



City of Bellevue

Meydenbauer Bay: Park and Land Use Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #5

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: August 16, 2007

TIME: 5:00 PM

LOCATION: Bellevue City Hall, Room IE-112 and IE-108

ATTENDEES:

Steering Committee

Iris Tocher
Doug Leigh
David Schooler
Stu Vander Hoek
Kevin Paulich
Bob MacMillan
Hal Ferris
Merle Keeney
Stefanie Beighle
Al Yuen
Marcelle Lynde

City Staff and Consultants

Grant Degginger, Mayor, City of Bellevue
John Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor, City of Bellevue
Patrick Foran, City of Bellevue
Matt Terry, City of Bellevue
Paul Inghram, City of Bellevue
Glenn Kost, City of Bellevue
Robin Cole, City of Bellevue
Mike Bergstrom, City of Bellevue
Kirsten Hauge, PRR

SUMMARY:

I. Welcome and review of the agenda

Doug Leigh, Steering Committee co-chair, welcomed Steering Committee members and public attendees to the fifth meeting of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan Steering Committee. He noted that there were some familiar faces, but also many new faces in the audience and thanked all those in attendance. In response to a public audience member request, Steering Committee members noted their place of residence and affiliations .

II. Review and approval of July 19, 2007 Meeting Summary

Doug asked if Steering Committee members had any changes to the summary from the July 19th Steering Committee meeting. Stefanie requested that the spelling of her last name be corrected on the first page of the summary. The motion was approved by the Steering Committee.

III. Property acquisition

Mike Bergstrom first noted that two additional documents were submitted to the Steering Committee, the first one was not related to the project but announced the upcoming utility work on Main Street and the second document was an updated version of a memorandum that related to agenda item #5. Mike then reported on the recent property acquisition for the park. The Bellevue City Council announced the purchase of the property where the Bayvue Village Apartments are currently sited. The council made the decision to approve the funds for the purchase at their August 6th meeting, and the purchase is anticipated to close on or before October 31, 2007. The property is being offered by a willing seller and the City will continue to operate it as a rental in the near-term. Had the property been sold to a private party, it likely would have been purchased for the purpose of redevelopment or conversion to condominiums. The property extends from Lake Washington Boulevard to other city-owned parcels along Meydenbauer Bay, helping make possible the fundamental vision of connecting the park to downtown

Robin Cole presented an aerial map to committee members and the public audience and indicated the location of the newly acquired parcel. The map helped indicate its relationship to other city holdings. The new property adds 1.5 acres to the city's property along the water. Mike noted that the property was purchased with a recent windfall from the real estate excise tax that the council had earmarked for acquisition of property for the Meydenbauer project should any become available.

Comments/Questions:

- A public audience member asked how much money was left in the bank for acquisitions. *The full amount (\$8.5 million) was used for the Bayvue site purchase.*
- David Schooler asked if the City has considered razing the building at the newly purchased parcel. By doing so, it would better show what the parcel means to the whole piece of waterfront. *We haven't discussed doing that, but thank you for the posing the suggestion.*
- Merle Kenney asked the City to comment on the notice the tenants received on the morning of the announcement. *We let them know that there was no plan to do anything at the site right away. However, there are some basic maintenance needs and improvements needed to keep the building up to code. It will be awhile before the vision is put in place for the waterfront, so we see no changes in the foreseeable future.*
- David Schooler followed up on his earlier comment and indicated that some of those involved with the site where Bellgate is now helped clear the site and put in some grass just to help envision what the change could look like.
- Kevin Paulich said a comment was made that due to the City purchase of the site, it may actually allow the tenants to be there longer than under a different scenario. *The independent appraisal conducted for this purchase determined that the highest and best use for this property is conversion of the apartments to condominiums. Therefore, it is assumed that if this property had been sold to a private party, that is what would occur. Such conversion can be accomplished relatively quickly,*

IV. Schedule update

Mike Bergstrom reviewed the status of the project schedule. Since the last Steering Committee meeting there was more discussion about not compromising the results by racing ahead with the schedule. Instead the team talked about adding some breathing room to the schedule by extending it. The Steering Committee meetings would continue on the third Thursday of the month. The decision about the land use would be pushed out to around the first of the year, which would better tie together the land use and park plans. The park planning would continue to mid-2008. The next step is to look at conceptual alternatives in September.

