

## Burnside Bridgehead Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 2006  
Meeting Notes

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**CAC Participants in Attendance:** Jim Andrews (Vice Chair), Mike Bolliger, Norm Chusid, Lynne Coward, Dike Dame, Frank Dufay, Joni Hartman, Tim Holmes (Chair), Bruce Murray, Jessica Roberts, Bob Wentworth, Michael Whitmore, Chuck Willis, Brian Wilson, Bruce Wood (Opus NW), Brian Bennett (Opus NW) Michael O'Connell (PDC Project Manager).

**Other PDC and Development Team Members in Attendance:** Peter Fry, Judith Gray (Kittelson and Associates), Sarah Harpole, Geraldene Moyle (Group McKenzie), Lois Cohen (Zetlin Strategic Communication).

**Facilitator:** Sue Dicile

**Others in Attendance:** Kathryn Ackerman, Jerry Auvil, Gilly Burlingham, Bill Hoffman, Chas K. Landskooner, Lee Perlman, Vic Rhodes, Emily Simon  
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*Note:*

*"Q" = a CAC member question*

*"A" = an answer contributed by the presenter of the agenda segment, unless otherwise noted*

*"C" = a CAC member comment, unless otherwise noted*

*(Public comments are noted in a separate section)*

### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- No public comments were made at the opening public comment period.

### ADMINISTRATION

#### Review of Meeting Notes From 12/13

The following revisions were made to the meeting notes:

- A reference to an illustrated elevation at "1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>" Avenues was corrected to say "2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>" Avenues

### BURNSIDE/COUCH TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECT COORDINATION

PDC Project Manager Mick O'Connell provided an overview of timing coordination issues between the project and the Burnside/Couch transportation improvements that have recently come to light. Key points included:

- A timing mismatch has arisen between the completion of the project, scheduled for 2009, and the financing for the Burnside/Couch couplet improvements. That financing is being worked on but is not anticipated to coincide with project completion.
- An interim solution is being sought. Considerations include:
  - Can a zone change be effectuated with the timing "as is"?
    - PDOT has the couplet in its Long Term Plan, regards it as "in place", and believe that the zone change can proceed.
  - Can the project operate effectively without the couplet in place?
    - The development team is currently working on alternatives.
  - Are there other ideas for couplet funding?
  - Does this development have bearing on the near term authorization to exercise the option on Convention Plaza?

Q: What is the scope of the transportation improvements that need to be implemented in order to support the project?

A: The entire eastside couplet, from 12<sup>th</sup> and Sandy to the Burnside Bridge. The budget for the entire project is between \$16 – 17 million. Staff cautioned that the budget would likely increase and new cost estimates are due next month. There is between \$7 – 8 million in place now, leaving \$9 million required. Sources of the funds are as indicated below, however in negotiation with Representative Blumenauer, it was envisioned that the \$1.7 million would go to the street car, with the \$5.2 million to the eastside couplet

Amount	Source
\$300,000	TIF funds (PDC)
\$1.7 million	Federal earmark (MTIP)
\$5.2 million	Congressional Budget
\$4.7 million	(In process)

Q: What is the total that will be contributed by PDC?

A: There is approximately \$300,000 in the budget. The Central Eastside URA Extension Plan has an additional \$1.6 million request, but it has not been approved.

Brian Bennett of Opus Northwest made a presentation on the problem presented by the timing mismatch, and potential solutions. A graphic of the project area was displayed.

- The timing of the funding presents problems of construction timing and of access to the project site.
  - Specifically, the access problem occurs at the point where the site is accessed via a left-hand turn when traveling eastbound on the Burnside Bridge. Solutions could include:
    - “Building the couplet ahead of time”, by changing from the original plan, which had parking under three blocks. The solution could be engineered through fill with a retaining wall that would build 3<sup>rd</sup> and Couch up to the Burnside Bridge level. This would allow phased development of the project. Phase II would be Block 76 that could come on-line once the couplet was in place.
      - In order to garner the left-hand access from downtown, it could start out with 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue/Couch Street as 2-way streets. This would position the entrance to the project further from MLK, providing a better chance of getting a left-hand turn into the project.
      - This solution has advantages from the standpoints of timing, constructability and economy, as the built-up road is more economical than building it on a parking structure. This option also avoids encroachment issues such as parking being built under a public street.

