

EWEB Riverfront Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT)

Wednesday, April 21, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

EWEB Board Room

Present: Mark Johnson, Desiree Moore, Mary Unruh, Anita Van Asperdt and Gary Wildish, members; Mark Oberle, Jeannine Parisi and Debra Smith, EWEB staff; Greg Brokaw, Kaarin Knudson and John Rowell, Rowell Brokaw Architects; Ellen Teninty and Julie Fischer, Cogito; Tom Larsen and Nan Laurence, City of Eugene; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Charles Biggs, Bob Hart, Mark Lakey, Tom Snyder and David Sonnichsen, public.

Absent: Dave Hauser, Tom Hoyt, Pat Johnston and Dean Pape', members.

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

Mark Johnson welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

2. Comments from the Audience and CAT Comment (deferred until later in the meeting)

Mark Oberle, Project Manager, briefed the CAT regarding the memo for the May 4 EWEB Board meeting. He told the CAT that he would like four or five CAT members to give the presentation, but added that EWEB staff and the design consultants would be assisting as necessary. He briefly explained the format for the Board presentation and noted that three of the current five Board members were not on the Board when the project started, and also that it will be the first Board meeting for EWEB's new general manager. He said the Board needs to come away with a very clear understanding that the Master Plan addresses the four criteria laid out in the Downtown Plan and the nine criteria in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and feels confident that the CAT has addressed all these issues and others in the Master Plan. He invited CAT representatives to help with the presentation.

Mark also commended the CAT for accomplishing a tremendous amount of work, and reaching consensus on most of it, and that he is confident that consensus will be reached on the rest. He added that it is obvious that the CAT has worked at a high level of detail that helps them articulate the plan, and that they have done exceptional work.

Mark Johnson told the CAT that this would be the last regular meeting he would be able to attend, and said that he has enjoyed working with everyone.

3. Continued Discussion of Design Guidelines

Kaarin Knudson thanked Mark Johnson for his hard work on the CAT team, and thanked everyone for adjusting their schedules to accommodate tonight's earlier meeting time.

Kaarin then gave a brief background of what was accomplished at the last meeting and a summary of what was going to be presented at tonight's meeting. She commended the group for

helping contact over 1,000 people in the community during the public process and doing so with integrity, which is the main reason why that support has been obtained.

Kaarin then gave a Powerpoint presentation listing the various requests for clarification from the last meeting.

Parking Strategies (**Consensus**)

Demonstration of solar access to Restaurant Row and impacts of various building heights along Riverfront Street using 3-D model.

(**Consensus for 80' with setback at 60' and a minimum of 10'**)

- The visuals are great and the tower should be shown

Steam Plant height discussion:

- Don't want to remove possibility of an addition to the existing building height
- Important to preserve historic quality of the Steam Plant – not opposed to 75' limit

Mark Oberle reminded the CAT that the Steam Plant needs a new roof and a seismic upgrade if it is to be reused, and there is a lot of renovation work ahead for historic preservation of the original building. He said, in his opinion, the roof of the Steam Plant is the best vantage point to see up and down the river.

Mary Unruh agreed, saying that it is indeed the best site for that purpose. She said she is not wild about having a taller structure next to the Steam Plant and is concerned that this could compromise the character of the Steam Plant. She noted that she wants to keep the visual elements intact, but a rooftop restaurant would be great.

Gary Wildish commented that the Steam Plant renovation could never happen because of all of its problems, but that he sees that area as a piece of property which is an opportunity for commercial owners to take advantage of a vantage point that doesn't occur anywhere else in Eugene. He said he likes the 75' limit because it maximizes the opportunities but also allows maintenance of the existing facility, and it gives the developer flexibility to use it to its maximum benefit. He said he hopes that will come back to reward EWEB.

Anita Van Asperdt said she would like stronger language regarding maintaining its architectural style, and that she doesn't want a building next to the Steam Plant.

Kaarin Knudson reminded the CAT that there was significant support from the public regarding re-use of the Steam Plant. John Rowell added its "associated use" (i.e., its use for steam generation rather than the architecture or structure itself) is why the Steam Plant would be listed on the Historic Register. He noted that another option for an addition would be horizontal to the existing structure, and that the total height could be limited, and that the new rooftop could require a small setback of five feet.

Nan Laurence briefly discussed historic preservation tax credits and how they provide the most likely scenario for the Steam Plant to be redeveloped.

Julie Fischer asked the CAT for consensus regarding re-phrasing the above height proposals and to consider John Rowell's suggestion of limiting the height of the Steam Plant to 75' with a 5' stepback at the height of the existing structure (two separate items) so that an addition could be seen as separate, and for the maximum height limit to be 55' for an addition.

Mary Unruh said she can live with that, but it would be difficult to undertake so she would rather not have barriers to the adaptive re-use of the building.

