

## Partners Group Meeting #1 - Meeting Notes

Review Draft– September 16, 2013

### Introduction

On September 9, 2013, elected officials and staff from the Willamette Falls Legacy Project Partner agencies participated in the first in a series of partner-level meetings. The purpose of the meeting was to present information to date and to receive direction from Partners’ elected and appointed officials to help guide development of the master framework plan for the redevelopment of the Blue Heron Paper Mill site in Oregon City.

### Partners Group Participants by Geographic Representation

State of Oregon Senator	Alan Olson
State of Oregon Representative	Brent Barton
State of Oregon Governor’s Office Representative	Bobby Lee
Metro Council President	Tom Hughes
Metro Councilor	Carlotta Collette
Metro Chief Operating Officer	Martha Bennett
Clackamas County Commissioner	Tootie Smith
Clackamas County Commissioner	Martha Schrader
Clackamas County Director of Business and Community Services	Gary Barth
Oregon City Mayor	Doug Neeley
Oregon City Commissioner	Carol Pauli
Oregon City – City Manager	David Frasher
Blue Heron Paper Mill Trustee	Peter Mckitrick

### Staff and Consultant Participants

City of Oregon City Community Development Director	Tony Konkol
City of Oregon City Planner and WFLP Project Manager	Christina Robertson-Gardiner
Cogan Owens Cogan, LLC	Jim Owens
Cogan Owens Cogan, LLC	Ellen Wyoming
Walker Macy	Mike Zilis
Walker Macy	Ken Pirie
LOCI, Inc.	Matt Brown

Facilitator Jim Owens opened the meeting with a welcome and asked participants to introduce themselves. Tony Konkol provided a project introduction and explained the purpose of the Partners Group. Christina Robertson-Gardiner gave a brief overview of the current site status. Ellen Wyoming presented on the community engagement activities to date and a few key points on what the process has garnered so far regarding desired future vision. She reported these elements from the community engagement process to date:

- “Community Conversation” discussions with 28 local and regional stakeholder groups have engaged hundreds of participants.
- Staff and consultants and held conversations with the Board of Clackamas County Commissioners, Metro Councilors, and City of Oregon City’s Commission independently.

- Project partners hosted an interactive community event at the First City Festival on July 27, 2013 in Oregon City's downtown as a part of the First City Festival.
- Metro Councilor Carlotta Collette, Oregon City Mayor Doug Neeley, and Oregon City Commissioner Carol Pauli as well as staff Tony Konkol and Christina Robertson met with the Grand Ronde Tribal Council in August.
- Staff have hosted 12 site tours for community organizations and business groups.
- City staff have provided information at six events and markets with table information.
- Robust Website, Facebook, E-newsletter platform have engaged hundreds with up to date project information.
- Opt In Opinion Panel survey reached over 2,000 people who responded with their visions for the site
- Partners have helped place articles in local and regional publications.

Key takeaways from these conversations thus far indicate that the public embraces the four core values and regarding site redevelopment, value:

- Public views and access to the falls
- Park and open spaces
- Idea of a concert venue
- Ways to honor historic space/uses
- Restaurants
- Mixed use development
- Housing options

Consultants and staff then presented opportunities and constraints from the early phases of research regarding the site and buildings. Partners were invited to comment, ask questions and give guidance on the findings with respect to the interrelated four core values of Public Access, Economic Redevelopment, Healthy Habitat, and Historic and Cultural Interpretation. Summary notes from this discussion follow.

## **Public Access**

### **Presentation**

- There is challenge for vehicles with one way in/out of site.
- Benefit of hwy 99 and potential access above and over railroad
- Grid is available to re-establish the historic urban pattern
- Access to falls is central and important. PGE is expected to allow access if and as negotiated.
- Pedestrian walk above is in place.
- Waterfront at spur trail and pond.
- Pedestrian walk from Oregon City's downtown to site is a short walk across 99W.
- Existing platforms along the river's edge can be utilized.
- Existing dock to enhance for visitors by boat/kayak.

### **Comments**

- Question of truck access in and out of site. Needs further study.
- Will purchaser be required to follow our vision?

- Not necessarily, but is expected to be e at the table with us during this effort.
  - Purchaser does agree with four core values.
  - We are not designing this but will establish allowed uses via the zoning code.
- Canemah Park - Had a steam ship building plant and a dance hall that was significant in history.
- Traffic concerns. How to handle that?
- Have existing buildings been studied?
  - Yes. Metro predevelopment studies were thorough and we are using those in our evaluation.
  - We will look at the pieces and stated example of Brewery Blocks and the redevelopment that included those existing structures.
- Can a river taxi be included?
  - Yes, the dock has a strong opportunity for that to happen.
- What is contact with State agencies?
  - Very involved with agencies, including ODOT.
  - We have six preliminary transportation concepts we have raised with ODOT and the team's transportation consultant.
  - I highly encourage their engagement at the front of the project. Will need consensus towards MME.
  - DEQ also is important and are involved
- Can the site be car free or optional with parking at the entry area? Example of Granville Island. Needs car and truck access, but make it best for pedestrians.
  - Understand need for easy parking for retail.
- Noted public access as a key to public support for this project. Opportunity for "outside museum" as a public amenity to go with the built museums in the area.

