City of Bellevue

Meydenbauer Bay: Park and Land Use Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #2

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: **Thursday, May 17, 2007**

TIME: **5:00 – 7:00 PM**

LOCATION: **Bellevue City Hall, Room IE-112**

ATTENDEES:

Steering Committee
Iris Tocher
Doug Leigh
David Schooler
Stu Vander Hoek
Kevin Paulich
Rich Wagner
Bob MacMillan
Hal Ferris
Merle Keeney

City Staff and Consultants
Patrick Foran, City of Bellevue
Dan Stroh, City of Bellevue
Robin Cole, City of Bellevue
Mike Bergstrom, City of Bellevue
Marcia Wagoner, PRR
Kirsten Hauge, PRR

SUMMARY:

I. Welcome and review of the agenda
Doug Leigh and Iris Tocher, Steering Committee co-chairs, opened the second meeting of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan Steering Committee. Doug reviewed the meeting agenda and noted the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the vision for the park, report back on the results of the May 15 public open house and receive updates on project activities since the last committee meeting.

II. Review and approval of April 19, 2007 Meeting Summary
Doug noted that all members should have received copies of the April 19 meeting minutes in their packets and asked if members had any comments or revisions. The Steering Committee had no changes and approved the minutes.

DRAFT

III. Discussion of the Vision

Mike Bergstrom, Planning and Community Development Project Manager, introduced key Comprehensive Plan policies that illustrated the historical foundation for the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Project. For instance, the Downtown Sub Area Plan talks about the feel and character of downtown connections and ties into the planning principles for Meydenbauer Bay. The plan also underscored the significant role Meydenbauer Bay Park can play in both reflecting the history of Bellevue and creating a true waterfront city. The park has the opportunity to create a remarkable and memorable shoreline experience that will serve future generations.

To get a sense of how the character of downtown Bellevue has evolved over the years, Robin Cole, Parks Department Project Manager, shared aerial views of Bellevue from 1971 and 1997 and highlighted the changes between them. She urged the Steering Committee to consider what the third aerial picture could look like in 2017 after they implement their vision for the park.

Patrick Foran, Parks and Community Services Director, then introduced his vision for Meydenbauer Bay Park (see "A Day in the Life of the Bay"). Patrick said the vision can serve as a reminder for what they want to achieve at the conclusion of the process. Although there could be much discussion and debate about regulations and policies, at the end of the day they are trying to put in place the emotion that will give shape and form to the policies. He emphasized that first and foremost the goal is to create a "people place" and it is more of an art than a science. For instance, while Main Street is not convenient, many feel it is the one special place downtown. Patrick noted that for him it was helpful to go through a writing exercise to picture how he would like the waterfront to look and feel, which can later inform the choices of what will be developed. The objective for the Meydenbauer Bay project is to have both the Steering Committee and the broader community go through a visioning process as well, without it devolving into a reaction to people's fears and instead evolving into a process where people share what they enjoy.

Robin said the project team collected pictures of other urban waterfronts to help trigger the imagination of the group and assist in developing their vision. She asked the committee to consider how they reacted to images, such as the formal versus informal waterfronts, a variety of uses as well as the intersections of natural and built environments. Robin then presented a series of slides depicting waterfronts in Charleston, the Erie Canal, New London, Sea Pines, Toledo, Indianapolis, Vancouver, Southfork, Amsterdam and Richmond (see Slide Presentation). She concluded that different areas of the park can be different things to different people, so no one solution is the answer.

IV. May 15 Open House-Report and Discussion

Mike Bergstrom said the first public open house on May 15 was successful, with a great turnout from both the Steering Committee and the community. Approximately 60 people attended the open house and had a variety of opportunities to share their comments and views with the project team. In particular, people shared a number of comments on a board with inspiration images. He thanked those from the committee who were able to attend and asked them to share their perspectives about the event.

Comments/Questions:

- Hal Ferris found that most people were positive about the park, but there were concerns about boat traffic and discussions about a "no wake" policy. Participants were involved in a fair amount of discussion about how people will get to the park. It is a much different feel if you introduce vehicles.
- Merle Kenney said he heard positive comments and several condo owners expressed support for the park. Some people attending the open house assumed the waterfront would become like Kirkland, so it will be interesting to see how it evolves and how to partner between the city and public ownership.
- Doug Leigh commented that most people in attendance were trying to get basic information about the project, others stumbled in from other meetings. What was the distribution of participants? *Many were adjacent to the park, a number were from south of the bay and most were Bellevue residents.*
- Stu Vander Hoek said he also heard general support for the project.
- Rich Wagner said participants were supportive, with some expressing concerns about noise and parking. He added that it is hard for people to see a different choice than just the Kirkland waterfront and it is important that the consultants learn how the community feels.
- Iris Tocher noted that one elderly woman was concerned about handicapped access. She said stairs or terracing with railings would help with descending to the waterfront.
- Kevin Paulich confirmed that the grades are a concern for seniors. He added that some of the views expressed about transient moorage might be due to a difference in the definition of the term.

Robin then asked the committee to share their ideas about how to more effectively engage the public as the process moves forward. The following highlight the committee's suggestions:

- Ask more direct questions of participants.
- Use dots to pick preferred ideas as the design team comes up with concepts.
- Allow opportunities for more dialogue at future meetings.
- Provide a clear definition of the study area versus city-owned property.
- Participants were greeted well when arriving to the open house, then it disintegrated. Have each station with an expert for a specific station. Clearly identify the expert and guide people through the displays.
- Structure and cycle people through the displays in increments with guided discussions to get focused feedback and input.
- Provide a combination of a presentation then forum where everyone can talk and get ideas out.

V. Committee Information – City-owned parcels

Mike Bergstrom distributed information to the committee in response to the request to show lease arrangements with the city-owned parcels. The committee filed it for reference.

