

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 9, 2003  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Commissioners in Attendance:** George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Anjali Bhagat, Ray Connell, Matthew Kitchen, Jeanne Krikawa, Denise Lathrop, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To, Paul Tomita.

**Commissioners Absent:** John Owen, Chair; Lyn Krizanich, Angela Brooks, Joe Quintana.

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

**Guests:** Michael Seliga, Rob Holland, John Rahaim, Department of Planning and Development (DPD); Cheryl Sizov, DPD; Vanessa Murdock, DPD; Michael Jenkins, DPD; Jackie Kirn, OPM,

**Call to Order**

Vice Chair George Blomberg called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan made a motion to approve the September 25, 2003 minutes as written, Commissioner Paul Tomita seconded and the Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

**COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

▪ **Commission Recruitment**

Marty Curry reported that the Commission is beginning the process for recruiting 3 new Commissioners. Two Commissioners, George Bloomberg and Anjali Bhagat, volunteered to work with staff on this year's recruitment process.

**ACTION:** The Commission reviewed the draft press release for Planning Commission recruitment. The Commission clarified that transportation, housing development and small business expertise should be highlighted in the recruitment press release. The Commission approved the press release with the mentioned changes.

- **Commission Monorail DEIS Letter**

Vice Chair Blomberg thanked all of the Commissioners for their work on this set of comments. He asked Ms. Wilson to update the Commission on getting the letter distributed. Ms. Wilson stated that staff has sent the letter to SMP, emailed it to City officials/staff and to MRP, Design and Planning Commissioners. She stated it is also up on our website and that news advisory was sent to the press. She also noted that, as requested, the staff had prepared a draft letter to the Mayor and Council outlining issues of particular interest to the city. Ms. Wilson circulated the draft for review and asked for feedback.

**ACTION: The Planning Commission confirmed their intent to send a letter to the Mayor and City Council regarding the Monorail DEIS. The Commission agreed that the letter should outline particular areas of concern with regards to deficiencies in the analysis in the DEIS that will create challenges for City decision makers in approving the Greenline Alignment and Station Location, approving the Transit Way agreement and issuing Master Use Permits. The letter will be concise but highlight several examples of places where significantly more detailed analysis of impacts and mitigating measures is required for the City to make informed decisions such as; more thorough analysis regarding the process and timing of decisions and about level of mitigation to those who are displaced; detailed analysis of impacts on property within a block of alignment, particularly single family residential; detailed analysis of Metro transit service alternatives (including a worst case scenario) and mitigating measures and many others. Staff will update the draft letter to be emailed to Commissioners on 10/10/03 for review by COB 10/13/03 and sent to Mayor, Council and others by 10/14/03.**

- **Commission Logo**

Ms. Curry brought some ideas for the Commission's logo/letterhead and asked Commissioners for input. She sent around the folder with the alternative designs that have been developed with a place for Commissioners' to indicate their preferences.

**ACTION: Based on comments, staff will begin formalizing Planning Commission letterhead including the use of a new logo for approval by the DPD Planning Director.**

- **Upcoming Meetings**

Vice Chair Blomberg announced several important upcoming meetings and events. He reminded Commissioners of the **October 14<sup>th</sup> Comp Plan Update Kickoff, co-sponsored by the Planning Commission**. He strongly encouraged all Commissioners to attend this opening session on the Comp Plan Update at Garfield Community Center from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Planning Commissioner Angela Brooks will introduce keynote speaker Bill Dietrich and moderate the Forum. Vice Chair Blomberg also noted that on **November 5 the Northgate Open House on Library and Community Center** will be held at Olympic View School, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m., and on **November 7<sup>th</sup> the Planning Commission will co-sponsor Waterfront Forum #2**. Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa added that this last event will be held at Odyssey Maritime Museum, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. followed by an Argosy tour of the waterfront.

