Meydenbauer Bay: Park and Land Use Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #3

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: **Thursday, June 21, 2007**

TIME: **5:00 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
Stefanie Bieghle
Betina Finley
Marcelle Lynde

City Staff and Consultants
Patrick Foran, City of Bellevue
Matt Terry, City of Bellevue
Dan Stroh, City of Bellevue
Robin Cole, City of Bellevue
Mike Bergstrom, City of Bellevue
Owen Lang, Sasaki
Jim Jacobs, Sasaki
Allison Joe, EPS
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 third meeting of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan Steering Committee. Doug reviewed the agenda and said that the majority of the meeting was dedicated to a work session. The work session would focus on primary project issues as well as opportunities and constraints that would feed into the development of alternatives.

II. Review and approval of May 17, 2007 Meeting Summary
Doug said the first item on the agenda was review and approval of the May 17 meeting summary. Mike Bergstrom, Planning and Community Development Project Manager, requested

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that a few additional City of Bellevue staff be added to the list of attendees. The motion was approved by the Steering Committee.

III. Meeting and Public Event Schedule

Mike Bergstrom then reviewed the meeting and public event schedule prepared in response to the Steering Committee's request at their May meeting. The primary steps in the process outline the project's milestones, committee meetings and public events through completion of the land use component. Given the aggressive schedule, the team discussed whether to hold two committee meetings each month, but instead decided to hold one longer meeting per month. However, additional tentative meetings are included on the calendar if needed. Mike asked if committee members would prefer to start their meetings earlier, given the longer meeting duration. Iris Tocher requested that the City conduct a follow up survey via e-mail to determine what would work best.

Next, Mike reviewed the upcoming public events. Two public workshops are scheduled during the month of July, on July 10 and 31. The events are tentatively located, respectively, at the South and North Bellevue Community Centers. The goal is to host the workshops at different locations in order to gain access to more representatives of the Bellevue community. Following the last public event in July, the Steering Committee will have the opportunity to meet again to further refine the land use plan proposal. Mike noted that the land use proposal is on the critical path through the end of the year. The City Council anticipates adopting Comprehensive Plan amendments by December to implement the land use proposal. He emphasized that the Parks Program Plan in development through the end of the year is only an identification of uses, rather than an illustrative plan showing where the uses occur. The team will then begin to develop Park Master Plan alternatives in 2008, with additional opportunities for public input.

<u>Comments/Questions:</u>

- Hal Ferris asked about the strategy or plan for the next public event. *The second public meeting will mirror the objective of the Steering Committee's work session today, with a focus on opportunities and challenges.*
- Merle Keeney asked how the city planned to advertise the workshop. *We will distribute notices through our e-mail listserv, community organizations, newspaper advertising, media releases, postings in community locations as well as mailed notices to our interested parties list.*
- Kevin Paulich asked to receive a list of specific questions to reflect on before each future meeting.

IV. Public Comment

- Aaron Dichter: I wanted to confirm an e-mail I sent was distributed to the committee. I find that Main Street is very troublesome, particularly with access and egress to my home. You can't widen Main Street. Meydenbauer Bay itself has milfoil issues, I am also concerned about dredging and transient moorage. The bay is currently dangerous for water skiers.

- Pamela Ebsworth: I also wanted to confirm an e-mail I sent was distributed to the committee. In my e-mail I provided the definition of a park, as found in Webster's dictionary:

  A piece of ground in or near a city or town kept for ornament and recreation. An area maintained in its natural state as a public property.
- Diane Giese: In regard to the meeting times, please do not move meeting times during work hours so that more public have the opportunity to attend.

V. Work Session

Mike Bergstrom introduced Owen Lang and Jim Jacobs with Sasaki Associates. Owen and Jim are leading the consultant team and recently gathered background information and identified existing issues to share in an understandable fashion with the committee. The existing issues were illustrated on maps on the wall and provided as handouts in the Steering Committee packets. Owen noted that the maps are static and simply record what is there today. He said if the public or the committee had new information or corrections to please go ahead and share them with the team.

Owen emphasized that the planning horizon is very long and the purpose of the project is to create a park for both the citizens today and future generations. He said the team would need the assistance of the Steering Committee to determine the project's economic goals. Committee members received a list and descriptions of the six key planning issues to address, as well as a chart showing how the planning principles apply to key issues. The key issue topics include: overall park character; upland character; access/mobility; moorage; environmental; and historical.

