



**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 13, 2003
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioners in Attendance: George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Anjali Bhagat, Angela Brooks, Ray Connell, Jeanne Krikawa, Denise Lathrop, Joe Quintana, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To, Paul Tomita.

Commissioners Absent: John Owen, Chair; Matthew Kitchen, Lyn Krizanich.

Staff: Marty Curry, Executive Director; Barbara Wilson, Commission Analyst.

Guests: Rob Holland, Martin Clements, John Rahaim, DPD; Cheryl Sizov, DPD; Vanessa Murdock, DPD; Scott Dvorak, DPD; David Graves, DPD; Jackie Kirn, OPM.

Call to Order

Vice Chair George Blomberg called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Sheehy made a motion, seconded by Tony To, to approve the October 23, 2003 minutes as written. Motion was unanimously approved.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Commission Recruitment:** Vice Chair Blomberg noted that the deadline for applications is November 25. Staff noted that they have heard from a few good potential candidates but are still hoping for more resume submissions and encouraged Commissioners to get the word out.
- **Planning Commission Year End Dinner:** Vice Chair Blomberg noted that the Planning Commission year end dinner is scheduled for Thursday, December 11 with John Owen hosting the event. Executive Director, Marty Curry reminded Commissioners that the dinner is a social event, with an opportunity to talk on a more informal basis about this past year.
- **Upcoming Meetings:** Vice Chair Blomberg referred Commissioners to a list of upcoming meetings on the back of the agenda, but highlighted a few meetings:

November 15 – CNC/Neighborhoods Committee sponsored forum on the Comp Plan, focusing on neighborhoods and neighborhood plans. DPD and the Planning Commission have been asked to participate in this. He asked for a couple of Commissioners to volunteer to attend this and possibly help to facilitate two small discussion groups.

ACTION: Commissioner Tony To volunteered to attend the CNC sponsored Comp Plan Forum. Director Marty Curry noted she would also attend.

November 18-19 – Seattle Monorail Project All City Forums – Vice Chair Blomberg noted that the SMP will hold two all-city forums to release the staff recommended draft alignment and station location plan. Ms. Curry noted she would check in with City staff with regard to timing and MRP review in order to better inform the Planning Commission review of the alignment and station location decisions.

ACTION: Commissioner Blomberg volunteered to attend the SMP All City Forum on Nov. 18th and Commissioner Krikawa volunteered to attend the Nov. 19th meeting. Commissioners who serve on the Monorail Review Panel will all attend (Sheridan, Tomita, and Sheehy)

November/December Commission Meetings – Vice Chair Blomberg noted that there is only one monthly meeting on our schedule for both November and December due to holidays and that if important business needs attention we will try to use Committee meetings for any additional meeting time we need.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

UPDATES

City Center: What We Want To Be - Thinking Boldly About the Future, November 10

Commissioner Quintana noted that the Community event hosted by the Mayor's office was a very successful and well attended event. He also noted that the Mayor discussed the newly released Downtown Draft EIS and asked whether the Commission would be involved with this issue. He urged Commissioners to consider reviewing and making a recommendation. Ms. Curry noted that SPC staff had received a copy of the DEIS. She stated that Ms. Krizanich had expressed interest and recommended that if the Commission does review that we include at least four Commissioners to ensure a breadth of perspectives. Commissioner Sheridan volunteered to be involved in the review.

ACTION: Commissioners Quintana, Krizanich, and Sheridan along with any interested additional Planning Commissioners will review the Downtown Height and Density Changes DEIS and make a recommendation to the full Planning Commission regarding SPC comments to the City.

Commercial Code Advisory Committee

Vice Chair Blomberg noted that Commissioner John Owen is the Commission's formal representative and asked Commissioner Quintana who is representing the Chamber to give an update. Commissioner Quintana reported that the committee has made significant progress and believes there is congruence on the conceptual approach. Key areas of agreement are more flexibility, use design review as a key tool, and focusing on mixed use more broadly within urban villages and centers. He stated that DPD intends to have a concept completed and to the Mayor by the end of the year.

Landmarks Board

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa briefly described the work of the Landmarks Board, noting that the Planning Commission has an official seat on this board. The Landmarks Board focuses on historic structures and areas and mainly conducts specific review of historic building and districts and approves listings to the historic register. She discussed some of the current work of the board.

Letter to City Council on DON/Neighborhood Planning Budget.

Vice Chair Blomberg noted that the Planning Commission's letter to City Council was approved by the Executive Committee and sent last week. He noted that it builds on the letter to the Mayor, offering more detailed suggestions regarding adding to the DPD Planning Division's capacity to take on some of the future planning analyses related to implementing neighborhood plans.

