

**NORTH OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) MEETING #6**

APRIL 10, 2008 ◆ 4:00 P.M. – 5:45 P.M.

PDC COMMISSIONERS ROOM

Present: Fern Elledge, Brian Ferschweiler, Patrick Gortmaker, Betty Jean Lee, Richard Louie, Steve Walti, Gloria Lee, Kevin Diaz, Rudy Munzel, Steven Ying, Alexander Mace, Kathryn Krygier, Gail Kennedy, Gabriel Sheridan, Von Summers, Kevin Kaufman, Lew Bowers

Facilitators: Peter Englander (PDC), Sarah Harpole (PDC), David Horsley (Dao), Joann Le (Dao), Kathy Fong Stephens (Barney & Worth, Inc.)

I. Welcome, Overview & Updates

- Sarah Harpole opened the meeting and provided an overview including the following information:
 - meeting purpose and agenda
 - a recap of the North Old Town/ Chinatown (N OT/CT) project goals, work completed to date, and the role and accomplishments of the SAC:
 - The SAC's charge is to work with PDC and community members to prepare a strategy to guide future redevelopment in the N OT/CT study focus area.
 - At previous meetings, the Dao Architecture Consultant Team, PDC, and the SAC have identified and discussed the development opportunities of the area and what has constrained development up until this point.
 - Members of the SAC provided input on the siting decisions for the Blanchet House of Hospitality (BHH) on the NE corner of block 25 and the Resource Access Center (RAC) / Transition Projects, Inc (TPI) on block U
 - Community concerns and comments regarding the light rail expansion, arts and culture preservation, the prospect of a northern gateway from the Steel Bridge, as well as the creation of synergy from compatible uses in and around the Portland Classical Chinese Garden (PCCG).
 - Also, she acknowledged the past participation of neighborhood activist Carol McCreary and introduced her replacement on the SAC, Alexander Mace. Alexander is also the new chair of the Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Association.
- Sarah provided the following project updates:
 - On February 27, 2008, the PDC Board of Commissioners approved the siting decision of TPI / RAC on block U and BHH at the NE corner of Block 25. Shortly after, City Council approved the siting of the RAC on block U. City Council approval of the Blanchet House siting was not necessary.
 - HAP and TPI are currently working with Holst Architecture on conceptual design work for the Resource Access Center, and public design charrettes have been scheduled for May 2008. Sarah Harpole will send out an email in advance so people can participate.
 - The construction of the RAC building will likely continue from Spring

2009 - Summer 2010.

- Negotiations with the Blanchet House are just beginning and therefore their project timeline has not yet been defined.

II. Work to Date & Development Opportunities

- David Horsley gave a brief recap on the previous work completed by the SAC and the consultant team, prior to suspending activities during the BHH and TPI/RAC site search period.
- Block 25 Considerations:
 - Following a 3 day planning charrette with the SAC, Dao investigated the feasibility of different development components including:
 - Massing
 - Specific uses for the site (particularly on the ground floor)
 - Street Activation
 - Gateway possibilities
 - Traffic movement, building entrances,
 - The scale (or grain) of development and/or design
 - Ways to enhance the surroundings of the Classical Chinese Garden
 - Their work evolved then into 4 different development scenarios:
 - a range of massing, height, densities, and uses were taken into consideration
 - Absorption rates (for the potential number of housing units) were also evaluated. Feedback from various developers indicated that a full build-out all at once may flood the market for the district. While large, catalytic developments have many advantages of scale, an incremental strategy might prove feasible, related to providing a more limited amount of housing units in a phased strategy. The development scenarios illustrated both single-phase and incremental possibilities, some with Blanchet remaining on Block 25, and some showing Blanchet relocated.
 - At that time, the scenarios including BHH on Block 25 (Scenarios 3 and 4) showed them remaining on the NW Corner of the block, with the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ block illustrated with mid rise development and a larger future build out on the adjoining blocks.
 - Now that the location for BHH has been decided upon in the NE corner of Block 25, these scenarios have been modified. These new Scenarios 5 and 6, showing BHH in the NE corner, have revised the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ block massing to again reflect higher and lower densities, conceptual building and parking entrances, as well as positioning the building massing to maximizing sunlight onto the Garden.
- Gateway Enhancements:
 - During the development of the 3rd and 4th Streetscape Plan back in 2002, that Stakeholder Advisory Group recommended an urban plaza, extending into the Right-of-Way of Glisan, between 3rd and 4th Avenues, but recommended funding that portion of public works at the time that development had reached that portion of North OldTown/Chinatown.
 - Now that the Light Rail portion is being completed in this area, and the East

of Pearl Building (EOP) is proceeding, now is the time to build upon that vision, and study this possibility in a little more detail.

