Better Housing by Design
Stakeholder Working Group Meeting Notes: May 3, 2017

Date: May 3, 2017
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Location: 16126 SE Stark Street (Rosewood Initiative Space)
Topics: Street/pedestrian connectivity and alternative approaches for high-density development in Eastern Portland, focusing on Rosewood/148th Avenue as a study area.

Attendees:
Andrew Kurkinen, Sarah Iannarone, Simone Goldfeder, Katie Larsell, Ken Marks, Jenny Glass, Sarai Rodriguez, Doug Klotz, Bob Rosholt, Basim Khadim (plus two others), Rick Potestio, Soren Impey

Staff: Bill Cunningham (BPS), Neil Heller (BPS), Radcliffe Dacanay (BPS), Denver Igarta (PBOT), Daniel Soebbing (PBOT), Chip Lazenby (Facilitator)

A. Street connections – pedestrian connections, safety features

Question 1: Should we consider pathways instead of full street connections?

- The problem with pedestrian only paths is lack of safety or the perception of being unsafe. These types of connections need homes facing onto them to provide more eyes on the connection.
- Better to get a partial street connection, for future full street connection, as these provide better visibility – from adjacent buildings and cars.
- Near schools, so many people are driving – need safe sidewalks on streets like Glisan.
- We need to figure out a way to incentivize these connections to be built or maybe even use eminent domain. We need funding. What about some sort of transportation overlay for value capture?
- We need street safety on major streets, like buffered cycle tracks, which are inexpensive.
- Like the idea of getting pedestrians off the main streets (unpleasant environment) by providing connections on secondary streets. Rather bike on Burnside, than on busy Stark street.
- Safety concerns with ped/bike pathways in East Portland, such as the I-205 bikeway – they have the tendency to become sketchy.
- As pedestrian, like being separated from cars/busy traffic to feel safe – need more separation on busy streets like Stark.
- If we do build pedestrian paths, make them straight with good sight lines. Would also need to include low pedestrian-oriented lighting and benches.
- Need to work with adjacent neighbors on safety and security concerns.
- Tall fencing along pathways create blind spots where one can start to feel trapped if in a bad situation, provides places for illegal activity.
- Build an active transportation network of narrow streets, with slow speeds that allow cars and pedestrians to mix, but only allow local auto access. Similar to neighborhood greenways approach.

- Concerned about sharing the road with cars who speed, issues for blind people. 135th has a greenway designation, but cars speed through.
- Put Stark on a road diet and allocate space to peds/bikes.
- Dead ends are fine if they include pedestrian path connections between them.
- On big streets, the real problem is speed, so:
    - Lower speed limit. This does not cost anything.
    - Narrow the streets.
    - Buffer the bike lanes, adding trees.
- Lighting is key for pedestrian connections.
- Need interruptions on long straight-aways to slow traffic on streets like Stark.
- We should create a connectivity index and use local SDCs to help fund important connections.
- For street connections, consider bonuses and SDC waivers.
- We need different/alternative types of streets, such as boulevard treatments on Stark, alternative approaches for ped/bike connections, and think about creating better connections out of connections that already exist (such as existing poorly-marked connections to schools).
- With easements, need to consider liability and crime issues on private land. What will insurance cover?

B. Alternative Development Approaches Discussion – Rosewood Area RH Zone

Participants were presented with examples of a range of alternative development approaches, in order to gauge if some outcomes are preferable than others. These alternative development examples were based on site configurations common in the RH zone in the Rosewood area, as a case study for high-density development in East Portland. Participants were asked to rate each example as an outcome that would be "Preferred," "OK/Acceptable," or "Should Discourage."

Recent Example (ample parking, multiple buildings)   0 preferred, 1 ok, 6 discourage

Mid-Block Open Space (less parking, single building)   0 preferred, 0 ok, 6 discourage

Side Open space and Tuck Under Parking: 0 preferred, 3 ok, 0 discourage

Multiple Buildings and Dispersed Open Space: 0 preferred, 3 ok, 3 discourage

Large Central Courtyard:

Comments:

- We should code for a changing future. One that we can't see right now. One that allows flexibility.
- Examples have too much parking. Build housing, not car storage.
- Consider climate action goals, less emphasis on cars.
- Use parking as trade for units/affordability.
- Cars are important to people living in the Rosewood area, such as for getting to work – transit doesn't go to where many people's jobs are. Parking is needed.
- It is hard to understand what the minimum standards are in the US – in Canada it is clear that residential has front gardens, while shops are built next to sidewalks, and pedestrian and bike connections are designed to feel safe.
- The prototypes do not illustrate good design – parking and buildings are clumped awkwardly.
- Go look at 1920s garden apartments. These are parked, but in an elegant manner, more dispersed way.
- Good to integrate parking into the buildings in order to gain positive elements.
- Buildings should have multiple entrances.
- Need to rethink the idea of 1 parking space per unit – this is too much. Auto-centric design is bad for livability.
- Parking is important in this area. If we commit to less parking, then we need to commit to better transit/bike/ped infrastructure. Right now, people in the Rosewood area do not have good alternatives to getting where they need to go.
- I drive because transit is inconvenient and walking is unsafe with little kids.
- Mid-block open spaces are not always the best idea. Better to have multiple open space types, allow a variety.
- Having outdoor space at the rear sometimes doesn't feel safe – better to have outdoor space surrounded by residences, not tucked in the rear, out of sight.
- I would feel safe having my children play in the large courtyard example – this type of development should be encouraged.
- Have buildings wrap central open space.