

## South Downtown Steering Committee Meeting #3

August 18, 2010

St John's Episcopal Church

2036 SE Jefferson

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Kenny opened meeting

Attendees:

### Staff and Consultants

Kenny Asher; Katie Mangle; Li Alligood; Jeanne Garst; Mike Zilis, WM; Ken Pirie, WM; Mark Hinshaw, LMN; and George Signori, AM

### Committee Members

Joe Loomis; Ed Zumwalt; Mark Gamba; Mike Miller; David Aschenbrenner; Lisa Batey; Joan Shipley; Cynthia Schuster; Sarah Smith; Neil Hankerson; Eric Shawn; Joe Krumm; Jim Bernard; Arlene Miller; Sarah Smith; Rosemary Crites; Dion Shepard; Danielle Cowan(CI Cty)

Kenny said that Walker Macy will present ideas about how to present SD to the general public and City Council. He told the group that the committee needs to be forthright about what they want. This is the last SC meeting in this phase of the project. The City will have to figure out what mechanisms it will take to get the public spaces built and what mechanisms it will take to get the private sector to invest.

The drawings need to be more precise in public spaces; they need to identify streets, the LR station, the park, and plaza development parcels. It is still very much a concept at this stage.

Katie and Li have been working on a self-guided tour. Katie talked about the city's Design & Landmark's Committee who have working on the downtown plan, sign codes, etc. for downtown Milwaukie. The DLC would like to go on a tour of Milwaukie and a self-guided tour of other places in the region to see what might be able to be applied to Milwaukie. If the SC members want to go on a tour with the DLC they are welcome to participate.

Kenny encouraged the committee members to review the images in the self-guided tour handout. WM also has some regional images to look at.

Mike Z reviewed the phases of the south downtown project.

They will be at the Farmer's Market on the 9/12 to present the new drawings for the south downtown concept plan. This will wrap up the work with this committee.

Kenny said there is room in this concept for refinements. There will not be a lot of significant changes after today. The draft being presented can be tweaked, but there will not be any major alterations.

WM has focused on connections to the river and riverfront park. They also looked at connections to the plaza at Lake and Adams. The plans allow for dwellings and workspace on same block. They are proposing a lot of variety and to have it be affordable. Building density is very close to 180,000 sf.

Mike reviewed the Essential Elements identified as desirable for the south downtown area [see list at the end of report].

Mike showed a map of south downtown with identified blocks of project.

Mark H said that large windows and wide sidewalks are what exists in downtown now. These areas can be helped with design assistance. He talked about the North Main project being too repetitive and too much in the area it is in. There need to be standards that require storefront windows. The City needs to regulate development.

Mike Z talked about the development advisors recommendations. The City should be looking for additions to downtown – small business incubator building or buildings and small simple retail businesses.

They showed drawings and a site map focusing on the natural area to the south. There needs to be a visual link to Main Street. The triangle site needs to be built with connections from Adams and Lake. The location near the park is a real plus. They talked about the elevations for Kellogg Creek.

Mike Z reviewed what they have heard from the committee. See presentation for list [see list at end of report].

Mike reviewed schemes discussed at the last meeting. Scheme C was well received. Scheme B was not as popular – plaza was too small. Scheme A plaza was round and was not as open as needed. Mike reviewed some of the key points from the discussion at the last meeting:

Pioneer Court House Square as an example of a plaza with an edge.

The square needs to be a gathering place with lots of seating.

There should not be a stage.

There needs to be space for impromptu events.

The Farmer's Market can be in that space.

They need to look at an interactive space like the water feature at Jamison Square.

A fountain in Bend was shown as an example

They showed a picture of Esther Shore Park. They talked about how the area changed over a period of years and discussed the water feature.

Edges are important for people to spill out into from the plaza.

Basic Formula – active street edges. Use them to fill the plaza.

Structures – the structure to the west needs to be very special. It could be an interpretive center, a restaurant, etc.

Circulation – should be able to close Main Street for pedestrian activities. Good intersections are key to bringing people through the area.

He showed some plaza sketches with different connections.

The building on the SW corner would be an opening to the green space. He made the bridge over McLoughlin smaller. The terrace is graduated toward the river. It would be like stepping down to the river. There are lots of edges. The plaza has lots of character. There would be gates to close off the plaza. He showed a section cut of the plaza down to the river. There needs to be an overlook to the creek and the park on the south end of the plaza. There could be both paved and soft trails along the newly developed Kellogg Creek.

He showed a revised scheme drawing with a Market Layout showing how the farmer's market would fit into the area.

They have proposed a narrower Main street. He showed pictures of Director's Park in Portland. They have movable furniture in the park. There is a large canopy and a new restaurant with hours set to invite people into the plaza during specific times. Jim B said it was successful because people live there.

Main Street would be high quality material [brick] with parking spaces along the edges.