- Block A&N Potential Uses:
 - Joann Le presented images showing that connected to the potential Glisan ROW plaza is also potential future development on Block A&N, and some work has recently been done related to this block.
 - She showed images and drawings showcasing the light rail (LR) alignment, including a spur line that cuts off a portion of the property to the north. TriMet and PDOT currently show the addition of a traffic signal at the intersection at 3rd and Glisan with pedestrian traffic rerouted on the north side of Glisan.
 - The configuration of block A&N and the surrounding intersections were challenging when studied by TPI/ RAC and BHH, but other uses may still see potential for development on that parcel. Images of a recent parking study done by SERA Architects were shown, with the possibility of 4 -7 levels of parking.
 - There was a brief discussion to clarify the use of the LR spur line (emergency repairs and train layovers), the configuration of the light rail alignment, and location of proposed light rail stops (adjacent to the Greyhound station on NW 5th & 6th)

III. Open Discussion

Kathy Fong Stevens facilitated a discussion to seek additional SAC input on the development of Block 25, the potential gateway enhancements, and development of Block A&N.

Gabriel Sheridan: said that he was concerned by the size of the high rises in the neighborhood as depicted in the scenarios, and further concerned about the creation of wind tunnels and the shading from the buildings on the Chinese Garden. He also pointed out the historic district status and to the history of the structures in question.

- Blanchet house is the historic Yamaguchi Hotel,
- Dirty Duck building is the Western Union Building
- Fire Station #2

He also cited the example of Deschutes Brewery Building in the Pearl, an adaptive reuse where the owners applied for federal historic designation of the structure and saved it from demolition.

Sarah Harpole: Looking into how to reuse the firestation and asked for input from the community. PDC board decided the location for the BHH due to NW Natural parking obligations and continuity of Blanchet House services.

Alexander Mace: talked about the process for selecting the sites for both Blanchet and TPI/RAC. These talks stirred heated debates. PDC made a recommendation and the City Council voted and settled this dispute. He also doesn't believe that this discussion is about these decisions, but rather is about the future development of this area.

David Horsley: The topic has been considered for 2 years in open public discussions. Architects seriously consider the built environment – take into account wind/ sunlight/ streetscape, active streets... this group will also continue to engage the public in this discussion.

Rudy Munzel: In addition, the Blanchet House discussions about potential sites occurred during neighborhood and Visions meetings for 4 years – it was a public process. The expansion of the Blanchet House will allow for the internalization of the queuing lines. Blanchet House has been in the same location for the past 50 years and the building is in poor shape. He agreed that historic structures are worth saving, but there needs to be special architectural history or design that needs to be considered. This is not an architecturally significant building and it has some serious structural issues.

Gabriel Sheridan: The RAC and BHH are a perfect fit together, why aren't they both on Block U?

Blanchet House Representative: BHH and TPI serve some of the same clientele but are not affiliated and it was not their preference to be co-located.

Alexander Mace: Pacific Northwest College of the Arts (PNCA) will soon be in the 511 building, Post Office projects are in the pipeline, University of Oregon, two school and university influences are in the area. They will be entrenched in the neighborhood by the time anything is built in this area. Although PNCA is still 5 years out, what is missing in this study is the school and arts influences in this area. Whether the development is Student Housing, Workforce Housing, this area is right in the middle of that. It is perfectly suited but still is a blank slate and will have a huge influence. We need to take that into account.

Kevin Diaz: He would like to see a way to bring these students and others into the community through creative class live/work units, workforce housing, galleries, etc, they will reactive the district.

Alexander Mace: Everett Street Lofts is a constant draw to the area. Anything that can build upon that will be helpful.

Kathryn Krygier: A & N has proven to be challenging but there are opportunities and unique attributes.

Richard Louie: Does the parking structure proposed on A & N mean that the Fire Station will be demolished?

Dao – The study will identify possibilities for the site with and without the Fire Station. Vehicular access is challenging on this site.

Steve Walti –idea of a pedestrian tunnel was considered when evaluating the use of the site for parking.

Steven Ying – Block A & N should include a health service center similar to Asian Health Center on SE 35th and Powell and in Beaverton–firehouse can be renovated to be an office or service center with the first two stories for center, open land can be used for a garden.

Gloria– Safety must be considered for Asian Health Center use due to language barriers and age.

Kathy Fong Stephens: – That organization was approached during the stakeholders interviews– they had, at one time, considered an OTCT site for a clinic, but couldn't find an appropriate site with sufficient transit and vehicle access.

Gloria Lee- Pointed to Interstate Cultural Center as a possible use for fire station as a good fit for ethnic minority artists. The artist who donated the elephant statue in the N Park Blocks would likely consider a donation of new public art piece.

Patrick Gortmaker- block A & N – Can PDC meet 130 parking stall requirement and save the firehouse? (SERA study)

Joann- At full build out and FAR of 4:1 the SERA study shows the site can accommodate 190 stalls, but a 7:1 bonus configuration is also illustrated showing the potential of 325 stalls. These numbers, however assume removing the Fire Station. If the building is not removed, it remains to be seen how many cars can be accommodated. Practically speaking from a construction standpoint, to build around the unreinforced masonry structure will be difficult.

David – This location has a clear value as a parking lot and it is a feasible use. How can we beat that first option with a more district activating use?

Gabriel – The bus stop was at EOP then moved over to 5th Ave. That is where it should be to save the fire house.

