

Burnside Bridgehead Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 11, 2006
Meeting Notes

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**CAC Participants in Attendance:** Jim Andrews (Vice Chair), Mike Bolliger, Jeff Brooks, Dike Dame, Frank Dufay, Joni Hartman, Tim Holmes (Chair), Bruce Murray, David Nemarnik, Bob Wentworth, Michael Whitmore, Chuck Willis, Brian Wilson, Bruce Wood (Opus NW), Michael O'Connell (PDC Project Manager).

**Other PDC and Development Team Members in Attendance:** Sarah Harpole (PDC), Trang Lam (PDC), Bruce Allen (PDC), Lois Cohen (Zetlin Strategic Communication), Jim Brown (Opus NW architect).

**Facilitator:** Sue Dicile

**Members of the Public in Attendance:** Bruce Dennis, Lee Perlman  
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Key:

"Q" = a CAC member question

"A" = an answer contributed by the presenter(s) 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

None

ADMINISTRATION

Review of Meeting Notes From 2/28/06

(There are no minutes from March, as the a site tour was held in lieu of that meeting)

The notes were adopted as submitted.

PROJECT UPDATES

Mick O'Connell gave the following updates on behalf of PDC:

- We will have copies of executed MOU by the end of the meeting. *(Note: MOU copies were distributed).*
- The team is starting to work with PDOT on the portion of the Burnside Bridgehead property that encroaches about 15 feet into the Skate Park. Transferring ownership of that 15 feet to PDOT will be on an upcoming PDC agenda.
- There is a minor correction to the property purchase price of \$8.73 million that was announced in January. The actual price is \$8.757 million (The difference is \$27,000). This will be an agenda item at the April 26 PDC Commission meeting.
- Work is proceeding to execute leases with ODOT and BES for the portions of the property they own on Block 69. These leases will be agenda items at the May 10 PDC Commission meeting.
- Trang Lam is the new PDC employee taking Sarah Harpole's place with the BB project, as Sarah moves to other projects.
- CAC meetings will move to a one-meeting-per-month framework, Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month.

Bruce Wood gave the following project update on behalf of the development team:

- Brian Bennett is out of town this week and is unable to attend the CAC meeting.
- On April 12th PDC is meeting to discuss the extension of the Central Eastside URA, and increasing the funding forecast of the URA from \$35 million to \$51 million to potentially help fund the Burnside/Couplet.
- The team met with Rep. Blumenhauer and Friends of the Couplet. Rep. Blumenhauer believes that federal dollars will still be forthcoming, even with the implementation of an interim solution.
- PDOT is moving the design of the couplet forward.
- The City has agreed to move forward with the east side couplet without the west side.

ARCHITECTURAL UPDATE

Project architect Jim Brown gave a presentation using a computerized schematic of the project. Highlights of the presentation, which he noted have been “learned since the last meeting”, included:

- Access points to the parking structure can be modified to work better with the couplet.
 - Alterations have been made to capture trips on both Burnside and Couch. There is also an interim solution if the couplet is delayed.
 - The parking structure will be done in phases, so Phase One buildings will have proportionate parking as they come on line, although the excavation for all phases will all be done during Phase One.
- The design will be modified to include a central plaza.
 - The preliminary design was not dense or urban enough.
 - The street grid and view through the project to the river have been maintained.
 - The North/ South “slot” through the project didn’t exist in the old plan due to the large size of the facilities. But now the goal is to create more of a “town center”, as has been suggested by CAC members, through a linear block system, with an open covered structure at the center, creating a “node”. This center node can have a range of possible uses, such as a bandstand, a greenhouse, or something similar that will act as a focal point.
 - Surrounding buildings are oriented toward the plaza. This configuration also orients views from the streets toward and inside the project, with the node at the center as a visual draw.
- “Red” shown on the schematic diagram, at the lower level of the buildings, indicates full retail presence on all blocks, with different uses at upper levels.
 - Upper level uses have not been determined yet. The market will determine uses. The intent now is a significant portion of that space in “creative office uses”.
- The need to ventilate the garage presents a problem.
 - There is a concern about what the garage floors (layers of the parking structure) will look like from the street, so other interesting uses across the street are being considered.
- Other inclusions being sought now include:
 - Low-income housing.
 - A node at the back for a service area to support deliveries, trash collection, etc.
 - Private/ restful spaces.
 - The best means to use stairs to link to the main plaza.

Q: How much traffic can be accommodated on Davis?

A: That is a good question. A key function of the “slots” is to capture trips on the couplet, but there are other access points off of 3rd underneath the bridge, and also two on the other side to make sure there isn’t too much pressure put on Davis. Parking experts have explained to us that we need to avoid having too many ways out due to the cost of maintaining exits. We want to ingress at the top and egress at the bottom side.

C: Flushing the garages from the lower level might put a lot of traffic on 2nd.

C: We want to reiterate the concern about traffic on 2nd into the industrial sanctuary.

C: Pacific Fruit is in IG1 zone, so we may not be able to vent any traffic there.

C: (Pacific Fruit representative) Parking on 2nd is being studied. Our traffic at Pacific Fruit is early in the morning so it’s not a “fatal flaw” necessarily but the numbers need to be checked.

A: Beam is addressing that area and they feel confident that they have a strategy.

Q: When viewing the schematic, is there any way to see the buildings adjoining the project? Looking across to Pacific Fruit, that roof could be an impediment to views. Studies of elevations are relevant.

A: Plaza level is 36’ feet and Pacific fruit is 24’ feet, so the plaza is higher. However the freeway from plaza level blocks the view of the river. Also once uses are decided we need to integrate with the rest of the area buildings.

Q: How big is the retail area now?

A: 100,000 square feet.

Q: How many individual spaces will there be, and will they be too small?

