

Portland Plan Advisory Group

Notes from Discussion on Draft Economic Prosperity and Affordability Strategy

April 22, 2011 – 8:30am – 10:00am

(Steve Kountz, BPS)

Q1. When we are measuring success in prosperity or job growth (strategy parts 1-4), should we be measuring the region, citywide or a smaller geographic district?

- Others are already focused on the region. You should be focused on areas within the city and pockets of opportunity there. Pockets are really important.
- Start with the region. Traded sector job growth is regional. Much of Portland's economy serves regionwide markets and markets beyond the region.
- Our trade gateway investments compete with other West Coast gateways, serve Columbia Basin markets, and are concentrated in the city's harbor and airport districts.
- Both the region and city are important. You have to do it all.
- In summary, actions should address economic opportunities in the city while considering their regional impact. Coordinate with regional efforts as a partner.

Q2. The household prosperity metrics in the strategy (5-8) include specific targets. Are those targets too aggressive or unrealistic? Should we set targets aspirationally or realistically?

- Set targets at the upper end of the realistic range. High realism.
- Efforts should be grounded in realistic experience and trends.
- Maybe set tiered targets, identifying a goal you can likely hit and a higher aspirational target.

Q3. The EPA strategy focuses on trying to change the underlying fundamentals of the economy to support increased incomes and job growth. A persistent public comment has been the lack of any directions concerning reduced business fees or regulations. Do we need to create such a direction?

- Always. Policies are often not aligned. Rigid regulations can result in requirements that are too often burdensome and appear to have little benefit.
- It depends on the answer to question 4. What trumps what?
- We hear different views among our members. However, there is agreement to make sure that regulations provide for business' ability to adapt to the changing marketplace and current practices. There should be a continuous improvements philosophy.
- What incentives make sense? There should be more alignment.
- Exert downward pressure on fees while providing competitive advantages. Make fees as low as possible, yet high enough to get things done.
- Get to the most efficient, streamlined regulations, including predictability in review processes.
- Agreement around the table: yes.

Q4. How are you going to prioritize among issue areas? How should tradeoffs be resolved among the strategies?

- This strategy drives the ability to pay for the rest of the plan.
- Prioritize actions that drive the economy forward.
- Think about prioritization at the action-specific level.
- The eventual result will be politically driven.
- This is really great. We're happy about the language in this strategy.

Portland Plan Advisory Group
Notes from Discussion on Healthy Connected Neighborhoods Strategy
April 22, 2011 – 10:30am – 12:00pm
(Michelle Kunec, BPS)

PPAG Members in Attendance: Art DeMuro (Landmarks Commission); Noelle Dobson (Comm. Health Partnership); Marianne Fitzgerald (SWNI); Margaret Neal [PSU, Institute on Aging]; Linda Nettekoven, Co-Chair (SEUL, CIC); Rob Sadowsky (Bicycle Transportation Alliance); Chris Smith (Planning Commission); Justin Wood (HBA)

City Employees in Attendance: Tim Heron (Bureau of Development Services); Marie Johnson (Bureau of Environmental Services); Bill Cunningham, Steve Dotterer, Eric Engstrom, Alex Howard, Michelle Kunec, and Deborah Stein (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability)

The group first reviewed the proposed discussion questions submitted by staff, added additional questions for consideration and voted on which questions to address and in what order.

Q1. Should the strategy acknowledge that density (i.e. increases in people/customers) may be required to support public and private investment in infrastructure, services and amenities in hubs and greenways? (staff proposed)

The conversation and recommendations focused on:

- A. The strategy, both in its content and language, should be clear about goals and objectives of growth in the City. The location and design of growth in the City It should build on the positives and mitigate the negatives growth can bring.

Related Comments: Goals and Objectives

- Density should be a means not an ends and should be strategically located or targeted to specific places.
- We need to be clear about our goals and support them as we move forward.
- Need to address why density is needed in the strategy and actions.
- Density is not just housing – parks, transportation, economic development

Related Comments: Support Positives and Mitigate Negatives

- Are we valuing density or is it an automatic negative?
- There are psychological impacts of density. What is the good that density brings? How do we do it right and reduce friction points?
- Density needs to be addressed in the strategy but with the right language.
- Find language to value density while supporting existing neighborhoods and mitigating negative impacts.

- B. The strategy should acknowledge and support both existing neighborhoods and new growth. It should address how the City will provide services to existing underserved areas and examine the City's funding and investment structures to achieve this objective.

Related Comments: Acknowledge & Support Both Existing and New Growth

- Actions don't address already dense areas, like the central city
- Acknowledge and address existing density (not just what's to come)
- Is there a conflict between the overall goal of density and the desire to plan for and value unique neighborhoods?

Related Comments: Provide Services to Underserved Areas

- Focus energy (infrastructure investment, community economic development funding, etc) both in existing areas and in areas that are expected to grow

- What about areas that have grown but haven't had corresponding infrastructure development?
- How will we bring services to underserved areas?

Related Comments: Examine Funding and Investment Structures

- The current system of developer and SDC funded improvements is not working to actually get infrastructure built. We need to rework our funding structures.
- Need to improve "asks" of developers – standards, etc to better achieve objectives
- Think about leveraging public/private relationships and investment to achieve objectives

Q2. Should the draft Healthy Connected Neighborhoods Strategy more explicitly incorporate and expand on recent related plans, such as the Portland Bicycle Plan, Grey to Green Initiative and Streetcar Master Plans, which are not called out in the current draft? *(staff proposed)*

Generally the group agreed that adopted plans including those listed and others (such as the Climate Action Plan) should be better incorporated as they have a direct connection to the strategy. Some suggested that better integration and incorporation could also help prevent the Portland Plan from contradicting other adopted plans and reduce the risk that the Plan would just "sit on the shelf".

However, members of the group varied in the level of proposed integration. Options included (from most integrated to least):

- Integrating concepts, policy changes and actions recommended by other plans.
- Being more explicit about the source of goals, policies and actions in the strategy and their relationship to other adopted plans.
- Adding statements of support or reliance on the continued implementation of other plans.
- Adding a reference list of related plans and/or initiatives.

Members of the group also expressed concerns that it may be difficult to draw a line between what plans (or aspects of plans) are included and which are not. There was additional concerns about how to address potential inconsistencies between various plans or between a specific plan and the goals of the strategy.

Q3. The strategy includes a number of actions in many topic areas. Does the strategy set clear priorities for implementation? *(staff proposed)*

The group expressed general concern that the strategy does not clearly state whether the actions are examples or priorities. One member suggested differentiating between quick starts (easy to accomplish actions) and first steps (actions that are the first steps in larger or more difficult tasks).

Q4. Historic resources *(PPAG proposed)*

Comments suggested that the strategy should:

- Integrate the issue of historic preservation alongside conversations of density
- Be sensitive to neighborhood characteristics and be targeted in where growth occurs
- Support compatibility of growth in scale and form

Q5. The strategy's goals (i.e. improving public health, equity, watershed health, infrastructure and climate change) can be mutually supportive or contradictory. Does the focus on human and environmental health give enough clarity and direction?

The group expressed concern that the actions in the *Human and Environmental Health in Public Decisions* section were not clear enough. Noelle Dobson responded that the Healthy Portland Plan Work Group would recommend revisions to this section to call out specific actions.