Comments/Questions:

- Doug Leigh said he viewed the schedule extension as a positive change that brings the park in line with the land use planning.
- Merle Kenney asked if the City could update the timeline of tasks as well.
- Doug added that he would like to see the schedule on the web updated. *Yes, we will as soon as we send out the new version to the committee.*
- Doug also noted that the website was a good resource and included the history of Steering Committee meetings.
- Iris Tocher commented that the website included a virtual tour that people could take of the park. *A companion feedback survey is also posted for people to provide their comments.*

V. Outreach update

Following the discussion of the outreach schedule, Mike again noted that the public outreach memorandum from the meeting packet had been updated and each member had received a new version. The month of July was busy for the project team with two public events and a Steering Committee meeting. Included in the memorandum is the summary of the July 10 public workshop, with the July 31 open house summary forthcoming. Also included is a summary of a project presentation at the Park Board meeting and the subsequent input from the board. This Park Board meeting summary is still in draft form and not yet given final approval by the Park Board.

The City has also extended special outreach to youth and families. Many meeting participants may have noticed the QFC bags on display in the lobby. Those coloring panels were printed on the back of QFC bags with project information. The children who returned them with their pictures received a free pack of markers. In addition, Robin and Mike presented background about the project to a youth leadership academy and received a wealth of input that is also summarized in the memorandum. Robin noted she was surprised to see the same considerations and ideas emerge from the youth leadership group as from the Steering Committee. Other outreach activities include 35,000 project inserts that will go out with the City of Bellevue's utility billings starting on July 23. The inserts provide a brief project description and the website link.

The July public meetings were held at locations around Bellevue (South Bellevue and Crossroads Community Center) in order to gain input and share information with a broad contingency. Upcoming public events will include “open hours” in the Downtown Park. The open hours will provide a way for the public to gather project information and talk with staff on Wednesdays from 11:30-1:30. An event at the Meydenbauer Beach Park on September 8th will offer opportunities to take people across the water in canoes to view the park from that perspective, as well as free games and entertainment. Participants can take a shuttle from City Hall to the park. The City will begin advertising for this event next week and plans to use the Boys and Girls Club and other similar organizations to get notice to families. Robin Cole will post these event details on the project website next week.

Comments/Questions:

- Doug Leigh commented that he saw familiar faces in the audience, but many new faces as well. He asked for staff to put the park planning process into a framework for those new to the project and share what is coming up next. *The City has had a long-term vision, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, to create a significant presence on Meydenbauer Bay. Of Bellevue’s 14 miles of shoreline, only about 10% is currently accessible to the public. The process of creating a public waterfront started in the 1950s, with the City’s first acquisition along Meydenbauer Bay, now the Meydenbauer Beach Park. The City began to acquire available waterfront properties in the 1990s, extending the Beach Park property through what is now the Bellevue Marina.. Purchases were all made from willing sellers—this was a process that has taken patience, creativity and commitment. The end goal is to develop a waterfront presence and knit the park up to the downtown area so it turns its face to the water and makes the waterfront connection apparent.*

After assembling the properties along the water, the City Council decided to act. Many properties in the adjacent upland are older and nearing the end of their economic life. A moratorium was put in place to provide a stable planning environment for the project. The Mayor appointed and the Council confirmed a Steering Committee, and the Council adopted a Steering Committee Charge and a set of planning principles to guide the committee in its work. The committee meetings have occurred on a monthly basis since April. In addition, the City hired a consultant team to conduct a site analysis and help them set a direction through the development of alternatives. The project was introduced to the broader public at a May open house. The public had the opportunity to share their vision or “big ideas” for the park. As mentioned earlier, during July we had a focused workshop to address some of the major project issues and a follow up meeting to assist us in developing conceptual alternatives. Now, the consultants are using this time to develop alternatives. The overall process will lead to a vision, or master plan, for the park and surrounding area. Any vision for the surrounding study area will be implemented through land use code changes. These changes would entice development to occur in a certain way. Any changes would happen over the long-term. We are not yet to the point in the planning process of identifying what those land use code changes might be.

