



WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 3, 2014
Area 93 (Bonny Slope West) Advisory Briefing and Discussion

Meeting Summary

The Planning and Development Services Manager noted that this represents the first time the Planning Commission (PC) has played an advisory role on a plan that will ultimately come back to the PC. On 12/02/14, the Board adopted an R&O that authorized the PC to act in this capacity for the Bonny Slope West community planning.

Staff presented background information on the following topics:

- History of Bonny Slope West (BSW) from 2002 to the present
- Physical characteristics
- Current land use designations in BSW and the surrounding area
- Existing street network in BSW and the surrounding area
- Metro and State planning requirements for new urban areas

Members of the PC offered the following questions and comments about the row of properties on the north side of Thompson Road, south of the BSW planning area:

- Will inclusion / exclusion of this area impact the ability to create north/south connectivity between the planning area and Thompson Road?
- Has any consideration been given to applying a commercial land use designation to this row of properties?

Dick Steinbrugge, Executive Administrator for facilities for Beaverton School District, provided oral public comment. He referred to a comment letter that was provided to the PC as a handout. He noted the following:

- The school district (BSD) has been an active member of the BSW Technical Advisory Committee
- BSD shared with that committee that there was a need for an elementary school site to be incorporated into the BSW community plan
- BSD has conducted a site feasibility analysis and determined a feasible site in BSW, south of Hiller Lane and west of 120th Avenue
- BSD is also concerned about Saltzman Road, a BSD bus route, because its narrow lanes make it challenging to have a bus and another large vehicle pass each other

Members of the PC offered the following questions and comments in response to Mr. Steinbrugge's comments:

- BSD owns a building to the east of Bonny Slope in Multnomah County within a rural reserve. Is there a possibility to expand that school site to accommodate more students who are located within the UGB?

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- Aren't there provisions in a lot of the county's urban residential zones (not just Institutional) that would allow an institution such as a school?
- Applying an Institutional designation could impose a limit on property value because there would be only one party with whom the seller could negotiate
- Are you talking with the property owner identified in the BSD site feasibility analysis?
- Are there funds available for BSD to make land acquisition for a school?
- Could the community plan have an allowance for locating a school somewhere in BSW without tying it to a specific site?
- The velocity of development has exceeded previous modeling for building schools and it's catching everyone by surprise. The school district needs to be proactive in staying ahead of the velocity right now.

James Crawford, BSW property owner, offered public comment. He made the following points:

- The owner of the property identified by BSD's site feasibility analysis has his property under contract with a developer. Designating that property for a school takes away his opportunity to make a sale.
- Adjacent property in the rural reserve could be acquired fairly inexpensively from a willing seller for a school.
- The Clean Water Services vegetated corridor boundary for the creek is very reasonable compared with Multnomah County's 600-foot stream buffer.
- The area developers, such as Arbor, should be engaged to get their assistance in doing some of the engineering for the area.
- The school district had a large amount of money in the late 90's or early 2000's for capital improvement projects, and they did not buy school sites.
- The Planning Commission can come out to visit my property.

Mike Nelson, BSW property owner, offered public comment. He made the following points:

- He owns land west of 120th Avenue and south of Hiller Lane, but he has not been contacted by BSD regarding a proposed school site.
- The urban planning process has taken a long time and Multnomah County was unable to finish it.
- Working with Washington County has been a good experience, and he hopes this process goes quickly and smoothly.

Stacey Wainwright, a property owner to the south of BSW, offered public comment. She made the following points:

- She's a parent of children in two overcrowded BSD schools.
- Her concern is residential density in BSW.
- Why are county staff proposing density greater than required by state law when schools are overcrowded and area roads are considered unsafe?
- The county has discretion to zone for density less than 8 units per buildable acre, according to the state's Metropolitan Housing Rule.
- Although area schools are near or over capacity, the county's plans propose relatively high density and don't include siting a school in the area.
- Shouldn't improvement of Saltzman Road take place before any new families are added to BSW?
- Although the portion of Thompson Road near BSW may be slated for improvement by Washington County, the portion of this road within Multnomah County also has

dangerous curves. Shouldn't Washington County work with Multnomah County to ensure that the road as a whole can support the new traffic from BSW?

- She asked that the county zone BSW for housing density of no more than R5 and R6.

Members of the PC offered the following questions and comments in response to the public comments:

- Can the county pull crash data for Thompson and Saltzman Roads to see if there's a documented safety issue with these roads?
- One commissioner noted that many of the crashes on Saltzman go unreported, and the northern portion of Saltzman is too narrow for two school buses to pass each other.

