



SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
October 14, 2004
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance

George Blomberg, Chair; Steve Sheehy, Vice Chair; Angela Brooks, Mahlon Clements, Tom Eanes, Jerry Finrow, Chris Fiori, John Owen, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To, Paul Tomita.

Commissioners Absent

Anjali Bhagat, Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Lyn Krizanich, Joe Quintana.

Commission Staff

Barbara Wilson, Acting Director
Elizabeth Martin, Analyst

Guests

Marty Curry, Consultant; Scott Dvorak, DPD; David Graves, DPD; Ethan Melone, SDOT; Cheryl Sizov, DPD; Brad Shinn, Seattle Monorail Project

Call to Order

Chair Blomberg called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Sheehy moved and Commissioner Sheridan seconded to approve the September 23, 2004 Commission minutes without revision. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chair's Report

• **Upcoming and Recent Activities**

Chair Blomberg referred Commissioners to the back of the agenda for a number of upcoming meetings and events noting in particular the Planning Commission focus group meeting this Friday at 11:30am to discuss the Comp Plan User's Guide.

- **Meetings with UDP Councilmembers**

The Commission has scheduled a series of meetings to meet with the three Councilmembers on the Urban Development and Planning Committee. Barbara Wilson, Planning Commission Acting Executive Director, is preparing an agenda for these meetings and will send it to participating Commissioners early next week. This is an opportunity to assess where the Commission is regarding the Ten Year Comp Plan Update and to discuss Councilmembers' questions, thoughts and concerns related to the Comp Plan Update. There will be no more than three Commissioners at each meeting. Ms. Wilson will also attend. Next week, staff will send out a draft letter on the Comp Plan Update response via email. Chair Blomberg reminded Commissioners that October timesheets are in their folders.

- **Alaskan Way Viaduct**

Chair Blomberg noted that on Monday, October 18, 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM there will be a Council public hearing on the Alaskan Way Viaduct on a preferred alternative and guiding principles. The meeting will be at City Hall in the Bertha Landes Room. The current Council resolutions and the summary of Council consensus points on the preferred alternative are included in Commissioners' red folders. Additionally Chair Blomberg noted that Councilmembers Conlin and Steinbrueck have asked the Planning Commission and the Design Commission to provide a response on these documents.

Commissioner Sheridan asked about the construction and phasing of the project. Ms. Wilson stated that SDOT and WSDOT have presented three alternative construction scenarios. There is a nine-year option which would not completely shut down the corridor; a four-year option that would completely shut down the viaduct corridor which is cheaper; and another option which is a mid-range plan.

ACTION: The Commissions Transportation Committee will discuss and send on for full commission approval a preliminary response to Councilmember request for review of the Guiding principles resolution, the resolution on the Safety and transition plan and the preliminary Council preferences for the Viaduct Preferred Alternative. The Commission will also address in later meeting the Construction phasing issues and offer feedback to decision makers. Commissioner Sheridan recused herself from this action.

- **Neighborhood Business District Strategy (NBDS)**

Chair Blomberg stated that a series of meetings will be occurring in different neighborhoods in the next few weeks of October. DPD planners will work with six neighborhoods to map the boundaries of the retail core. The meeting schedule is listed on the back of the agenda. The proposal will go to the Mayor by the end of the year and will likely get transmitted to Council around February 2005. Ms. Wilson has handed out a copy of the latest proposal and noted that the Commission will schedule a briefing with City staff sometime in the coming months.

- **November Meeting schedule**

Ms Wilson noted that in November both the second and the fourth Thursdays of the month are holidays. The Commission will meet on the third Thursday of the month, 11/18, if Commissioners are able to attend.

ACTION: Commissioners approved the canceling the November 11th and November 25th meetings due to holidays. The approved a make up meeting which will occur on November 18th from 3 – 5:30 pm, location to be determined based on availability

Commissioner Spotlight - Tom Eanes

This month's spotlight focused on Commissioner Tom Eanes. Commissioner Eanes shared information about himself that included his professional and personal background.

Planning Director Report

John Rahaim, DPD Planning Director, briefed the Commission on NBDS, Center City Strategy, and Waterfront Planning.

