

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION & PARK BOARD JOINT MEETING SUMMARY

March 1, 2007
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline Conference Center
Arden Room

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chair Rocky Piro
Vice Chair Sid Kuboi
Commissioner Michael Broili
Commissioner David Harris
Commissioner Robin McClelland
Commissioner Chakorn Phisuthikul
Commissioner Michelle Wagner

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Commissioner Will Hall
Commissioner David Pyle

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF PRESENT

Steve Cohn, Senior Planner
Matt Torpey, Planner II
Juniper Garver-Hume, Planner
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

WELCOME

Chair Piro of the Planning Commission and Chair Clements of the Park Board welcomed everybody to the meeting and invited everyone to briefly introduce themselves. Chair Piro alerted the Planning Commissioners to the additional materials that were distributed prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

LaNita Wacker asked that the Planning Commission carefully consider what portion of the City should be zoned commercial in order to sustain the municipality. She noted that the commercial space on Aurora Avenue is very narrow. As the Commission addresses revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, she suggested they consider opportunities for additional commercial space by increasing the height limit in some locations. The City must provide more space for businesses that generate retail sales tax in order to shift the burden away from individual property owners.

PARKS BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair William Clements
Co-Chair Patricia Hale
Board Member Margaret Boyce
Alternate Board Member Kevin McAuliffe

PARKS BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Board Member Carolyn Ballo
Board Member Larry Blake
Board Member Herb Bryce
Board Member Londa Jacques
Board Member Dwight Stevens

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES STAFF PRESENT

Dick Deal, Director
Maureen Colaizzi, Parks & Recreation Project Coordinator

UPDATE ON PARK BOARD AND PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Each of the Commission Subcommittees provided a brief update on their work with the following groups: the Aurora Business Corridor Advisory Committee, the Comprehensive Housing Strategy's Citizen Advisory Committee, and the Ridgecrest Commercial Area Community Visioning Workshop.

Parks Board Chair Clements provided an update on the following park projects: the Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Master Plan; the siting of an off-leash dog park; soccer field improvements at Twin Ponds Park; the formation of a trail study group to identify locations for trails and pedestrian paths; tennis court projects at Cromwell (joint park/stormwater project), Hamlin and Shoreline Park; property acquisition; an arts project at Echo Lake Park; an eagle scout project for trail improvements at Northcrest Park; a new park at the Richmond Beach pump station owned by King County Wastewater (funded through mitigation money from Brightwater); and changes to the Park Board's term limits and positions.

DRAFT REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Mr. Torpey advised that he and Ms. Garver-Hume are the project managers for accomplishing City Council Goal 6, which is to create an environmentally sustainable community. They worked in conjunction with the Parks, Recreational and Cultural Services Department, the Surface Water Management Group, Public Works Department, and the Street's Department to identify what the City is already doing to create an environmentally sustainable community (see Attachment C). He reported that because the Planning & Development Services Department does not currently have available staff time to come up with a plan to accomplish Goal 6, they have recommended a consultant be hired. He referred to the draft Request for Qualifications (Attachment A) and specifically asked the Planning Commission and Park Board Members to review the scope of work to identify additional items before the draft document is forwarded to the City Council.

Planning Commissioner McClelland suggested the City establish a goal for where they want to be in the future and then identify a method for measuring their success. Mr. Torpey referred to Scope of Work Item 2, which would require the consultant to propose measures of sustainability and recommend a user-friendly tracking system the City could use in the future to set up measurability. Commissioner McClelland added that the consultant should also be asked to identify the City's future expectations.

The group discussed definitions for the term "environmentally sustainable community," and Ms. Garver-Hume reviewed the definition from the City Council's goal language. She explained that environmental sustainability is a new concept of using environmental assets or what the natural world can contribute to improve the quality of life. Mr. Torpey announced that the Public Works Department is planning to do a green street demonstration as a model.

Planning Commissioner Kuboi questioned the role money would play in the City's ability to reach their goal of creating an environmentally sustainable community. He noted that the policies would have an impact to both people and the natural environment. Mr. Torpey agreed that the impacts must be carefully balanced.

