

Meeting Summary
NORTH RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL STATION REBUILD PROJECT
Stakeholder Group Meeting 6
Hamilton Elementary, 4400 Interlake Ave North, Seattle
June 30, 2009 6:00 to 8:00 PM

ATTENDEES

Stakeholders

Bill Bergstrom
Eric Pihl
Bob Quinn
David Ruggiero
Rob Stephenson
Toby Thaler
Cathy Tuttle
Paul Willumson

Seattle Public Utilities

Nancy Ahern
Veroncia Baca
Tim Croll
Jeff Neuner

Triangle Associates

David Harrison
Jennifer Howell
Renee Stern

Observers

Ed Andrews
Erika Bigelow
David Hansen
Mary Heim
Allison Hogue
Jake Beattie
Eric Mead
Jeff Parker
Mary Sussex

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting was for the North Stakeholder Group to discuss and develop an initial list of potential community benefits for the vacation of Carr Place. Eliminating a public right-of-way requires that the City provide some other community benefit as compensation. Further discussion of community benefits will take place at future meetings. After receiving input from the stakeholder group and the community, SPU will make a recommendation to the Seattle Department of Transportation. The Seattle City Council will make the final decision. (See <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/streetvacations.htm> for details on the street vacation process.)

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- The next stakeholder meeting will held in September/October close to the transfer station and will focus on the issues of recycling/reuse, traffic and view corridors. A meeting will also be held in November after the support services contractor has been chosen. The November meeting will focus on the issues of interest matrix, community benefits and design issues.
- SPU and Triangle Associates will work with stakeholders to identity the best dates and times for the September and November meetings.

AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

WELCOME, AGENDA REVIEW AND RECAP

Facilitator David Harrison welcomed the stakeholders, led introductions and outlined the purpose of the meeting. He emphasized that the discussion of community benefits would not end with this meeting and it is expected that stakeholders will circulate some of the ideas developed to their constituent groups for further consideration. David Harrison also noted that this will be his last meeting as facilitator and Bob Wheeler, president of Triangle Associates will be taking over in his place. Nancy Ahern, SPU Deputy Director introduced the new project manager for the North Transfer Station project, Veronica Baca.

UPDATE ON PROJECT STATUS

Project Manager Veronica Baca stated that SPU is preparing to put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to retain a support services contractor. She handed out portions of the proposed scope of work and would like to receive any comments from stakeholders in the next week. She noted that the consultant will flesh out the design requirements of the new facility and will be responsible for helping to select and negotiate with the design build contractor. One observer stated that it would be nice to see qualifications relating to urban design in the request for qualifications.

Solid Waste Director Tim Croll spoke to the stakeholders about zoning issues at the station. He stated that the industrial buffer on the northeast corner of the property cannot be built on unless it is re-zoned. The current facility is only allowed on the industrial buffer due to it being a pre-existing condition. Regarding the 1550 N. 34th Street building (1550 building), recycling is generally allowed in commercial zones, but there is some lack of clarity about whether recycling in the 1550 building would be viewed as being “accessory” to the new transfer station across Carr Place N. If it were accessory, then recycling would likely be precluded from the 1550 parcel under existing code. SPU is consulting with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) on this issue and will know more definitely in the next few weeks about zoning for recycling on that site.

REVIEW OF PROCESS FOR RECEIVING COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND DISCUSSION

The facilitator asked each stakeholder to provide input on potential community benefits for street vacation. He noted that this is an opportunity to start the discussion on benefits and that SPU will respond to the ideas generated.

Tim Croll added that SPU is required to show community benefits for street vacation as part of the project. SPU will be asking the City Council for a street vacation of Carr Place which will include approval for an expenditure on public benefit in exchange for the vacation. He noted that there is no formula to determine the value of community benefits, but it is generally preferred that the benefits be close to the impacted site. A stakeholder asked SPU to provide information on traffic near Carr Place to help the community better understand the traffic impacts.

Stakeholders and observers then presented their initial ideas regarding community benefits. The following ideas were suggested.

