

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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I told him, 'Well, now that you mention it, the soccer fields could use some work.' It's a beautiful park, but the fields are in terrible condition." According to Fish, poor drainage has caused a corner of one field to sink so far that players standing there can't be seen from the rest of the field. "We need to work across jurisdictions to get the job done," Fish said.

Citizen planners want to start planning

A number of the 50 people who attended a briefing on a new Central City Plan effort had this message for city planners – make us part of the process and do it now!

The Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability is updating the Central City Plan as part of the Portland Plan process. The Central City includes the North Macadam area and other close-in neighborhoods on both sides of the Willamette

River as well as the downtown.

The area is designated for intense development subject to design review. Current plans call for modest expansion of the area's boundaries in several areas, such as an extension from downtown into Goose Hollow.

When planners said they intended to report back in a few months on their progress, several people called for more citizen involvement sooner in the process. Dean Gisvold of Irvington said, "I came to learn more about your citizen involvement. I still don't understand it, and to the extent that I do it's inadequate. It's not a partnership, it's staff leading citizens."

Together with several others, Gisvold called for formation of a working group from among those present, and permission to start working.

"Is this supposed to be a citizen-originated plan?" South Portland's Bill Danneman asked. "Where do citizens play into this? We don't want a repeat of the Southwest Community Plan process." That process went years beyond its original timeline, largely because of failure to get early agreement on goals.

Planner Steve Iwata responded, "You're getting our early thinking now. We were debating when to hold this meeting."

Some disagreement between the volunteers emerged during the meeting. South Portland activist and former Metro Councilor Jim Gardner noted that the bureau was making projections based on the Metro 2040 Plan and a more aggressive development approach.

"What about a projection for a policy with less growth than Metro calls for?"

"Why would we do that?" Patricia Gardner (no relation) of the Pearl District asked.

"Because the densest Central City is not necessarily the most livable," Jim Gardner replied.

Disputing this, Patricia Gardner declared, "We have a responsibility to allow people to live here so that they don't have to live in Beaverton." Duane Hunting of Hillsdale suggested, "Gear downtown to people, not cars. People will find a way to get there."

Tree canopy

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over-regulate, people will ignore the laws. But where there are regulations, they need to be enforced and the penalties (for violations) increased."

McAlister's suggestions were not well received by the Commission. "Why should we have separate regulations for public and private trees?" commission member Howard Shapiro asked. "You say it's working, but in some ways it's not. I would like a good reason to have two sets of regulations."

Greg Schifsky of Bridlemile also served on the Stakeholders Working Group, but did not testify. He later told *The Post* that he was impressed with the process so far. "It's an incredibly complex issue," he said.

Schifsky was one of a group of southwest activists that for years have tried to deal with the issue of "disappearing trees." "It's important that people are starting to pay attention to this issue," he said. "It's happening all over the city, but our efforts made it easier to get the process started."

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