

EWEB Riverfront Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT)

Wednesday, March 24, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

EWEB Board Room

Present: Dave Hauser, Tom Hoyt, Mark Johnson, Desiree Moore, Mary Unruh and Anita Van Asperdt, members; Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioner; Mark Oberle, Jeannine Parisi and Debra Smith, EWEB staff; Greg Brokaw, Kaarin Knudson and John Rowell, Rowell Brokaw Architects; Tom Larsen and Mike Sullivan, City of Eugene; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Charles Biggs, Bob Hart, Judy Morse, and Tom Snyder, public.

Absent: Pat Johnston, Dean Pape' and Gary Wildish, members.

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

Dave Hauser welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. He asked the CAT and EWEB staff to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes Approval

The March 10 minutes were approved. Desiree Moore abstained as she had not had a chance to read them.

3. Comments from Audience/CAT Comment

Judy Morse thanked the CAT for the opportunity to speak. She suggested that another walking tour of the EWEB riverfront site might be a good way for the public to see what space is available, what space isn't available, and to give them a better overall idea of the site. She added that she appreciated the opportunity to attend CAT meetings.

Mark Oberle replied that a walking tour will be part of the May 12 open house. Judy asked if it would be possible to get an e-mail reminder of the open house, and Mark said it would.

Tom Snyder said it is his understanding that the amount of money that the EWEB property might generate doesn't come anywhere close to paying for what it will cost to move EWEB operations departments to the new Roosevelt Blvd. location. He asked the CAT to keep in mind what's on the table and that value to the community is most important. He asked when design visions will happen in the master plan process. He added that if one Googles for riverfront museums, there is a long list, as he has mentioned before. He said there are not very many state or regional models for development, but that many exist in other parts of the United States, and used Minneapolis, Rockford, Cincinnati, Peoria and Sacramento as a few examples. He closed by saying that there isn't a history museum in Eugene and that the City of Eugene needs to protect its heritage and get involved in that heritage.

Dave Hauser thanked Ms. Morse and Mr. Snyder for their comments.

CAT Comment

Tom Hoyt thanked Judy Morse for the walking tour request. He noted that there have already been two or three walking tours of the site and that they have been very beneficial, and that they help create community buy-in once the public sees what is here now and what is proposed. Tom Hoyt also asked Tom Snyder to confirm that he is proposing a city museum and not a county museum. Tom Snyder said that is correct.

3. Discussion of Implementation: Tools and Strategies

Kaarin Knudson reminded the CAT that some of the biggest questions at previous meetings concerned implementation, tools and strategies for the Master Plan, and that the CAT had requested to spend the majority of tonight's meeting on that subject. She added that the CAT had also requested more information from Chris Zahas at Leland Consulting regarding economic opportunities for the site. She noted that one of the assumptions that has been building in the community is that a public/private partnership will be the likely outcome with shared burden and shared value. Kaarin then gave a brief overview of tonight's presentation. A brief outline is below:

Leland Memo: Assumptions

Timing

Financing Challenges

Riverfront Park

Internal streets

Steam Plant

Entitlements

Disposition Options

EWEB as Master Developer – pros and cons

City as Master Developer – pros and cons

Private Master Developer – pros and cons

Process Recommendations for Selecting Private Developer

1. RFQ Selection Process
2. MOU Agreement
3. Development and Disposition Agreement

Desiree Moore asked the hypothetical question: if EWEB maintains a master developer position and finds a private developer to partner with but financing is tight, would it be possible for EWEB to carry financing for the private investor with the rest carried by EWEB, which would obviously also generate income?

Mark Oberle replied that the simple answer is no because, by law, EWEB can't lend money, but it doesn't mean that EWEB can't hold the property, and that there are ways EWEB could act in that capacity and not carry a contract.

Desiree asked if the property would have to be sold for cash. Kaarin Knudson said that would depend on whom the agreement was between. She also added that there are incentives, for example, if EWEB proposed an agreement with a developer where the land could be held by EWEB and sold in pieces to the developer. With this structure, a developer wouldn't have to buy with the entire site at once and carry its costs, which could prove an initial barrier to redevelopment given the current financing markets. This could also benefit EWEB as land values tend to increase over time and with site improvements.

Desiree asked if that type of agreement would allow additional control for EWEB, and if EWEB could terminate the agreement if desired. Kaarin replied that was likely to be the case and that ground rules would likely be spelled out at the outset of such an agreement.