A: Not at all, there will be between 16,000-25,000 square feet per plate. We want to steer away from having tenants that are too big. They place too many demands on the center and they are not willing to pay sufficient rent. We want a more organic mix of tenants that create a more organic town center feel, and that requires lots of storefront variety.

- C: It is good that the building notches back to let light and air into the Skate Park. *(This was illustrated on the schematic.)*
- C: How does the “notch” fit in with the bridge?
- A: We haven’t fully figured this design element out. There are advantages to some separateness. The park does need an additional entrance and ventilation.
- C: The notch may inhibit pedestrian access from the bridge.
- A: It may, but we don’t want to bring people in at the back of the building, so it isn’t really a disadvantage.
- C: But that was a strong feature of the original proposal. We saw it as a “promenade” not as a “back side”.
- A: At the proposal stage we didn’t understand everything about grades or the needs of the Skate Park. But we agree that a lot more input and work is needed on that area.
- C: Shouldn’t there be lots of viewing areas into the project and Skate Park.
- C: (Skate Park representative) There are pros and cons to that. The Skate Park shouldn’t be a viewing attraction, like a skating rink.
- C: One solution could be to curve the building near the skate park and eliminate the notch.
- A: Whatever the approach, we need to embrace the Skate Park architecturally, but we haven’t figured out how to do it yet. We need input about what are and are not good ideas. Also one objective is to prevent damage/ use of the plaza and parking ramps by skate boarders. We will need for them to police themselves.
- Q: (Developer) Any fatal flaws?
- C: Pedestrian refuge, exposure to the elements – rain, freeway noise, doesn’t seem to be addressed.
- C: The use of trees down the center seems static, and needs more study.
- C: The west side promenade should be re-instated onto the design. Also concerned about views from the west side and from the bridge. These were better in the original design sketch.
- C: Agree that the west side of project should be activated. It is viewable from the freeway and the west side and could be a draw.
- C: Flex space is not interchangeable with typical office space. There could be opportunities for real flex space uses, such as medical tech companies priced out of the South Waterfront area. That’s an example of a non-office flex space use.
- C: Economics can be a fatal flaw. Need to be sure the project makes money.
- Q: How much parking is there in this current design?
- A: About 1000 spaces.
- Q: If the Union Arms building remains is there sufficient space?
- A: Yes.
- C: This residential arrangement is more successful now that it is arranged around a central core.
- C: I like the layout and boulevard effect, and I like the creation of public space and an open space outside. The outdoor aspect is a positive.
- C: I like the first level retail band.
- C: I support the outside experience in this updated design.
- C: I like the overall direction.
- Q: If a Trader Joe’s was interested, where could a size like that be accommodated?
- A: The 2nd and Davis building would accommodate a Trader Joe’s type retail presence.
- Q: Will that type of business buy in to this access configuration?
- A: If we offer unique opportunities, like “popping” up from parking into their store. Another sequence is for the homeowner. They can access stores from the plaza into a complete pedestrian environment.
- Q: What percentage of the total business of a Trader Joe’s could come from the project residential area?
- A: Don’t know, but not enough.
- A: Need to engage the retailers in an interactive process. But in Trader Joe’s they pay less per square foot than we’ll need to charge for this project, although they, like all retail, are locationally sensitive. The trick is to get a mix of uses that creates synergy.
- C: Retailers will choose the location. The project doesn’t get to choose the retailers. We can’t force anyone to come to the project
- Q: Who is the ideal magnet tenant?
- A: Don’t know. A big anchor is not the goal because we can’t accommodate them. It will likely be a mix.

Q: Are restaurants part of retail? Could a restaurant be on an upper level to take advantage of the view of the city?

A: It could work, for instance like City Grill, but it is hard to make 2nd floor retail work.

Q: What is the offset of sidewalk on MLK?

A: 12 feet.

Q: Will that accommodate the streetcar off-load?

A: Yes. 12 feet is "the sweet spot" for sidewalk.

C: Is the wall-type façade on MLK too forbidding?

C: The first 30 feet of a building is what makes a neighborhood and creates pedestrian friendliness. Give the team time. They will get there.

C: Want to reiterate comments that have been made - don't turn the project's back on the west side.

Q: Will the underground parking be too confusing? Can it be color coded in some way?

A: "Way – finding" is an enormous question. We will spend a lot of money working on that. Also it needs to be safe, well lit, and open.

Jim Brown reiterated that the design at this point is very plastic, and that changes can and will be made. He invited CAC members to email him between meetings if they wish, noting that six months from now changes will be harder to make. He asked that CAC members keep in mind that windows, awnings, landscaping other than rows of trees, etc. are not indicated on the computer schematic but will obviously be features of the finished design.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM THIS MEETING

The facilitator asked CAC members to go "round robin" and identify the single most important comment they hope the development team will take away from this discussion. The following is a list of the issues that were identified. The numbers of the left of each comment indicate the number of CAC members who noted that factor as their "most important comment". (Note: in some cases more than one comment was contributed).

# of times cited	Concepts identified as most important
6	I like the concept.
4	Focus on west side of project, and the view from the project out. Don't turn the back of the project to the west.
3	Care about clarifying access to parking, and easy ingress and egress, as having all of the parking underneath may impact retail viability.
2	Do more to integrate the Skate Park, and work out the details.
1	Orient eyes toward the central plaza.
1	Care about the quality of building.
1	Take advantage of the context of the project as a uniquely dynamic place. Important dynamics include the river and the freeway. Find a lot of ways to get the public to those points of view.
1	Consider the opportunity to use the rooftops of the project.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on May 9, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by the meeting facilitator.

Materials distributed in the meeting packet: 2/28/06 meeting notes

Materials distributed at this meeting: - Copies of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)