

Art & Design Teams-All Work Session Meeting Synopsis
October 22, 2009
Lane Council of Governments Buford Conference Room, Eugene
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Attendees:

ADTS: Robin Craig, Mike Faha, Lee Imonen, Adam Kuby, Suzanne Lee, GreenWorks; Tulsi Wallace, Yotokko Kilpatrick, Erin Lamb, Betsy Wolfston, Litus/Five Weavers; Peg Butler, Pat Lando, Buster Simpson, Lando and Associates

Stakeholders and DEP Members: Charlotte Behm, CAG/CPC/DEP; Charles Biggs, CPC; Damon Crume, Willamalane-Parks Maintenance; Eric Gunderson, CAG/DEP; Rich Hazel, CAG/Laurel Hill Valley Citizens; Greg Hyde, CAG/Willamalane-Parks Planning; Bob Kline, CAG/DEP; Charlene Larison, CPC; David Lewis, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde; Annie Loe, DEP; Sally McAleer, Travel Lane County; Randy Nishimura, DEP; Sally Nunn, CPC; Philip Richardson, Eugene Parks and Open Space; John Rose, DEP; Jennifer Smith, Eugene Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; David Sonnichsen, CAG/CPC/PDT; Esther Stutzman, Kalapuya Elder; Scott Wylie, CAG/DEP

Staff: Dick Upton, ODOT; Ann Sanders, ODOT/PDT; Don Kahle, Douglas Beauchamp, Larry Fox, Justin Lanphear, Megan Banks

Meet and Greet

The Art and Design Teams talked with stakeholders in different parts of the conference room. A map specific to each team's bundle and an overall bundle map were on the wall to talk from.

Project Updates (in 2-minute segments)

Larry Fox went through the alphabet and shared an acronym and Willamette River Bridge-related definition for each.

Bob Kline discussed the theme. As background, a discussion at the CAG meeting led to a smaller group getting together—David Sonnichsen, Douglas Beauchamp, Bob Kline, Charlotte Behm and Scott Wylie. "Passage" describes all types of travel and it seemed appropriate to use the Native American word "Whilamut."

Randy Nishimura discussed the design workshops. Architects, landscape architects, ODOT and OBEC staff, and artists all participated—lots of diversity. They built upon the theme. Outcomes were surprisingly diverse yet there were commonalities: pass through time, pass through space. A lot has happened before today.

Eric Gunderson described Bundle 1, "Above Deck". The experience of people is one of traveling in a car; a regional event. I-5 has no turns and then all of a sudden you're turning and heading in or out of the foothills. A "one-minute movie." Bundle 1 ideas reflect the surroundings and geology—valley to foothills concept

Scott Wylie described Bundle 2, "South Bank." Cacophonous from above deck to quiet underneath; really not that quiet—there are layers: bikes, pedestrians, travelers; there

are layers of direction also. There are many mediums: things damaged, things restored. Hidden and clear. Different rhythms. Bundle 1 and 2 talk to each other about layers and rhythms.

Charlotte Behm described Bundle 3, "Whilamut." Her favorite part of the Whilamut Natural Area Plan is that the area is managed for plants and animals. What happens in the area is collaboration between the Citizen Planning Committee, Willamalane and Eugene Parks and Open Space. On behalf of the CPC, David Sonnichsen spoke about the old park plan versus the new park plan. Greg Hyde described Eastgate Woodlands and Philip Richardson noted that such a large natural prairie area located in a large metropolitan area is rare.

ADT Presentations (in 2-minute segments)

For Bundle 1, above deck features, Peg Butler said for her team it was most important for us to hear from you, whatever you want to share. She said their team loves the different scales coming together in time and place; the living histories; quiet elegance; poetic utility. She introduced Buster Simpson, a public artist and Pat Lando, a landscape architect.

For Bundle 2, south bank features, Robin Craig introduced the team—Mike Faha, Adam Kuby, Lee Imonen and Suzanne Lee. Unfortunately, Lon Mikkelson couldn't make it. A description she uses is organized chaos. Their team will look at understanding the layers of natural and built, technical and artistic, and movement—human and wildlife. The challenge is telling the story.

For Bundle 3, Whilamut features, Tulsi Wallace introduced the team—Yotokko Kilpatrick, Betsy Wolfston, Erin Lamb. Unfortunately, Bill Shaw couldn't make it. She said they are new to this type of project and are therefore perhaps the "rookies" amongst the ADTs. The team wants to make something exciting happen at this place. She read the poem "Earth First."

Questions and Comments

Buster asked about the existing bridge columns. He said this was a plea to ODOT to save them.

Bob said the bridge is special and unique to the area.

Jennifer Smith said that she represented the walkers and bikers, and is a member of Eugene's BPAC. She said the future is with those groups (implying cars will become increasingly obsolete over time) and we should pay attention to them.

Scott said that not all bicyclists and pedestrians continue through, some stop. There needs to be some symbiosis for the through and stop types of movement.

Randy said that although there are three separate bundles, be sure to keep communicating among the teams to keep coherence. Do more than just say good things.

Greg said initially he had been concerned about the undersides but is not any more. He noted constraints. All types use this space, so whatever is designed must be able to withstand abuse—vandalism, tagging, etc.