Mr. Rahaim noted that the NBDS includes a proposal to reduce parking requirements and to eliminate a minimum parking requirement. He stated that currently, in downtown there is no minimum parking requirement for housing. Instead the market can determine whether there is parking. Politically there has been negative feedback and concern about neighborhood parking. NBDS aims to eliminate the minimum requirement in urban centers and station areas. Parking will be reduced in urban villages. NBDS simplifies the two pedestrian overlay zones (P1 and P2) into one pedestrian overlay zone with retail use at ground level. Residential will be allowed at ground level. These zones will be mapped. This year mapping will occur in six neighborhoods. And in 2005 the mapping will be completed. DPD has had interns go out into the neighborhoods to help identify and document what is out there. DPD then suggests where the pedestrian overlay should be.

Commissioner Clements commented that it is interesting that the P1 and P2 will be changed. He asked how this will impact the neighborhood plans. Chair Blomberg asked how these recommendations were derived.

Commissioner Clements asked if there has been strategic outreach to developers or architects. Mr. Rahaim replied that there has been a good mix at public NBDS meetings. Commissioner Clements mentioned that in the Ballard area he attended a meeting and there were no developers present. Mr. Rahaim responded that the advisory committee includes development experts including Val Thomas. There is a background report and extensive information online and in paper form. Their input has been covered in the initial stages of the project. Ms. Wilson offered to provide this information to the Commission if they are interested.

Commissioner Finrow asked about what would replace parking. He expressed concern about the character of the buildings and wondered whether street level would be residential. He recommended that it is important to replace the fenestration language with something else to create good urban design at the street level. Commissioner Finrow cited street level housing in San Diego as an example. He noted that there are setbacks with a six foot zone with landscaping stating that this creates a street edge that is appropriate for residential. He also stated that it is important to replace the fenestration with good elements for residential. Mr. Rahaim answered that either residential or mixed uses would replace parking at street level and that there are guidelines for non-retail uses at street level. He agreed that it is a good point about setbacks and stoops. He mentioned Vancouver as an example where the residential use at street level has been well-designed to protect the privacy of residents.

Commissioner Eanes urged City Planning to avoid the example in Belltown. Commissioner Owen recommended avoiding ground level parking. He mentioned a concern about certain areas such as 19th Avenue on Capitol Hill where if certain uses are pushed out they will degrade the neighborhood citing 73rd and Greenwood Avenue as another example. He also noted it is difficult to call these areas a P zone but stated that residents need these areas. Commissioner Sheridan agreed. Mr. Rahaim agreed that there are dozens of intersections that are similar in this respect.

Vice-Chair Sheehy requested more information about what the fenestration requirements will be at the November meeting. Mr. Rahaim mentioned that a draft of this exists and that Commissioners will be briefed at the next meeting.

ACTION: The Commission will consider the City's Neighborhood Business District more thoroughly and will receive a more extensive briefing at the Full Commission meeting in the coming months or at a HNUC committee meeting. The Commission requests that DPD will provide more information specifically about what the fenestration requirements will be included.

Center City Strategy

Mr. Rahaim congratulated the Commission on the positive response from Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis on the Commission report on the Center City Strategy (CCS). Mr. Ceis commented that the Center City Roundtable report was a great and that it should guide the City. Mr. Rahaim noted that he is working to staff this project with one full-time staff position by the end of 2004. He also noted that DPD has worked with a consultant who recommended to focus on a few things such as housing in general locations like First Hill, the Denny Triangle; to focus on areas around transportation hubs such as the King Street Station, Westlake, and Colman Dock; and to approach the project from both density and transportation perspectives. Mr. Rahaim requested Commission input on this project.

Commissioner Owen concurred and mentioned Portland as a successful example of such an approach as a means to positively transform an area or neighborhood within

their City. Commissioner Finrow stated that he is glad to hear that there is good support for CCS as he has been concerned about initiatives without any support behind them. He complimented Mr. Rahaim on DPD's work on this project.

Waterfront Planning

Mr. Rahaim reported that City Planning is coordinating an Implementation Team to focus on how to implement the waterfront plan. The fourth meeting session of the Waterfront Advisory Team (WAT) is charged with developing recommendations to address this. He noted that the WAT has been exploring issues such as the piers and their historic value and uses. Mr. Rahaim noted that there has been a strong recommendation from the Seattle Planning Commission and the Seattle Design Commission subcommittee on the waterfront to provide feedback to the public and the charrette participants. He committed DPD to organize a meeting to show the evolution of the process by the end of 2004.