Meeting with the Mayor

Marty Curry reported the Commission has been able to schedule a meeting with Mayor Nickels on Wednesday, December 3 at 4:15 p.m. This meeting is a follow up to the Commission's letter to the Mayor about neighborhood plan implementation budget cuts. She recommended that since the budget will have been approved by the City Council by then, it would be wise to focus on how to continue to meet the City's commitment to implementing neighborhood plans within the budget cuts. Given the meeting's focus on neighborhood planning, she expressed the hope that Commissioners who have worked on these issues can help to plan for and attend the meeting. Ms. Bhagat asked that staff email the meeting outline to the full Commission to review before the meeting.

ACTION: The Executive Committee will develop a proposed scope/outline for this meeting with the Mayor and will email it out to Commissioners to review after next week. The Chair will determine a team of Commissioners to attend the meeting with Mayor Nickels.

Waterfront Forum #2 Debrief

Vice Chair Blomberg offered his kudos to the Commissioners and staff that helped plan for this well-attended forum on Friday Nov 7. He noted that the next steps are to begin planning for the Charrette which will be scheduled for late February or early March.

Commissioner Sheridan observed that the choice made for the viaduct replacement will be a critical issue for the waterfront noting that the impacts to railroads still need to be worked out.

Commissioner Krikawa stated that it will be important to ensure that people who can speak on residential/resident issues are at the table at the charrette.

Ms. Wilson noted that there was a request to the City to address the water side of the waterfront which would include a more specific conversation about the seawall options. Commissioner Blomberg stated he believed that this is a very important discussion that will impact environmental quality and the visual aspects of the project.

DPD Director John Rahaim asked the Commission to consider what other knowledge base is needed. Commissioner Quintana responded that from a business perspective he would like to identify the key economic considerations and also know how the City's tax base will be affected. He suggested it would be useful to know what the opportunities and strategies are for economic development, noting that the City relies on retail and property taxes for much of its revenues. Commissioner Blomberg suggested that the economic productivity of the area will likely be impacted by the vitality and authenticity of the area.

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT: MONTHLY REPORT/DISCUSSION WITH DPD PLANNING DIRECTOR

Vice Chair Blomberg welcomed John Rahaim for his monthly Planning Director report to the Planning Commission. He noted that the Commission is particularly interested in the work that he is involved in regarding the future of neighborhood plan implementation. He also asked Mr. Rahaim to share his thoughts and observations about the 2004 budget and how that is affecting the Planning Division. Finally, he asked him to add his comments about any other major projects the Planning Division is working on.

Mr. Rahaim stated that from a budget standpoint the Planning Division is okay and that the Division will be adding two new staff positions; one will be a public outreach position and the other will be administrative. He noted that the Division is currently involved in a number of planning meetings and retreats to organize itself.

With regard to the Neighborhood Plan Implementation he noted there are many discussions going on internally through a subcabinet and a working team that are both working on operational and capacity questions. He noted that the sub-cabinet is being co-chaired by the Director of DON, Yvonne Sanchez and the Director of DPD, Diane Sugimura.

John Rahaim stated that it looks likely that some of the neighborhood plan implementation functions will come to DPD and that there is currently a lot of discussion about how to effectively deal with the planning and policy decisions. He noted that in many cases more analysis is required to continue implementing neighborhoods. One of the larger issues is how much DPD will be able to take on with no new staff resources.

As far as other big issues go, Mr. Rahaim noted that there is an incredible amount of work going on in the Planning Division. Some major projects include the Monorail, North Link Light Rail DEIS, the Waterfront, the Comp Plan Update, Northgate, South Lake Union, Housing Choices, Downtown DEIS, and the Commercial Code revision. The Planning Division has a lot on its plate and he will continue to rely on the expertise of the Planning Commission to offer advice and counsel on many of these issues.

Commissioner Blomberg thanked Mr. Rahaim for his update and assured him that the Commission would be at his service.

UPDATE & DISCUSSION: NORTHGATE REVIEW

Marty Curry reported that five Seattle City Council members have proposed a Council alternative to the Mayor's Northgate Proposal. Council President Steinbrueck has requested that the Planning Commission review the Councils alternative plan for Northgate, particularly focusing on the consequences of repealing the General Development Plan requirement and on creating an effective public involvement process.

Jackie Kirn, Office of Policy and Management, informed the Commission that the recent events with the Council coming out with a plan have had implications to the proposed agreements. For instance, Lorig has pulled out of their commitment to develop the South Lot, Simon Properties is saying they won't negotiate further on the development agreement, and Nordstrom's and the Bon have expressed that they are deeply distressed by the lack of internal agreement at the City.