Mr. Torpey emphasized that the project is in its infancy, but the intent is that the document become something that could be carried forward for a number of years. Park Board Chair Clements said that

while the goal is create an environmentally sustainable community, he would hope the vision would extend towards a regional perspective. He noted that creating great cities can benefit the entire region. The staff pointed out that opportunities to implement the concepts of green streets and creating environmental sustainable communities would be considered as the City reviews their Aurora Avenue and Town Center plans in the future. Mr. Cohn announced that Jim Duvernoy, the Executive Director of the Cascade Land Conservancy, would provide a presentation to the City Council on March 19th. Park Board Chair Clements added that an argument could be made that by allowing greater density along Aurora Avenue, it would keep the density from spilling somewhere else, and that is an environmentally friendly thing to do.

Park Board Member Hale expressed the need to recognize and celebrate environmentally friendly developments that are constructed in the City. For example, the new waste transfer station would be a huge environmental friendly project, but no one in Shoreline really knows about it. Not only does the project utilize green building concepts, but it would result in a significant reduction of impacts to Thornton Creek. The group concurred that environmental friendly changes must be touted to the public as positive efforts.

URBAN FOREST ASSESSMENT BY SEATTLE URBAN NATURE PROJECT (SUNP)

Ms Colaizzi briefly introduced the staff's goals for the urban forest assessment that is currently in progress. She also provided pictures to illustrate the situations that currently exist in the City's urban parks and forests. She introduced Sharon London, the Executive Director for the Seattle Urban Nature Project (UNP), which is a non-profit organization that was founded out of a project developed in Seattle to look at a scientific approach to conducting habitat evaluations. She explained that the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department asked UNP to do habitat mapping and study four parks (Boeing Creek, Shoreview, Hamlin, and Southwoods) that make up the largest urban forest areas in Shoreline. She noted the location of the four parks, particularly identifying the forested areas.

Ms. London described the process UNP would utilize to map and study the four parks. She said the report provided by UNP at the end of the assessment would identify the following:

- The extent of the habitat for each type of park
- How big the trees are
- The type of forest class
- Composition of the under story
- The percentage of native species
- Where and how big the invasive species are

Ms. London explained that UNP is currently in the process of mapping the four parks and reviewing air photographs. They plan to visit the parks next week to make sure the air photo mapping is correct. From April to September, they will conduct field work in the parks. From October to November, they will complete their data analysis and prepare a final report that will be presented to the City in December. She provided air photographs that have already been taken of the parks.

Ms. Colaizzi advised that once completed, UNP's report would be presented first to the Park Board and then to the City Council. The actual report would provide general implementation strategies that would

give the City direction on how to tackle some of the concerns that are found in their forests. Once the report is available, the Parks Department staff would be tasked with identifying which area should be implemented first and what the plan of action should be.

Mr. Deal said the Parks Department is delighted to work with the UNP, and the information they provide will be very valuable to the City. The test plots that are done by UNP will enable the City to determine how healthy their forest settings are, whether the native species are thriving or declining, and where the City should focus their efforts. He said staff will be looking for opportunities to work with groups within the community to evaluate the test plots.

Planning Commissioner Phisuthikul asked how long the data collected by UNP would be applicable to identify the location of invasive species. Ms. London answered that the data should be applicable for four or five years. She pointed out that the UNP study would provide baseline information that would enable the City to judge the extent of the problem in the future and identify their priorities.

Planning Commissioner Kuboi asked if the survey would include a review of wildlife. Ms. London said it would not. However, a lot of wildlife information could be inferred based on the type of habitat present. Planning Commissioner Kuboi asked if the UNP has a position regarding the responsible use of herbicides and pesticides. Ms. London said their work is purely science related, and they simply collect the information. They would prefer that pesticides and herbicides not be used, but they are not an advocacy group. Their report would identify standards for best available science, and it would be up to the City to make these decisions. Mr. Deal pointed out that 18 of the City's parks are pesticide free. The only pesticide work they do in their park system is a small amount of Round Up in their shrub beds. They would like to eventually reach the point of being totally pesticide free.

Park Board Member Boyce asked if the UNP would make recommendations for removal of trees or invasive species. Ms. London answered affirmatively. Board Member Boyce recalled that the Park Board previously visited a park on Vashon Island where they did tree removal that actually resulted in a positive impact to the park. She asked if the UNP would provide recommendations for this type of work. Ms. London said they could certainly provide some suggestions for the City to consider.

Planning Commissioner McClelland asked if the City currently has any programs to teach children about nature and how to protect it. Mr. Deal answered that a new program would be added to the City's summer day camp that would teach the children about environmental issues. Ms. Colaizzi added that some school programs have approached the City about the idea of allowing students to participate in the urban forest assessment program. The group discussed the need to nurture volunteer groups so they can become long-term, effective programs.