Turns into the project:

C: If a northbound turn were allowed on 3<sup>rd</sup> off Burnside it would benefit other local businesses.

Q: What kind of signalization could there be at the proposed left-hand turn area? This concept raises concerns for bicyclists and pedestrians.

A: This is a preliminary concept, and we haven’t gotten that far in fleshing it out. Now there are 3 westbound lanes up until Burnside reaches MLK. It may be possible to have a turn lane.

C: Concern about anything becoming etched in stone. At NE 3<sup>rd</sup>, have a concern for pedestrians if cars can turn north.

Q: After the transportation improvements are constructed, would the left turn move up to where it was originally planned?

A: Yes.

C: The solution that has been proposed is interesting. We have previously discussed the potential for doing the Burnside/Couch couplet in phases if it became necessary. If this option is found to have significant safety downsides, it may be possible to do some signalizing in order not to tank the project.

- C: Currently there is a right hand turn lane at Burnside and MLK. Why not use that turn, loop around the block and come into the project a grade lower. Then the wall could be relocated and left-turn congestion eliminated.
- A: Agree there is potential with the right-right-right turn there at MLK and Burnside. That option should be studied.
- C: Looping around away from the project via those three right-hand turns could be confusing to drivers, but that could be overcome with the appropriate signage.
- C: As it is now, that turn is hard for pedestrians and cyclists to make, and it is dangerous. Signalization might help.
- C: What if we didn't have the left-hand turn but did build the road. Then we can figure out how to live with it. For instance, it could be a one-way street accessed via a right hand turn when going west on Burnside.
- Q: With a left turn on 3<sup>rd</sup> coming into the development onto a 2-way street, and then with a right turn, what stops one from using this route as a shortcut to the freeway? This would be a much easier route to the freeway than the existing route.
- A: Don't know if that would be a problem, and it could be a benefit as well.

Parking:

- Q: Prior adjustments to the original design eliminated 300 parking spaces under Block 76. Under this new concept will more parking be lost?
- A: Some gains can be made in parking if we reduce some of the flex space. Brokers are skeptical that too much space is dedicated to flex space in the current design. The deck layout provides additional efficiencies. The parking should be sufficient for Phases I and II.

*(Note: Comments about the loss of flex space are noted in a later section of these meeting notes.)*

- Q: The ground floor of the office complex had a plan for commercial retail. Will this concept still include that?
- A: Yes, with parking on a second, and third, and possibly fourth floor.

- Q: What will drive car count for the purposes of determining the need for parking? How will the formula work?
- A: That is more art than science. Use and mix all figure in. The assumptions would be based on something like: 1 parking space per condo unit; approximately 2 spaces per 1000 sq ft office; 4-to-5 spaces per 1000 sq ft retail; and 10 spaces per 1000 sq ft for restaurants. Using assumptions like this produces an initial calculation that then needs to be further balanced. There are about 1065 programmed parking spaces within the current scheme. Providing handicapped spaces will lose some, but gains may also be found elsewhere in the final configuration.

- Q: How will drivers get to the west side parking?
- A: There will be two access points, from Burnside at MLK block, and from 2<sup>nd</sup>. There are access points from "P2" and "P3".

- Q: Will block 76 parking be connected to other parking?
- A: No.

- Q: Will the parking be free or for pay?
- A: The major concern about free parking is that it will create a park-and-ride lot for downtown. The transition to pay parking at Lloyd Center dislocated between 900 – 1100 park-and-ride parkers.

- C: Anything that makes parking more difficult for residents and customers diminishes use by project tenants.

- C: Concern about where motorists end up with the left hand turn as proposed, if all the parking goes "up".

C: Concern about how parking will be accessed at the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> levels, and whether access be disrupted by the traffic using the northward turn off of Burnside as a route toward the freeway.

Other issues:

C: Concern about loss of flex space. Flex space is a critical part of a catalytic inner northeast project. The objective for the area is not to leapfrog office spaces across the river.

C: (Other CAC members echoed concerns about loss of flex space. It was noted that the flex space supports the objective of employment in a way that isn't supported by residential or office space.)

C (Opus): We understand and agree that one objective is to support employment.

Q: How long is it anticipated that a band aid approach would have to be in place?

A: 18 – 24 months, since the project is scheduled to open in 2009, and the construction on the couplet is anticipated now to begin in 2010 and be done in 2011.