The work session provided the opportunity for committee members to identify what they think about in relation to each of these issues, and to sift out the salient points that form the framework of a plan. Owen said he wanted to take a "blue sky" approach and to work with the committee to understand the relationships between the uplands, the park and the water. The following are highlights of the Steering Committee's comments, sorted by issue area.

Overall Park Character

- Tranquil public refuge
- Welcoming
- Swimming/water focus
- Vehicle-free
- Visual connection to city
- Park connected to city
- Year-round use
- North end passive (heavily landscaped) moving toward active use at the southern end
- Amphitheater
- Family place – all ages
- Treasure

- Work with natural features
- Additional "water" features
- Programmed uses toward marina
- Not urban
- More recreation
- Enlarge beach
- Volleyball
- Kayak use
- Consider teenage users
- Restrooms
- Bike parking
- Adventure playground – incorporate natural features
- Access to docks
- Dogs okay (on leash)
- Safety: sensitive lighting
- Think about future users

Upland character

- Views to water!
- Adaptive reuse of buildings
- Parking opportunities
- Terraces: Upper – retail; Lower – parking (revenue potential)
- Downtown park could host music venue, parking etc (public comment)
- Potential restaurant users
- Potential for waterfront inn
- Don't dilute Old Main commercial activity
- Specialty district

Accessibility

- Circulator/city plans?
- Options to get to park
- Extend circulator shuttle
- Capacity threshold (can't get to it)
- Traffic (limited asset) and parking (garage/multi level, Old Bellevue) – big issue to solve
- Escalator
- More parking for Main Street in addition (if think 20 years – existing buildings won't be here)
- Have to think of Old Main/Park areas together for traffic/parking
- Connect to "great streets" and NE 6th St pedestrian corridor
- Underground parking
- Bike parking/designated skateboard route
- Connect pedestrian passage ways with natural water features

Moorage

- Should be a no wake zone
- Transient moorage /prefer not
- No jet skis in the bay
- Maybe "touch and go" moorage for launches, pick up, drop offs, etc
- Concern – interest is in enjoying the park and water
- No fuel dock
- Rentals of kayaks, canoes – "non motorized"
- Concern is noise – needs to be "tranquil"
- If public park and a public dock – should not be private in nature
- Allow public to use docks – get out on water (marina bonds paid by 2018)
- Covered moorage is a good revenue source – if keep moorage, keep cover
- Should moorage be kept?
- Police boat to monitor activities? (public comment)

Environmental

- Opportunity to create a park that is "understatedly extraordinary"
- Take advantage and respect all natural features
- Maybe use slope – add water features
- Expand study area to include Downtown Park connection
- Below Lake Washington Blvd – heavily landscaped
- 100th – important because of lack of grade change
- Add interpretive elements
- Look at what it does for air/water – should capitalize on its natural systems restore what it was / Shoreline is a challenge because there weren't beaches before-need to show stewardship of environment
- Removal of moorage cover could add to mitigation
- Daylight existing streams (or stormwater) – possibly make part of pedestrian experience
- Maybe create connection to downtown park
- Canadian geese, challenge
- Dog stations – be part of park
- Water quality questions in regard to closed swimming beaches (public comment)

Historical

- Historical seminars (part of year-round uses)
- Reflect the history of Meydenbauer Bay and of the Whaling building
- Keep structures to the south – less structures to west
- Lagen's House may have some use
- Outreach
- Teens – specific group to talk with about issues

After discussing each issue area, Owen asked committee members to consider if nothing existed at the site and there were no constraints, what they would like to see at the park and surrounding neighborhood. Their recommendations are outlined as follows.

What if?

- Reroute Lake Washington Blvd
- Put bridge across NE 1st again
- Close off 100th from Downtown Park
- Create "eased" route to water
- Underground parking at the "Center of Gravity"
- Have beach, transportation, city as backdrop
- Put in place a "big" people mover (tram)
- Connect Downtown Park physically with water (winding, meandering European feel)
- Seattle has "space needle" – Bellevue has "this"
- Buy the property from Downtown Park to water
- NE 1st and LWB building parking – hide above, landscape below
- Park once in Bellevue – then get around on foot, transit
- If take parking issue away, eliminates a big part of the problem
- Parking solution – multiple solutions needed

Then Owen asked the Steering Committee to identify from their earlier discussion the key constraints and opportunities. Committee members noted that many of the opportunities were revealed as part of the "What if?" discussion. The constraints and an additional opportunity are highlighted below.

