

STRATEGIES

Newsletter of the City Planning and Management Division of the American Planning Association

Winter 2004-05

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FOCUS

Trends and Issues in the Field

Portland's South Waterfront District

*Marie Johnson, Senior Planner
Portland Bureau of Planning*

The South Waterfront District (previously known as North Macadam) is the last major underdeveloped area located in Portland's Central City. Encompassing 140 acres of land and 6,500 linear feet of riverfront along the Willamette River, the plan area is largely vacant or occupied by underutilized industrial sites. The South Waterfront Plan, adopted in 2003, seeks to integrate nature and economic development within a highly urban environment.

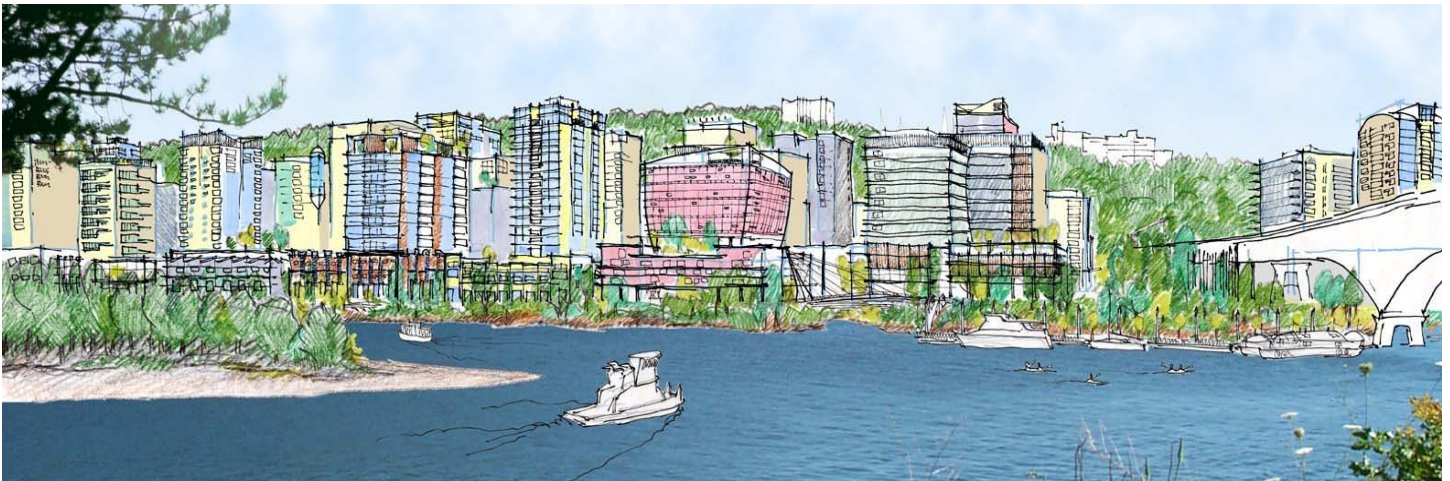
Planning for the South Waterfront area began in the 1980s when the land was rezoned from industrial to Central City Commercial with the adoption of the Central City Plan (CCP). The CCP established a master plan process and set required housing targets to guide future development for the area. Redevelopment was hampered in the 1990s by public and private fiscal and infrastructure constraints, as well as by extensive environmental remediation requirements. Later, the expansion needs of Oregon Health Sciences

University (OHSU) and disagreements about the vision for the district became the impetus for a more detailed planning process.

The South Waterfront Plan process began in 1999 when City Council formed an urban renewal district and accepted the Portland Development Commission's concept for the area. The plan reaches beyond urban renewal district limitations to identify broader and longer-term aspirations for the area. In addition, the plan is influenced by significant new issues: interest by Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to expand beyond their Marquam Hill location, the opportunity to create a Science and Technology Quarter around that expansion, and the listing of Willamette River salmonids under the Endangered Species Act.

The planning process has raised a number of issues that are central to

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NEWS

What's Happening

Houston, TX

The **Houston Main Street Coalition** has received the 2004 Transportation Planning Excellence Award for Planning Leadership. The award, sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration and co-sponsored by APA, recognizes a team that has advanced or promoted excellence in transportation planning. This coalition of 70 stakeholders, in partnership with the city government, created a vision that has transformed Houston's Main Street into a premier destination. The newly created Main Street Square features a new 7.5 mile light rail system.

Visit: www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/tpca04/planldrshp.htm

Milwaukee, WI

Mayor Tom Barrett and Department of City Development Commissioner Rocky Marcoux recently announced the successful completion of the **city's largest environmental clean up** project. The project remediated environmental problems at a 140-acre site, just east of Miller Park in the Menomonee Valley. The property is being redeveloped as a new business park and recreation area. The site was formerly a rail yard and contained several manufacturing plants, employing 3,000 Milwaukeeans in the early 1900s. The \$20 million clean up project included 23 federal and state brownfield grants.