URBAN FOREST MAINTENANCE TECHNIQUES

Ms. Colaizzi noted that in November of 2005 the Park Board toured Agren Park on Vashon Island. She explained that this park became a second growth forest of predominantly Douglas Fir after the original growth was cut down around the turn of the century. The Vashon Island Park District recognized the trees were overcrowded and lacked some complexity in habitat diversity. In 2004 and 2005, they undertook an ecologically thinning project to open the canopy and implement native species plantings.

The project also included building new trails or altering the existing ones and removing invasive species.

Ms. Colaizzi announced that another tour of Agren Park has been scheduled for March 9th starting at 8:30 a.m.. Staff believes the tour would provide valuable concepts for how the City could manage its urban forests. She said two members each from the Parks Board and the Planning Commission are invited to participate. She asked that the Board and Commission identify their participants no later than March 7th.

The group discussed that the Agren Park project was very sensitive to the environment, and it is very difficult to even see that trees were removed. Planning Commissioner Broili said it is important to understand that urban forests offer a potential to positively impact the environment, and the Agren Park project is a good example of this concept. He expressed his belief that once the City has a Comprehensive Urban Forest Management Strategy, there would also be numerous economic opportunities both for the City and private entrepreneurs. He shared an example of a citizen in Seattle who purchases trees that are removed from Seattle Parks and uses them to construct furniture for sale.

TRAIL CORRIDORS PARK BOARD CITIZEN SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Deal announced that a subcommittee of citizens has been formed to study trail corridors. The subcommittee members would meet on March 24th to tour the community and review the existing conditions. On March 26th, the subcommittee would start mapping the trail corridors and identifying opportunities for creating trails in Shoreline. The subcommittee is eager and enthusiastic and will be a great resource. With the \$2.5 million identified in the bond issue for trail corridors, the City hopes to create soft-surface loop trails at some of the major parks, provide better connections to and from the Interurban Trail, and identify the best routes to get around Shoreline and to go between the Burke Gillman and Interurban Trails.

Planning Commission Chair Piro said he was glad to hear the subcommittee would be working on connections, since these are a critical component and a key part of the strategy that was expressed in the original Comprehensive Plan and reinforced in the recent update. Mr. Deal announced that the City of Seattle has contributed \$100,000 and is taking the lead on a project that would place a pedestrian activated light on 145th at the very south end of the Interurban Trail. The City of Shoreline has agreed to provide \$20,000 for the project, as well. He noted that many people have complained about the challenge of trying to cross four lanes of traffic in this location. The work should be completed this summer.

Planning Commissioner Broili asked what the City of Seattle is doing to finish the connection from the end of Shoreline's portion of the Interurban Trail to where it picks up again in Seattle. He noted that Seattle's long-range goal is to complete the trail all the way through. Mr. Deal answered that the City of Seattle has plans to provide signage and striping this summer to create a pedestrian opportunity, but no separate trail has been planned for the near future.

NEXT STEPS FOR CIVIC CENTER/CITY HALL AND HERITAGE PARK

Mr. Cohn reported that the construction of the City Hall Building is on a very tight timeline. The first opportunity for community input is scheduled for March 20th at the Meridian Park Elementary Cafeteria from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. During the first part of the meeting, the City Manager would provide background information and a basic overview, with time for questions and answers. The second part of the meeting would be an information gathering exercise. Three or four questions would be posed, and those in attendance would be invited to respond to the questions and participate in small group discussions.

Planning Commissioner Broili asked when the City would start looking for an architect to design the new building. Mr. Cohn replied that a Request for Qualifications has been published and submittals are due by March 28th. Staff would review, score and rank each one, and then send out a request for proposal on April 18th to those that make the cut.

Planning Commissioner Kuboi asked why the City Hall Building Project is on such a fast track. Mr. Cohn answered that the City Council has expressed their desire to move forward quickly. He said the goal is to move into the new building in 2 to 2½ years. Ms. Simulcik Smith informed the group of the City Hall Project website that can be accessed via the homepage of the City's website.

Planning Commissioner Broili asked if the City's goal is to obtain a LEED rating for the project. Mr. Deal answered affirmatively but said the exact level is still undecided. Commissioner Broili clarified that LEED is an environmental design rating system for commercial buildings, and the City of Seattle currently requires that all public buildings meet a level of LEED.