- Kevin Paulich clarified that the role of the Steering Committee is to make a recommendation to the City Council. The council will ultimately decide whether to accept, modify or reject their recommendation.
- Bob MacMillan asked staff to discuss the current project phase and how it related to the moratorium. *The council imposed a moratorium on 13 properties in the planning area. This means the property owners cannot apply for any development permits during this time. A public hearing extended the moratorium until mid-September. It can only be extended six months at a time. Therefore, the council will have another public hearing in September to determine whether to extend the moratorium for up to an additional six months, or the middle of March 2008. As a result of the moratorium, there is pressure to get through this process as quickly as possible.*
- Doug added that the process is still in the preliminary stages and the end product is still an open book. The Steering Committee is trying to get public input on the ideas and issues important to them.

VI. Public Comment

Prior to beginning the public comment period, Doug Leigh noted that due to the number of public audience members in attendance he asked participants to try to hold their comment to two minutes. He requested that people with questions of clarification go first, followed by those with comments. Iris Tocher added that the Steering Committee also receives the public comments that are e-mailed to the project staff, so attendees were welcome to send in any follow-up e-mails as well or to take a comment form and send it in at a later time. *(Note: City staff committed to providing written responses to several of the questions raised at the meeting. The public comments listed are not verbatim and are intended to highlight the key points. Staff and steering committee responses are noted in italics):*

- Stan Beckelman: First, I would like to thank the City Managers for creating the committee and looking at taking advantage of this public asset. However, I am concerned. I attended the public meeting on July 31 and some ideas emerged that would affect the quality of my neighborhood. Will you provide future public forums at Steering Committee meetings to take input? *Public comments will be documented in meeting minutes. Emails and letters are forwarded to the steering committee members. The public can also comment and participate at workshops. As the process progresses there will be continuing opportunities for public comment.*
- Pamela Ebsworth: I would like to thank the committee for the wonderful job you are doing and your responses to my previous comments. I am an environmentalist and would like to know if you will be conducting an EIS. The bay provides habitat for nesting eagles, great blue herons, cormorants, otters and other wildlife. I don't want to see this disturbed. *The project will go through an environmental review process to identify what the impacts will be, but we are not to that point yet. One of the committee members is a fisheries biologist who is familiar with environmental permitting. When there is on-the-ground work proposed the city will have to go through detailed permitting with the city and state. We are all very concerned about possible impacts to the bay; it is a great asset.*

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- Katherine Hershel: There is a lot of talk about the park and the vision, but where is it leaning? Can you shed some light on that? *At this point there is no vision for the park apart from the planning principles to connect the waterfront park to the downtown area. The planning principles are available on the project website.*
- Anonymous: On your website you have a document entitled financial feasibility analysis. It references mixed use development and multi-story units. What is this about? It scares all of us to think about this type of development. *The committee has the same concern. We are exploring possibilities and will narrow those down over the course of a few months. The financial feasibility document is a pro-forma tool to test various alternatives that may result from the committee's work. It does not represent a proposal. If we want to guide redevelopment of private property we need to know what will represent sufficient incentive to property owners to develop in a way that helps achieve the project goals.*
- Anonymous: You said developers are involved? What does incentivize mean in this sense? *We have seen a lot of pressure on older apartment buildings to convert to condominiums because there's a promise of a large profit. That gives the property an extended economic life during which the City will not be able to attain possible connections through that property or other project goals. We want to look at alternatives that would provide sufficient financial incentive to redevelop in a manner that would support the plan that will be developed through this planning process.*
- John Hackett: You mentioned that the developer would need to make money — does this mean a hotel?
- Bill Sternoff: Will you foreclose that there will not be a hotel in that area? *The steering committee cannot answer that at this time. We have no alternatives before us since we are at the beginning of the process.*
- Bill Sternoff: Many people live in close proximity to this area. If you do an EIS, and I ask that you do, will you include the people in Medina? Because Main Street may become known to these residents like what the Mercer Street mess is in Seattle. *Any changes in land use will be reviewed in compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act. The nature and extent of environmental review will depend on the final proposal.*
- Anita Neil: In the meeting packet, I noticed that 1,500 postcards were sent to residents in south Bellevue. Why were other neighborhoods not notified? How can you justify non-Bellevue residents being on the Steering Committee? *The Steering Committee cannot answer all of the questions tonight. We want to answer all your questions so we will record these questions and make the answers public.*
- Eleni Stoneman: How do you reconcile the long-range planning process for the vision and the moratorium deadline which speaks to the land use issue, if a developer comes after the moratorium? The moratorium needs to be addressed first. *The goal is to come up with a zoning plan before the moratorium is lifted. If there is a gap after the moratorium is lifted, then development will occur under current zoning regulations. Most of the current zoning allows 40-foot buildings. Within the shoreline jurisdiction 200 feet from the water, the height restriction is 35 feet.*
- Joan Streck: So what we're talking about is allowing developers to develop up to 11 stories rather than four stories? How many of you drive on Main Street? It's a madhouse. It isn't possible to make a left turn safely without the risk of a collision. *One committee*

