

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Topic and Number:	Waterfront Committee Meeting No. 1 – Goals and Guiding Principles
Meeting Date & Time:	3-16-15, 3PM-6PM
Project #:	0830.02.02
Project Name:	St. Helens Waterfront Redevelopment Integrated Planning Grant
Meeting Location:	City of St. Helens Council Chambers
Recorded By:	Mary Heberling – MFA
Attendees:	<p>Committee Members: Chuck Daughtry – Columbia County Economic Team (CCET) Howard Blumenthal – Parks Commission Diane Dillard – Arts & Culture Commission Al Petersen – SHEDCO, Planning Commission Randy Peterson – Mayor Susan Conn – City Councilor Ashley Baggett – Public Health Foundation of Columbia County Paula Miranda – Port of St. Helens Eric Porchinow – Cascade Tissue Chris Finks – Tourism Director/Maritime</p> <p>City of St. Helens Staff: John Walsh – City Administrator Jacob Graichen – City Planner Jenny Dimsho – Assistant Planner Sue Nelson – Public Works Co-Director Margaret Jeffries – Library Director</p> <p>ECONW: Lorelei Juntunen Emily Picha</p> <p>Maul Foster & Alongi: Seth Otto Mary Heberling</p>
Distribution:	All Attendees, File

City's Goals for Waterfront/Mill Sites:

1. Ensure public access
2. Develop transportation connections
3. Finding a balance between private investment and public use

Overall Thoughts and Ideas:

Do not just focus on residential, need a mix of housing, commercial, and recreation – for Veneer Site

- No condos
- No view blockage
- Public access is key
- Flex office space on waterfront, businesses that need loading docks, but also office space with outdoor patios, etc. – Hood River is a good example
- Current zoning for Veneer site: mixed use with a little bit of marine industrial

Drive jobs

- St. Helens needs high paying jobs – many lost with mill closures
- 74% of community commutes for jobs outside of Columbia County. Most commute to Portland, Hillsboro, Washington County
- Types of jobs people commute for are white collar, but a good mix as well
- Need a regional draw for both the Veneer and Boise White Paper site

Need a mix of industry and amenities

- Amenities help bring larger industries here for jobs, jobs fuel local economy to create more amenities.
- Problem with Columbia Co: no industrial buildings for businesses to locate to. New buildings must be very flexible and proper access.

Reflects on SDAT Findings and Conclusions:

1. A sense of connectivity was lacking between St. Helens' various neighborhoods, between people and the river, and between St. Helens and the greater local region.
 - Committee agrees with this conclusion.
2. Public access to the waterfront mill sights is imperative.

- Committee all in agreement with this statement. Public access should be safe and secure.
- 3. Find a balance between economic growth, natural stewardship, and quality of human life.
 - Natural stewardship should be balanced with economic growth
- 4. Only water-related uses should be considered.
 - Phrasing should be altered
 - Possible new phrases:
 - “Encourage water-related uses”
 - “Certain critical proportions should be considered for water-related uses”
 - Access and visibility for the waterfront is important
 - Preserving vistas and views are important.
- 5. Development on the Veneer site should not compete with the Riverfront District, but rather be planned as an extension to this town center.
 - Committee in agreement with this statement
- 6. The highest and most explicit environmental design standards must be used for all planning and development activity on this site, including the US Green Building Council’s LEED for Neighborhood Development for planning and components of the International Living Futures Institute’s Living Building Challenge.
 - This may inhibit development
 - Paperwork for LEED is a concern
 - Could affect historic buildings, cause some unintended consequences
 - Be as flexible as you can. LEED limits flexibility, less able to market the property
 - Terms such as “desire” or “encourage” versus restriction should be a guide for the City
 - Take out International Living Building Challenge and specifics
 - Better terms to use “green buildings”, “sustainability”
- 7. The site must be planned to anticipate a dynamic and changing future climate. Resilience to future sea level rise in addition to historic river flooding, severe heat and drought and interruptions to power supply and associated threats to public safety must be considered.
 - Committee in agreement with this statement.
- 8. The planning of this site is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to return the highest public benefit to the greatest number of citizens over multiple generations.
 - Committee agrees on this statement. Should be the first conclusion, rather than last.

What's not in the Findings and Conclusions?

