

Chris Smith Initial Comp Plan Comments - 8/17/14

Citywide System Plan

p. 34 - 2nd topic uses phrase "alternative transportation systems". "Active Transportation and Transit" would be a better phrase and more consistent with language in other parts of the plan.

p. 281 - The key issues and trends section seems like an opportunity to discuss a tension that is occurring as the Fire Bureau purchases larger vehicles. Large vehicle footprints may influence street design standards. For example, the bike facility project on SW Stark/Oak could not employ protected bike lanes because of concern that it would constrain use of the outrigger supports for ladder trucks.

Not Found - I was surprised to find no reference to what I understand are somewhat substantial fiber-optic resources owned by the City.

Goals and Policies

Policy 3.15 - Accessibility in Centers - We may be missing an opportunity here to talk about goods and services access to centers and specifically about the connection with sustainable freight strategies.

Policy 3.28 - This discusses linking Town Centers to the regional HCT system. But in fact some town centers (e.g., St. Johns, Belmont/Hawthorne) are not now on the HCT system and some may never be. I think some discussion of the relationship to the frequent service transit network is important.

p. GP3-11 - the introduction section for Neighborhood Centers suggests that there are "many more" Neighborhood Centers than Town Centers. Looking at the map, this is not really the case. There are only slightly more Neighborhood Centers. This would seem to beg the question of whether we should be designating significantly more Neighborhood Centers?

Policy 3.75 +1 (my shorthand to indicate my especially strong support for a policy)

Policy 3.86 - This policy correctly identifies the need for special treatment for bicycle and walking connections due to the irregular and large-grained street network in Eastern Neighborhoods, but seems to downplay sidewalk and bike facilities on the street grid. This should be clarified as both will be vital.

Policy 4.12 +1

Policy 5.4 +1

Policy 5.6 +1

Policy 6.20 - I am skeptical about the 'campus' model for corporate and institutional uses. I understand that we need to support a model for the clustered land use pattern these uses will require, but I would prefer to see a model that 'knits' these uses into the fabric of a center rather than defining a campus with edges.

Policy 6.24 +1

Policy 6.38 +1

Policy 6.39 +1

Policy 6.41 - West Hayden Island. This policy should articulate the high bar that the PSC set for West Hayden Island: that if development occurs, it must have the highest standards of mitigation to retain ecosystem function and protect human health. Since the port has indicated that at least in the near term they see no economic model that can meet this bar, I wonder if the Comp Plan should indicate a preference to permanently protect this area as the unique environmental and cultural asset that it is?

p. GP6-15 Campus Institutions - see my comments on Policy 6.20. This policy get closer to my vision of "knit into the fabric", but that could be further strengthened.

Policy 8.77 Public Trails - the model that Parks manages the Trail system while PBOT controls streets has inherent challenges. We should have language somewhere that strengthens the connections between City Trails, the City bicycle and pedestrian systems and the regional Intertwine network (Policy 8.78 is a start, but more is needed).

p. GP8-22 - School facilities. These policies hint at but do not directly say that school facilities citing should be prioritized in designated centers. Why not come out and say it? Particularly if we designate additional neighborhood centers. Perhaps we need to differentiate larger facilities (high schools?) for their more important land use and transportation connections.

Policy 8.99 - Should this policy have a second section emphasizing creating a safe transportation environment around existing school facilities (i.e., support the Safe Routes to Schools program)?

p. GP8-22 - Technology and Communications - I fear that these policies fall short of the ambitions of the Broadband Strategic Plan and the needs of the community. Accessible and affordable broadband is critical for educational and economic attainment by families and for regional economic competitiveness. In the absence of effective Federal policy in this area, the City has a compelling interest in using its assets and regulatory authority to foster a competitive market and/or municipal service to create this capability.

Policy 9.5 - Using Metro's mode share and VMT goals is a much weaker statement than referencing our own Climate Action Plan. Why not aim for the latter?

Policy 9.24 - It might be useful to call out the 'short trip' function of streetcar for its placemaking role.

Policy 9.25 - Appears to suggest that biking and walking are not appropriate modes for job access. We should be encouraging people to cycle and walk to the Central City and Gateway from appropriate distances. Finding a way to blend 9.24 and 9.25 to better clarify the relationship between the modes might be helpful.

Policy 9.28 - Not clear why we call out BRT but not other forms of High Capacity Transit? We should say HCT unless we mean something different (perhaps we're trying to call out mixed operation with motor vehicles? If so, we should say so).

Policy 9.41 - See comments from Citywide System Plan. We need policies to make sure emergency routes and bicycle facilities are not incompatible.

Policy 9.53 - We need to call out the need for a variety of types of bicycle parking that serve a variety of bicycle types (e.g., recumbents, cargo bikes, bakfiets, etc.) as well as riders of different levels of ability (under current zoning, multifamily developers are building almost exclusively wall or vertical racks and some people cannot lift a bike onto such racks).

Not found - Any reference to an open data policy. I think this is a serious omission and will provide additional thoughts separately.

List of Significant Projects

pp. LP39,40 - Several Streetcar corridors are called out. Staff assures me that these are still 'placeholders' and may be changed/refined by the TSP project. I nonetheless feel compelled to point out that the current set are not in alignment with the Portland Plan objective of including a Streetcar corridor for analysis that is NOT an extension of the central city network (e.g., Gateway, Lents, St. Johns).