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Memorandum

TO: Michael Bergstrom and Robin Cole
City of Bellevue

FROM: Sandy Fischer, Director of Planning and Design
EDAW, Inc.

DATE: July 16, 2008

RE: **Technical Memorandum No. 2: Land Use Analysis**

Executive Summary

EDAW reviewed the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan element of the Meydenbauer Bay Park and Land Use Plan prepared by Sasaki and dated May 15, 2008 and supporting documents provided by City of Bellevue (COB). This technical memo (TM2) summarizes the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan, provides an overview of unresolved issues and describes opportunities. The Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan is a site master plan that illustrates building masses and pedestrian connection concepts for the upland areas. The plan includes background information on the process used for arriving at the design, illustrations of alternatives and a bulleted summary of outstanding issues. The plan does not address implementation strategies, illustrate urban design concepts or describe in any detail the development program, policy and regulatory changes required to implement the plan.

The Preferred Preliminary Land Use Plan proposes closure of 100th Avenue SE, and coordinated redevelopment of one city owned and two privately owned parcels; the redevelopment was designed to improve pedestrian connections and environments by developing a series of mid block pathways and plazas. The envisioned program, uses, unit yield, form and character of the structures is not thoroughly developed or documented. City staff is undertaking more detailed analysis and documentation of the program, parking requirements, and implementation strategies including a zoning analysis. City staff will also identify comprehensive plan and land use code amendments that will be required to implement land use changes and the eventual park master plan.

Due in part to the development of the land use plan in isolation from the park plan, the edge condition between the park and the development is not fully developed and some opportunities may have been missed. The grade difference along this edge is more than a full story or approximately 12 feet. This grade change holds potential to activate the corridor edge, provide vertical circulation, capitalize on views, and separate public and private uses while pulling some uses and structures away from the shoreline.

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Twelve issues and opportunities addressed in the findings and recommendations section of this document include:

1. Concept Plan Versus Comprehensive Land Use Proposal
2. Communicating Land Use Concepts
3. LUCAs and CPAs required to Implement Park and Land Use Concepts
4. Coordination with the Shoreline Management Plan Update
5. Character and Form
6. Feasibility and Urban Form
7. Development Program Assumptions
8. Opportunities for improved Vertical Connections
9. ADA Solutions
10. Undocumented Parking Requirements or Proposals
11. Unresolved Access and Circulation Issues
12. Status of Plan Documentation and Analysis

The design of the park and access to the water is a complex three dimensional challenge that must both respect and evolve the existing urban form. The master plan should initially focus on improving access, circulation and connections, while providing eloquent grade transitions. The master plan should also offer options for the shoreline interface and spatial arrangements with built and natural terraces that provide opportunity and flexibility to incorporate a wide range of building and outdoor uses today and in the future.

Scope of Review

The purpose of TM2 is to provide a review and analysis of the Meydenbauer Bay Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan dated May 15, 2008 prepared by Sasaki Associates for the City of Bellevue (COB). Supporting documents prepared by Sasaki and preliminary analysis documents prepared by COB were also reviewed, including the Opportunities and Constraints Summary (Sasaki, 4/04/2008)

EDAW 's contract includes a small budget to support COB staff on strategy and graphic illustrations to assist with communicating and processing the required comprehensive plan amendments (CPAs), land use code amendments (LUCAs) and development guidance to implement the land use plan. Additionally, EDAW is tasked with integrating a new Park Master Plan with a Land Use Plan to produce a comprehensive vision for the project area.

Staff Discussions

Following review of the documents prepared by the Sasaki Team, Sandy Fischer of EDAW met with project manager Mike Bergstrom of the COB Planning and Community Development Department (PCD) to gain a better understanding of recommendations, unresolved issues and consulting support required to advance the LUCAs and CPAs.

COB staff and EDAW agree that detailed assessments of Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code Amendments, development guidelines and implementation strategies will be developed once the park design and the interface between the park and land use plans is further developed. It is likely new ideas could emerge during the park master planning process that may require other CPAs and LUCAs.

