

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UDP Committee  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

**FROM:** Diane M. Sugimura

**DATE:** September 6, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Update for September 13 Meeting

**Permitting Workload Indicators**

The work keeps pouring in. Some indicators are noted below:

Intake volume YTD: 6,602 permits (12% beyond forecast)

Intake value YTD: \$2.13 billion (81% beyond forecast); projected \$3.17 by year end, compared with \$2.04 billion in 2005

Revenue YTD: \$17.6 million (38% beyond forecast); projected \$26.7 million by year end, compared with \$21.3 million in 2005

Creative ... and Successful ... Response to the Huge Workload: As we have been reporting, the current backlog for our complex projects has been challenging. At this time, we are at about 10-12 weeks compared with our target of 6 weeks (pre-2002 target = 12 weeks). Managers and staff have made a huge effort to think creatively about what can be done over the short-term. Examples include:

Two former employees recruited as part-time TES, to focus on coaching applicants. This frees up time for staff to review more plans.

One staffperson, is working out-of-class to review small projects such as single family homes, some townhouses, and platting actions.

Each Tuesday in August, conducted a plan review blitz. Intake appointments were blocked, and supervisors helped TES staff with coaching, while the rest of the team reviewed plans. Review staff were redirected to focus on Initial Reviews on backlogged projects. In August, the zoning team accomplished about twice the usual production level. We will continue this method for just two days in September. We believe that will help us keep the zoning review backlog in check.



**Code Compliance Activities**

Mobile Home Park: A mobile home park on Aurora Avenue is being sold to a developer who plans a large mixed use development at the site. Mobile home parks are not routinely inspected by DPD; as with other property, we inspect when we receive a complaint. In this case, an SPU employee reported concerns to us about the laundry building – shards of glass in broken windows, for instance – and an accumulation of junk and inoperable vehicles. Current conditions in the park are very poor, with partially demolished trailers being cleared and vacant trailers awaiting demolition. We have required the owner to fix hazards such as broken windows and securely close vacant residences, and to clear the inoperable vehicles and junk from the site; however, new junk and inoperable vehicles keep appearing. We continue to follow up on these issues.

One major concern at this time is about the safety of the residents and level of ongoing criminal activity, including drug use and sale, theft, and prostitution. With our encouragement, the property owner has hired a security guard for the site who is present from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m., according to residents, who report that this has helped to reduce some of the criminal activity.

The trailers are old (approximately 1950s-60s); only one can be moved to another park. The rest must be demolished because they do not meet current standards for most parks. The residents, who we believe all speak Spanish and have very little English, own the trailers they occupy, so they are not covered by other ordinances such as the Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance. We have been informed by the property seller's attorney that there are a dozen occupied trailers at this time (there were 37 when the relocation coordinator starting working there last fall). We continue to work on this issue.

Condominium Conversion Update: As can be seen below, we have now exceeded last year's number of units being inspected for conversion. If this pace continues, by the end of the year we would have requests to inspect more than 2500 units.

YEAR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2004	32	30	53	16	22	46	123	61	0	31	13	3	430
2005	0	102	14	51	7	300	130	14	538	142	109	144	1551
2006	97	104	340	98	436	137	167	337					1716

2006 Total is as of Aug 31, 2006

Magnolia Enforcement Issue: You may have received a number of letters and emails, primarily in support of a children's theatre/school in Magnolia. We were responding to a complaint from a neighbor about traffic and parking impacts from the drama school. Upon examination of the hours of use and number of children served, we concluded that the theatre's current use of the church is an accessory use and that no additional permit is required at this time. The theater program serves 18 children in each of three workshops. Each workshop concludes with three one-hour matinee performances.

However, that investigation turned up another use of the property, a preschool which was not the subject of the complaint. The preschool serves 140 families with 195 children, five days a week throughout the year. In this instance, though located within a church, the operational

hours and the number of children served make the preschool a significant use of this property, and an administrative conditional use permit is required.

### **Green Building Team**

The team has assisted in about 25 development projects, including five City fire stations and four downtown projects that will take advantage of the new zoning incentive for green buildings. They have also met with seven single family housing developers. With regard to education and outreach, the new web site has gone live, the team has sponsored several workshops and training sessions with several more coming in the fall. This year to date, we have sponsored eight events in the Urban Sustainability Forum series, with three more coming. We are also working on a scope for a Sustainable Communities Study, which would look at sustainable development on a community-wide basis, rather than a building by building basis. We are talking to potential funders for this study.

### **Planning Work Program**

Livable South Downtown Study: We have developed an initial scope for the EIS, and are talking to potential private funders for this work. This follows the Council's guidelines for how we are to use private funding for this work, which comes after we have developed the initial recommendations. We are looking forward to additional Council briefings on this, and would be happy to brief the committee or individual members in the next few months.

NBDS: Thank you for your recent actions to adopt the final policy direction for the commercial districts. We are finalizing the legislation to send to council staff next week, in time for a September 12 introduction. We're looking forward to the public hearing in October.

### **Public Outreach Events**

#### Urban Sustainability Forum:

Jonathan F.P. Rose – green developer, historic preservationist, affordable housing provider, music producer and more

“Principle Based Planning, Development and Investment”

Wednesday, September 20 at 7:00 pm in the Bertha Landes Room of City Hall

Followed by a jazz and dessert reception, featuring the Victor Noriega Trio

#### Introduction to Green Remodeling Workshops

- Safeco Neighborhood Academy at University Heights  
Thursday, October 19 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm
  
- Safeco Neighborhood Academy at Jackson Street  
Thursday, October 26 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm

#### Home Improvement Workshops

- Safeco Neighborhood Academy at University Heights  
Saturday October 21 from 10:00 am - noon
  
- Safeco Neighborhood Academy at Jackson Street  
Saturday October 28 from 10:00 am - noon