

Meeting Summary
NORTH RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL STATION REBUILD PROJECT
Stakeholder Group Meeting 7
Nalanda West, 3902 Woodland Park Avenue N, Seattle
October 20, 2009 6:00 to 8:00 PM
Walking Tour of Neighborhood 5:00 PM

ATTENDEES

Stakeholders

Bill Bergstrom
Eric Johnson
Trish McNeil
Eric Pihl
Bob Quinn
David Ruggiero
Rob Stephenson
Cathy Tuttle
Jessica Vets
Paul Willumson (tour only)

Seattle Public Utilities

Nancy Ahern
Bill Benzer
Tim Croll
Jeff Neuner

Triangle Associates

Bob Wheeler
Jennifer Howell

Presenters

Art Campbell, Herrera Associates
Laura Van Dyke, Heffron Transportation

Observers

Richard Floisand
Marcia Wagoner
Erika Bigelow
Penny Mabie
Rob Gala

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting was for the North Stakeholder Group to discuss view corridors, recycling/reuse, and traffic. The meeting was preceded by a walking tour north of the transfer station to see views first hand. SPU also introduced new project staff and provided an update on the contracting process.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- SPU will include ideas related to the view of the proposed recycling center from Woodlawn Avenue N to the scope of work for the support services contractor who will work with the stakeholder group. Additional suggestions from members of the group included looking at the cumulative impact of traffic from the Fremont urban village with the transfer station or expanding the range of assumptions regarding traffic, garbage and recycling generation.
- SPU will identify the number of parking spaces for the facility that are required by the Department of Planning and Development.
- SPU will invite a representative from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to talk about traffic calming techniques if the stakeholder group would find this helpful.
- SPU will evaluate existing information and determine if an additional study or survey on who currently is using the North Station for recycling is needed. If adequate information does not already exist, SPU will gather it.
- The issues identified as part of the discussion on views, traffic, and recycling will be

incorporated into the master “issues of interest” document if they are not already included.

- Undergrounding utilities and adding a buffer area along east side of property will be added to the list of ideas for community benefit.
- The next stakeholder meeting will be in late winter or early spring after the support services contractor is hired and has had time to finish the first task in the scope of work and is familiar with the design program for the project.

AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

TOUR SUMMARY

Prior to the meeting, Art Campbell, Herrera Associates, led a walking tour to the key viewpoints in the Visual Technical Report he prepared for the project. The group met at the corner of 35th and Stone Way, walked east on 35th Street to Woodlawn Ave N, stopping at locations along the way. The group was able to look at the view from the porch of 3428 Woodlawn where you could see over the 1550 Building (1550 N. 34th Street Building, formerly the Oroweat Bakery). The corner of Woodlawn Avenue N. and 35th was also a key viewpoint. The group walked up Woodlawn to 36th and then west to Ashworth, another key viewpoint. Back at Ashworth and 35th, the group noted the view of the fence and the transfer station building along 35th. The group then walked west to Interlake Ave N, another viewpoint and then north on Interlake. The group then proceeded to the meeting site at Nalanda West. Comments made along the tour were reiterated at the meeting and will be described below.

WELCOME, AGENDA REVIEW AND RECAP

Facilitator Bob Wheeler welcomed the stakeholders, led introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting. He reminded the group that he has taken over the role of facilitator from David Harrison. Nancy Ahern, SPU Deputy Director, also introduced the new project manager for the North Transfer Station project, Bill Benzer. Veronica Baca took an extended leave shortly after the last stakeholder meeting.

The facilitator recapped the last meeting noting that the suggestions for community benefits were captured in the meeting summary and would be revisited later in the process after the support services contractor is hired. He also pointed out the Issues of Interest document and that any new issues identified at tonight’s meeting would be added to the matrix.

VIEW CORRIDORS

Facilitator Bob Wheeler reviewed the route of the tour and then asked Art Campbell, Herrera Associates, to comment on what he heard and then invited stakeholders to add their impressions. Several stakeholders noted how helpful it was to walk in the neighborhood and see firsthand how views are affected. Tim Croll, SPU Solid Waste Director, reiterated SPU’s commitment not to raise the height of the transfer station building from its existing height except any height that would be needed if a green roof was added. Jeff Neuner, SPU, also commented that a 25-foot height was needed for operations and that no advantage existed to raise the transfer building higher than what it is.

1550 N. 34th Street Building—Recycling Area

Art Campbell noted that he heard several comments regarding what will happen with the 1550 Building and how this may impact views along the east and northeast side of the facility. The

walking tour underscored that the residences particularly on Woodlawn have views of Queen Anne and the Aurora Bridge. Some areas see Lake Union, the Space Needle, and/or parts of the city skyline. The issue regarding the potential rezone of the 1550 Building property and how that impacts both height and buffer requirements was raised. The fact that the property slopes to the south and the grade between the existing 1550 building and the existing transfer station is different also may create some opportunity to improve or reduce the impact on existing views. Stakeholders suggested the following ideas on how to minimize view impacts created by replacing the 1550 Building.

