

EWEB Riverfront Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT)

Wednesday, October 28, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

EWEB Board Room

Present: Tom Hoyt, Pat Johnston, Dean Pape', Mary Unruh, Anita Van Asperdt and Gary Wildish, members; John Brown and Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioners; Jeannine Parisi and Debra Smith, EWEB staff; Tom Larsen and Nan Laurence, City of Eugene; Greg Brokaw, Kaarin Knudson and John Rowell, Rowell Brokaw Architects; Julie Fischer and Ellen Teninty, T'NT Consulting; Vicki Maxon, Recorder; Bob Hart, Kevin Matthews, Lorri Nelson, Tom Snyder and Wintergreen, public.

Absent: Dave Hauser, Mark Johnson and Desiree Moore

1. Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Pat Johnston welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

2. Comments from the Audience and CAT Comments

Bob Hart presented a model of a senior project done by University of Oregon architecture students. He noted that the Lane County Historical Museum is looking for a new museum site and is very interested in how the riverfront master plan will proceed. The model depicts the current EWEB operations building being used for a future historical museum, and is accompanied by digital files and an executive summary. Bob added that he would like to get the model back for display at the museum but that if the CAT sees value in keeping it, he will lend it out.

Wintergreen said that she had attended the recent City Club meeting and has questions about how EWEB's site redevelopment will connect to downtown. She said that someone at that meeting suggested that EWEB should stop taking advice from the public, and that she is quite nervous about the idea of a conference center. She added that she views the High Street railroad track/pocket park/stone wall area as a great entrance to the new site from downtown. She noted that Eugene is a very family-oriented city and a good place to raise a family, and that the residents have strong opinions. She said she is concerned that the EWEB site will end up having no energy and that she wants the heart of the City and the connection to EWEB to be family-friendly.

Tom Hoyt thanked Wintergreen for attending, and confirmed that the CAT is committed to the EWEB site being a people place, and that they hope that downtown will be a family-friendly place. He added that he had the misfortune of walking near the Eugene Library today and that there were indeed some people there, but that he felt some of those people were actually a deterrent.

Tom added that at the City Club meeting it was mentioned that light rail is in Eugene's future, and that when it arrives, there needs to be a good location for people to get enter and exit the light rail, and that the courthouse area just south of the EWEB property was mentioned as a possible location.

Anita Van Asperdt asked the design team if they would address the design comments in the recent Register-Guard article during their presentation tonight.

3. Minutes Approval

Ellen Teninty presented a bouquet of flowers to Vicki Maxon, Recorder, for her birthday, and thanked her for her hard work on this project and for always going the extra mile.

The September 24 and October 14 minutes were approved.

4. Discussion of November 10 Public Meeting

Ellen Teninty went over the plan for the upcoming November 10 public input meeting, which will begin with a presentation by Rowell Brokaw, followed by small discussions at tables and then a full group discussion on the design options. She noted that at this meeting a remote control response system will be used to tally the attendees' responses by percentage, on an overhead projector. She explained that the point of this system is not to vote on favorites, but to draw out what participants like or dislike about different concepts. She added that Margot Long of PWL Partnership and John Ellis from WRT Urban Design will be in attendance at this public meeting and that the attendees will be able to hear from them as well.

Anita Van Asperdt asked for clarification that elements of three design options will be presented at this meeting. Ellen Teninty said that is correct. She added that it is possible that if more than 125 people attend this meeting, the small group session may need to be moved to a different meeting room, and that she will update the CAT on that when it gets closer to meeting time.

Jeannine Parisi asked John Rowell for a brief preview of Rowell-Brokaw's presentation at the public meeting. John Rowell replied that there will be a combination of both new participants and people who have attended previous events, so the presentation will attempt to compress the foundational information on what the riverfront master plan entails and lead to an overview of the design options. He added that there may be more than three design options presented and that the challenge will be to give the attendees enough information, yet still allow enough time for questions. Kaarin Knudson added that they want to make sure that the public understands how the Guiding Principles and Project Assumptions connect to the design options.

Ellen Teninty continued, noting that Julie Fischer has again notified neighborhood groups, community organizations, etc., and that EWEB is taking out two meeting announcement ads in the Register-Guard. She added that a media day will happen the Monday before the meeting, with a possible TV preview. She reminded the CAT that direct contact with friends, co-workers, colleagues, etc. helps to get more attendance and expands that attendance to a new mix of people.

Pat Johnston asked what will be posted on the riverfront website in order for the public to be prepared for this meeting. Kaarin Knudson explained that currently the website offers a way to RSVP for this meeting, and that it is RBA's preference to walk through the design drawings at the meeting rather than display them on the website ahead of time.

Debra Smith suggested providing a summary of the first public meeting in order to allow people who didn't attend that meeting to get up to speed.

Ellen Teninty summarized that she is hearing two things—a desire to allow people who didn't attend the last meeting to get up to speed, and to allow people to participate at a more advanced level. She noted that there will be a later time to meet with people who were in the interview and focus groups for a deeper level of conversation, due to their expertise. She added that this phase has been extended until February 24, 2010 to allow time to loop back around for meetings with 2-3 of those focus group/interview members, and that Julie Fischer has a list of people who have already signed up for those meetings.

5. Review Preliminary Design Options

John Rowell and Kaarin Knudson gave a Powerpoint presentation regarding the revised preliminary design options. John explained that their desire tonight is to collect more input on how to use the framework in order to present the options to the public, and to calibrate that information in order to present what the CAT feels is most important. He added that Anita Van Asperdt's request to address the Register-Guard article was a good one.