COMMISSION PROJECT REVIEW:

MONORAIL STATION AREA ACTION PLANS

Ethan Melone, SDOT staff, Cheryl Sizov, DPD staff, David Graves, DPD staff, and Scott Dvorak, DPD staff briefed the Commission on Monorail Station Area Planning.

Mr. Melone provided an overview on the context for Station Area Planning. He noted that there is sub area and corridor planning. Ms. Sizov provided a framework for the decision making for station area planning. She noted that the Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plans provide a framework. Ms. Sizov noted that Monorail Station Area Planning consists of stations, corridors and segments and is similar to sub-area planning. She observed that integrating the monorail is a two-pronged approach addressing the urban environment and the transportation route. The transportation system includes sub-area planning issues such as goals for mobility to stations and mobility within a sub-area. The corridor operation includes opportunities and challenges and includes the quality of the public realm and streets. Ms. Sizov stated that there are three months left in Monorail Station Area Planning efforts and that staff are hosting community and city-wide meetings on November 15, 16 and 17.

Commissioner Sheehy asked for further information about what the public realm includes. Ms. Sizov replied that it generally outside the purview of Seattle Monorail Project (SMP). SMP is responsible for straight access. Commissioner Finrow asked what improvements SMP required to make. Mr. Dvorak responded that SMP is responsible for handicapped accessibility ramps at corners and sidewalks. Commissioner Eanes asked if it is possible to lengthen the station platforms in future. Staff and Commissioners responded that it is likely that increased capacity will be met by additional trains and increased frequency of service. SAP staff mentioned that improvements to the public realm are generally outside of the purview of SMP, that they are not funded and have no steward. It is hoped that private and public investment in the public realm can be leveraged.

Commissioner Finrow asked if staff have looked at the planning implications of the impact of the guideway, specifically to look at three-dimensional impacts on the space above and below the structure. He pointed out that there are implications on land use planning. Commissioner Finrow recommended that staff present a graphic representation of the three dimensional space that the guideway affects. Planning strategies should include appropriate and reasonable land uses below and above the guideway. He suggested corridor intensive work in plan, section, and photo to show the conditions of the area and to illustrate what certain setback and heights might look like.

Commissioner Tomita suggested that there is a need to educate pedestrians in the bike zones of the streetscape. He expressed concern about bike zones in intersections.

ACTION: The Commission directed its Transportation Committee to provide a detailed review and follow up with DPD staff at one of the next Committee meetings. The Commission will focus its review on planning related issues brought up in this meeting as well as others that impact the city's Station Area Action Plans. The Commission will review the Mayor's proposal to be released early next year and advise Council.

DPD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

Marty Curry, consultant for City Planning is working on a guide for public involvement. Ms. Curry described her work on creating a usable tool for DPD to use in public involvement activities. She asked if the Planning Commission would be interested in providing feedback on her work and she encouraged the Commission to consider its role in this project. Ms. Curry asked the Commission to consider its criteria for participating in a public involvement effort. She recommended that the Commission clarify and confirm its role in public outreach efforts. She also suggested that the Commission can advise and shape DPD's approach to public involvement. She noted that in her research she discovered DPD is often concerned about controversy in its planning efforts and the City generally does the same types of outreach, either open houses or workshops when other methods might be more appropriate. She noted that one of her recommendations was that the Commission be involved with public outreach at an earlier review of a project noting that often the Commission is invited to participate at a later review stage.

Commissioner Eanes commented that there is some cynicism on the part of the public and that it is good to consider how to get public buy in. He noted that if the process is improved that helps get people to attend and participate. Commissioner Sheridan mentioned that better predictability of the process should be considered.

ACTION: Planning Commissioners will convene a work session with Ms. Curry to provide input on the public involvement guide. Ms. Curry will send

out draft materials and discussion questions to those Commissioners who will attend.

Chair Blomberg announced that it is Commissioner Angela Brooks' last Commission meeting. She has accepted a new position as Community Development Specialist with the City of Seattle in the Office of Housing. Chair Blomberg and other Commissioners congratulated her on her new position and thanked her for her valuable work with the Commission.

Public Comment

No public comments were made

Adjournment

Chair Blomberg adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.