- Lower the building.
- Move it further south on the site.
- Move it further west to allow a larger buffer along the east side of the building.
- Add a promenade on the east side of the building—a slithering park down to the water.
- Add a green roof to the building. If the building was lowered/buried and it had a green roof, this could possibly enhance views for the residents in the neighborhood.
- Place any needed height for the building further down south on the property so the existing view would not be affected.
- Bury utilities to improve view.

An observer commented that he would like to see the building fit better into the residential setback of 25 feet and have a softer treatment, not just a big wall. Tim Croll, SPU Solid Waste Director, commented that SPU was concerned about the weight of a green roof on the transfer station building where the roof has to cover a large span without internal columns. However, the recycling building would not need to be as wide and therefore possibly could hold the weight of a green roof. A green roof could be an interesting concept. A stakeholder commented that SPU may have an opportunity to enhance what residences right next to the property look at and that this would mitigate the immediate impact of the facility.

Stakeholders also asked about the view from the Aurora Bridge and how the view of the site appears from other locations. A green roof would be more attractive to look at. A request for a topographic map that shows the grade across the site would be helpful.

Employee Parking Lot

An observer noted that the parking lot to the north of 35th is zoned a conditional use. He suggested moving the parking to the industrial zone and making the parking lot a park. Nancy Ahern noted that this idea was raised at the last meeting as a potential community benefit. The group discussed whether the lot was bigger than needed and whether all or part of the site could be used for other purposes. Tim Croll noted that the lot currently has more spaces than needed. Laura Van Dyke, Heffron Transportation, noted that the lot currently has 46 spaces and that the traffic study indicated that the number of employees could range from 29-39 employees. The higher number reflects 10 additional SPU employees who were added in the high traffic scenario. SPU can determine what is required by DPD.

Trees on 35th Street

The question was raised regarding how tall the trees on the north side of the facility might get. Jeff Neuner, SPU, noted that SPU can control the height of the trees and that the goal for planting these was to screen the building, not to obscure the views above the station. One stakeholder commented that the trees were a great addition.

RECYCLING AND REUSE

Jeff Neuner, Solid Waste Planning Manager, presented SPU's future plans for recycling and reuse at the north station. He reviewed the benefits and current operating assumptions for developing a separate recycling center. Separating the recycling from the transfer station allows more space, convenience for customers who are only recycling, and provides one central location for recycling. It also will save approximately 2000 square feet in the transfer building that could be used for other purposes such as adding stalls to get waiting cars off the street. Jeff explained that the preferred location for the recycling center is the east side of the site where the 1550 Building is now. Access would be on the west side and customers would enter and exit off 34th Street. Ideally a cutover would allow access to the transfer side so customers could drop off recycling prior to paying for disposal, encouraging people to recycle and save money.

Questions arose about who currently uses the recycling available at the existing site and who is expected to use it in the future. Jeff Neuner responded that currently mostly cars and small trucks bring recycling; businesses bring cardboard, taverns bring bottles, self-haulers bring packing boxes. Big recycling trucks go directly to recycling facilities. SPU hopes that more recycling will happen at the curbside. A stakeholder commented that currently people who have parties or big events bring the recycling to the facility to avoid overloading their curbside container. Tim Croll noted that SPU knows what kind of trips come to the station to recycle but not who they are or why they are bringing the material. SPU could do a study to collect data on who is using the facility.

The group discussed recycling metal at the facility. Jeff Neuner stated that providing a place to recycle metal is a real need at the facility that is not available at curbside. SPU expects to keep the metal recycling in the transfer building because it is heavy and hard to move. This would also include appliances. Metal that can be recycled curbside would be collected in the new recycling building. One stakeholder suggested that SPU allow recycling mid-size metal in the recycling building to encourage recycling of this material as long as it could fit in a dumpster or be lifted by one person. Tim Croll added that it would be important to keep anything that would make a lot of noise in the transfer building. Facilitator Bob Wheeler noted that these issues would be added to the list for follow up.

Jeff Neuner then described plans for dropping off reusable materials including construction and other materials. The space allows only for drop off not a retail outlet. He described the pilot project for reuse that flags people who have reusable materials before they get on the property so they can drop them off at the 1550 Building area. Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of taking the opportunity of educating people on reuse or recycling opportunities as they use the transfer station. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of separating reuse and recycling versus keeping it in the transfer station which might allow for more education or future flexibility. Concern regarding noise generated at the recycling center was also highlighted as was managing the queues of customers and keeping commercial customers separate from self-haulers. Also noted were concerns regarding open bins and the potential for rats and blowing trash.

Jeff Neuner concluded his presentation that the new recycling center could include new materials not currently accepted such as textiles, electronics, or other things not yet known. He added that the administration office for the facility would also be moved to the same area.