Dave Hauser asked if EWEB has ever been in a master developer role. Mark Oberle said they have not. Mike Sullivan, Community Development Manager from the City of Eugene, added that the federal courthouse property was held for a period of time, and also gave the example of the University of Oregon being the master developer for the Riverfront Research Park.

Mark Oberle commented that EWEB as the master developer would have to be explored more deeply because EWEB has to operate within the City Charter, but because EWEB is the property owner, they have fiduciary responsibility to market the best deal possible.

Debra Smith added that if that were to happen, and if different scenarios were priced out, the cost of that development role would have to be covered, because EWEB does not currently have staff available who have that specific skill set.

Mark Johnson asked for confirmation that it is up to EWEB, and not the CAT, to decide how to go about this with the City of Eugene. Dave Hauser replied that that speaks to feasibility concerns.

John Rowell commented that Chris Zahas had also made the comment about EWEB not having staff experience in a master developer role, but that there are many people, given the current economy, who have great experience in this type of work and could be contracted with.

Tom Hoyt commented that even Dean Pape' and Gary Wildish could form a partnership if they so chose, because that's what they do for a living. He added that EWEB is not asking the City Council to be the project manager, but rather there will be an RFP, a contract manager, etc. to see the project through, and that would give it flexibility, and EWEB would reap the benefits while someone else did the management. He added that he would like to add the contract management piece to the EWEB and City development process.

Mike Sullivan gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding redevelopment financial tools. Included in his presentation were maps of the MUPTE, urban renewal areas, etc. where these funds could be applied. A brief outline follows:

Redevelopment Financial Tools:

- Capital Improvement Program – Infrastructure Investment
- General Obligation Bonds
- Tax abatements
- Urban renewal

Secondary List of Redevelopment Financial Tools:

- Annual Increment
- Bonding Capacity

Typical Uses of Urban Renewal Funds:

- Public infrastructure
- Public facilities
- Property acquisition
- Site development

Tom Hoyt asked if the EWEB property is in the urban renewal district. Mike Sullivan replied that it is, except for some residual property. Tom Hoyt then asked if EWEB is paying any urban renewal dollars or receiving any credits. Mike Sullivan replied that the EWEB property is entirely non-taxable.

Mike Sullivan noted that urban renewal funds were used for the Riverfront Research Park and that development on that site is taxable to the extent that those entities are taxable, and that if any buildings are leased, portions would be taxable.

In reply to a question regarding whether or not the money has to be initiated somewhere else, Mike replied that that is correct, and that the entire boundary of Franklin Blvd. to the river is all within the urban renewal district—a combination of commercial/residential and privately owned plus publicly owned.

Mark Oberle noted that the only buildings on the EWEB property that are taxable are the Midgley building and Credit Union, at approximately \$14,000 per year. Dave Hauser noted that there is also in lieu of tax payments, which go to the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

Mike Sullivan further commented that any urban renewal funds would be based on an estimate of private and public investment, and the hope would be that a small investment on the public side would pave the way.

Dave Hauser asked Mike Sullivan for a refresher regarding the infrastructure for the federal courthouse. Mike replied that it is primarily federal along with County and urban renewal funds, but that the largest piece is federal.

Tom Hoyt asked which comes first, the chicken or the egg. Mike Sullivan replied that in this case the egg comes first. Tom commented that it looks to him like the land has to come first and then the City has to be sold on urban renewal funding, and not the other way around.

Mike Sullivan added that the urban renewal guidelines point out that unless improvements are put in early, the value of the property is always encumbered by use and improvements, and if there was some improvement in early phases, it could move forward that way, but improvements would have to be put in place to facilitate any development.

Tom Larsen noted that the great street in the master plan is the first step toward access. Mike Sullivan added that is also a first step toward mediation to the extent that the site requires it to support that type of property value.

Mark Oberle noted that, until the EWEB Board tells him differently, he is pursuing ways this could get implemented, but that the open space and great street have to happen before private development can occur.

Debra Smith gave the example, in response to the chicken and egg comment, that if the work that the CAT does shows a preference toward the open space but has a great street so that cars could drive down to the river, the likelihood of access to urban renewal funds would be minimal to none because it would not be set up for community development. She added that the CAT's decision vs. the overall conceptual plan will be weighed for future development possibilities, and that infrastructure funding has to be up front.