**ACTION: Commissioners indicated on a sign-up sheet where they could participate in these events.**

## UPDATES

- **Monorail Review Board:**

Commissioner Steve Sheehy provided an update on the MRP's recent meetings. Commissioner Sheehy stated that overall MRP is going very well. The Board has spent quite awhile defining and negotiating with SMP about the review process and the types of decisions the MRP will make. Issues have included the number of reviews for each of the 19 stations and the expected level of information given during the review. MRP has recommended 3 review sessions per station and has asked for more detailed information for the initial presentations.

City Council has asked the MRP as well as the Planning Commission to weigh in on alignment and station location. Commissioner Sheehy stated that the MRP will focus mainly on design issues. Commissioner Sheehy noted that the MRP just completed the first review of the first station. Commissioner Tomita added that some of the biggest challenges thus far have to do with the negotiating with SMP staff over the process and the schedule. Commissioner Sheridan added that there is a real lack of detail to the information the MRP members have received thus far.

Marty Curry noted that the Council had also asked the Planning Commission to weigh in on the Greenline alignment and station location, and that the Commission needs to determine how it will approach this task. Commissioner Sheridan suggested that Marty

Curry, Cheryl Sizov and other City staff could assist such an effort by outlining key issues for the Commission to weigh in on. Commissioner Tomita suggested that rather than an intricate review, the Planning Commission should help create a framework for weighing the decisions. Commissioner Blomberg agreed with this course of action and added that SPC could help articulate the community's response. Commissioner Sheehy suggested the Commission's review focus on its role as stewards of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Curry suggested that the Commission's review and analysis could include a look at the DEIS comments from the community groups around the proposed stations in order to help inform decisions. Commissioner Kitchen recommended that the Transportation Committee begin to tackle this issue. Commissioners Krikawa and Tomita agreed, and there was general consensus by the Commission to have the Transportation Committee begin to outline a framework for monorail station location and alignment using its lens as stewards of the Comprehensive Plan as guidance.

**ACTION: The SPC Transportation Committee will take the lead in developing the Planning Commission's comments on the SMP alignment and station location alternatives. They will draw from overall Comp Plan policies, from the Commission's review of the DEIS, and from community input on the DEIS and alignment/station location alternatives.**

▪ **Landmarks Board**

Vice Chair Blomberg noted that the Planning Commission has a designated seat on the Landmarks Board, which is currently being filled by Jeanne Krikawa. He asked Jeanne to give the Commission a brief update on their activities, particularly as any of their issues relate to Planning Commission work. In the interest of time, Commissioner Krikawa conceded her time to Commissioner Blomberg for his Commissioner Spotlight and will provide a landmarks board update at a future meeting.

**Commissioner Spotlight – George Blomberg**

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

**PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS**

**INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION WITH JOHN RAHAIM, DPD PLANNING DIRECTOR**

Vice Chair Blomberg welcomed John Rahaim and offered congratulations from the Planning Commission on his appointment to this new position. He reminded Mr. Rahaim that as was stated when the Commission met with him as a candidate, they look forward to working closely with him as the new Planning Division Director and in helping to build a strong planning presence in the City. Vice-Chair Blomberg then invited Mr. Rahaim to share with the Commission his initial goals and ideas for taking on this new task.

Mr. Rahaim expressed his excitement in accepting this new position with such a great department and wonderful employees. He stated that his biggest challenge is creating an identity for planning in the City. There are six departments within the City that have some responsibility for planning, and he believes that focal point of planning in the City should be in the DPD Planning Division.

Mr. Rahaim shared a short paper he prepared on his vision for the new Planning Division that outlined his views on creating a mission, identity and organizational structure for the division. The current organizational structure is composed of three silos – Comprehensive Planning, Land Use Policy and Code Development, and Citydesign in addition to the Planning and Design Commissions. He outlined ideas he has about ways to potentially structure the division's work, and his notions for creating a culture and approach for the Planning Division. This attitude or culture would involve creating a nimble, entrepreneurial environment where the staff is excited about their work.

