group Member Opinions**

This memo summarizes the range of opinions expressed by members of the Advisory Group during the process. On several topics there was not unanimity or consensus among all members of the Group. DPD listened to and considered the variety of opinions. Because there were at times opposing or inconsistent viewpoints, not all expressed opinions by members of the group are reflected in DPD's final Stadium District Study recommendations.

This memo seeks to document for the record the range of opinion. Below are the specific topics that had a wide variety of viewpoints, with a focus on the viewpoints that are not clearly reflected in the final recommendation.

#### **1. Stadium District in the Comprehensive Plan**

DPD considered three options for how to identify the proposed Stadium District area in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Two members of the group expressed opposition to treating the Stadium District as an independent district, and favored keeping the current arrangement of the area as a zoning overlay that is not expressly represented in the Comprehensive Plan. The current arrangement divides the area between the Downtown Urban Center and the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center. The primary reason cited for this viewpoint were opposition to removal of any industrially designated lands in the city, and a concern that the stadium entities and teams would have too much influence over future planning of the area in other scenarios.

Several members of the group supported an independent Stadium District Comprehensive Plan designation. Other members of the Group did not express any strong opinion on the Comprehensive Plan designation.

No members of the group expressed strong support for adding the area to the Downtown Urban Center.

## **2. Residential Uses**

There was a very wide variety of opinion about the introduction of residential uses into limited portions of the proposed Stadium District.

One member expressed strong opposition to the introduction of any residential uses in the proposed Stadium District. Two other members expressed some concern about expansion of residential uses into the area certain portions of the area. The primary reasons cited against allowing residential uses were concerns that the area is too noisy, and could be subject to too much light and glare from industrial or stadium uses. The members suggested there could be incompatibilities created with industrial uses that would lead to complaints. Other reasons cited included a concern that residential uses could cause impacts on traffic flow.

On the other end of the spectrum two members expressed a strong opinion that the proposal did not go far enough and that residential uses should be allowed throughout the entire area, and in other nearby areas. The primary reasons cited in support of more residential included a desire to create a more vibrant neighborhood and support a broader range of businesses. One member stated that industrial uses were no longer a very economically viable use in the area, but demand for residential uses is strong.

Several members of the Group expressed support for introduction of residential in limited quantities or specific areas of the proposed Stadium District. In particular, multiple members expressed the need for housing at the north end of the district to support goals for additional market rate housing near Pioneer Square and the Chinatown/ International District.

## **3. Location of Potential New Open Space**

A majority of members of the Group supported or did not oppose the inclusion of a large new open space on the WOSCA site to provide an amenity for the neighborhood, but there were a variety of opinions about the specific location of potential open space relative to other new uses on the site.

One member of the Group expressed a strong opinion that a new open space should be located at the northernmost end of the WOSCA site. The primary reason for this viewpoint was that a location at the north end could help achieve greater overall scale and continuity of open spaces in the area, if it were connected directly to proposed Railroad Way improvements. Another member of the group expressed support for open space at the south end of the site, for the reason that it would be more centrally located within the district. Multiple members of the group expressed support for an open space that was larger than the amount identified in the DPD recommendation. It was also suggested that open space be allocated to both ends of the site rather than as a larger, single space.

## **4. Building Height and Tower Structures**

Members of the Group expressed a range of opinions about the introduction of a limited number of tower structures and the locations where they should be allowed. One member of the Group expressed strong opposition to any increase in heights on the southern portion of the WOSCA site. The main reason stated was that such an increase could block important views from locations within SafeCo Field that are an amenity for all customers of the ballpark. A few other members expressed moderate concerns about the introduction of a limited number of tower structures, due to potential for reduction in views to or from stadiums and the south downtown skyline. Those with modest concerns about introduction of towers seemed to want additional assurance that care would be taken in locating towers to avoid obstruction of specific valued view corridors from the district or to the skyline of the district.

One member of the committee supported allowing greater heights in most or all locations within the district. The rationale for this opinion was that soil conditions in the area require extensive pilings to be driven beneath new buildings, and therefore construction of taller structures would result in more efficient return on the infrastructure investment required to support new construction.

The majority of Group members seemed to support, or not oppose, the DPD proposal to allow taller structures in limited locations as a way to incentive public benefits on other portions of key sites.

#### **5. Introduction of Lodging in the Stadium District**

A majority of the Group supported allowing lodging uses within the proposed Stadium District. However, one member of the group objected to allowing lodging within the area at all. The reason stated was that the area could be subject to too much ambient noise and/or glare from other uses in the vicinity, potentially leading to incompatibility with other uses.

#### **6. New Parking**

Several members of the Group expressed a desire for stronger direction in the recommendations allowing new parking in the district, or even identification of specific strategies to build new parking in the district. Reasons cited for this opinion include a sense that significant quantities of parking have been lost in the Stadium District and Pioneer Square in recent years, and that there could be additional parking demands in the future with the Waterfront Seattle project.

#### **7. Street Vending**

One member of the Group expressed a strong opinion about organization of street vending that was not overtly reflected in the DPD/SDOT streetscape recommendations. The Group member felt strongly that event-time street vendors on Occidental Ave. should be more organized and managed – potentially in a specific area, and potentially by operators of the sports stadiums. The member stated that standards for the overall appearance of the vendors should be substantially increased. No other members of the group expressed strong opinions

on the topic, but there was general agreement that strategies to improve the visual character and cleanliness of street vending on Occidental Ave. should be explored.

#### **8. Streetscape Design Qualities – South Occidental Block**

Two members of the Group expressed some concern about the proposed streetscape design qualities for Occidental Ave. S. in the block between S. Atlantic St. and S. Massachusetts St. These Group members were concerned that employing shared street design principles for this portion of the street could potentially impact the ability for event busses and trucks to use the area during event times. The Group members were also concerned that implementation of the streetscape design could reduce the effectiveness of the street for through-movement of vehicles during non-event times.