They suggested that we change the bridge to a thinner design to allow for better views of the river. He showed some pictures of examples of bridges.

He showed some cross sections of buildings that have residential above and retail on the bottom floor.

Danielle Cowan recommended not labeling any of the spaces on the drawings so that people don't think that is the final decision on what will be going on those parcels.

Mark H talked about the density and where housing fits into the plaza. He showed a drawing of housing and retail over sub-ground parking. He showed different density options. A picture of the south waterfront walkway in Portland with housing next to it was shown.

Mike Z reviewed the station area and building drawings.

Kenny said that the rest of evening is for the group to talk.

Jim Bernard made some comments. The North Main project is successful and has an appeal to a certain segment of the community. The South Downtown project does not have financial feasibility. A successful downtown is not about the buildings – it is about density and who lives

there. Bringing the river 'onto' Main Street is a signature project. He does not think that any of these projects will ever happen.

Kenny said he wants to have everyone have a chance to voice their opinion in smaller groups and come back for discussion in the larger group.

Lisa B reminded the group that their direction at the beginning of the process was not to worry about financial feasibility in this phase.

The committee members broke up into three groups for 30 minute discussions.

Each team reported on the discussions in their group.

### Group 3

General appreciation for work done since last time

Feels the street should be open in the plaza

Street and plaza should be seen as two separate spaces

Since it is not a closed plaza it has a different feel than a closed space

Access and visibility to river are important

Adams could be narrower

Like incubator idea and uses

Need to get high school and college students involved

Like pavilion idea

Talked a lot about parking and where on-street parking would end – do not bring it too close to the plaza

Bridge to river could curve out of plaza rather than along Main Street

### Group 2

Liked overall concept

Like lots of green

Had concerns about the size of plaza; is it as large as farmer's market current space

Did not want housing [on the north end] to block view of river from the plaza

Liked European village look

Quality of density is important

Need high design standards

### Group 1

Talked about density downtown – need people in downtown

Development parcel concerns – that the uses are what is shown on the drawings

Density and land use discussion

Liked curved plaza

Liked the terrace

Connection under McLoughlin (from Kellogg Creek) should be part of the scheme

Draw scheme so that you can see the air gap under McLoughlin for that connection

Value of farmers market being here – may be able to have it more than once a week  
Concern about circulation when gates are closed – could use Adams as a back entrance  
Liked Main Street as a textured surface  
School concern about how LR will affect students – the school will be doing a review  
Talked about the design of the light rail station

Kenny said that we will need to start designing the plaza eventually.

Kenny reviewed the discussion points. The last group gave some direction about finalizing the drawings. David – naming of buildings was what the discussion was about – do not want any names except the station.

Katie – would it be more useful to show options or just blobs?

Mark G – we could give several options for the uses.

Joe L – having a concept drawing and a final version is important.

Kenny – problem is that what is on the drawing is making people nervous, however we need to show some of the things that represents what the discussion has been. Going too soft is not necessarily a good idea.

We are not trying to tell private property owners what they can do – but they need to be part of the process.

Jim said the problem with any plan is that it is a dream.

Kenny said that what we are showing here is more financially feasible than what's in the downtown plan today – which is not financially feasible.

Jim – his vision is something financially feasible – maybe a nice hotel on his property.

Kenny said that we will not go out to the public representing this as a final plan. Those people who have voiced their opinion about what they want downtown have had no problem saying what they want. They get to have some opinion about what might happen to the private property parcels.

David – we need to indicate what we would like to see. Can show blocks for development with options for what could be done.

Lisa – people viewing the drawings at the farmer's market will not have been privy to all this discussion.

Ed – this has a long way to go. This will give us a chance to go wild with our ideas – it will work out down the road and property owners will work with the city to develop it.

Jim – the city has to be careful about zoning it so that people could have some options.

Ed – the city is going to be intelligent enough to make this work.

Kenny said that there will be a lot more work as Ed has indicated. Are people comfortable with making this presentation to the public and Council without defining the spaces so definitively? There was a general consensus that they are comfortable with it.

Kenny thanked the group.

Ed thanked Kenny and his staff for the work.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Plaza as central anchor for South Downtown

Vibrant, lively, public place

Activity in evenings

Intimate scale

Small, local businesses and artist studios

Respect history, reuse buildings

Use locally-appropriate materials

Preserved views and connections to River

Preserved natural elements

Pedestrian and bike-friendly

Integrated light rail station

Hide parking

## WHAT WE HEARD

- Range of opinions on schemes
- Bridge over McLoughlin
- Seamless connection from plaza to bridge
- Close Main Street on week-ends and special occasions
- Step back top floor of Main Street buildings
- Plaza is right scale and location
- More plaza to the west
- Better connections to nature
- Soften edges of plaza
- Buildings shouldn't hide the plaza
- Alleyway onto 21<sup>st</sup> should be right-in/right-out
- Improve bike access