VI. Status Reports
Mike then reviewed the status of project tasks and activities. To gather information about opportunities and constraints, the consultant team was in town earlier in the week and interviewed a variety of people in the study area and surrounding neighborhood to understand development pressures and other issues.

As far as public outreach, after completing the first open house the team will identify ways to ramp up public involvement and solicit feedback. In particular, one option is to create an interactive Web site.

The team is also sifting through demographic and market data to learn if there may be ways the city can provide value to property owners in the study area to encourage redevelopment that is consistent with the project vision. By the next meeting, staff will have information to share regarding opportunities and constraints , which will provide the context for moving into conceptual alternatives. Future meetings will become more focused in order to create a land use plan for the area and a park program plan. The next committee meeting will also involve further discussion about the public involvement process and public events.

VII. Questions and answers
City staff invited the Steering Committee to share other comments, thoughts and questions. In addition, Mayor Grant Degginger came and addressed the group. He thanked members for volunteering their time to guide the process and said the City Council was very excited and interested in working closely with the committee. He added that Iris Tocher and Doug Leigh have a wealth of experience to lead the group and that the entire committee as a whole has so much expertise to share and an array of representative viewpoints. He planned to attend some future meetings and said that the committee will be invited to brief the council later in the process.

<u>Comments/Questions:</u>

- Post information in Downtown Park about the Meydenbauer park planning process.
- Schedule briefings at Whaler's Cove Condominiums, Grace Lutheran, Boys & Girls Club, service organizations, Bellevue Downtown Association and the Chamber to reach people who may not attend a public meeting.
- How will the interactive Web site function? *It would serve to get information from people who have opinions but wouldn't attend a public function. It could provide images or information to react to as part of an on-line survey. Please share any examples you believe have worked well.*
- Provide information at the new community center at Lewis Creek Park and other community locations.
- Look for ways to involve local schools.
- Find ways to encourage people to get excited about the park.
- Conduct an event in the park during swimming season.
- Put up an informational sign in Meydenbauer Park (like a Realtor sign).
- Share information at farmer's markets.

- Pose trade-off questions to the community.
- Are consultants collecting site analysis information about shoreline regulations, soils, ect.?
- The consultant team should attend the meetings. The project success has much to do with how well they know the client.
- Need a strong concept that inspires response, not a large selection of options.
- What are you expecting from the Steering Committee? *We are asking you for direction on a continual basis. The next point of direction is to learn from the committee about preferred activities at the park.*
- For the Downtown Park, it took a while to get to the idea that we wanted a passive park. The public process we used prepared us philosophically for what the park could mean. It took a number of years of break-out sessions and lectures, but the time schedule for this project doesn't allow us this type of immersion.
- If you ask people what they have in mind for the park they refer to what they know, the consultants can help open people's vision.
- The sooner we can meet the consultants and get them to hear us the better.
- We need a copy of the city contracted consultant work plan so we can understand the process they envision and are clear about the path forward.

VII. Public Comment

- What are the bigger goals regarding economic vitality? The notion can help to frame trade-offs and choices. What are we looking for in terms of long-term goals? Are we looking to create a respite or retail center? Are we creating a place for adjacent neighbors, Bellevue residents or across the region? The bigger picture creates impacts and clarity.
- I live on the border of city land across from the marina. I agree that it is about the larger context. I like Main Street because it is sweet and charming and want that to connect and extend to the waterfront. Meydenbauer Bay has a tremendous history and I don't want to see any more shiny buildings. Look at the success of the Olympic Sculpture Park which was saved from development or consider the examples of pocket parks in Honolulu. There are no ferris wheels, it is just a respite and park to enjoy. So much could be done with Meydenbauer Bay; there are a lot of decisions to make and we need to decide who we want to attract. The traffic around the area is already a challenge. Also, there are a number of people who walk along the pier everyday and you could reach out to them by posting information at marina or passing out information.
- As an adjacent resident, I'm concerned about how we can have input about the main egress to the park. I have suggestions about closing off the street to just local residents only and am eager to participate in this process.
- Please send a mailer out to zip code 98004 about future events. I just found out about the open house and you needed better notification. Also, please identify the Steering Committee members that are nearby residents to the park.

IX. Direction to Staff

In addition to the comments provided above, the Steering Committee provided the following direction to the project team:

- Find a way to communicate with the new community that is developing among the condo owners adjacent to Downtown Park.
- Provide information from the consultants in advance of the next meeting.
- Address opportunities and constraints ahead of concepts, so we know what's real.
- It seems the moratorium is really putting pressure on the schedule.
- The project needs to get moving a little faster and have some sense of urgency.
- Set up a schedule for the Steering Committee meetings to match the pace and key milestones, including more meetings if needed.
- Please take a picture and send a copy to the committee of the idea board from the open house and other boards.
- The history board from the open house was great and emphasized that it is important to include a sense of history as part of this process.

VIII. Adjourn
City staff thanked Steering Committee members for their recommendations and noted that the next meeting is set for June 21. They added that they would tie future meeting dates with completion of various products. The meeting was then adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Incorporate Steering Committee recommendations in public involvement program and next public meeting format (City staff)
- Provide a project and Steering Committee work plan (City staff)
- Schedule a time for the consultant team to meet with the Steering Committee (City staff)
- Distribute project work products to committee ahead of next meeting (City staff)
- Distribute photos of the public open house Big Idea Board to committee (City staff)
- Forward information to the Steering Committee on the responses to the Open House comments forms (City staff)

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS (who signed in):

- Pamela Ebsworth
- Crystal Madison
- Aaron Dichter
- Ron Honeyman
- Anil Butail
- Diane Giese
- Ben Ellison
- Peggi Barthelow
- Scott Hannah