David said that if you read the introduction to the Whilamut Natural Area plan, it says the area is for passive recreation.

David Lewis said we should maintain and attend to the pristine; maintain a sense of the area even with the one-minute over the bridge; there should be a sense of depth.

Sally McAleer introduced herself and said she was with Travel Lane County. As an organization that focuses on bringing people into town, she likes that ideas are being considered to draw the user from the bridge down to the areas below. She sees potential in the area and with the project. She supports way finding signage to help people find the area.

Douglas talked about gravity (the Newtonian sort). The Willamette River comes from the Cascades as well as the small streams being restored; at the canoe canal intake, the water is churning—there is a sense of movement. He hopes that the ADTs will honor this sense.

Eric said that earlier, when the through arch bridge design didn't happen, some thought they might want pylons on the bridge. During the design workshops, it became clear that the bridge stood for itself.

Charlotte said there are three new talking stones in the Park; check them out. She said the vision and work behind them is important to consider when doing the art and design.

Esther Stutzman said that in reference to the one-minute movie, on a trip she had taken to the southwest, what she remembers most are the bridges with designs such as geometric patterns.

Bob said he would like to be able to show visitors the site so they can appreciate our beautiful area and environment. There are lots of elements under the bridge.

Scott said there is a bit of pathos to speeding up and slowing down. Sense of layers—we're creating "handles." Don't *have* to grab them, can move on to another layer.

Sally Nunn said her word for the day was "aesthete," defined as one who is sensitive to art and nature. She said there could be spectacular views of Camas in bloom (about two weeks per year) but what about other times of the year when it is not in bloom?

Philip said that 1) from a practical side, whatever is proposed has to be maintainable and 2) he is excited about art opportunities—those of grandeur as well as the subtle, elements that can be discovered. He added that the site has lots of contrasts—natural area vs. the bridge, for example.

Charles Biggs said that views should be preserved for the future as things grow and die.

Betsy said she loves the park having been a user and appreciator of it for over 20 years and that she is honored to be a part of the improvements.

John Rose mentioned the “ESPN shot”—what would they show as the closing or opening shot of Eugene?

Douglas said that if there weren't dams upstream, the area would be a flood zone.

Peg talked about the wooden spoon she carved. The metaphor is that we are carving a story when we tell people about this place, especially the slowing down and stopping. It is more than a place to those of us who are working on it.

Don Kahle talked about the diversity of voices—many are outside their comfort zone and taking risks. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

In response to Greg and Philip, and the need for things to be vandal-resistant, Randy said that he hopes what the teams design with will be so spectacular, there will be a respect for what everyone shares and understands is beautiful. This is an opportunity to think positively.

Scott added that he is on the Art Commission Board in Springfield and they have had only one incident of vandalism on the downtown murals. He noticed later that a mural had been tagged by the author's signature only, not the mural itself. It was like the person wanted to take credit for the art. He suggested there could be creative ways to address graffiti.

Mike said that we are truly blessed here. Eugene and Springfield run east and west; I-5 runs north and south. The McKenzie and Willamette Rivers are close by; communities have done a good job here. When driving through, he thinks of rivers and geology—the foothills and valleys—not a hodgepodge of suburbia. This reflects the values of the local communities.

Justin said that he has been working on the project for over a year. The goal is to leave the place better than it was. For example, the old dump is getting better. ODOT, DEP, and the A&E team are putting forth an amazing effort and sacrificed a lot—part of a larger movement.

Dick said he wanted to engage the community—how does the project become about community? Something got set in motion and it keeps getting bigger and better. We will continue to go places that we haven't been before.

David Sonnichsen said that only 70 acres of the 260 in the Whilamut Natural Area was used as a landfill in the early 1960's, so the entire area is not a former dump site. ODOT hasn't done a project like this before, and David complimented Dick for taking this on.

Charlene Larison said she is a member of the CPC. She said there are a multitude of uses in the park, and the designers should be mindful of different age groups that use the area.

Betsy echoed support for Dick/ODOT and noted Douglas as an early instigator for this exciting project.

Erin said that as the park host for the Nearby Nature program, she asked how we might invite thoughtful users who will be mindful of the efforts of others.

Bob said he has noticed the silence in the park spaces—not a lot of talking or yelling. He would like to continue the silence to appreciate the area.

Adam wondered at a place of silence next to I-5. He doesn't think it is pristine—there are layers of existing conditions. Would like to highlight that these places can co-exist. Infrastructure and natural world—can we repurpose some elements? Adds another layer.

Suzanne said she previously lived in Eugene for 12 years. She said it is impressive that Eugene has been able to bring people together to talk with each other who are very opinionated. She added she knew very little of the other artists' work and is very much looking forward to working together on this project.

Robin said she became familiar with bridges in Virginia where she grew up since her Dad is a bridge engineer. She visited the site today and was very excited that the overriding element of the site is the river. The sound is of the river, not the bridge and travel noise.

Annie Loe commented on the layers—structural, environmental, the users. She is excited to be part of something that will come to fruition. She is also excited about the design teams that were selected.