Visit: www.mkedcd.org/news/2004/MRVcleanup.html

Washington, DC

In November, Mayor Anthony Williams and the DC Office of Planning hosted a reception to celebrate the release of "**A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City,**" the vision and policy framework that will guide the Office of Planning's revision of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will be revised in 2005. The vision lays out three challenges--Creating Successful Neighborhoods, Increasing Access to Education and Employment, and Connecting the City--which provide a framework for strategies to bridge the divides that exist in the city.

Visit: http://planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,1283,q,620147,planningnav_GID,1707.asp

NEWS

People



Con Howe, Director of Planning for the City of Los Angeles, is retiring in early 2005. Howe has served as Director since 1992. Previously, Howe served as Director of the Lower Manhattan Project, Executive Director of the New York City Planning Department, and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Land Bank.

Richard "Rocky" Marcoux was appointed Milwaukee's Commissioner of the Department of City Development by Mayor Tom Barrett in September 2004. Since 1986, Marcoux had been a senior staff member of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.

Blair Tremere has been named Director of Community Development for the Metropolitan Council, the regional planning organization for the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. Previously, Tremere served for 23 years in planning and managerial roles in local government. He is a member of the Golden Valley City Council.



Conference Activities of Interest to City Planning and Management Division Members

Sunday, March 20

10:30 - 11:45 a.m.: Integrating Planning and Preservation (sponsored by CPMD)

Monday, March 21

6:45 - 8:00 a.m.: Planning Directors Breakfast
3:00 - 4:15 p.m.: The State of the Western City (sponsored by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Harvard Graduate School of Design)

Tuesday, March 22

7:00 - 7:45 a.m.: CPMD Annual Business Meeting
9:00 - 10:15 a.m.: Integrating Planning and Redevelopment (sponsored by CPMD)
4:00 - 5:15 p.m.: Reflections on Big City Planning (sponsored by APA, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and Harvard Graduate School of Design)

University Real Estate Development: Time for City Planners to Take Notice!

Wim Wiewel, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs
University of Baltimore



The Boston Redevelopment Authority last year convened a meeting of the city's universities and medical centers to discuss collective strategies to address the shortage of affordable housing in the city.

shortage of affordable housing in the city.

This year, a coalition of these institutions is discussing not just how to address that issue, but how they can play a larger role as an economic sector in shaping the future of the city.

In Chicago, several universities jointly developed a 2,500-bed housing facility right in the downtown, a \$151 million project that is being hailed as both a breakthrough of collaboration as well as a hallmark of the transformation of the city's traditional business core into a center of education, arts, and leisure.

This is one of the conclusions of a recent study I conducted with my colleague David Perry from the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute. With support from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, we have been holding annual workshops of university real estate staff and collecting case studies. We found a large number of university real estate development projects that encroach upon surrounding neighborhoods. That alone probably justifies more systematic attention by city planning staff to universities.

CONNECTION

Development. Networking. Support

Reminder: Division Listserv Available

We're pleased to offer a new service for the 900+ members of APA's City Planning and Management Division. Members are able to communicate with each other through a voluntary, members-only e-mail network or "listserv." Subscribers may use the listserv to facilitate discussion about the practice of city planning and management; to post job openings, conference announcements, and calls for presentations and papers; and to relay division business.



To subscribe, go to the division website at www.planning.org/cityplanning and click on "Listserv." Type in your e-mail address, choose a password, and submit your request. You'll receive a confirmation and instructions on how to use the listserv. If the e-mail address that you use for the listserv is different from the one in your APA membership record, then you may be asked for further information in order to verify your membership.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is planning a conference later this year at the University of Baltimore to discuss the role of universities in smart growth, neighborhood sensitive development, and environmental issues. It picked Baltimore in part because of the city's focus on requiring master planning by universities.

These are just a few examples among many of the increased importance and visibility of urban university development projects. The bucolic campus in a pristine setting still retains its dominance as an image; indeed, in Thomas Wolfe's recent bestseller "I am Charlotte Simmons," set at contemporary fictional Dupont University, the outside world indeed barely appears in its 700 pages.

But the reality is very different. Of the nation's over 3,700 institutions of higher education, 51% are located in the urban core, and an additional 24% in the urban fringe. Of all university expenditures, 87% is spent by these urban institutions. Universities are the largest employers not just in traditional college towns, but also in cities like Philadelphia and Baltimore. It is time for city planners to take notice and begin planning more systematically with these institutions than has been the case until now.

