

Marina District Planning

Summary of Stakeholders Meeting #3 – November 3, 2010

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Stakeholder Group Meeting #3 was to review the stakeholder contributions to date, make additional refinements to Scenario 1.0 and discuss and confirm policy recommendations for the Planning Agency and City Council consideration.

Staff shared the initial modeling of the Stakeholder Group ideas from meetings 1 and 2. The model depicted building heights at 45 feet along 7th Avenue S between S 222nd and S 225th Streets and at 65 feet on the QFC site. In addition, the envisioned streetscape was shown along S 223rd Street from Marine View Drive to Cliff Avenue.

Staff provided an overview of how current development standards and design guidelines were applied when characterizing the building design. Stakeholders were also able to see what it might be like to stand on the ground in the model and from various perspectives within and adjacent to the Marina District. This allowed the Stakeholders to better understand the topographic characteristics of the area and potential view impacts.

Discussion of Scenario 1.0 and proposed policy recommendations focused on economic opportunities, building heights, traffic circulation, and access to the Marina. In general, there is consensus on the broader land use and streetscape character as described for Scenario 1.0. Increasing building heights is deemed critical for existing properties (i.e., Stegin property, QFC and others) to redevelop; however, the Stakeholder group wants to ensure that increases are considered through a special review process in order to monitor change incrementally. It was noted that land assembly would be necessary for any significant development projects to occur.

Although there were differing opinions on where to focus economic development efforts, allowing more mixed use on the Marina floor and providing a direct connection from the Marina floor to S 223rd was identified as the key to the overall success of the Marina District vision. It was suggested that the City sell property on the Marina floor for commercial development; however, staff pointed out that the land was acquired for a public purpose and indicated that a long-term lease might be an option for consideration. Other comments included the need to provide a range of housing choices, to plan for a younger population (including Highline Community College students), and to ensure the Marina District sets itself apart from other communities. The idea of a one-way couplet was tabled given the fact that couplets have not always worked well in other communities (i.e., City of Redmond).

The following summarizes the general policy direction provided by the Stakeholder Group:

- Increase building heights now to stimulate economic investment. Allow flexibility regarding where height increases are permitted to ensure existing underdeveloped properties can take advantage of the opportunity.
- Ensure that affordable housing choices are available within the Marina District and that developers are incentivized to provide housing to different economic segments of the population.
- Use Development Agreements or the Planned Unit Development process rather than an area-wide rezone to allow increased building heights – this would enable the City to monitor the pace and form of development and its impact on other properties.
- Focus economic efforts on attracting commercial development to the Marina Floor and investment in a stair climb and elevator to S 223rd Street.
- Focus the initial pedestrian and streetscape improvements on S 233rd Street from Cliff Avenue to Marine View Drive.
- Establish a Local Improvement District and/or other alternative funding approach that targets funds for completing the pedestrian access from the Marina floor to S 223rd as well as streetscape improvements. This could be tied to height bonuses or other deviations from development standards.

In summary, the Stakeholder Group was in support of a Developer and Property Owner Forum and broader community outreach to confirm the vision and policy recommendations of the group. They also expressed an interest in reconvening in early 2011 to discuss the outcome of the Developer/Property Owner Forum and community outreach efforts and finalize their recommendations to the Planning Agency and City Council.