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Background

Initially the land use study area encompassed primary and secondary study areas. The primary study area included city owned properties plus nearby upland properties that might redevelop in a manner that complements the park expansion. Early land use alternatives addressed redevelopment of upland areas that have been described as the Upper Block and the area South of Main (the primary study area is illustrated on page 6 of Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan). As part of the early studies, a market analysis was prepared by Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) to assess the economic feasibility of ensuring redevelopment through the use of 100% market-based development incentives. This analysis concluded that significant additional development capacity would be required on the Upper Block to provide sufficient economic incentive for current owners to redevelop versus pursue condo conversions. The analysis included introduction of commercial uses and taller buildings, possibly as high as fourteen stories. In response to this finding, 100% market-based incentives to ensure redevelopment in the Upper Block have not been pursued further. However, the steering committee does support policy and regulatory changes to provide some degree of incentive (other than height increases or addition of new allowable uses) that could result in an improved pedestrian environment along the edges of the Upper Block.

The Sasaki led planning team explored alternatives and incentives for redevelopment of the area South of Main. The incentives included additional development capacity, expanded retail opportunity, increased lot coverage, and reduced setbacks, use of FAR versus units per acre zoning; all within the existing height limitations.

Findings and recommendations:**1. Concept Plan Versus Comprehensive Land Use Proposal**

The Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan is a very general site plan and does not document recommendations on funding, policy, phasing or partnership strategies. However, the proposed site, circulation and building configuration will require coordinated redevelopment of a City owned parcel with two private land owners. Benefits of coordinated redevelopment include shared underground parking, pedestrian connections, plazas, viewpoints and active public spaces. COB staff has explained that the City will engage in conversations with the landowners and will be developing partnership strategies and refining incentives in upcoming months.

2. Communicating Land Use Concepts

Overall the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan requires more detailed development and/or documentation to communicate the intent and envisioned neighborhood urban form to stakeholders including the property owners, planning commission and city council. EDAW recommends a series of 3D diagrams, tables and matrices be prepared illustrating existing zoning, and allowable form, density, setbacks, and lot coverage under current code as compared to what will be permitted, and encouraged through incentives for redeveloping in partnership with the City.

3. Identify LUCAs and CPAs required to Implement Park and Land Use Concepts

The Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan narrative indicates changes are required to several elements of the Comprehensive Plan and land use regulations. *Specific changes are not outlined in the May 2008 documents. CPAs and LUCAs will likely be developed*

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and reviewed simultaneously. City staff will identify comprehensive plan and land use code amendments that will be required to implement land use changes and the eventual park master plan, as the plan progresses. EDAW will review and suggest revisions as the park plan evolves.

CPAs may be needed to address several sections of the Comprehensive Plan including the Downtown, North Bellevue and South Bellevue Neighborhood Plans, and the Land Use Code to provide redevelopment incentives in the upper block area, and to address setbacks, density, lot coverage, parking and permitted uses in the block south of Main. Mechanisms for implementing the plan under consideration are new district, overlay district, or special opportunity areas. Development codes and guidance will need to be revised to support Comprehensive Plan amendments. LUCAs may also need to address incentives and design guidelines for a new district or other land use implementation tools.

4. Coordination with Shoreline Management Plan Update

An update to the COB Shoreline Master Program is currently underway with Watershed Company providing consultant support. EDAW agrees to coordinate our work with the shoreline update and requests COB staff continue to forward analysis and draft recommendations for our review prior to public hearings on the recommendations.

5. Character and Form

The site plans for the South of Main Site are general; lacking information on landscape architectural connections (100th street on west end and park perimeter). The summary report includes no indication of building 3D form or architectural intent. This appears to be a missed opportunity. The plan would benefit from further three dimensional development with sections and 3D diagrams to illustrate existing and proposed form, vertical connections and FAR yields. More detailed architectural studies may reveal that the depth and forms of the proposed building masses may need refinement for the intended uses or development intensities. Introduction of natural light and ventilation concepts may reduce the FAR yield. EDAW's urban designers will prepare preliminary architectural massing concepts with sketch up diagrams of the concepts. These diagrams will help all stakeholders understand proposed changes. This work should be deferred until the park concepts are further developed. Cross sections of the preliminary land use plan should be developed to allow further study of park edge interface and opportunities described above.

6. Feasibility and Urban Form

COB staff has explained that one intent of the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan is to provide additional development capacity in the area South of Main within the existing height limits using increased lot coverage and reduced setbacks, in order to achieve public spaces, building forms, and uses that complement and provide transition to the park. The documents EDAW reviewed do not illustrate or confirm the feasibility of achieving the equivalent of 60 units per acre while at the same time retaining the amount of un-built lot coverage shown on the site plan diagrams within forms that match the intended uses. Again further development of the three dimensional building forms, capacity yields and underground parking layouts should be pursued.