Mike Sullivan commented that this could be discussed with the various governmental agencies and the City Council, but that the appraisal is probably based on density and potential development, so the highest number has to do with the most dense development. Debra Smith added that property tax to the City then declines, so the value to the City then declines. Mike Sullivan added that there is value to the open space as well.

Dave Hauser asked Mike Sullivan for his opinion on public comment that redevelopment of the EWEB site somehow dilutes the planning effort for downtown.

Mike replied that if the idea was for hundreds of thousands of dollars of retail development and significant new office structures, he would say there was a bit of push and pull between the EWEB site and downtown. He said he hadn't followed the specifics of public discussion, but that there is thoughtful balance between open space and development that the City is going to develop over time. He added that the central downtown core has the capacity for offices and structures and that the EWEB site has intrinsic value for the types of structures that probably wouldn't compete with downtown. He said that the City's vision has been to create a strong connection to downtown and riverfront through the EWEB property and thereby provide a strong amenity to downtown, but that there needs to be something going on at the riverfront, and that he sees the two as complementary.

Mike also noted that the riverfront rural district is separate from the downtown urban renewal district geographically and by financial land statute, and that funds can't be taken from either one, and they have to be separate.

Mary Unruh asked if the riverfront project would qualify for federal stimulus. Mike said that it would, given the right set of parameters, but that most stimulus programs put emphasis on

something that is ready to build, and the timing wouldn't be right. He added that the stimulus over the long term seems to be a bit of an anomaly and would not occur year after year, but may continue for a short period of time. He said he wouldn't count on it as a resource.

Mike also noted that the comments from Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting are very realistic and that the economy is significantly different now from what it was two years ago. He added that he also agreed with Chris' comment that it would be difficult to find someone with the financial muscle to finance the project.

Tom Hoyt asked, given the above information, how Mike Sullivan would coach the CAT to keep the project on the front burner. Mike Sullivan replied that the traffic should be broken into phases and communicated well to the developers and the Eugene community. Each piece of project would move forward independently but there should be a basic infrastructure piece so one can see the vision come forward in the early phases. He noted that this addresses several issues—the sheer magnitude of development and economic obstacles, and the idea of holding significant property on the private side. He added that breaking the property into smaller pieces makes it more feasible.

Mark Oberle commented that he has been thinking about how to keep the project alive for quite a while. He noted that the lots north of 4th Avenue don't have to be re-zoned like the rest of the property from public land, as they are zoned residential with their own tax lots and are ready to go, and the EWEB Board could declare them surplus at any time.

Tom Hoyt asked if part of that land could be carved off for institutional and public development from the part most suited for private development, and then move forward on the private portion first. Mark Oberle replied that it could, and that each buildable block could be a separate tax lot so the developer wouldn't have to buy the entire property.

Tom Hoyt then asked if the EWEB building and its buddy building are separate tax lots. Mark Oberle said he is not sure, but possibly.

The CAT thanked Mike Sullivan for his presentation. Dave Hauser noted that there is no action required on this item at tonight's meeting.

4. Followup on Land Uses – Consensus on General Uses

Jeannine Parisi briefly reviewed the consensus items from the last meeting. She asked the CAT if they would like to see any other items on the general use list receive special approval or if any should be moved to the disallowed list.

Dave Hauser read the items on the conditional use list. Jeannine Parisi noted that Rowell Brokaw's recommendation is that some of the disallowed uses may be approved under certain conditions. She asked the CAT if they felt there was any reason to outright prohibit any of those uses. The CAT agreed there was not.

Jeannine then asked the CAT if there were any allowable uses to be added to the conditional use category. After a brief discussion, the CAT reached consensus regarding the general use list.
Review Master Plan Document Outline and Template

Kaarin Knudson gave a Powerpoint presentation and briefly described each section heading and subheading, and also showed examples of the template, maps, graphs, and building forms. A brief outline follows:

Master Plan Outline:

- 1) Vision and Context
- 2) MP Framework
- 3) Design Guidelines/Form-Based Code
- 4) Infrastructure
- 5) Implementation
- 6) Appendix

Regarding design guidelines, Tom Hoyt asked how the CAT can make sure they don't create restrictions that disallow uses, but also do not create incentives to just sit on the property. He added that he wants to make sure to maximize options for the new owner.