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member said he lives on Main Street and is familiar with the traffic on Main Street because his children attend Bellevue High School. The neighborhood has been greatly impacted by redevelopment.

- Marvin Petersen: I live across from the Meydenbauer yacht club and already get a lot of debris in my yard when the wind blows. I don't want to see this increase. I don't get what the vision is all about. I'm also concerned about the quality of the bay. What assurance do we have that the Bayvue site will be developed as park land? *The property is being purchased to help connect the new waterfront park with the downtown area. We do not yet know specifically how the property will be developed whether it is all park or has some other type of development in addition to park area. Part of the planning process is determining how it will be developed.*
- Marvin Petersen: The bay is currently full of silt. We paid thousands of dollars to have it removed as well as creosote logs. Who will continue to take care of the bay? *That concern has come up frequently and is being studied by the consultant team.*
- Paul Burg: Is it possible to maintain a timeline of key decisions so people know that you are talking about wrapping up the process in mid-2008? *We will make the schedule more transparent. The Steering Committee makes recommendations. Decision making is the responsibility of the City and they have their own public notification process. Through the course of workshops and public meetings, the steering committee is gathering information. Decisions will not be made until after public hearings. The City Council will ultimately decide.*
- Anita Neil: I'm hearing a lot about information gathering. How is this shaping the vision?
- Mayor Grant Degginger: Tonight there is obviously great interest in this project. So, why are we doing this? We spent \$30 million to improve public access to the water because there is very little public waterfront. Our vision is to create a connection between the park and downtown. We are asking the Steering Committee to develop this vision. Currently there is a blank slate. We want to listen to them. They are part of a process that will include getting input from the whole community. We are spending everyone's tax dollars and want to develop a plan that benefits everyone. People on the committee are volunteering their time to create a great opportunity at the water. The question we're asking is what should it look like? That's why we're engaging with you. Once we have a range of alternatives we can begin sifting through to find out what works and what doesn't work. Right now we don't have a list of alternatives. It sounds like there are rumors out there about what is being proposed. We'll make sure you get what the Steering Committee receives so everyone has the same information.
- Bill Sternoff: I'm requesting that you add a seventh planning principle that will take into account affects to the adjacent neighbors. *We have heard almost all of the concerns we have heard tonight at previous meetings and committee members have similar concerns.*
- Jerry Baruffi: I have lived on both sides of the bay. Where do you all (Steering Committee) live?
- Gary Galeotti: Since you've implemented a moratorium, I'm assuming you are trying to buy properties that will work toward that final goal. The three apartment buildings from 100th-99th are reaching the end of their useful life. Are they on the City's list to buy? Of the properties already purchased, could the City resell them to developers? If so, would

they sell to developers? *The moratorium is a planning tool and has nothing to do with property acquisition. While the City is continually open to speaking with willing property sellers, it does not have a list of properties to buy or any acquisition plan. The purchase and sale agreement for the current property acquisition contains no restriction on its eventual use.*