ACTION: The Northgate subcommittee will convene to address requests by Council and the Mayor's office to assess and report on the Council alternative. The Planning Commission will attend the November 17th Council Committee of the Whole to offer preliminary remarks on the alternative and to offer a process for moving forward including offering the Planning Commission's expertise on the issue.

PRESENTATION: MONORAIL STATION AREA PLANNING

Vice Chair Blomberg welcomed DPD Monorail staff Vanessa Murdock, Cheryl Sizov, Scott Dvorak and David Graves. He asked them to review the December workshop agenda and to present the segment analysis for Commission review/discussion.

Ms. Wilson circulated a sign-up sheet for the December workshops and noted that she would like to have at least one Planning Commissioner attend each of these workshops. She stated that today's discussion will include potential roles for Commissioners, and will be dependent in part on how many and which Commissioners are able to attend and help with these events.

Vanessa Murdock reviewed the agenda for the December workshops, noting that each of the six meetings will be two to two and a half hours. They will begin with a discussion by Ethan Melone describing agency roles, where there is common ground and the points of differentiation between the City and the Seattle Monorail Project. Ms. Sizov will then give a brief overview of the City's interdepartmental effort including Design Review, Permit Coordination, and Station Area Planning.

Next, Ms. Murdock will briefly discuss the definition of Station Area Planning, including the approach, phases and focus. At that point participants will have an opportunity for questions of clarification. The station area planners will then go through the segment-specific analysis. Participants will break into station specific discussion groups to go through the station area-specific analysis. Staff and perhaps Planning Commissioners will help facilitate small group discussions and two exercises on access and place making and stewardship. Station area groups will report back and a Planning Commissioner or staff member will summarize key opportunities and constraints that have been identified by the station area groups. DPD staff will conclude with next steps.

ACTION: The Planning Commission supports the goals and approach of the kick off station area planning community workshops.

Commissioners recommend that staff describe how they will use what is heard from the community, how it will be incorporated into their work. They also recommend that staff speak about place-making first, then discuss access because access is easier and more tangible. They suggested staff go over existing land use and zoning maps as part of station area presentation. They recommended the meeting also conclude with identifying common themes and next steps.

The Planning Commission will commit to having at least one Planning Commissioner and a Planning Commission staff person attend each workshop. The SPC will support, help facilitate, and offer advice and expertise.

Segment Analyses

David Graves, Station Area Planner, presented his segment analysis for **Interbay Segment**. He noted the following information:

The Interbay segment includes three stations located at Dravus Street & 16th Avenue, Howe/Blaine Streets & 15th Avenue (future station), and Mercer Street & Elliott Avenue. The segment is a major transportation corridor situated between two hills – Magnolia & Queen Anne, and between Queen Anne and Elliott Bay. Topography defines and constrains the corridor. The segment is also book-ended by Smith Cove/Elliott Bay at the south and Salmon Bay to the north.

All modes of transportation run through the corridor: Heavy rail, trucks, commuters and local traffic, transit (buses), bicycles and pedestrians. All the transit corridors are oriented in a north south direction. Future transportation modes include the monorail, and potentially commuter rail and the street car. These also will run in the north south direction.

East west connections across Interbay are few. West Emerson Street provides the northerly connection between Queen Anne & Magnolia, with connections to Fisherman’s Terminal, Discovery Park and Seattle Pacific University & Fremont. Dravus Street, the middle connection, provides access between Queen Anne & Magnolia, and to the Elliott Bay bicycle trail. The Magnolia Bridge (W Garfield Street) is the southerly east-west connection across the segment.

Each of these east west connections is a developing node: At Emerson Street, there is Fisherman’s Terminal, which serves the fishing industry and is a destination for residents and tourists, and there are connections to transit routes and bicycle trails. Dravus Street is also a developing node, with restaurants, a coffee shop and a grocery store. The area around the Magnolia Bridge could become a transit hub and an employment center – the area is in the process of redeveloping. The Mercer/Elliott station is not associated with a developed or developing node, but is at the margin of Queen Anne & Downtown.

Most of the Interbay area is within the Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing and Industrial Center (BINMIC) with the exception of a small area around the proposed Dravus Street monorail station. The focus of the area is predominantly marine related manufacturing and industrial uses. There are limited residential uses, sports fields, a golf course and a P-Patch. There are large vacant parcels. Closer to downtown, there is a transition to office and mixed use buildings and auto oriented service facilities.

Mr. Graves provided specific information about the Dravus Street Station, including zoning, uses, transportation, traffic, topography and pedestrian issues. He also outlined several challenges in the Dravus Station Area, including pedestrian access to and from the station, connection to fisherman’s terminal (Bicycle & Pedestrian), the QFC site, determining what the area becomes, location for bus stops, areas for pick-up & drop-off, transit connections, parking and pedestrian crossings over Dravus Street.