- Flexibility
 - Short term vs long term
 - May need a Plan A and Plan B for site
 - “Preserve adequate public space, allow for flexible private enterprise” – Flexibility should support vision though.
- Like the term “working waterfront”
- Balance community interests with development interests. Green space is a necessity for public health of the community.
- Should we have architectural themes, complementary with Riverfront District, or should it be on its own?
 - If aesthetics are important, it should be a principle
 - Don't want any surprises for developers, should be upfront
 - Possible phrasing: “Visual coexistence with riverfront and riverfront district”
 - The Riverfront district should be able to keep its character and feed off of development of Veneer site. Want them to upgrade buildings, not tear them down.
 - City could provide a design review versus a code on development aesthetics
 - Must still be flexible

Existing Conditions/Environmental Constraints – Veneer Property

- Site must cap contaminants from the building that was demolished
- DEQ will assess it as an existing condition and release new purchaser from liability, any future contamination found will still be liable for Boise
- Lead contaminated soil has been removed
- Contaminants are in the groundwater
- The contamination is being monitored and understood

Comments on SDAT Veneer Site Ideas:

1. Maritime Heritage Waterfront
 - Seen as a heavily branded, themed, water-oriented use
 - Could become a regional tourism item, bring people to visit
2. Waterfront Boardwalk
 - Could be included for the entire length of the Veneer property
 - Boardwalk in the water would be expensive
 - Better use to have it as a waterfront trail and/or boardwalk on land
3. Civic Park Plaza
 - SDAT locates this at the end of the existing staircase from Tualatin St. Do we want to keep those specifics or be more open ended for where this could be located?

- Committee likes idea of civic plaza though
- Should consider the trade-off of the size of the plaza vs other uses
- 4. Public Fishing Pier
 - Could be expensive
 - Heard community would like this
 - Could be combined with something else, such as a public marina, etc.
 - People already fish on the public docks of St. Helens
- 5. Public Commercial Marina
 - Public is key
 - Public ramp may not be suitable for this location, don't want a 10 acre parking lot to fit this type of development
 - Do not want a boat launch
 - Good way to get people downtown
- 6. Multi-Unit Housing
 - Residential has a place, but no big condos
 - Should not be a main focus of the property
 - Committee favors balance of public uses, residential, commercial, and job creation
 - Residential will help pay for commercial
 - Live/work development can also be considered residential
 - Retirement living/empty nesters may be a factor
 - Should be open to multi-unit housing, but nothing that is a high-rise
 - Hotel with meeting space/conference rooms is a need in the community
- 7. Landscape Strategies
 - All good.

Boise White Paper Mill Site:

- Table discussion, more of a long-term idea
- City intends to keep as light/heavy industrial

Interim Uses on the Veneer Site:

- City plans on acquiring the property in the next 3 months
- Currently people are walking through Nob Hill Nature Park onto the property, even with No Trespassing signs
- As much public access as possible
 - Pedestrian plan should be adopted, no vehicular traffic allowed (except during large public events, such as 4th of July)
 - Take fence down
 - No 24 hour access. No camping.
- North part of site could be used for festivals, connects with staircase at Tualatin St.

- Safety concerns
 - Is bank safe? Should be considered with public works and city attorney. Liability concerns.
 - Monitoring wells are located on site, safety concern.
- City should start putting up signage about ownership of property and to locate more details on the website
- Possible ideas:
 - Food cart park
 - Temporary ship yard
 - Large-scale art installations – idea of reclaiming the space
 - Event about tearing down the fence. Fence implies contamination.
- Not ready to talk detailed plans yet

Next Meeting:

- Hone in the scope of work that can be used in the EPA grant, how does that get implemented?
- Plan for the community open house, what kind of input do we want from the citizens?
 - End of June may be a good time
 - Coincide with closing of the Veneer site and a “Grand Opening/Celebration Kick-Off” event with the EPA grant
 - Should be interactive
 - Would be great to have on site
- Talk about final report recommendation
- ECONW revised findings will be given
- Next meeting: Late April, early May? Creating a doodle page may be useful.
- May 18th and April 17th a no go.

Action Items:

Item Number	Description	Person Responsible	Date Due
A1	ECONW will present findings at next meeting	Lorelei Juntunen	TBD
A2	Create Doodle page to figure out next meeting time	Mary Heberling or Seth Otto	TBD