Anita Van Asperdt asked that a sentence be added regarding what is concerned "old" and "new" in relation to the guidelines.

Consensus regarding Steam Plant and Restaurant Row height limits/stepbacks.

Consensus regarding bulk controls for areas with 120' height limit - (120' height, 140' maximum diagonal, 110' any dimension, 8,000 sf total area).

Consensus regarding Uses and Active Frontage – recommendation to split this topic into two different diagrams for clarity.

A discussion ensued regarding access and curbs. Desiree Moore asked for confirmation that the restrictions proposed were for driveways and alleys, not curb cuts for facility deliveries. The suggestion was made to add softer curbs, not for the whole area but so they would be more sloping or gentle in some areas. The discussion continued regarding restricting access to curb cuts and how this relates to the experience of the public realm.

Julie Fischer then asked for consensus on Access and Curbs, and the following comments were made:

- I support the curbs aesthetically and for pedestrians, but maybe that limitation isn't necessary on 4th Avenue
- Why do we need the curb cuts when we don't want cars?
- I don't want to continue to add layers and layers of restrictions and limitations – this is a very difficult and challenging site to develop.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the above comments. It was decided that additional language would be drafted regarding curb cuts with the clarification that they refer to driveways, not sloping sidewalks for ADA access at intersections.

Consensus regarding Access and Curbs with additional draft language.

Consensus regarding the refined definition of active frontage.

Kaarin Knudson gave a brief presentation regarding amendments to Proposed Uses, including residential use (i.e., stacked flats, dormitories, a hotel, townhouses, etc.) being an active use, and reminded the CAT that the public would like to see the riverfront be "alive" after 5:00 p.m.

Anita Van Asperdt said that she is still concerned about the area underneath the viaduct and that she believes language needs to be added regarding the safety of that area. She said that without

that safety, there may be a potential blight on the site, and suggested screening and lighting guidelines as a possibility. Gary Wildish commented that he wouldn't want it to look like the Willamette River crossing at I-5. It was agreed that the design team will bring new language regarding the viaduct to the April 28 meeting.

A brief discussion ensued regarding Restaurant Row and its uses and height limits. Kaarin Knudson reviewed the previous recommendations and noted that some CAT members had expressed concern that a 30' height limit was too tight. Kaarin noted that this could present a particular challenge if residential uses were proposed above the ground floor along Restaurant Row.

Gary Wildish said he had had a similar question and was glad the designers were considering this aspect of making sure the guidelines worked with construction types.

Consensus regarding revision of Restaurant Row height limit to 38' with residential use above the ground floor with a 14' ground-floor minimum height. The height limit remains 30' without residential use above the ground floor.

Kaarin Knudson proposed to simplify the diagram for the build-to/setback guideline to be consistent with previous discussions, i.e., removing the build-to lines on River Street, etc.

Consensus for this item was postponed until the April 28 meeting, when Dean Pape' could be present because he had asked specific questions about this guideline in the preceding meeting.

LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) Certification:

Kaarin Knudson proposed that baseline LEED certification standard be a requirement for new construction on the riverfront. She noted that many of the points required to meet this standard are accomplished simply by the site's location and other vision expressed by the master plan, and that certification is a very achievable standard for new construction.

Desiree Moore asked why it would be a requirement instead of a recommendation. Gary Wildish described LEED requirements and how private industry often prefers LEED because it increases marketability, shows sensitivity to the environment, is energy-efficient, etc. He said that very few contractors are without a handful of LEED-certified employees on the payroll. He added that the only downside is that the medical industry has a problem with LEED because it is difficult for them to come up with the points to fulfill the requirement of different certification levels beyond the baseline (silver, gold, platinum).

Debra Smith noted that not having the LEED requirement could make EWEB Board and City Council approval more difficult.

Mary Unruh commented that she believes it is important to make LEED a requirement and that not doing so would indicate "lukewarm" support for the sustainability aspects of the plan.

John Rowell confirmed that from discussions the design team has had with LEED representatives, this is a very achievable standard. He added that the project could easily be designed to meet the LEED Gold standard with just its site planning, and that the buildings would take it to another level.

Consensus for LEED certification requirement.

Jeannine Parisi asked if LEED requirements would still be applicable to the Steam Plant remodel. Nan Laurence said they could, as that level of remodel could be classified as “new construction.” Greg Brokaw added that LEED certification for the Steam Plant would be very easy to achieve. Jeannine Parisi then asked for confirmation that this would mean that LEED would be applied to all new construction on the site, as defined by the USGBC. John Rowell said that is correct.

Kaarin Knudson briefly summarized the Design Guidelines and plan phasing.

Consensus for Design Guidelines and Phasing Recommendations.