ACTION - Planning Commission Recommendations for Interbay segment analysis and presentation:

Commissioner Krikawa suggested that the display boards note more street names for orientation and show more than just the ¼ mile – screen back surrounding area. Commissioner Lathrop suggested the boards note landmarks and do more to show a graphic scale. Commissioner Tomita suggested making the railway on Dravus bolder and also suggested showing the proposed operations base in this segment. Commissioner Sheridan suggested a more overt acknowledgement of activity around Amgen more graphically and in presentation.

Commissioner Krikawa recommended showing bike routes on the segment board (i.e. Interbay).

Commissioner Sheridan suggested using a different icon to better represent areas where pedestrian activity is needed to show it more clearly.

Commissioner Krikawa also suggested showing station areas on segment maps; simplifying station area maps (i.e. take out purple line that shows traffic volume on Elliot). Commissioner Sheridan suggested overall simplification of boards graphically. Commissioner Tomita suggested potentially using two boards in order to show all of the needed information.

Scott Dvorak, Station Area Planner, presented his segment analysis for **West Seattle Segment**. He noted the following information;

West Seattle is a plateau separated from the water and the Duwamish Valley by fairly steep bluffs. The topography limits connection points with the rest of Seattle. The most obvious visual of the West Seattle segment is that topography and the road system create a funnel at the West Seattle Bridge.

Over 110,000 vehicles travel each day over the Bridge. Traffic is collected and dispersed throughout the region by Delridge, Admiral Way, 35th Avenue, Alaska Street and Fauntleroy Way. California Avenue acts as a north-south traffic spine connecting Admiral to West Seattle Junction to Morgan Junction.

Buses in West Seattle collect riders from the neighborhoods and provide frequent service over the Bridge to downtown Seattle. Currently, West Seattle Junction is both a destination point and a significant bus transfer point.

There are several significant pedestrian areas in West Seattle; the neighborhood commercial centers of West Seattle Junction, Admiral, and Morgan Junction, as well as Alki Beach and several large parks and recreational areas. And, of course, the residential neighborhoods.

There are excellent bicycle trails that run around the periphery of West Seattle along the waterfront. Otherwise cyclists use residential streets to get around the region. The bicycle connection under the West Seattle Bridge is somewhat difficult – though there is a marked bike trail, it is not as suitable for an average rider as it could be. It currently acts as a deterrent for bicycle traffic to and from this area.

The Green Line follows the route of heaviest traffic flow. The Monorail stations will be located at strategic traffic points: Delridge at 26th and Andover, 35th Avenue & Avalon, West Seattle Junction at Alaska & California, Morgan Junction at Fauntleroy & California.

Morgan Junction is the terminus. The station will be located in a neighborhood commercial area and serve the residential area around the station and will also be a connection point for service to the Vashon Ferry. Delridge will probably be the major bus connection point for Alki, Admiral and South Delridge and perhaps beyond. 35th & Avalon will be a major bus connection point for southern West Seattle neighborhoods.

Mr. Dvorak provided specific information about the West Seattle Junction Station including zoning, uses, transportation, traffic, topography and pedestrian issues. He outlined several challenges in the Alaska Junction, including connecting the station to the pedestrian/retail area along California Avenue, connecting the station to the Jefferson Square development across 42nd Street, improving pedestrian environment along Alaska from 42nd Street eastward, connection of the bus transfer zone to the Monorail station, support for the existing successful retail environment, determining the impact parking needs will have on the neighborhood (hide and ride and parking needed for retail uses) and the accommodation of bicycle commuters and providing access to the station.

ACTION - Planning Commission Recommendations for West Seattle segment analysis and presentation:

Commissioner Lathrop recommended that the ferry be noted on the West Seattle segment map. Commissioner Krikawa recommended noting the Alki Park property. Commissioner Bhagat recommended distinguishing between paid, restricted, and unrestricted parking, and including on street parking. She also suggested showing significant signals, especially the scramble light at the Junction.

Commissioners made the following recommendation regarding the overall presentation; Speak to the boards and better orient the audience to the boards, describe what colors represent and what the board is conveying; break up presentation between access and place making and stewardship. Use the boards to make this distinction clearer. Have a before and after board for each station area to distinguish what is there and what is needed or possible. They also recommended providing 8.5 x 11 copies of the boards as handouts to allow participants to follow along in the presentation. They also recommended providing more than one segment map and finding a way to simplify the map so important things don't get lost.

Vice Chair Blomberg thanked the DPD staff for an excellent presentation noting that the Commission looks forward to continuing its role and providing feedback and expertise.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

ADJOURN MEETING

Vice Chair Blomberg adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.