C: Concern that the timeline could stretch beyond that, and end up being closer to 4 years.

C: Concern that the wall would become permanent.

C: A cross section graphic is needed to visualize the proposed wall.

C: Concern about the entrances on 2nd Avenue and the impact on the skateboard park.

Q: Who pays for the interim solution?

A: There are some construction savings that can be applied from the developer's side, but not the entire amount.

C: (Opus): The idea that we could build a road on grade, get the west end of the Burnside/Couch couplet done, and do it cost effectively has great benefit. Flexibility and constructability will be key success factors. But the concerns about pedestrian access and flex space have been heard.

C (PDOT): This concept is hot off the press and hasn't been examined outside of the development group. PDOT is responsible for movement across the Burnside Bridge, so too much focus at this level of detail may not be productive right now.

Upon discussion, it was agreed that the following questions are important at this time:

1. Can the funding and construction of the Burnside/Couch couplet be sped up to synchronize with the project timetable?
2. Can the CAC express support for this with the City Council?

C (PDC): City Council is planning to kick off the Burnside/Couch design process at some point, but no firm date has been set.

C (PDOT): PDOT is working on release of the \$5.2 million in funding. Completion of that process is expected in May, at which time engineering can begin.

C (Rhodes): Regarding the federal funding timeline, if you have a Letter of Advance Construction you can spend local funds to be reimbursed or count toward a match. This could be done to accelerate design. Additionally, there is another group making a request against the \$4.7 million in pending funds, and it is a possibility that they will get up to \$1 million. The next federal Transportation Act reauthorization will happen in 2010. That is too far in the future for Opus and this project. Another strategy to consider is through Metro and JPACT which will have allocations for the years 09/011. If those funds could be applied they could be reimbursed later with federal funds. These strategies aren't certain at this point. "The challenge is to thrive on ambiguity".

C (Opus) These are all good ideas, but certainty is needed in order to secure financing.

C: We all seem to be in agreement that whatever can be done to get the Burnside/Couch couplet off the ground should be acted on.

C (Rhodes): Once the resolution is filed, authorize the Chair to send a letter to all Commissioners.

C: Could we have an interim solution from 12<sup>th</sup> to MLK, making the traffic change at 8<sup>th</sup>, using the existing grid?

C: If we want a project, we have to have some type of interim strategy. And we have to accept that an interim solution may become permanent.

Toward the end of the discussion, the group was asked how it felt about moving forward to further evaluate the above-ground parking concept, and other aspects of the proposed solution. Reservations were reiterated about safety issues regarding the eastbound left turn from Burnside, the potential loss of flex space, and the potential for interim solutions to become permanent, but there was general agreement that the next steps to examine these and other interim solutions should proceed, while keeping options open.

There was also agreement that the CAC is willing to sign a letter or otherwise advocate in support of an expedited process for funding the eastside Burnside/Couch couplet.

Responding to a request, PDC and Opus agreed to organize a project site visit.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Project (i.e., couplet) financing is competitive. Letters don't do it. People need to go in person and advocate.
- Request for Opus' testimony schedule. (PDC agreed to provide this.)

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THIS MEETING**

- Concerns were expressed about the proposed interim alternative, in light of the extended timing of the eastside Burnside/Couch couplet, including:
  - Potential loss of flex space to recapture lost parking.
  - Pedestrian and cyclist access and safety on the Burnside Bridge, in the event of the left turn at 3<sup>rd</sup>, or the right-right-right turn that initiates at Burnside and MLK.
  - The impact of creating a short-cut to I-84.
  - Impact of the left-hand turn on rush hour traffic on the Burnside Bridge.
  - The importance of the right parking configuration to the long term value of project tenants.
  - Structural and aesthetic concerns about the proposed wall.
  - The impact of the entrance on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue on the skateboard park.
- The CAC supports moving forward to further evaluate the proposed alternative, but encouraged PDC and Opus to keep options open in light of concerns. Other options for addressing an interim solution to the couplet, from both a construction standpoint and a project access standpoint, may exist and should be evaluated in addition to the alternative proposed.
- The CAC is supportive of expediting eastside couplet funding.
- The CAC acknowledged the need for an interim approach if expedited funding is not forthcoming.

Meeting adjourned at 5 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by the CAC facilitator

Materials distributed in meeting packet:  
-12/13/05 notes