Staff presented information on public feedback received at the April Open House:

- Support for single family residential neighborhood development compatible with surrounding area
- Support for protection of the creek and natural features
- Support for connectivity between neighborhoods and safe and inviting streets for all users
- Lack of support for a commercial node, with many comments about the lack of longevity of businesses in the commercial node at Saltzman/Laidlaw

Members of the PC offered the following questions / comments in response to the April Open House and technical information:

- The childcare business at the Saltzman/Laidlaw commercial node has thrived and even expanded over time

Staff presented information on technical information collected since the April Open House:

- TAC meetings
- Dept of Geological and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) is evaluating landslide susceptibility issues
- Pacific Habitat Services (PHS) has inventoried the creeks, wetlands, and riparian areas and has estimated the Clean Water Services (CWS) Vegetated Corridors
- TY Lin civil engineers have looked at preliminary costs of a pedestrian/bike creek crossing and full vehicle crossing at Marcotte
- ECONorthwest will be assisting in development of an infrastructure funding plan

Members of the PC offered the following questions / comments in response to this technical information:

- Will the county treat deep and shallow-seated landslide susceptibility areas in BSW any differently than those areas are treated in North Bethany?
- DOGAMI takes a very conservative approach. Metropolitan Land Group's experience was that MLG's geotechnical engineer disagreed with DOGAMI's assumptions. We don't want to eliminate areas for development if they're suitable for development.
- There were questions about the methodology that PHS used to determine the Riparian Area boundary.
- There may be some questions about whether PHS was too conservative with the riparian estimate. Could PHS compare the most conservative estimation method with the least conservative, and provide us with feedback on the trade-offs of these methods?
- Would the pedestrian bridge that goes over Cedar Hills Boulevard south of Cornell be of the same character as the potential ped/bike creek crossing of Ward Creek?

- Has the ped/bike creek crossing been discussed with THPRD yet, as far as their ability to be involved with it financially?
- Have traffic studies looked at the impact on Saltzman Road if the ped/bike crossing and/or the auto bridge at Marcotte Road is constructed?
- Will the PC play a role in the conversation about infrastructure funding in BSW?
- Are parkway streets (one-sided streets) still under consideration? That could affect the financing considerations for BSW.

James Crawford, BSW property owner, offered public comment. He made the following points:

- He owns the properties on which the two potential ped/bike creek crossing sites are currently proposed, so he's familiar with the characteristics of those areas.
- Both locations are fairly wide portions of the creek canyon that would require longer, more expensive bridges.
- He would like to meet with staff and their consultants to point out other, narrower locations.
- If the elevation of the bridge is reduced (placed lower in creek canyon with trail approaches) it will be shorter and less expensive.
- There is room for refinement in design of the crossing that will considerably reduce its costs.

Staff presented the following considerations about residential density in BSW:

- Public feedback at the April and October open houses expressed a strong preference for lower residential densities.
- Metro's current Urban Growth Management Functional Plan requirements apply to BSW, but they don't specify a minimum density requirement for the area.
- Metro has recommended the county look to the state's Metropolitan Housing Rule (MHR) as a potential backstop.
- The state has encouraged us to plan for densities that achieve the MHR requirement of at least 8 units per net buildable acre, so that's the county's current goal post.
- The MHR is a county-wide target and staff is currently reviewing the county's performance in meeting that target.
- If the county exceeds the MHR requirement county-wide, one of the Planning Commissioners has asked how that would affect the residential densities proposed in BSW. Staff does not have an answer for that question yet.
- Other variables to consider with regard to residential densities in BSW include compatibility with adjacent areas, the physical and environmental constraints of the planning area, and infrastructure funding considerations.
- At the October open house, we displayed a proposal for most of the area to be designated R-6, with a smaller area in the SW portion of the planning area to be designated R-9. We think we can meet the MHR goalpost with this mix of residential densities.
- Staff has begun to look at how many residential units could result if most of the area is R-6 and a smaller portion is R-9.
- The Community Development Code allows but does not require a developer to transfer density from an undevelopable portion of a site (such as a steep slope) to the remainder of the site. Staff has begun to look at how many residential units could result under different density transfer scenarios.

Members of the PC offered the following questions / comments in response to the information about residential density considerations:

- Objection to the concept of density transfer, because it could result in a more dense development pattern on the buildable part of a property than would be expected from the property's land use designation.
- Even with the density transfer allowance, lots within a development still have to meet minimum dimensional standards and minimum lot sizes, which limits the amount of density that can be transferred to the buildable part of a property.
- Density transfer has a bearing on efficient use of land, resources, and services. It may be ecologically beneficial for the county or drainage area as a whole to get the maximum density into an urban area.
- The density transfer allowance may be more beneficial to the developer, as it allows them to create more lots and obtain more profit.
- If density transfers are not allowed, a developer can provide executive sized lots.
- The infrastructure costs will be a large component of the density transfer and residential density discussion.
- There is a very wide range in the number of residential units under the various density transfer scenarios – about a 50 percent difference between the low end and the high end.

County Counsel offered the following considerations regarding PC site visits to BSW:

- Public meeting laws must be considered.
- The PC has to be careful to avoid convening a public meeting, even inadvertently. Public meeting laws require public meetings to be noticed and to provide facilities for the public to attend the meeting.
- A site visit is not considered a public meeting. Being at the site and talking to people or property owners at the site are not considered public meetings.
- However, Counsel's reading of the public meeting laws is that there should be no discussion of the BSW planning while going to and from the site, except if the PC is traveling in a number below a quorum (less than 5 PC members).
- Four or fewer PC members traveling together to visit the site is fine.
- Please have property owner permission before you enter someone's property.
- Later on, when the PC is actually making a decision (when an ordinance is being considered), PC members will have to disclose site visits.

End of 12/3/2014 Meeting Summary