



**Interbay Working Group Meeting
January 9, 2013**

Attendees:

Adam Silvers, Resident
Betsy Blackstock, Blackstock Lumber & Interbay P-Patch
Bob Beebe, KG Investment Management
Charles Wathen, Interbay Urban Center
Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
Jeff Thompson, Freehold
Jeffrey Hummel, Hummel Architects, Interbay Urban Center
Jeremy Eckert, Foster Pepper
Jesse Clausen, McCullough Hill Leary
Joe Giaccio, WA Army National Guard
Joe Maltese, Albert Lee Appliance & Queen Anne resident
John Coney, Queen Anne Community Council, Uptown Alliance
Joseph Gellings, Port of Seattle
Kent Angier, Kauri Investments
Martin Kaplan, Queen Anne Community Council
Ron Sudderth, Interbay Urban Center

City Staff:

Patrice Carroll, Senior Planner, DPD
Geoff Wentlandt, Senior Planner/ Urban Designer, DPD
Michael James, SDOT

At this meeting we revisited existing conditions information related to jobs, port related traffic and recent development; and discussed concept land use alternatives for the study area.

Review of Existing Conditions

Supplemental existing conditions information was presented related to jobs and employment numbers; traffic related to the Port Pier 91 facilities – specifically cruise ships; and a summary of recent development and permit activity. These materials can be found at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/EnvisioningInterbay/ProductsandFindings/default.asp>

Questions and Comments on Supplemental Existing Conditions Information

On Employment Numbers

- Confirmed the source of employment numbers – Washington State Employment Security Dept. and Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Clarified the categories included in the eight “employment sectors”.
- Added Comp Plan 2024 estimated jobs for BINMIC, all MICs, Hub Urban Villages and Ballard HUV.
- Not possible to limit the query to exact study area boundaries, but is very close.
- Agreed to post this info on the website.

On Pier 91 Traffic Study and Traffic

- Effects of potential transit extensions on traffic volumes should be considered
 - SDOT response – such effects will be evaluated with the High Capacity Transit study

On Development Activity Summary

- Property owners are ‘doing what they can’ within existing zoning but this doesn’t reflect market demand
- Owners can’t put willing tenants in the buildings because of land use regulations
- It was debated whether improved transit service (i.e. Rapid Ride) could be affecting development activity and interest – some saying it would, others saying it would have no affect
 - A resident of Gillman Ave. said he sees no marked improvement in transit service with Rapid Ride

Land Use Concept Alternatives

Three concept level alternatives were presented. The concept Alternatives are intended as frameworks for thinking about potential land use changes. The land use concept alternatives are:

1. Industrial / Commercial Corridor
2. Local/Production District
3. Urban Village

Descriptions and further information on the alternatives can be found on the project [website](#).

Comments and Feedback on Land Use Concept Alternatives:

1. Industrial / Commercial Corridor

- The Port of Seattle’s Report on the Terminal 91 uplands determined that there were few feasible industrial uses for the property – which shows industrial uses are not viable.
- This represents the status quo, which means fewer jobs and underused lands.

- Small light industrial business owner indicated support for continuing some industrial use in the corridor.
- “This alternative is insane” – it wouldn’t allow the market to produce any new development.
- Areas where new retail has occurred (i.e. Whole Foods) should be removed from the BINMIC- they are not an industrial use.
- Recommendations should focus on specific property where comp plan changes have been proposed.
- The Port has fairly low vacancy rates for industrial land, so it makes sense to keep the land industrial.
- The BNSF railyard adjacency should be considered – heavy industrial uses in the railyard would not impact other properties in this alternative
- ‘Hard lines’ between residential and industrial are unnecessary – consider more mixing.
- Show the industrial areas of the Port Uplands and the BNSF railyards as industrial on the maps to show extensive industrial opportunities in the area.
- The more flexibility and options owners have for their property the better, so this alternative is not preferred.
- Retaining all the industrial land will increase vehicle trips, because workers have to drive long distances to get there because of housing prices.
 - Others pointed out that in an alternative with retail jobs – those works would have low wages and would have to drive to the jobs as well because of housing costs
- The Port has a large reserve of industrial area, so we don’t need to retain industrial throughout the corridor as shown in the alternative
- A lot of the past industrial uses have already left. This alternative would mean continued underuse of land and exodus of industrial uses.

2. Local Production District

- An advantage of this alternative is that industrial uses could be supported by other ‘higher end’ non-industrial uses.
- A lot of industrial type of uses can successfully mix with other uses: for example an editing shop next to a machine shop.
- The negative is that industrial tenants simply do not command as much rent as non-industrial tenants, so this is a challenge.
- In the Interbay area the infrastructure has to be improved (i.e. streets, curb, gutter, sidewalk). This alternative could allow for some development that could support infrastructure improvements.
- There is little demand for industrial uses currently. Vacant spaces evidence soft demand for industrial.

