



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Farmer, Brown, Cassidy, Cunningham and Ernst
FROM: Mark Oberle and Jeannine Parisi
DATE: November 17, 2009
SUBJECT: Riverfront Master Plan Project Update

Issue Statement:

The purpose of this memo is provide a brief update on the master plan project and specifically, results of recent public engagement activities, and to list upcoming opportunities for Board input on the redevelopment design options.

Background:

Since the last meeting with the Board, the project team has held two major public events and a design charrette. These events have exceeded expectations in terms of publicity, participation and positive community response. The CAT and the project team are heavily engaged in the design phase of the project, soliciting feedback and refining the major elements of the master plan framework: traffic circulation, block structure, open space configurations, etc.

Discussion:

A project kick-off event was held on September 30th that included a site tour, presentation on the site constraints and opportunities, and an overview of what the master plan will, and won't, deliver. At least 125 people attended this event and provided valuable insight into the redevelopment of the property. The design team introduced the concept of 'sustainable urbanism' which seeks to integrate the built and natural environments, as a means to avoid a development versus park paradigm. Participants seemed to favor retention of some of the existing buildings for their unique character and as a way to honor Eugene's history, as well as connect the site to the UO, Alton Baker Park and the downtown.

On October 3, the Southwest Oregon Chapter of the AIA sponsored a design charrette, with another 75 people in attendance. Eight different redevelopment schemes were developed at the event, and the common elements of each were used to help create the first five design options for CAT review. After further research and CAT/community feedback, the five concepts were narrowed down to three design options. These were presented at a public meeting held on November 10th. This event may have set an attendance record for any EWEB public meeting, with 223 people signing in (not including staff and the project team).

The meeting started with a 30-minute presentation to help ground the audience on the master plan and to introduce the design concepts. With the help of over a dozen table facilitators, small group conversations on the three options were held, and then the participants reconvened as a large group, using 'clickers' to weigh in on different aspects of the designs. Results of this meeting, including comment card input, are still being tabulated. However, feedback received indicates strong support for an urban, active, vibrant riverfront experience as opposed to restoring the site to a more natural state. The project team has received mostly positive feedback about the public events, with people sharing their excitement for the potential redevelopment of the property and appreciation for the process. A meeting has been scheduled with the Board on January 5th to review the design options and share the public feedback received in more detail.

The CAT will spend its next several meetings selecting the strongest elements from the design options and refining them to arrive at a single redevelopment option. Public input will continue to be sought during this time, including an opportunity to meet with EWEB staff, tabling at the "Run to Stay Warm", and presence at other community events. Another meeting has been scheduled with the Board on February 2nd for commissioners to provide input on the single draft design prior to the third major public event.

Recommendation:

This is a project update only; however the project team welcomes any questions or feedback from the Board on the design concepts, venues for additional public outreach, or other direction to the CAT.

Requested Action:

None.