## Economic Redevelopment

### Presentation

- Goal to not be specific about job types, but General opportunities of framework
- Current barriers to development:
  - Site conditions and Existing structures including below street level mix of foundations and utility lines.
  - Floodplain
  - Access - Transportation to and from and impact on density of development
    - Railroad, bluff, river are access challenges.
  - No comparables in this current market. Will require a "Pioneering" project.
- Opportunities - Unique aspects
  - History/cultural
  - River
  - Connections to downtown

- The Falls
- Some opportunities for existing structures
- Framework needs flexibility given above.

### Comments

- Historic trade area up to current blue collar creative. Hoping for continued growth and options for both trade and creative class
- Reuse of facilities. Hope to have business such as McMenamins who work with existing structures.
- Creative sector and also a major tourist draw. Perhaps artists' opportunity to work and sell in this area.
- Can we return manufacturing to the site? As there may be EPA funds avail. And can we model this as an Eco-district?
  - EPA identified contacts for us. EDA also can be contacted as work progresses.
  - Funding may be available for specific programs.
  - David Porter is the local EDA rep and has toured the site.
- Like the idea of entertainment in this site. Opera house/Dance Hall or a legacy project of use. Grand Ronde tribe?
  - Repertory Theatre?
- What percentage needs to be profit generating vs public funded arts?
  - Tax revenue?
  - Energize this site and downtown Oregon City.
  - Need residents of uses on daily basis of office, residential retail to activate this
- Is role of developer to provide private funds for the public development?
  - No. Will require public funds as will be very difficult for private to fund their own goals.
  - Funds may be available from private cultural groups.
  - At the end of this process a sources and uses matrix will provide a realistic approach and balance to the development.
  - Should be a synergy between the benefits to the private development from the uses generated by the public uses.
- When closing happens, the developer will be more active in this project process. They have indicated a significant positive input from public agencies.
- Role of this group to trouble shoot issues to open up desirable development. Take away question marks to development community and use public funds to create the opportunities.
- Not a huge site compared to South Waterfront, or NW Pearl Districts.
  - Tight to combine all pieces and need to discuss priorities of uses.
- Existing downtown offers underdeveloped sites to add to the total area for redevelopment.
- Flood plain - Existing structures provide some advantages for development
  - FEMA certification is a higher concern since Katrina.
  - FEMA does not regulate the site above the flood line. Local agencies control that.
- Is there a regional economic development strategy for this area?
- Noted a grant to West Linn for 80 acre study. This will include Blue Heron redevelopment as a catalyst in their study.
  - West Linn important and extent of the study so far.

## Healthy Habitat

### Presentation

- Existing rocky site has been manipulated.
- Limited opportunities for bank enhancements due to force of river.
- Lagoon used to have moving water - needs fresh water again.
- Migratory fish have had extensive efforts in place; we can't change that.
- Need resting areas for fish/lamprey.
- Look to remove some build pediments in the waterway.
- Improve conditions for migratory birds.

### Comments

- Re-create mist areas for year-round habitat.
- Steam ships were located in the pond area and could return to boat uses.
- Can creating new flow help salmon. Answer from ODFW is no: too high of a lift.
- Back up of water is different than history due to other industrial building in the area.
- Ideally the entire site is managed as one entity for habitat as well as economics and eco district opportunities.

## Historical and Cultural Interpretation

### Presentation

- There is no more important location of the early settlement of Oregon and the Territory.
- Photos of development structures show significant history, but many have been degraded for industrial changes over the years.
- Many structures are more covers for equipment than buildings.
- Four structures are noted for their significance.
- Other opportunities of clusters of adjacent existing buildings.
- Fascinating in all seasons.
- Foundations of buildings have strong qualities to be considered.
- Historic city grid is available to re-establish.

### Comments

- To what extent are we able to control this site vs. developer. They own it, not us.
  - Current zoning does not allow what the developer will want. Zoning and planning is the tool by which the public side can regulate what happens here.
  - There are some great pieces of equipment (sphire) that are equally important as the structures.
  - Developer will need certainty.
- Are we offering architectural and engineering direction and data to the developer?

- Yes, they will have access to all studies accomplished and we will prepare further studies that will be avail to them.
- This area is not in an urban renewal district. And would have to be a separate district as too large to be an add-on.
- Grand Ronde tribes are very important in this effort; they have had very open input from them so far. Interpretive center may be an opportunity on which we could partner with them.
- Idea for site that developer does not try to develop entire site, but section off a portion that is given to public and/or for partners.
- PGE has been a great partner.
- May be an opportunity for federal connection and funding through parks.
- How is there a connection to larger regional opportunities such as the Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition?
  - Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition is working forward on path towards tourism and a heritage designation.
  - This is limited funds and directed to interpretation rather than buildings.
  - No known constraints to redevelopment.
  - Federal tax credits available.

The meeting closed a few minutes early with a brief conversation of next steps and keeping in mind the week of December 9, 2013 for the next Partners Group meeting.