- Current zoning already allows for some mixing of industrial and non-industrial uses. This is not a totally new concept. For example allows up to 25,000 gsf of retail in certain industrial zones (including IG2 zone in the study area).
 - [Note: The February working group meeting will discuss zoning in detail.]
- Granville Island is a possible example. The diversity of uses there is nice. It includes quasi-manufacturing in close quarters.
- There is a limited market for niche industrial uses that can mix with non-industrial uses.
- 8 years ago, the Seattle Planning Commission engaged in a study of industrial lands, including asking the question: “What’s Industrial Now?”
- Design for flexibility.
- Amgen, the biotechnical company, is an example of a newer format Industrial Use.
- New development is required to make this alternative work.
- Although city’s existing Incentive Zoning program has limitations, something like that could work here as a way to require inclusion of small industrial uses with new development.
- Residential live/work provisions in the land use code have not worked very well.
- Why wouldn’t the city just let the market determine the uses? Why restrict and limit the zoning at all?
- Consider market economics when developing this alternative. Consider how change in value can help support new infrastructure and industrial uses.
- A lot of businesses want to be where there is diversity, including uses where things are being made. This alternative could attract interested tenants.
- This is interesting, but the undeveloped streets and infrastructure are a constraint.
- Already past traffic studies said traffic problems on Dravus at 15th are a concern. This will always be a heavy traffic corridor, which must be factored in. What about bus service on Dravus Street?
- Consider more urban, mixed use at the south. The “production district” and retain this concept more for the north area nearby Dravus.

3. Urban Village

- This alternative would redirect growth from other places in the city (urban centers and urban villages), which is not a good approach.
- Please indicate on the alternatives and maps that there is a large reserve of industrial lands on the Port Property as well as the BNSF railyards beyond the limits of the study area. If this is considered it will show there is still a lot of area for industry in the vicinity.
- This just looks like a ‘bookend’ concept. To create a new urban village would have a very long way to go in terms of regulatory steps and politics. Perhaps the market could drive towards the alternative over the long term, but it’s probably too early to consider an urban village now.
- There are roughly 30,000 residents in adjacent Queen Anne and Magnolia neighborhoods. This could be an excellent location for services and higher density in support of those neighborhoods at the bottom of the bowl.

- This alternative would be the best at bringing resources to the table that could leverage infrastructure improvements.
- Having rail transit in the 15th corridor would make this alternative much more viable.
- Concern expressed about drawing development away from other neighborhoods.
- The 15th corridor is unique because it is so well positioned to serve existing neighborhoods. This alternative would capture trips that are currently going outside the area, so it would potentially reduce vehicle trips.
- This seems like typical Seattle planning. There is a lack of commitment to the current planning policies for the existing citywide growth strategy.
- This will always be a very auto-oriented corridor with high traffic volumes on 15th. The corridor is not well suited to becoming an urban village. This is not a walkable area.
- Adjacency to the railyard is a concern with this alternative. There would be problems with citing residential here due to noise and other impacts from heavy industry in the railyard.
- Development pressure and development interest shouldn't drive everything. There is a need for land use regulation to protect certain uses.
- The "us vs. them" mentality of new uses kicking out industrial uses over time expressed in this alternative is not good. Maybe broaden the idea of urban mixed-use. Or focus on a richer mix of uses that includes industry like in alternative 2.
- Concern expressed over whether the commercial (red) area on the alternative map would allow residential everywhere. Housing everywhere could be a problem. Explore appropriate locations where commercial could mix with – residential in some places and with industry in some places.
- Consider the possibility for intermodal connections. The vicinity of the Armory could be a great location for a hub of intermodal connections. This was the idea in past master planning efforts.
- Everybody in this area has to cross the city to get to shopping, so an urban village would be appealing in this location.
- The Armory site has similar characteristics to University Village- former land fill, adjacent to upper income neighborhoods.
- Traffic would have to be addressed in this alternative.
- Because of the way sound travels and reverberates in a valley, noise is actually a bigger problem on the sides of the Queen Anne and Magnolia hillsides than in Interbay.
- Larger / taller new buildings could actually help deflect / absorb noise from railyards and industrial uses into adjacent neighborhoods. Height limits in this area are currently too low.
- The vision of this alternative is the future. Support for this alternative.
- Be cautious about how much and how quick we call for urban village type development in this location. Consider the balance with existing Ballard and Queen Anne urban villages.
- The access into the armory site is difficult. With extensive development the access would have to be improved.
- While some increased flexibility makes some sense, adding residential does not seem appropriate or reasonable.

- Don't micro-manage uses. Use based regulations aren't helpful anymore. Focus on encouraging flexibility. Retailers also are confused about what the future will hold, so flexibility is needed to accommodate for rapid changes that we are seeing.
- One positive thing about this alternative is that abundant existing open space resources would support the urban village.
- This may not be a threat at all to other urban villages.

Consideration of Sea Level rise

Discussion of the susceptibility of Interbay to long term sea level rise impacts was addressed. The group discussed whether it is a concern that needs to be considered in alternatives as follows:

- You can engineer to accommodate sea level rise potential
- Raise the level you build lower floors at and include construction techniques for low levels.