Ann Sanders said she was born in Eugene. She said it has been interesting to watch the process and believes if we trust the process, it will, and has to date, work out. She added that the bridge itself is beautiful.

Tulsi mentioned that there are people living down there and we should be sensitive to them. Maybe they could become stewards for the area.

Bob said there is a spirit to the place—the spirit of the native people who lived there is still there. He hopes we can respect that.

Betsy said that the volunteers on this project are amazing.

When the World Was Made of Stone

Esther shared a short Kalapuya story about when the world was made of stone.

ADTs Discussion

Each of the ADTs presented their team and their team's projects.

Questions and Answers, and Answers and Questions

Scott said that Bundle 2 will be very difficult and complicated. How will the teams deal with that? Lee Imonen responded that what we do is to imagine what doesn't exist there now. Mike and Robin said that is the technical part of sharing what used to be. Mike added that opening up the space will provide some opportunities. Scott said that would help to make it a more humane place.

Lee said that the task at hand is to understand ideas that came out of the design workshops. Anything people can share from those would be helpful. Will it be a no holds barred approach?

Charlotte said she thinks Bundle 2 is the most challenging. She is glad the team is varied and experienced; it is the least defined of the bundles.

Justin said that in response to Lee's no holds barred, because of where we are at with permitting—federal, state and local—he has had to develop restoration plans. Flexibility, such as changing some of the hardscape, etc. will be challenging. Local land use-wise, the hardscape is pretty set—tweaks may be okay but there are ramifications.

Jennifer said that restoration as art is appealing and inspiring. Consider a sustainable future with all the parts.

Justin said that the project has to deal with stormwater run-off even beyond the project boundaries; there is an extension of a dry detention pond, and it is likely to remain wet on bottom due to groundwater seepage.

Eric asked if there is room to play with the stormwater route as it drains. Justin said that the current stormwater design is covered in the contractor's bid. Doing something different would come out of the design enhancement budget. Maintenance is also a concern and it is likely that ODOT will be responsible for maintaining.

Buster asked where we are at with stormwater design. Justin responded about 70-85% complete. Larry thought probably even a higher percentage than that.

David Lewis said that it sounds like the locations of art are already established. Need to communicate schedule since designers will need time within construction. Justin responded that not necessarily; didn't want to preclude great ideas; although we do have some fixed parameters.

Peg asked about lighting on the bridge. Larry responded that bridge lighting was a strong idea at the design workshops. Some don't want to see the bridge lit because it is a natural park and NMFs might have some issues. The Gold Beach Bridge is an example of a bridge that is lit with fiber optic rope lighting along the arch ribs and it was approved by NMFS as an acceptable light level.

John responded that the DEP made the decision to drop bridge lighting because of the high cost and the fact it would preclude other enhancement priorities.

Scott said the focus of lighting was on the bridge. He doesn't remember any discussion on hardscape away from the river.

Larry said that while the bridge will be dark, the two ramps will be lighted, as well as the weave lane. The paths on the south side will be lit per City of Eugene standards. There will be lighting on Franklin per ODOT standards.

Charlotte said that the WNA plan calls for darkness and no excessive lighting. The bridge lighting fell down on priority list because it was too expensive.

Jennifer said that no lighting is an issue for cyclist safety. Would be nice to find some middle ground. Even way finding lighting would be better than nothing. She understands it is a natural area but it is within an urban setting and used by many people who need to feel some level of safety.

Greg said he thinks Bundle 2 is a lost urban space; nobody has a reason to be there now. This project will hopefully change that. He appreciates that waterways that have lost their way such as Glenwood Slough and Augusta Creek will be somewhat restored.

Robin asked how much play the team has with Bundle 2. Justin responded that not a lot of variation in the path and channel layouts will be possible. Larry added that there is not a lot of real estate either.

Charlene asked how far the project boundaries extend from I-5 to the east and west. Justin said we are constrained and limited to the areas that we are disturbing. Have clearance to work there because we have performed environmental clearance and obtained permits.

Tulsi asked if the paths were set and Justin responded yes.

Mike noted that bringing people to the site, from a master planning perspective, brings up a lot of different questions. Don said that master planning may be part of the ADTs work in terms of developing ideas that could be brought to fruition sometime in the future.

Rich said access from Laurel Hill Valley was challenging yet important for future consideration; shouldn't preclude or restrict access. Bob said the City of Eugene was beginning to study access alternatives from the Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood.

Lee asked for confirmation that the viaduct project was going to happen. Justin confirmed and described the project. He also noted that a trailhead on the southside of the bridge towards Glenwood had been an idea that surfaced in the design workshops.

Adam asked if the Eugene millrace was the crown jewel or one of many that the team should be focusing on. Scott responded that the focus on the millrace as a jewel was appropriate but environmental restoration was also a key focus.

Larry said that no one person speaks for an entire stakeholder group. It is important to make decisions collaboratively in structured meetings. Staff is working on posting base maps for the ADTs and are a resource for interpreting lines on maps. Teams should also be aware of already permitted items. Larry concluded that the challenge is to work within the constraints however it is okay to push the envelope of ideas but be aware that staff or stakeholders may push back.