Mr. Deal reported that Heritage Park is a small 2½ to 3 acre site north of Walgreens, between Midvale Avenue and Aurora Avenue North. Currently, Ronald Place Road goes through the site. The last section of the Interurban Trail is under construction between 175th and 192nd Streets, and would go through the Heritage Park area once the businesses on the west side of Ronald Place have been vacated. This summer, the City intends to hire a firm to help them develop a master plan for the site, and this effort would involve community input. A variety of possible uses have been identified by the community, and staff believes the site could take on a much greater function than just a linear trail and landscaping.

Planning Commissioner Broili asked how the Heritage Park site would connect to the future City Hall site. Mr. Deal said a trail between the sites would go along the very east side of Walgreens. He noted that the landscaping on both sites should be tied together. Ms. Colaizzi said there has been some internal discussion about providing a pedestrian crosswalk connection that links the park to the City Hall site. Perhaps some directional signage could be provided, as well.

Planning Commission Chair Piro recalled that, upon occasion, the Commission has raised the question of why the planning efforts have not be coordinated for Aurora Avenue North, Heritage Park, and Midvale Avenue as a potential new main street to a Town Center Development. Mr. Deal said that students from the University of Washington recently completed a plan for this area, and staff just received their final report. Ms. Colaizzi reported that the Parks Department staff has worked with the public works staff on the Interurban Trail and Aurora Corridor Plans, and they will continue to

coordinate efforts so there is a level of understanding and continuity between the Heritage Park site, the City Hall site, the Interurban Trail, and Aurora Avenue North.

Planning Commissioner McClelland pointed out that at either end of Midvale, traffic must cut through private property to get to Aurora Avenue North. She suggested that these traffic solutions are unacceptable and should be resolved.

RICHMOND BEACH SALTWATER PARK MASTER PLAN

Ms. Colaizzi reported that the Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Master Plan is in the process of being completed. Final copies would be available within the next month or two. Interested Planning Commissioners could obtain a copy of the plan by contacting Ms. Simulcik Smith.

Ms. Colaizzi announced that the Parks Department is once again partnering with students from the University of Washington, this time with the Restoration Ecology Program. The group of about six students has prepared a proposal to do restoration work at the Richmond Beach Saltwater Park in the area of steep slopes where there is a problem with invasive species. She reported that she is having a great time learning from the students, and they are providing a testing place for some ecologically sound techniques to deal with some of the erosion on the hillside. One of their goals is to reach out to the community to create a “friends of” group.

Park Board Member Hale announced that a group from the Seattle Audubon Society would be volunteering their time at Twin Ponds to map the wildlife and bird habitat. Planning Commissioner Broili suggested the Parks Department Staff also consider utilizing a free service offered through the University of Washington to bring people together to accomplish wildlife mapping.

Ms. Colaizzi said the City is also partnering with Kruckeberg Garden to provide some of the native plants that will be used to replace the invasive species at the Richmond Beach Saltwater Park.

SUMMING UP

Park Board Chair Clements thanked the staff for supporting the Boards and Commissions. He said he is impressed by the City staff’s genuine commitment to involve the public in the City processes.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

LaNita Wacker said that when she was out soliciting support for the parks fund, a 9-year old girl said she wanted a wiggly bridge like at Cromwell Park. In addition, Ms. Wacker said Richard Louv has written a book called, “*THE LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS*,” which “saves children from nature deficit disorder.” This book was recently featured in *THE SEATTLE TIMES*. Next, Ms. Wacker said she recently viewed a documentary that described how some communities are retrieving native plants from development sites and using them to replace invasive species at parks. Lastly, Ms. Wacker reported that *THE ENTERPRISE* contained an article about the Aurora Triangle and the potential development of 12 stories. The article indicated one building would be commercial and the other would be residential. She emphasized that the City needs commercial space and senior housing opportunities. If she were a member of the Planning Commission, she would be willing to offer a developer extra height for

providing additional floors for commercial or senior housing uses. She expressed her belief that the Aurora Triangle is an ideal location for vertical development, because there would be no view impact. Planning Commission Chair Piro noted that the Planning Commission is currently working on the concept of flexible zoning.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Rocky Piro
Chair, Planning Commission

Jessica Simulcik Smith
Clerk, Planning Commission