In addition, in many places, higher education has become such a large part of the urban economy, that any city with an economic development planning focus ought to be paying attention to how this sector can be sustained and grown. Conversely, universities should become more deliberate and proactive in playing a larger civic role, rather than concentrating only on their own specific institutional interests. With the disappearance of independent corporate headquarters from many cities, universities (along with medical centers, foundations, and other not-for-profit organizations) need to pick up the mantle of civic leadership previously carried by the corporate sector. This is beginning to happen in Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore, but still at a very limited level.

Formal mechanisms already exist, but do not go very far. For instance, Washington, D.C. requires a master plan from all universities. But in reality, these plans rarely involve much joint thinking and planning, and quickly become irrelevant from the city's perspective. Less formal, but more effective, is the collaborative involvement of Georgia State University,

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Portland's South Waterfront District

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planning for urban economic development today. These are:

- Resolving the roles and tensions between urban planning and economic development professionals
- Creating an urban development vision that fits the local economic picture, considers other public policy objectives and sets an appropriate level of risk and return
- Developing effective partnerships around the notion of shared risk

These issues were at the core of the debate about how to set the right plan and implementation strategy for the district. In the end, the city and private and institutional partners decided to set a high level of shared risk guided by a bold urban vision with the expectation of high returns to the community and investors.

Economic Development

With a staff of 10,000, OHSU is the City's largest employer and is quickly outgrowing its facilities. An additional one million square feet is needed, but expansion possibilities and street access to Marquam Hill are limited. Staff generates about 36,000 trips daily between buildings, floors, and functions. Maintaining the synergy that comes from the close proximity of institutional functions is important not only to OHSU but also to the City and region's economic health and vitality. The plan accomplishes goals for compact urban form by recapturing underutilized redevelopment sites and reducing the need for Urban Growth Boundary expansions.

Transportation

One of the most innovative (and controversial) strategies forwarded in the South Waterfront Plan and its companion, the Marquam Hill Plan, is an aerial tram that will link the existing campus with new facilities in South Waterfront. The tram will fit into a broader transportation network of bus service; a streetcar to downtown, Portland State University and potentially Lake Oswego; a greenway trail for

cycling or walking commuters (less than 50% of OHSU staff commute alone by car); and the potential for river taxi landings. To further support non-auto trips, the plan sets minimum housing requirements in part of the district and limits the size of retail uses. Parking regulations, paired with negotiated development agreements, allow higher parking ratios early on, when there are fewer transit options, and then lower parking ratios later on.

Willamette River Greenway

The plan takes a function-based approach to achieve a wider greenway setback than previously required in Portland. While elsewhere development must be 25' from top of riverbank, the setback in South Waterfront is 100' minimum (with a goal of 150' average). The code includes incentives to increase setbacks or "lay back" the riverbank to a more gradual slope. In addition to providing a transition between trails and development, this setback provides for fish and wildlife habitat (to aid recovery of threatened salmonids) and bicycle/pedestrian trails for commuters and recreational users.

While the zoning code defines developers' responsibilities, the plan acknowledges that more significant improvements depend on public/private partnerships. Code requirements are implemented proportionally to other site improvements to avoid "takings" claims. Flexibility is allowed through setback averaging and an option to make improvements consistent with a district-wide greenway development plan. Development potential was increased for riverfront properties to offset potential economic impacts of the setback standards and is transferable from the greenway to elsewhere in the district.

Urban Design

The plan limits the width of building facades as seen from the west and the river. Increased densities with less bulk create a more inviting street and greenway environment while maximizing views of the river both from within and through the district. Under certain

conditions, the zoning code allows for additional building height if contributions are made for open space and the development has high floor-to-floor heights needed for laboratory space or has a small floor plate typical of "point tower" style residential development. A district developer, inspired by Vancouver B.C.'s "point towers," encouraged reexamination of building code requirements and, as a result, this sleek building type will be allowed. A focused set of floor area bonuses such as eco-roofs, moderate-income housing, and open space provisions reflects priorities for the district.

Housing

The plan sets a goal of 788 affordable housing units (of 3,000 total) for five income categories from 0 to 120% of median family income, doubling the CCP's previous goals for the district. The Portland Development Commission, the local Housing Authority, and nonprofit agencies will develop a strategy to achieve this goal.

Implementation

The lack of urban infrastructure and the desire to assure innovation and environmental sensitivity necessitate significant public and private investment. By the year 2019, public investment in the district is expected to reach \$1.9 billion, much of it supported by tax revenues generated by new district development. Every public dollar spent is expected to leverage about \$6 in private investment.