Another goal is to do planning with realistic ideas of implementation – to do plans that get implemented, and not just do planning. He stated it is important to set realistic expectations with products and actions that can be implemented. Mr. Rahaim said he also wants to encourage staff to take back some of the reigns in managing the process, believing that over time the staff (and the City) has conceded the initiative to developers and community groups. He stated that he feels the staff is bright and capable and should not be afraid to have opinions and to be more proactive in putting these forward and initiating planning processes. Mr. Rahaim concluded by stating his intent to do a public rollout of the Planning Division in February which will introduce the visual identity, brand and mission of the planning team. Mr. Rahaim then asked for feedback or questions

Chair George Blomberg stated he liked the notion of City staff playing a more active role in the planning process. Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa added that City staff had talked about possibly having a team in the Waterfront charette, and that she believed these types of opportunities for stimulating ideas were good for the City and the staff. Mr. Rahaim agreed that the staff does need to be encouraged to have creative ideas and room for innovative thinking. Commissioner Paul Tomita agreed stating that City planning staff should see themselves as more than impartial arbitrators and more as design and planning professionals. Nonetheless there will be a need for City planning staff to be able to do both and that balance will be tricky.

Commissioner Steve Sheehy asked how the mayor's mandate on code simplification could be achieved, noting it is a fairly significant task, particularly asking whether resources would be reprioritized within the division or if additional resources were expected. Mr. Rahaim stated that quite a few resources are currently being expended on code related work already, some of which is being moved to this project. It is likely that the division will also need consultant help to rewrite the Commercial Code. Marty Curry suggested that criteria and an overall vision would be useful in helping chart a course for the Planning Division, and that the Planning Commission may want to consider if it can help Mr. Rahaim in providing that direction.

Commissioner Tony To asked how neighborhood plan implementation would work with both the changes at DON and the new responsibilities at DPD. Mr. Rahaim said he could envision DPD being a co-lead for neighborhood plan implementation. He stated he is involved in a sub-cabinet for Neighborhood Plan Implementation that will assess the program and figure out how it will work. He pointed out that obviously whatever decisions that are made will need to be worked out with the administration.

Vice-Chair Blomberg asked how the Planning Commission can work effectively with Mr. Rahaim as the Planning Director. Mr. Rahaim suggested that he present a Planning Director's report monthly at the Commission's meeting. He also suggested the Commission play a role in getting the division organized and an advisory role in ongoing projects and planning review. Mr. Rahaim is in the process of thinking through the roles and responsibilities as well as the missions of the two Commissions. Commissioner Blomberg suggested that the Planning Commission is open to hearing Mr. Rahaim's thoughts and ideas on how it can sharpen its ability to assist the new division as a resource. He also pointed out that the Planning Commission needs to continue to consider how it is involved in planning beyond urban design elements where there is some project coordination with the Design Commission. He suggested that the Planning Commission needs to continue to be involved in planning from a broader lens and that should be considered in this thinking of missions and roles.

Commissioner Krikawa suggested that the rollout of the Planning Division be more than a new logo or brand; that it show a bold new change and is clear about what exactly is being rolled out. Commissioner Tomita stated it seemed that out-of-the-box thinking and a new vision are parts of it that should be part of the rollout.

Commissioner Blomberg thanked Mr. Rahaim for coming and said he is delighted that he will be coming monthly to report to the Commission.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

### **▪ Monorail Station Area Planning**

Vice-Chair Blomberg welcomed Vanessa Murdock and Cheryl Sizov and thanked them for returning to update the Commission on the Station Area Planning Process and to

discuss the Planning Commission's role in this process. He stated that a goal today is to identify some specific roles for the Commission to play, particularly in the upcoming public workshops. Ms. Murdock thanked the Commission for the opportunity to update them and to get feedback on the proposed outreach plan. She also introduced Michael Jenkins who is the lead Land Use Planner working on the monorail project.

Ms. Murdock presented the Commission with a brief outline of the Integrating the Monorail Station Area Planning Outreach Plan. The Outreach plan is organized into three phases, with final products to be completed by mid 2004. Phase One is focusing on the preparation of the background reports. Phase Two begins with the Urban Design assessments which include assessments of opportunities and impacts. Station Area visions and scenarios will be carried out through a second set of workshops in early 2004 that will focus on exploring a range of visions in order to add to the Council and SMP Boards action on alignment. Phase Three, preparation of Station Area Action Plans, will be completed in the second quarter of 2004.