- Jay Starr: We're scared to death about what could happen. There was an insignia for a parking lot on a paper you published. Mr. Vander Hoek owns another piece of property that was marked. We don't know that you won't let a developer have seven or eight or ten stories. *In terms of parking, the published document was an exercise to identify the what-ifs: If parking is needed where could it be located.*
- Bill Sternoff: This is exactly what happened on Mercer Island.
- Victor Amira: The process calls to tie Downtown Park to the proposed park. What is the necessity in tying them together? *The connection is one option that is being studied in a wide range of options. Many people in the community expressed the desire to have a walking or visual connection between the parks. One of several options is to provide limited parking at the proposed park and concentrate parking downtown.*
- Pamela Ebsworth: There is presently no barricade between Downtown Park and the proposed park. Are you also aware that a 10-story building is presently under construction across the street from the Chevron station on Old Main Street?
- Bill Sternoff: I'm asking that you add us to the geographical buffer that is marked as an affected area. *The geographic boundary has already been extended.*
- Ray Waldmann: I heard a rumor that the gas station at 100th and Main Street has been sold.
- Susan Gilson: I want to know when you might have a few answers for us. When do you feel like you might have some direction? *The next meeting the consultants will prepare and present alternatives.*
- Stan Beckelman: So many people are here because they are fearful and want to be part of the decision. Help alleviate that fear by letting us know when things are happening. *We will make the schedule more easily accessible on the website and include information about the Steering Committee process. We have goals in decision making and with the schedule, but the process is more iterative than linear.*
- John Hackett: The presentations are a little disingenuous. Consider the horrible impact urban renewal will have on surrounding areas. The park is a secondary issue.
- Rondi Holm: My comment is if you ask enough questions you get enough answers. It may come down to only a few people's vision. How many people in the committee are developers? We all feel like we are being steered. *One committee member worked with the school district's vision to have a downtown park not high rise development and left a city council position to work with private developers who contributed several million dollars to build the first phase. Some committee members are developers who do not stand to gain financially from the project.*
- Bill Sternoff: Who on the committee could benefit from the decisions being made? *Committee members were appointed to bring expertise and different perspectives to the committee.*

- Pamela Ebsworth: I would like to say that I have very much appreciated the responses from the committee, in particular Iris your comments are appreciated.
- Michael Luis: I'm on the board of the Eastside Heritage Center and we are very interested in the bay as the birthplace of Bellevue. We would like to see historical elements be part of the great overall design theme for the park. You could create a lovely park. History is engaging and you could make it a lot of fun. We plan to provide additional ideas at future meetings.
- Marvin Petersen: These comments (Michael Luis) just accelerated my concern. If you listen to the noise already on the south side of Shoreline Drive it is like an echo chamber. Please come out and listen to the noise level. *Michael Luis speaks from his perspective not the perspective of the city or decision makers.*
- Hank Chellson: I would like to know about what rights we have about the future of this current piece of property. *The public has input into the process. At this point we don't know what the zoning proposals or decisions will be. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing prior to recommending any zoning or comprehensive plan changes to the City Council.*
- Bob Dilg: We came here to have our fears alleviated and that hasn't happened. What happens when you incentivize developers? When we first came to the bay to buy a place we were overwhelmed by the beauty and we were told that there were zoning and height restrictions that wouldn't change. That is now in jeopardy. The future plans could block this beautiful view and you could set a precedent that could sweep across the city. You should keep a terracing effect as it moves toward the water.

VII. Direction to staff

Mike Bergstrom reviewed the action items for staff:

- Provide formal responses to the questions asked.
- Make a document file accessible for those who don't have computer access at libraries and Bellevue City Hall
- Add the names and addresses of those in attendance to the project mailing list

VIII. Adjourn

Doug Leigh then adjourned the fifth meeting of the Steering Committee.

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS (who signed in):

- L. Jermulowske
- Howard Henry
- Ray Fisher
- Marvin Petersen
- Neil Notari
- Mustafa Sagirochu
- Beverly Harris
- Paul Burg
- Terry Greve
- Daril & Janet Hahn
- Sheila & Remo Galvagno
- Jay & Carol Starr
- Eileen Schulte
- Sandra Boyd
- Steven Gustav
- Mercia Asher
- Al MacKenzie
- Ray Waldmann

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- Bob Buckley
- Michael Luis
- John Hackett
- Nora Schultz
- Pete Marshall
- Margrethe Andersen
- Janet Herrett
- Hank Chellson
- Lois Chellson
- Colleen Sheehan
- Stan & Jennifer Beckelman
- Eleni Stoneman
- Sasha Press
- Michael & Lilia McCannel
- Rod Bindon
- Bob Dilg
- Gary & Gwen Galeotti
- Pamela Ebsworth
- Scott Hannah
- Bill Whitaker
- Anita Neil