Kathy– or just the façade. The next round of discussions will include these possibilities.

Gabriel – A plaza was promised – Seattle has a new gate with more planned – Portland only has one.

Kathy– In regards to the gateway discussion – it does not necessarily need to be an actual gate, but can be a structure that represents the feeling of a gateway entrance to the area

Richard – Will NW Natural consider locating (parking rights) on Block A & N?

Steve Walti – As long as parking is within walking distance, NWN will consider it.

Gabriel – Isn't (the firestation) on the national historic district?

Dao – Local but not National Register.

Kathryn– How many parking spaces can be constructed with the firehouse left there?

Dao – We don't yet know. There are real practical reasons why unreinforced masonry structures are so costly and difficult to refurbish – but it not impossible. Part of the next steps is how to address A&N and parking. We are trying to add to the discussion of what can happen in that area, and that will entail looking at retaining the Fire House, coming up with the most feasible ways to accommodate parking (which may include hydraulic versions), as well as the potential for the block if the Fire House is removed.

Kathryn – Has anyone explored not having that (triangle road section on Glisan and 3rd) as an open space; where a physical structure on 25 is a part of the gateway? There is not a lot of opportunity for that space to be open space.

Dao – that section of right of way is probably in the neighborhood of 3000 - 5000 square feet, we will know more about the possibilities once we look at it and can present at our next meeting.

Dao – We know from previous meetings that Suzhou has offered a traditional gate at this end. How does this committee feel about that offer?

Gloria – This process needs to be vetted and needs to respect the ethnic heritage of this area. Suzhou can design the gate, but it needs to be designed by the community as the Japanese community is not here, but I will speak for them. They have been kicked out of this community and there continues to be a bit of politics around this – there needs to be an inclusive process.

Steven – Suzhou gate could be on 4th to respect the different minority groups around 3rd.

Kathy – what about another gate option?

Joann- What do people feel about an open space there (triangle portion of roadway)?

Alexander: This location has the same problems with A & N; it is an unfriendly point in the area. MAX will make it a more unfriendly location. There is nothing there as a draw, however it could benefit Blanchet and whatever (use) goes into East of Pearl.

David – In its current configuration that area is a sea of asphalt. It might change dramatically with a plaza or other form of open space.

Alexander – This corner should be focused on tie to A & N. That needs to be a draw. That is the only way for that corner to work.

Richard – That corner plaza will not draw people there rather it will be a draw for transients. Shifting the footprint of the new Blanchet building will help.

Dao – This design (points to plaza powerpoint slide) is from a 2002 plan – the study shows that this area is deferred until other developments. What are other options that people see? What does this neighborhood want?

Gabriel – thinks the plaza is wonderful. The city council reneged on their promise to put the plaza there depending on the future development of the warehouse (EOP). It is the north gateway to the district. There needs to be an Adaptive reuse of the fire station. Consider using the one story parking structure on 3rd/4th/ Flanders... takes up a half block. Consider using half of that. When we start destroying historic structures, you destroy the whole district.

Kathryn: What is happening with NWN block.

Steve: Nothing happens with that parking lot because NWN won't spend public funds to construct something there. Of course they would like to add a structure that will benefit the community and eliminate the chain link fence.

David – If we look at that portion of the parking lot with hydraulic parking, all of the 130 spots could conceivably fit in that location. The feasibility of these options might want to be

considered, in an attempt to unencumber Block 25's development.

Kathy- Brought the conversation to a close due to time and also wanted to offer some follow up steps.

IV. Next Steps

Sarah Harpole – anticipates 2.5 meetings over the next few months

- Next meeting will focus on key implementation decisions. This also ties to the discussion in Visions committee meeting – how do we efficiently sequence housing projects to allow for absorption of new units and the future projects to build upon the successes of those before them.
- Second meeting will focus on review of the draft report
- Final meeting will be more of a celebration to distribute the final report and acknowledge the contributions of the SAC.

Peter Englander – Suggested a homework assignment for consideration of the Stakeholders:

- Please review the provided budgets for River District URA and Downtown Waterfront URA for an update on the annexation of properties. Funding can be made available for these projects from RD budget but the challenge is that although there are additional resources, there are several highly competitive high priority projects. These Budgets include an explanation and he would like feedback on this information. The DTWF URA budget includes all of the money available for the remaining life of the district. The RD URA budget includes all of the money available for the next 7 years.
- Most of the uses discussed today require public subsidy – the group needs to start thinking about implementation of these projects. Other resources might be available aside for TIF funding, which can be determined at a later date. This budget will be finalized in late July.
- Offered the group a 3 page document on the Uwajimaya project and said this was a priority in the budget. It is slated to be a two phase project beginning with Block 33 with future expansion of underground parking to a project on block 32.
- In addition, following the Suzhou Trip with the Mayor's office and PDC, he will have more to report after the trip. The goal is to attract addition resources from Suzhou.

Dao asked that the group work on the discussion questions and offer feedback. Input can be provided to Sarah Harpole or DAO.

IV. End of Meeting