Constraints

- Capacity threshold
- Noise (neighborhood impacts)
- Property acquisition/lack of city control
- Cost
- Topography (both opportunity/constraint)
- Tribal lands, native artifacts
- Fisheries/shoreline /water quality
- Existing neighborhood expectation
- Recent and permitted construction (would limit any road changes)
- Water quality – encourage more boats absent pump out stations – and kids swimming in the Bay
- Care to not "drain" old Main of commercial health

Opportunities

- Improve water quality

At the close of the discussion, Allison Joe with Economics and Planning Systems (EPS) added that she met with Steering Committee members, as well as stakeholders and nearby residents to support the EPS economic analysis. She was using this input to understand the direction of commercial development and the interaction with residential uses. The team was looking at different alternatives and the committee's discussion of upland character was very helpful. Allison thanked the Steering Committee for their comments.

VI. Public Comment

- Stuart Currie: I am a builder, so I have business interests as well as a boat in the marina. I would like to share a few key points with committee members. Number one: Know your audience. Think about who will use the park. The character of downtown Bellevue is changing. The population will grow to 20,000 people living downtown and 60,000 working downtown by 2050. There is not a lot of land and I cannot imagine 40,000 people using it. Take care of residents first before trying to draw in outside visitors. I grew up here and have been boating on Lake Washington for years. Give kids an opportunity to play in the park like how I used to play outside. Provide the opportunity to roll down hills and hide amongst the trees. If you are thinking about getting rid of the boats, go to Kirkland. There is no interest on the docks without the boats. It is more interesting to view boats on the water. There are two private float planes I'm aware of on Meydenbauer Bay. You can't preclude someone from taking it into their moorage.
- Pamela Ebsworth: I live very close to Whalers Cove. I wanted to say I found that this was a very nice meeting, and it was good to hear what we can look forward to. The intensity of what is downtown is amazing, and the change phenomenal. The committee is on message about preserving what is so beautiful about Bellevue. We already have shops and restaurants. When I was in New York City, I had a very good view of Central Park. The city was so lucky to preserve it and there is no parking lot anywhere. Somehow it works. It is a signature for New York. Don't waste the gift of waterfront property. Natural beauty is a gift. As an environmentalist, I notice that we have nesting eagles, ospreys, beavers and other wildlife we need to consider around the bay. A waterfront park should preserve the quiet and tranquility, while also providing g a great place to enjoy. A lot of good came out of the meeting tonight.
- Rod Bindon: Focus on the customer, the tax-paying citizen of Bellevue, not the tourist. Secondly, Wildwood Park is a city-owned park and you could put parking underneath at that site. The quality of the bay is key to the success of the park and we need to work that part of the problem.
- Scott Hannah: As co-chair of the Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club, we do have pump out stations at the yacht club. We also would like to get rid of speedboats, and currently have a no-wake policy. The overall enjoyment of the bay is important to us. We actively work with the Washington State Department of Ecology and need a closer relationship with the city on the same subjects. We would like to plan a meeting of how we can work closer with the city. We also would be willing to talk with the group about hosting a future meeting at the yacht club.

VII. Adjourn

Owen Lang and City staff thanked Steering Committee members for their comments and indicated that they looking forward to returning with new information. The next public meeting is set for July 10, with a subsequent Steering Committee meeting on July 19. Iris Tocher thanked city staff for the substantive and helpful meeting packets and the meeting was then adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Survey committee members to determine future meeting start times (City staff)
- Provide key questions to Steering Committee members in advance of each meeting (City staff)
- Coordinate with Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club regarding environmental considerations (City staff)

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS (who signed in):

- Pamela Ebsworth
- Aaron Dichter
- Chris Chamus
- Scott Hannah
- Anil Butail
- Stuart Currie
- Angela Currie
- Rod Bindon
- Rondi & Geoff Holm
- Diane Giese
- William Diller
- Peter Maxim