Ms. Murdock reported that the SAP staff has attended many community meetings to introduce the City's Integrating the Monorail Project and to get initial feedback and input to help guide the process. She also noted that the SAP team would be attending several City and SMP events to promote their effort. The first series of SAP workshops will be held in December. Organized by segment, they will discuss with community members the background reports and the analysis of the opportunities and constraints. They will also discuss the importance of ensuring the system fits into the overall urban fabric of the city as a whole.

Commissioner Mimi Sheridan asked what the relationship will be between SAP and station design, particularly how some of the conflicts would be worked out. Michael Jenkins replied that there are several avenues including the SEPA process when trying to address conflicts. Specific mitigation actions will be identified in the MUP for each station (which cannot be processed by the City until after release of the FEIS). Ms. Murdock stated that SAP has not been formally linked to the station design process but agreed it will be beneficial to be involved in station design meetings. Ms. Sizov stated she was encouraged to see the early urban design work. It is good solid work and will help the SAP team with urban design issues.

Commissioner Denise Lathrop suggested that for the first workshops the SAP team should develop a clear framework for what input is being sought and to articulate the parameters for the process. This should include stating what the City and the SMP are each responsible for. Commissioner Matthew Kitchen added that the City's SAP effort should help provide clarity about the formal decision making points and should also clearly outline what products will come out of the SAP process. He suggested that the SAP team get clear guidance from the Council upfront about these parameters and what

is on the table. He also suggested that 2-3 key decisions should come from the MUP process, and they should have a commitment to review land use designations.

Commissioner Steve Sheehy asked how the product from an SAP process will inform the MUP process, and how both may inform the DBOM process. Mr. Jenkins suggested that planning documents can help inform and shape transit specific design guidelines. John Rahaim suggested that the SAP Action Plans won't affect station design and should be viewed more as long term action plans. Ms. Sizov agreed and offered her view that SAP can influence the project in the short term, noting that neighborhood plans are a starting place for offering guidance.

Commissioner Kitchen stated that the existing plans are in effect and should influence monorail decisions. Commissioner Lathrop asked what the City sees as SMP responsibility in making the stations fit into the community fabric and the neighborhoods' plans. She stated that it seems as if SMP wants to take very little responsibility for ensuring the system fits into the existing community fabric. Ms. Sizov replied that it will be a process of negotiation with SMP that will include the EIS, the permitting process and some general "horse trading". Commissioner Lathrop strongly suggested that in the workshops and elsewhere the City clearly articulate what and where the points of negotiation are. Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa suggested that the first workshops include a broader discussion of the options, including the opportunities and constraints, and to be sure that the public has a clear grasp of the long term vision.

**ACTION: Commissioners confirmed Ms. Murdock's proposal that the Planning Commission actively participate in the outreach and public involvement beginning with involvement in planning and participating in the first set of workshops. The Commission would also actively review and advise the staff on the City's Station Area Planning effort including its products and analysis.**

**SPC staff will meet with City SAP staff to develop a clear timeline and set of tasks for the Commission's involvement in the public process and a review schedule which corresponds to decision making efforts. The SAP staff and the SPC staff will prepare a proposal to the Commission for adoption.**

- **Northgate**

Vice Chair Blomberg asked Marty Curry to update the Commission on the City Council's deliberation on the Northgate proposal. Ms. Curry briefly summarized current and upcoming actions including the recent agreement between Simon and Lorig Associates to develop the South Lot, Council's tentative approval of the Northgate



Neighborhood Design Guidelines, and the schedule for Council meetings/action on the Mayor's proposal beginning November 17. She reminded the Planning Commission that it has been asked to have representatives attend and participate in the November 17 Council COW meetings. She asked for several Commissioners to volunteer to work on this with staff.

**ACTION: Commissioners (Lathrop, Sheridan, Blomberg, Krikawa ) will work with staff to prepare a Commission presentation for the November 17 Council COW and further discuss the Commission's potential role in other Northgate actions including a pedestrian connections workshop in early 2004.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were made.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

Vice Chair Blomberg adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.