TRAFFIC

Laura Van Dyke, Heffron Transportation, then presented the results of the Transportation Technical Report. This was a reprise of the presentation provided to the stakeholder group on March 18, 2008. Heffron was hired by SPU to perform a transportation study and examine transportation scenarios for low, medium and high traffic volume.

Ms. Van Dyke presented highlights of their analysis. The study was based on construction of a new transfer station building on the existing site; expansion of the site's recycling facilities within the vacated portion of Carr Place N, construction of new employee facilities and offices on the property east of Carr Place; and parking in the SPU-owned parking lot northeast of N 35th Street/Carr Place N. As part of the study Heffron documented background (Existing and No-Action) transportation conditions, added projected NRDS trips for three traffic scenarios (high, medium, and low) and evaluated transportation changes with the Action condition.

Heffron concluded that the net change in site-generated trips is projected to be slightly higher with the Action condition compared to the No-Action condition, ranging from 14 to 40 daily trips depending upon the analysis day and the traffic scenario. These trips are associated with new employees needed for recycling and possibly for other SPU employees that could relocate to the site. Also, while the number of transfer trucks may decrease, the number of transfer trucks moving reuse and recycling would increase. This is because these materials are typically moved in smaller vehicles.

Heffron further concluded that there would be no adverse impacts to any off-site intersection or roadway due to the project and driveway intersections would operate acceptably at LOS C or better during the PM peak hour in 2030. On-street queuing would be less with the proposed project since the number of scales and transfer building stalls would increase with project. No significant impacts to the roadway network are anticipated due to vacating Carr Place.

Ms. Van Dyke stated there would be no transportation impacts during the closure and rebuild of NRDS since existing station traffic will be diverted to other facilities during construction. Parking for construction workers will be onsite or in the SPU-owned parking lot northeast of N 35th Street/Carr Place N. As no adverse transportation impacts were identified, no transportation mitigation would be required.

An observer asked when Heffron conducted the traffic count on Carr Place and whether this was on a peak day. Ms. Van Dyke explained that while Heffron commissioned the count on Carr Place on a Tuesday in November, all transfer station transportation data were obtained from SPU for an average day and an average day in the peak season.

A stakeholder wondered if the study was based on how the station is currently used and whether it had considered new activities such as product stewardship, take back, and reuse. Tim Croll responded that if a significant amount of our trash goes into product stewardship mode, that SPU would provide this service at curbside rather than having people come to the station. Collection

must be efficient. Another idea would be to have small take-back centers rather than use the transfer station.

One stakeholder requested that SPU look at the cumulative impact of traffic from the urban village proposed for Fremont and the transfer station. The study only looks at the transfer station, not how it will interact with the urban village. A request was made for SPU to provide more information on the assumptions and comparison from today to 2030. Another stakeholder noted that the assumptions from the 1960s when the station was first built were really low for expectations for the future.

Another issue of interest was the impact on traffic for the closure of Carr Place North. While stakeholders understood the concept, concern for where the 90 cars per day will go was raised, particularly if this impacted Woodlawn or Densmore, the two streets that go through to 34th where the entrance to the station is. Concern for safety of pedestrians was also identified.

Tim Croll suggested that SDOT could come and discuss traffic calming ideas with the community. When discussing whether to do further or new traffic studies, some stakeholders noted that these are expensive and won't tell us anything new. They'd rather focus on solutions on how to get the traffic to go where you want it to go, reduce queuing, and get the self-haulers off the street. One suggestion was to either add a light or allow left turns onto the site from 34th.

The suggestion was made to look at the baseline in a different way. If a range of assumptions or scenarios were provided, this might make the rezone easier. We don't know what will be happening with recycling in 10 years or traffic. Tim Croll noted that we need to look at this in context of views. If views are paramount, this may affect the size of the building which in turn could affect the ability to keep queuing off the streets.. He noted that it is good to do this together so SPU and the stakeholder group can agree where to make compromises.

A stakeholder noted that predicting the future garbage estimates can be based on historical trends --if you look at people's habits, tie it to residential density, you can get a good idea of the volume of trash but you may not know the mix. The city is already recycling over 50%. You need to remember this facility is for waste that isn't recycled at curbside and the city is continuing to incentivize people to do more at the curb. The suggestion was made to consider material compaction and consolidation in the transfer station and co-mingling recyclables.

PROJECT UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

The facilitator then noted that it was 8 PM and time to wrap up the meeting. Tim Croll promised to email the group with a response to a stakeholder's questions on funding and the delay mentioned by Council President Richard Conlin at the candidates forum. Bill Benzer informed the group that SPU's next steps were to select a support services consultant, negotiate a contract, do the research, and get ready to look at the concepts presented in the scope. Tim Croll noted that SPU expects that the stakeholder group may also suggest some ideas for concepts.

ADJOURN

Facilitator Bob Wheeler reviewed the outcomes of the meeting. He noted that the issues of interest document would be updated and the group would reconvene sometime in 2010 when the support services contract was underway.