Dave Hauser commented that he wants to reiterate to the public that it is not in the CAT's purview to design buildings, but rather to design the framework around what can happen, and that the developer will design the buildings.

Mary Unruh asked if the building height in the central blocks would still be 120'. John Rowell replied that 120' is the existing Downtown height limit and for C-2 zoning but that specifics related to this issue and changes in the design team's recommendations will be addressed at the next meeting. He added that he believes the building height will actually be more like 85' plus setbacks, and that the 85' height allows for seven stories.

Tom Hoyt asked if the building height restriction west of the viaduct is the same as everywhere else. Kaarin Knudson said it is not. She explained that the design team is recommending that the parcels north of 4th Avenue remain as part of the Whitaker Plan with no amendment (with a 45' height limit), and that south of 4th and west of the viaduct be consistent with Skinner's Butte Height Limitation Area (500' elevation). She added that this will be covered in more detail at the April 14 CAT meeting.

7. Bike/Pedestrian Bridge Discussion

Jeannine Parisi handed out a recommendation for the proposed bike/pedestrian bridge language to be included in the Riverfront Master Plan. She explained that what is proposed is to mimic the Willamette Open Space vision process, with an interest in some connection which may make sense, while balancing that against habitat and visual impact. Jeannine asked for comments from CAT members.

Mary Unruh commented that she thinks that is fine, but that she doesn't want to ignore the elephant in the room—the transmission tower. She added that when doing drawings for the proposal, she believes the public needs to see it and that they should know that, unless there's a bridge built, the tower will be there.

Jeannine Parisi replied that the proposed bridge was added as one of the potential benefits as a route for the transmission line to be less visible.

Tom Larsen, City of Eugene Traffic Engineer, noted that he had heard no reference to pedestrian access to the bike trail between the EWEB substation and Steam Plant, and no language concerning connectivity throughout the property. Mark Oberle replied that 8th Avenue bike path traffic would be tied to riverfront bike path traffic. Tom Larsen commented that talking about the viability of that without reserving space for it to happen is a bit weak, in his opinion. John Rowell added that this connection would be noted in the master plan.

Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioner, asked about adding language regarding what value the bridge would have for the property. John Rowell said that the CAT needs to make sure it is not just a pedestrian/bridge access issue but a key to connectivity, and that he suggests using stronger language.

Greg Brokaw added that there are also issues regarding urban design qualities rather than just pedestrian access. Kaarin Knudson added that the concerns that have been raised should be interpreted as design constraints, and that Bart Johnson's ecological consulting team will speak to those in their final report. She added that those issues should be presented to anyone charged with actually designing a new connection.

Jeannine Parisi noted that this recommendation had been brought up during the design process but is also consistent with existing planning documents, and that the issue isn't a new one. Kaarin Knudson added that an additional positive factor is improved connectivity to open space.

Tom Larsen noted that the bridge issue has come up over and over again, and that the bridge isn't really part of the master plan.

Tom Hoyt asked if the CAT needs to adopt the proposed language this evening. Jeannine Parisi said they do not, but rather need to adopt the concept for further review during the upcoming planning process, and to add any language that has just been brought to the table, including Mary's comment about the transmission tower.

Desiree Moore asked if, in a catastrophic emergency, the DeFazio Bridge is the only exit. Tom Larsen replied that the Knickerbocker Bridge, Autzen footbridge, DeFazio bridge and I-5 bridge would all be available in a catastrophic emergency, and that even the pedestrian bridges would support small ambulances.

8. Closing Comments/Next Steps

Parking Lot item: Height restrictions/minimums

Jeannine Parisi told the CAT that the Walnut Station project will be part of the Eugene Planning Commission work session on Monday, March 29 at 11:30 a.m. in the Atrium building, and that the public hearing on this project will be held on April 20.

Jeannine also commented that the CAT has been invited to participate in the Living River event on Wednesday, April 14 at the Jacobs Gallery at the Hult Center, and that the CAT has been invited to bring their display and be available to discuss the project. She suggested that if the CAT is interested in doing this, the April 14 CAT meeting could begin at 5:00 p.m. and end at 6:45 p.m. in order for those interested to attend.

After a brief discussion, Dave Hauser suggested that, due to the short time frame for the CAT to wrap up this project and with just a few meetings left, the CAT should thank them for their invitation but decline, because of the full agenda for the April 14 CAT meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 14
 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
 EWEB Board Room**