Initial improvements to the greenway have already begun with regrading and bank stabilization along almost 1,400 feet of riverfront and construction of a stormwater management bioswale in the greenway. Local developers and OHSU expect to soon begin construction on the first phase of development, with over 500,000 square feet of housing, offices, research labs, retail space and a potentially a hotel. The Portland City Council is expected to adopt the South Waterfront Greenway Development Plan in early 2005.

Visit: <http://www.portlandonline.com/planning/index.cfm?c=34291>

DIVISION BUSINESS

Division Chair's Message

Con Howe
Director of Planning
City of Los Angeles



As much as we have all come to depend on electronic communication, there is nothing that can substitute for face-to-face meetings. Even if we only meet once in old-fashion, direct human contact, it makes all those future e-mail communications more effective. That's why I hope, at the time of this writing, you are registering to come to APA's 2005 National Planning Conference in San Francisco, March 19-23. The Conference program (and this Newsletter) note the sessions and activities that should be of special interest to our Division members, and give us an opportunity to meet and match face to name. These include two sessions ("Integrating Planning and Preservation" and "Integrating Planning and Redevelopment") sponsored by our Division, which compare/contrast the scope and structure of these responsibilities in different cities. Which works best for your city? There will also be a New Planning Directors Institute and a Planning Directors Breakfast.

One of the most successful efforts to establish direct exchange between planning directors has been through an annual institute sponsored by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, Harvard, and APA. This collaboration will result in two other sessions at the National Conference ("The State of the Western City" and "Reflections on Big City Planning") that should interest all those involved with city planning management.

Finally, and most personally, I hope you will come to the City Planning and Management Division Annual Business Meeting early morning (breakfast) on Tuesday, March 22. There you can learn about and contribute to the work program of the Division for the coming year. See you in San Francisco.

Speaking of work program, coming out soon will be a survey of large city planning departments sponsored by the Division and Youngstown State University Center for Urban and Regional Studies (thank you, Hunter Morrison). The survey will cover the scope of responsibility, staffing, budget and salaries and other issues. The results of this research will be shared with all Division members.

The Division has also been seeking to establish a "Peer Advisory Service" whereby planning departments/institutions could receive frank, practical face-to-face advice from peer city planning managers from other cities. Two pilot efforts are being explored, and we are looking for some volunteer leadership to add to the committee fleshing this out.

Speaking of volunteers, that, of course, is how the Division operates. This newsletter depends on them (thank you Dana Burghdoff and our Regional Contributors). We are always looking for fresh volunteer blood. For example, anyone with website experience want to volunteer to be the Webmaster for our Division's website? We are also always looking to expand our leadership circle. Susan Golomb, Planning Director in Pittsburgh, has agreed to chair the Nominating Committee, which will nominate a slate of officers at our annual business meeting (March 22). Let her know (susan.golomb@city.pittsburgh.pa.us) of your interest or nominations.

One final plug for direct human contact: come to the National Conference in San Francisco, where we can share our experiences, headaches, and hopes.



Regional Newsletter Contributors

The following division members have graciously accepted the task of collecting newsletter articles and updates for cities in their U.S. census regions. Be sure to keep them in the loop on any planning news in your city.

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University Real Estate Development

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led by its president (not coincidentally, urban planner Carl Patton) with the mayor and other city leaders in Atlanta. As a result of years of relationship building, Georgia State has become an anchor of downtown Atlanta's revitalization, and benefited significantly from the housing built for the 1996 Summer Olympics that subsequently became student housing.

In other places, the relationship has elements of conflict as well as cooperation. The University of Illinois at Chicago, sited in an urban renewal area because of the determination of the first Mayor Daley, was pressured by the second mayor Daley to redevelop a 50 acre area south of its campus. While the mayor pushed, many of the city's planning department staff (often graduates of the university's own progressive and community-oriented

Urban Planning Program) were pretty sympathetic to the community opponents and created frequent obstacles. Strong mayoral support, and significant concessions by the university regarding preserving some buildings and facades, finally allowed the project to go forward.

The relationship between universities and local governments should be different than is the case for just any large institution. In the knowledge economy, universities are more important than ever. In most of the cases we studied, neither the university nor city planners appear to have thought much about how this affects the role of the university, or what the long-term real estate and policy consequences of this are. Projects tend to be handled in a piece-meal fashion, and city planners treat the university like any other

organization that needs some permit or services. Relationships tend to be project and task-oriented, rather than continuous, comprehensive, and strategic. Of course, much city planning occurs that way. Nevertheless, given the importance and permanence of universities, a more consistent and comprehensive approach to joint planning might serve both universities and their cities better.

Wim Wiewel is provost at the University of Baltimore and a professor of public affairs. Previously, he was the president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, and dean of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Colleges of Urban Planning and Public Affairs and of Business Administration.

STRATEGIES

Published quarterly by the American Planning Association's City Planning and Management Division

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