In regard to the Register-Guard article, Greg Brokaw discussed various alternatives to the viaduct with the aid of an aerial photograph, noting height restrictions to cross existing infrastructure. Tom Larsen, City of Eugene Traffic Engineer, presented some comparisons and concerns. John Rowell noted that this would be a very expensive proposal, requiring major traffic rerouting, and would not necessarily achieve any improvements in terms of connectivity and aesthetics (there are still four lanes of traffic carrying 50,000 vehicles/day).

John Rowell added that Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting had reviewed the financing proposal in the article and that it would take 30 years and a lot more taxable area in order to work. John said that Chris thought it was unlikely that this project could support \$60 million in urban renewal financing, and no market in Eugene has ever been remotely close to that figure. He also noted that Chris had questioned why that money would be put into a transportation feature vs. other community priorities like restoration, open space or quiet zones.

In response to the idea that federal dollars might be available, Debra Smith noted that the City is still smarting from the last time the Ferry Street Bridge viaduct was revised, and that there would be significant political barriers to fund any further enhancements any time in the near future.

Further discussion ensued regarding how to address the Register-Guard article and whether or not to craft an informational piece responding to it. It was noted that factual clarifications were being made with the author. Jeannine Parisi suggested that the analysis just described be written up and included in an appendix to the master plan to document why that idea was not included.

Anita Van Asperdt asked if any of the design options had considered locating buildings next to the viaduct in order to cover up the “scar.” Kaarin Knudson noted that new construction and the viaduct would have different life spans. Anita added that the viaduct is an obvious visual barrier to the river and that she would like to see designs that would make the viaduct less of a barrier if the street wall was constructed differently, so as to make the street edge feel continuous.

Further discussion ensued regarding how to make the viaduct area more attractive and how to draw people to that area.

Tom Hoyt noted that the former Oregon State Motor Pool lot on the corner of 5th & High is surplus property that is now for sale, and that governmental agencies will get first shot at it.

Nan Laurence asked if the Master Plan would still be approved even if certain design options weren't adopted, i.e., a Ferry Street viaduct revision. John Rowell said that it would.

John Rowell then asked the CAT for feedback on the previewed presentation and/or individual slides. The following comments were made:

- Retail will die if not easily accessible
- The community feels the millrace is important – have you looked at where it enters the site right now and how to make it flow?
- Any reason not to look at a retail pocket? The plaza would be a natural area for that.
- Like the existing structures, making it feel like a plaza

- Would like to see a crossing at both locations (both design options)
- Would like to be optimistic that some time in the future, the street will connect with the Riverfront Research Park (at University Street?)
- Essential to discuss the character of the river's edge--roadway, more quiet, etc., how to physically experience the river
- Don't like the footbridge in the middle of the "vision"
- Lay out what the differences are with words—use paths with pictures to highlight views (as if on a tour)
- Didn't hear you mention the different identity or Eugene's history
- Helpful for me to see the loop with colorization difference, etc.
- Need differentiation between existing and possible scenarios, i.e., crossing options
- High Street connection – when you tell me this is as far south as we can go, I'm happy
- Lay the foundation, then we know what we have to work with
- Need pictures of potential connectivity with the river--not enough look and feel yet
- Show more existing buildings, river and Alton Baker Park - perspective is helpful for people (as in drawings shown at last meeting)
- Does each scheme show potential for millrace? Concerned that it sets up an expectation that the Master Plan comes with the millrace. Would like to see an option that doesn't have a millrace feature, but another type of water or millrace history.
- Mill pond idea off of High Street was interesting--could have stormwater type treatment run into that
- Millrace concern – only time it is guaranteed to have water is when it rains in good quantity – once U of O doesn't want the water anymore, are they going to supply what is needed? EWEB has water rights with an intake structure to circulate the water itself, but who's going to pick up that tab?
- Would like to see private vs. major thoroughfare scenarios (parks vs. open space map)
- Potential for passive heating – how does that come into play? (district energy loop)

Pat Johnston asked John for a hard copy of any drawings that are presented at CAT meetings so they can be marked up during the meeting if desired.

Pat also noted that certain locations mean something to the community, i.e., site familiarity and what's important about standing at certain places—what makes them unique from one another and what is an attribute. She used the example of, “when I stand at the corner of High Street and look northeast...” i.e., possible use of several vignette photos.

Debra Smith said it might be helpful to show some key differences between the three designs, i.e., different access points, proximity to the river, etc., along with maybe 5-6 key attributes so it would be easier for the public to identify them.

Tom Hoyt reminded the CAT that he is participating in the dialogue with the University of Oregon regarding the millrace issue, and that he would hope that the design options don't preclude the possibility that the millrace may exist within University property. He added that he would like to see many options to keep it as broad as possible.

John Rowell replied that there is a public desire to call it a millrace in order to represent history, and that it is possible to look at a version that isn't so interdependent on actual water.

6. Public Outreach from November 10 to February 24

Jeannine Parisi handed out a list of dates for further outreach events. She added that the list includes events that are her best guess for where the CAT would want to have a presence, and asked the CAT to let her know if any major events are missing from this list. She said it wasn't necessary for the CAT to attend every event, but that if there were two people interested, she could make it happen. She said she would e-mail the list to everyone for their review and to sign up for events of interest.

7. Closing Comments/Next Steps

Bob Cassidy, EWEB Commissioner, said that he would like to hear more information about a possible connection with University property and Alton Baker Park.

In regard to Tom Hoyt's previous comment about a Eugene light rail in the future, Bob Hart asked where the depot would be located and noted that a comment was made regarding whether or not to take that area out of public ownership.

Julie Fischer noted that she had e-mailed the most recent list of public comments (from the website) to the CAT today.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 11
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
EWEB Board Room**