Julie Fischer told the CAT that the April 28 meeting would include obtaining final consensus on the elements of the master plan the CAT would be forwarding to the Board, confirming that the CAT has been responsive to all points of the MOU. She asked if anyone had any questions or concerns. She noted that tonight’s revisions and decisions will be shared with those absent from tonight’s meeting.

There were no questions or concerns.

Kaarin Knudson said that the draft master plan will be reviewed in May and CAT comments should be forward to Mark Oberle, who will relay them to the design team and EWEB Board as necessary. Debra Smith added that the Board will have the opportunity to comment back on what the CAT sends to them in May, then there will be one month allowed to review those comments, and then it will go back to the Board again on June 1 for final approval. Debra added that the CAT will see any revisions before it goes to the Board for the final time.

Julie Fischer asked the CAT to call the design team if anyone changes their mind or has questions or concerns on any of the above consensus items.

Mary Unruh asked how concerns from tonight’s absentees will be addressed. Mark Oberle reminded the CAT that their ground rules state that even when some members aren’t present, the rest of the group has to move forward. He added that those members who are absent tonight will be given an opportunity to write an alternative proposal and present it to the EWEB Board as part of the presentation.

Desiree Moore asked if her suggestion about the possibility of a developer looking at the master plan before it goes to the Board, strictly to obtain constructive feedback, had been accomplished. Kaarin Knudson said that the design team had spoken with several developers during the early

stages of design development and that Leland Consulting continues to offer input regarding implementation and feasibility to the design team.

Desiree then asked what the final decision was regarding cultural landscape and interpretive sites. Kaarin she had shown an overlay of those areas at the previous meeting when Desiree was absent and pulled images from the preceding CAT meeting's presentation onto the projection screen. Kaarin also told the CAT that she and Desiree had met with a woman who had written a thesis on the Ferry Street Community and that additional research regarding this aspect of the master plan continues.

Mark Oberle noted the master plan has addressed the site's cultural history and identified potential sites for displays, but doesn't spell out what those sites would look like.

Kaarin Knudson confirmed that the two sites specifically related to African-American history are included in the Cultural Landscape proposal and both are on the north edge of EWEB property: one looking toward the Ferry Street Settlement's historic site and one at the location of Wiley Griffin's house.

2. Comments from the Audience and CAT Comments

Charles Biggs said that he concurs with the Steam Plant height not being any higher than the existing building. He said he is worried about the worst case scenario and that he would hate to see an outlet mall or a car lot on the site, and that he would favor minimal height standards. In regard to phasing, he asked the CAT to be very careful so that the site doesn't end up with empty lots between, i.e., development toward the viaduct with a vast empty space leading to the river. He added that he would hate to have another Sears pit in the area and that, if any buildings are demolished, there should be immediate plans in place and financing set for construction prior to the demolition, so that there are no additional vacant lots created in downtown.

Bob Hart asked if the height of the transmission tower had been discussed tonight (as he arrived late). He said he still believes the transmission tower is a problem and that he isn't sure that it has been dealt with realistically. He added that he hopes the CAT is considering having parking near the Steam Plant.

Tom Snyder said he is concerned about what will happen if in six months from now, when the city gets really invested in this project, somehow passion unites with vision and somebody wants to build something on the site that is not at all like anything the CAT has talked about.

Mark Lakey voiced concern about a decision at a previous CAT meeting regarding the shading being 60', and now it has been changed to 80'. He noted that the shading diagram did not consider November thru February because the sun will be lower then. He said he realized why the present season was used, but he notes that it is going up 20 more feet and outward even more. He said he would like to see a shading diagram for November through February.

Anita Van Asperdt asked if there is a minimum height requirement in the document or anything stated about phasing. She said she would like to see some language regarding an “anti-pit strategy.”

In regard to Tom Snyder’s question, Mark Oberle said that, assuming the master plan is approved by the Board and once it is approved by the City Council, whatever is proposed has to fall within master plan guidelines, so if someone wants to build something different, they would have to go through a complicated process to do so.

Jeannine Parisi noted that future adjustments to the master plan will be discussed at the April 28 meeting. Gary Wildish added that almost all codes provide a clause for such changes. Mark Oberle noted that code changes normally address slight tweaks, but not complete overhauls.

Regarding the shading diagram, Gary Wildish noted that 80’ was the proposed height that appeared on the diagram, and he agreed that the sun in April is certainly different than in November thru February. He added that there is a lot more shade to the north than shown on tonight’s slides (on sunny days). He noted that there is about 30 minutes’ difference in solar access, as far as he can tell.

Kaarin Knudson confirmed that the impact of building heights on solar access and shading have been considered and discussed earlier in the meeting, and thanked Mr. Lakey for the good question.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, April 28**
 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
 EWEB Board Room