

TOD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 19, 2005 1:30 to 3:00

Metro (600 NE Grand Ave) Room 274

Members present: Mark Ellsworth, Chair (Governor's Office), Vince Chiotti (Oregon Housing & Community Services), Tamira Clark (ODOT), Jillian Detweiler (TriMet), Robert Liberty (Metro Council, District 6) Cheryl Twete (PDC)

Staff present: Andy Cotugno, Phil Whitmore, Kelley Webb, Marc Guichard, Lisa Miles, Meganne Steele, and Lisa Hrenko.

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Mark Ellsworth called the meeting to order at 1:38 PM and asked for any discussion items on the minutes of the July 26, 2005 meeting.

Ms. Jillian Detweiler noted that there should only be one l in the spelling of her last name.

Action Taken: Chair Ellsworth moved to accept the minutes from the July 26, 2005 meeting. Ms. Cheryl Twete seconded the motion. The minutes were approved, with Councilor Robert Liberty abstaining.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE POLICY DIRECTION FOR TOD/CENTERS

Mr. Phil Whitmore presented a Power Point presentation on "TOD/Centers Program Strategy" for the purpose of soliciting input from the TOD Steering Committee regarding program scope and strategy. Input was being sought by Councilor Liberty for a scheduled appearance before the Metro Council on the subject. (Handout of the presentation included as part of this meeting record)

Mr. Whitmore offered six possible strategic directions for the future of the TOD/Centers program. These were:

- Implement Projects: continue to build examples in pioneer TOD/Centers markets
- Share Expertise/Build Partnerships: provide advocacy and technical assistance to targeted audiences
- Promote Public Spaces: create a regional funding source for urban plazas and open space projects
- Feed Centers: Farmers Markets and Grocery Stores
- Expand Funding: identify new revenue sources to expand ability to implement projects regionally
- Reduce Barriers: provide advice and assistance to larger planning efforts addressing goals, codes and incentives

The rest of the presentation covered information from a Get Centered Forum featuring George Crandall and Rudy Barton (along with a panel of public sector business people) on the topic of promoting public spaces and investing in centers.

After Mr. Whitmore's presentation, members discussed suggestions and ideas for the future policy direction of the program and offered suggestions on what the group or the region can do in order for the program to take a quantum leap forward including an increase in TOD/Centers funding and strategic investments to spur higher density/mixed-use sooner.

The Committee went over examples of projects that have worked and those that haven't and the possible reasons why. Unique retail and restaurants were two examples given of what needs to be included in order for a higher density, mixed-use project to succeed. Affordable housing issues were also discussed in relation to success. Location issues and a lack of amenities came up as possible examples of why a project can fail.

Members expressed an interest in investing in a few critical projects with a "wow" factor to get interest going and to show developers that this is what people want. Criteria for what would make a "wow" project were discussed as well as what it takes to put such a project together. The need for a mix of big and little projects was also raised.

The Committee discussed the possibility of focusing resources in one center at a time rather than taking projects as they come (as the policy has been). Concern was expressed that focusing on one center at a time may eliminate good projects that come up elsewhere. Concern was also raised that focusing on one center could raise costs by lowering the private sector desire to be aggressive about other sources of money. It was advocated that the criteria continue to be that funding go to a project that was real and out there in order to stay opportunistic, creative and visible.

Discussion also covered spending money on fewer projects in order to have more money per project, especially since costs continue to rise. Members suggested that this would help the final project more closely match the original vision and result in higher quality.

The Committee talked about the need to identify new revenue sources in order to expand the program. Ms. Detweiler suggested that the recent partnership between Metro, TriMet, and the PDC (on Interstate) could be an example of something new to copy in the future. Members also commented on potential property tax or bond possibilities, but wanted to look into polling information. Members also wanted to explore the possibility of private donors and businesses as additional sources of money.

Members talked about being clear up front on the goals of a project and the possibility of narrowing the public goals for a project based on specific locations.

The Committee noted the importance of getting the private sector excited and about helping local jurisdictions get involved. Suggestions offered concerned an investment or support in developers and private financial partners to educate and help them in how they can get involved in projects and to show them why they should want to.

Members discussed possibilities of what the program can do to promote the role of the urban plaza, using the Round in Beaverton as an example. Members talked about the need to encourage urban town centers and plazas, citing the work Vancouver has done as a model. Concern was expressed that while plazas are good catalysts in town centers, the message should be that you don't just go build a plaza and expect the rest to follow but that you have to be pro-active and focus on the ability of the development to activate the plaza. It was noted that just building a plaza should not be seen as a replacement strategy for public investment in development.

Members felt that it will be important to work with communities that do have money for investment in public places to help them do so with a connection to the centers strategy. This was seen as an opportunity to make the program much bigger. A desire was also expressed to focus on the design and importance of finding places that work for the criteria of high density for the centers program, but to also be unique and cater to the community. Member wanted to make sure that they not do the same thing over and over.

Steering Committee Members discussed the importance of a farmers' market or grocery store in future projects, focusing on the Vancouver Farmers' Market as an example of what they may want to look at. Discussion took place on techniques to fund a grocery store or farmer's market by using new program criteria or strategy. A suggestion was offered that open spaces and grocery stores/farmers markets could fall under the program strategy for complete communities in order to provide a role for public money to round out or inspire places that are walkable and livable.

Mr. Vince Chiotti stated that he doesn't want the program to be just a gap-filler by supporting projects that are just looking for money, but rather wants to get behind projects that are truly buying into what program is about.

Discussion ended with the suggestion that there be recognition that this is not just about the TOD program, but about what is going on around the region and the fact that TriMet, PDC, Milwaukie, Gresham, and others are actively involved is an important resource that is going to make things work in these places. The question is how can we reinforce this and have even more people involved.

REPORT – OVERLOOK TERRACE PROJECT

Mr. Whitmore provided a brief overview of the issue of the concern on what is the appropriate return on investment for condo projects as compared to rental, and asked the members to read the communication for the full report on Overlook.

REPORTS

Mr. Whitmore gave reports on the Milwaukie Texaco site, the Milwaukie North Main Village project, and the work plan amendment approved by the Council allowing unsolicited proposals.

Committee members discussed the advantages of unsolicited proposals and the use of RFP's and RFQ's.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Ellsworth adjourned the meeting at 3:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Hrenko
Recording Secretary