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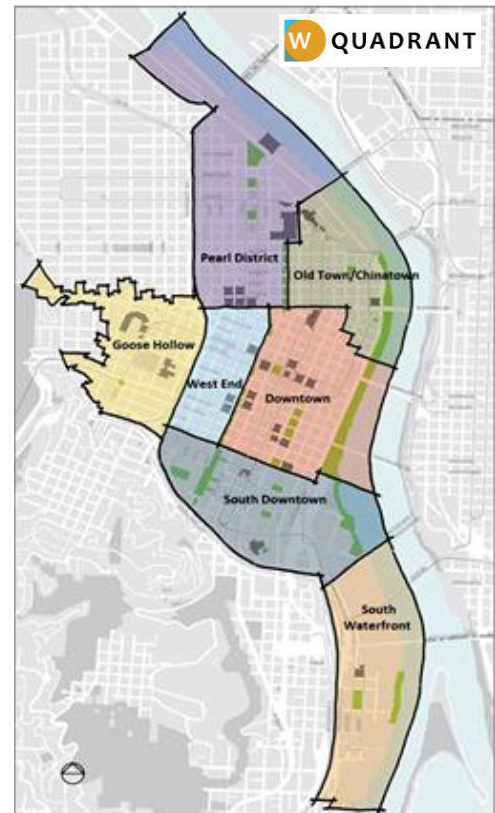
MEMO

DATE: July 31, 2014
TO: Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
FROM: Karl Lisle, West Quadrant Plan Project Manager (3-4286)
CC: Susan Anderson, Joe Zehnder and Sallie Edmunds
SUBJECT: 8/12/14 Central City 2035 West Quadrant Plan Briefing

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff will brief the Planning and Sustainability Commission on the Proposed Draft West Quadrant Plan on Tuesday, August 12. This project is a key component of the 5+ year effort to update the 1988 Central City Plan. It examines a comprehensive range of land use, urban design, transportation, environmental and economic development issues in the western areas of the Central City. The plan area covers seven districts, including Downtown, the West End, Goose Hollow, the Pearl, Old Town/Chinatown, South Waterfront and South Downtown/University. Additional information and project documents can be found on the project website: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/cc2035/westquad>.

Staff is still working on the Proposed Draft West Quadrant Plan document, and will bring printed copies to the briefing on August 12. An earlier version of the plan can be found on the project website at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/496551>.

To develop the plan document, BPS staff worked with co-chairs Katherine Schultz and Karen Williams and a 33-member Stakeholder Advisory Committee for more than 16 months. This committee provided guidance through all



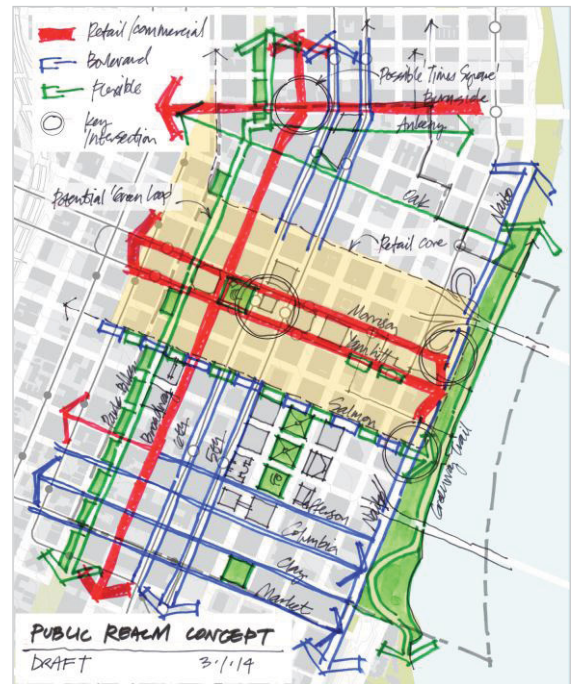
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phases of the planning process – from identification of issues and opportunities to the development of district policies and action items. Public input was gathered through a large week-long charrette held in June 2013 as well as two large quadrant-wide open houses and multiple online feedback tools. In addition, staff held or attended more than 100 meetings with various stakeholders, neighborhood associations, business associations and other groups. Staff is grateful for all those who participated in this process.

Here are some of the key areas of emphasis in the plan:

1. **The Riverfront.** No other topic generated more shared enthusiasm among participants than activating the Willamette River, in the water and along the edges. The plan envisions a true 21st century urban riverfront, with additional development along an enhanced Naito Parkway and a rejuvenated Waterfront Park with improved trail facilities. A healthy and vibrant river, featuring increased human and boat access along with enhanced and restored natural areas, including shallow water habitat is also envisioned. The plan calls for a redesign of Waterfront Park and restoration of several habitat areas to help realize this vision.
2. **Mixed Use.** Informed by the successes of the Pearl District, the plan embraces zoning tools that increase flexibility where possible, allowing more mixing of office, retail and residential within buildings and specific districts than previously possible. Goose Hollow and the West End, in particular, are expected to see increased investment and vibrancy as a result of these changes.
3. **Street Hierarchy.** The Central City’s streets and rights-of-way account for 40 percent of the land area and are, therefore, an untapped opportunity to meet multiple objectives. Compared to other U.S. downtowns our streets are narrow, but we have far more of them. The plan calls for being more intentional about which streets should be shopping streets, which should be quieter and greener, and which ones are important for pedestrians, bicycles, transit vehicles, freight, cars and trucks.
4. **“Green Loop.”** In perhaps its most unique aspiration, the plan recommends designing and building a smooth, signature 10-mile walking and biking parkway connecting parks, attractions, civic institutions and employment centers throughout the Central City. Trail segments would be designed to reflect the unique character of each place or district the Green Loop passes through. This urban trail



Public Realm Concept for Downtown illustrating an intentional street hierarchy



would be unlike anything in the United States today and could bring health benefits, support economic development, increase bike riding (especially by tentative riders) and provide an opportunity to showcase sustainable urban development practices.

- 5. **Strengthening District Character While Embracing Development.** Central City 2035 and the West Quadrant Plan support the projected growth of more than 20,000 new households and some 30,000 new jobs by 2035. The goal of the plan is to develop effective tools to accommodate that growth while preserving important historic and cultural resources, retaining some smaller character-giving buildings, and encouraging new development to incorporate design elements that help make each of the seven districts distinctive.



This rendering illustrates a possible development scenario meeting targets for 3,000 new housing units and 2,000 new jobs in the West End

- 6. **Equity.** At the outset of the planning process, staff introduced a draft equity lens and a set of questions for SAC members to consider as they developed the plan. In the concluding months, Multnomah County and West Quadrant staff developed a set of Central City-wide policies to ensure that communities of color and other underrepresented or underserved populations have access to the benefits of the Central City, do not experience disproportionate burdens and are offered the opportunity to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.
- 7. **Building a low-carbon Central City.** A reduction in carbon emissions from existing and new buildings, transportation systems and infrastructure will help mitigate the global challenge of climate change and create tens of thousands of jobs. A new generation of innovative buildings, technologies, green infrastructure and energy systems can reinforce the Central City’s place as a model for low-carbon, sustainable development.

At the August 12 briefing, staff will review the main elements of the plan as well as touch on some of the areas of controversy. These include:

- A. **The future of Old Town/Chinatown.** To help revitalize the district and encourage new investment, the plan proposes to develop design guidelines for the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District and change heights in a limited area to enable new development while promoting historic preservation through direct development transfers. There was a lot of discussion and public testimony about the future of this historic district highlighting several key divides: preserving architecture vs. preserving culture; looking to



the future vs. protecting the past; developing larger buildings vs. keeping things small. Various members of the public expressed concerns that the scale of new development might not be compatible with existing historic structures.

- B. **Surface Parking.** To support new development and encourage vitality, the plan proposes a number of strategies to address parking needs while reducing the number of surface parking lots, particularly in Old Town/Chinatown, the West End and along West Burnside. Some SAC members and members of the public expressed concern that the City is not doing enough to eliminate surface lots.
- C. **Hawthorne and Morrison bridgehead heights.** To facilitate signature developments that activate the riverfront and visually connect the City to the water, the plan proposes an increase to allowed maximum building heights at the Morrison and Hawthorne bridgeheads. A few SAC members expressed concern that: i) the existing building height step-back from the river should be uniformly maintained; and ii) taller buildings might overwhelm the experience of Tom McCall Waterfront Park.
- D. **Environmental stewardship.** One role of the Central City, and the West Quadrant in particular, is to relieve redevelopment pressure on valuable natural resource areas inside and outside Portland's boundary by developing at high densities. In addition to goals, policies and actions consistent with this role, the plan proposes to protect and improve natural resource areas and enhance habitat opportunities for native species of wildlife within the Central City. Several SAC members felt that the plan did not go far enough given Portland's international reputation for environmental stewardship and sustainable development, as well as the highly visible, energized and progressive design and development community in the West Quadrant today.
- E. **West End building heights.** This plan does not propose changes to existing maximum building heights in the West End. However, members of the public expressed concern that building heights and FARs need to be significantly reduced in this area to protect the district's livability, character and existing historic structures.

Thanks to the work of the West Quadrant Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the City's Technical Advisory Committee, the Proposed Draft West Quadrant Plan contains considerable direction on many topics for the Central City 2035 Plan. Once adopted by the Planning and Sustainability Commission and City Council, staff will be able to draft zoning code amendments on these topics.

However, there are still a number of topic areas not addressed, or fully addressed, in the West Quadrant Plan. Work on parking, bonuses, the update of the Willamette Greenway Plan for the Central Reach, scenic resources, and other topics will continue through focused staff and stakeholder discussions over the next year. This work, along with the completion of the Southeast Quadrant Plan (in process), will come together into a complete Central City 2035 Plan.

Staff looks forward to the briefing and your comments. Thank you.