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7. Confirm Development Program Assumptions

COB staff has indicated the intent is to further incentivize redevelopment through use of FAR versus units per acre zoning. The draft land use plan does not document assumptions related to the envisioned development program, density, unit sizes, commercial square footage or lot coverage. However, in an earlier version of the redevelopment concepts for the South of Main area, an assumption of 25,000 total square feet of commercial space was assumed. That version included a potential commercial building on the city-owned parcel on the west side of 100th Ave SE, of approximately 8,000 sf in size. That building is no longer reflected on the preliminary plan, leaving as assumed 17,000 sf east of 100th Ave SE. Refinement of this assumption is needed to test the parking program and to determine trip generation for the traffic study. After development of Park Plan Alternatives, EDAW will ask the parking consultants to assess trip generation and parking demands for the park and proposed land use program against existing conditions.

8. Opportunities for Improved Vertical Connections

Vertical connectivity from the Downtown Park to the waterfront is one of the sites greatest challenges and opportunities. The Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan relies on a landscape solution (steps, plazas and small garden terraces) to accommodate grade changes. The preliminary preferred land use concept does not address the use of vertical circulation or terracing of building forms as part of the solution. This is a missed opportunity. Further development of the Sasaki massing studies for the purpose of confirming and illustrating intent and opportunities is needed. The overall design would benefit from integrated planning of buildings and interior vertical circulation, corridors and outdoor spaces. Harbor Square in Seattle is an excellent example of design integration of architecture and site with the solution addressing graceful grade transitions, place-shaping through architecture, and landscape architecture. The park plan should also explore tucking park or marina related building uses into the underutilized hillside. This edge is more than a full story high and holds potential to activate the corridor edge, provide vertical circulation, capitalize on views, and separate public and private uses while pulling some uses and structures away from the shoreline.

9. ADA Solutions

It is unclear if the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan embodies an effective ADA strategy and if a compliant route is addressed. Item 8, above may yield an integrated solution. Again, a creative solution could for example, incorporate a public elevator into the architecture. In Meydenbauer Park, the solution and transitions could be more eloquent and capitalize on views

10. Undocumented Parking Requirements or Proposals

The plan does not document parking required to support the envisioned use and density or develop in detail the underground parking strategy and yield. COB will coordinate with Perteet to provide sufficient information for proper analysis of parking analysis and traffic impacts.

11. Unresolved Access and Circulation Issues

Streetscape development, redevelopment and new pedestrian connections including the closure of 100th Ave. SE are key strategies in the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan.

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Not all of the access issues or streetscape designs are resolved. Access to the Vue Condominium is unresolved, and emergency vehicle, service vehicle, resident and guest vehicle, and pedestrian access to adjacent properties require further investigation and resolution. Traffic circulation concerns and network modifications are not addressed in detail and the street cross sections need development. Street and right of way widths and designs appear to be quite variable. Evaluation of current conditions in greater detail and recommendations for driveway locations, right of way widths and streetscape standards for each critical street and pathway connection should be developed. As the park design develops, designers should also pursue a more obvious hierarchy of the multiple routes and gateways into the neighborhood and the park.

12. Status of Plan Documentation and Analysis

COB acknowledges that the Preliminary Preferred Land Use Plan is intentionally general because COB has not made any decisions on CPAs, LUCAs, or program. The proposals and assumptions in the land use plan need to be tested against, and integrated with, the Park Master Plan recommendations so that the unified proposal works as a whole. EDAW's discussions with interest groups reveal that stakeholders are expecting unresolved issues to be addressed and opportunities provided for review and comment.

Conclusions

The redesign of the park and access to the water is a complex three dimensional challenge that must both respect and evolve the existing urban form including uses of the land, building and water. An optimal urban design solution will integrate site, shoreline and architectural concepts. "Fitting" the pieces together in an inspired solution will require both grand gestures and detailed design. This is best accomplished through integrated three dimensional approach to land, corridors and buildings and will require further development of the Preferred Preliminary Land Use Plan into a fully fleshed out urban design. EDAW recommends that the park master plan should initially focus on improving access, circulation and connections, while providing eloquent grade transitions. The master plan should also offer options for the shoreline interface and spatial arrangements with built and natural terraces that provide opportunity and flexibility to incorporate a wide range of building and outdoor uses today and in the future.