Facility Improvements

- Bury or lower the building to minimize impacts on views.
- Promote zero waste practices and think into the future to design a facility that makes it easy to sort materials and minimize waste.
- Provide for a green roof. This enhances the aesthetics of the neighborhood.
- Create a strong buffer zone between the facility and the neighborhood – develop a greenbelt.
- Ensure that the new station is exceptionally safe and that environmental testing is thorough and transparent.
- Downzone the new property.
- Ensure that idling time for trucks is minimal. This helps businesses, reduces impacts on the neighborhood and the environment.
- Provide educational opportunities at the transfer station and promote the City's zero waste goals.
- Have the entrance to the facility be in the southeast corner.
- Move the recycling facilities further west or away from the area.
- Use the top floor of the 1550 building as a community meeting space.
- Do not increase the height of the buildings.
- Seriously control speeding vehicles near the transfer station.

Community Open Space

- Create a community center near the transfer station. The surrounding area does not have an active community center.
- Consider converting the employee parking lot in the northeast corner into an open space for the community.
- Convert the Essential Bakery parking lot into public space.
- Devote land to a community pea patch.
- Set aside space for a farmer's market.
- Dedicate/repurpose the former University Child Development Center building at 3500 Interlake Ave N. to public use as a community center and pea patch.

Other Off-Site Improvements

- Put funding toward the Center for Wooden Boats to create a new maritime-based community center campus at the old Metro site on Lake Union. Classes could be offered to a variety of ages, the public could rent boats, a farmers market could be set up, and a water taxi could be established on the site.
- Enhance existing park facilities such as Gas Works Park.
- Provide additional parking at Gas Works Park.
- Build a swimming pool for the community.
- Create an off-leash dog park.
- Dead end streets near the facility such as Carr and Woodlawn.
- Build a pedestrian boulevard toward Gas Works Park starting on Woodlawn Ave. This would help create a stronger link between Wallingford and Gas Works Park.

- Create a non-profit entity and earmark funds to be spent in the community as decided by trustees.

Stakeholders discussed possible criteria to consider when choosing community benefits. One stakeholder emphasized that community benefits should be close to the station and should be aligned with the goals and objectives of the Wallingford Neighborhood Plan. He noted that there is currently a community planning process underway which may help flesh out community gaps and needs. The Wallingford Community Council president added that there will be a public meeting in September to prioritize some of the desired community services and programs. Stakeholders also mentioned that additional criteria should include the number of people impacted and benefits to residents living within a few blocks of the station. There was some disagreement about whether the community benefits should focus more broadly on the needs of the City instead of the area surrounding the transfer station. One stakeholder noted that the offsite benefits are more tangible and that if the community chooses to focus on onsite benefits, they should be substantial. Another stakeholder stated that because the City was not required to do an environmental impact statement, the first priority should be to mitigate for the environmental impacts that would have been required under SEPA such as traffic flow and toxic waste. One member of the public asked the stakeholders to look carefully at community impacts and potential effects on crime in the area. Several stakeholders also expressed a desire to ensure that the community benefits fit in with Wallingford's designation as an urban village.

The facilitator noted that SPU will respond to the suggestions raised for community benefits. Tim Croll stated that SPU will be consulting with SDOT on which of the ideas discussed may be feasible. Nancy Ahern added that there is interplay between community benefits and design issues and she looks forward to revisiting the ideas presented as the design process moves forward. The November meeting may provide an opportunity to discuss both facility design and community benefits in more detail. By November, a support services firm should have been chosen and the height/bulk and scale of the facility can be discussed. The master use permit (MUP) will come later in the process.

One stakeholder asked SPU some clarifying questions about the facility plans, the purchase of the 1550 building, and whether the City had considered including purchasing additional property to the west. Regarding the property acquisition of 1550 building, SPU acquired the property through a negotiated sale with the owner. The owner agreed to sell the property to SPU under the threat of condemnation. SPU paid the owner the fair market price for the property. SPU stated that the former University Child Development Center at 3500 Interlake Avenue N. was never considered a part of the plan given that access to the building is difficult. SPU noted that recycling at the 1550 building will be largely for commercial customers and will have items such as cardboard and batteries that can't be recycled through curbside programs. A non-fee recycling station is also at the South transfer station. Issues surrounding recycling at the new North station will be discussed in more detail at the September/October meeting.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND ADJOURN

A stakeholder noted that there will be a judicial hearing on July 31st at 8:30am on the issue of whether or not SPU's Determination of Non-Significance was appropriate. He invited anyone to attend. Facilitator David Harrison then reviewed the outcomes of the meeting. He restated that

the next meeting will be held in September or October and will focus on recycling/reuse, traffic and view corridors. A meeting will then be held in November to review community benefits and discuss design issues. He then thanked the parties for their participation and adjourned the meeting.