

# Clark County Sustainable Communities

## Stakeholders Meeting #2

November 5, 2009 – 2 to 4 p.m.

CTRAN Fisher's Landing Passenger Service Office

Rose Besserman Room, 3510 SE 164th Avenue, Vancouver WA

### Meeting Summary

#### Members in Attendance

Leslie Johnson, Clark County  
Ron Onslow, City of Ridgefield  
Anya Caudill, Dept of Ecology  
Phil Bourquin, City of Camas  
Jim Muir, Clark County  
Michel Piper, City of Vancouver  
Webb Wilbanks, City of Battle Ground  
Marty Snell, Clark County  
Steve Stuart, Clark County  
Mitch Kneipp, City of Washougal  
Robert Maul, City of Battle Ground  
Joe Layman, City of Washougal  
Brent Davis, Clark County

Matt Swindell, City of Ridgefield  
Marian Lahav, City of Vancouver  
Mike Piper, City of Vancouver

#### Guests in Attendance

Kelly Odione, BIA  
Brent Davis, Clark County  
Jim Carlson, VECOS

#### Staff in Attendance

Pete DuBois, Clark County  
Gina Franzosa, Cascadia  
Katie Spataro, Cascadia  
Adrienne DeDona, JLA  
Kelly Skelton, JLA

#### Agenda items:

- Welcome, introductions and meeting agenda overview
- Overview of SARD Recommendation Discussion Topics
- Small Group Discussions with Reports
- Close

#### Welcome

Adrienne welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and the meeting goals and everyone went around and introduced themselves.

Gina recapped the first meeting and the project purpose. She mentioned current state and regional initiatives and why cities and communities need to be ready to respond to these types of opportunities by removing barriers to green building.

Gina provided an overview of 4 of the 21 topics areas from the SARD report for the purpose of the small group discussions. Committee members were asked to select a group to join. The topics for discussion were:

1. Priority permitting – creating a more open and collaborate process with builders and building officials.
2. Cottage housing – allows smaller home construction in single family residential areas.
3. Minimum parking – reductions to minimum parking requirements, reduces impervious areas, flexibility to create flexible storm water systems.
4. Building code conflicts – broad group, will discuss of appendix A of the SARD report that looks at conflicts within building code and ways to overcome the conflicts. Focus on 2 or 3 for today.

Gina noted the matrix of the 21 recommendations on the back of the agenda and said this would be provided to the group by e-mail following the meeting. She asked each member to complete the matrix and return their responses to the project team electronically.

### **Small group discussion reports**

**Cottage housing** - Pete DuBois gave the group's recap. The current state of cottage housing in Clark County includes an ordinance Washougal passed 6 months ago and Battle Ground one year ago. No one has developed a project in Washougal; though one has been built in Battle Ground.

Pete summarized some of the issues raised by the group around Cottage Housing: Who is your market? SERA did a study, looking at empty nesters and they found that quality is an important factor when choosing a home. Location is also important and the "form" these cottages take dictates who wants to live there. Examples are Lopez Island and their co-op, and a project in Lacey comprised of a lot of duplexes and high-rises with open spaces; creating a market for cottages to be built. Issues for the County include having multi-family dwellings in single family areas. Moving forward, we can all put ordinances on the books but they won't be taken advantage of unless the ordinances are marketed to the right people. Mike Piper commented that design criteria are very important to make them attractive. Less thoughtfully designed cottages tend to fail.

**Priority Permitting** - Marty Snell gave the recap. He described that Clark County currently has a 'Fast Lane' permitting process which was set up to help initiate economic development opportunities. He said that something similar to the fast lane process could be set up to initiate sustainable development opportunities; such as the 'Green Lane' process. Marty said that this process could leverage lessons learned through the 'Fast Lane' process. He explained that this type of permitting is resource intensive for an applicant. The County tries to get them out in 90 days but it is difficult due to other improvements. Marty said they would have to consider how these permits are prioritized, including the review time, place in line, and fees (all up front, reduced, split). He said it could be done similarly to what the County has done with impact fees for schools. If it's a green project, the process is not "canned"; there is going to have to be additional expertise by reviewers with the authority to deviate and use alternative ways of building to get approval. This creates a dependence on staffing resources, new or additional. Seattle has just started the "Green Q" a new expedited permitting process for highly energy efficient development projects. Anya said many jurisdictions struggle with what qualifies as

“green”, and Katie said there is currently a “squishy” definition, and those qualifiers would need to be defined. Katie said Seattle has an incentive program for LEED projects, if certification commitments are not met the developer has to pay penalty fees.

**Building Code** - Kelly Odiorne reported. There needs to be an alternative system for things outside of the standard building code as well as increased public awareness, better communication with building officials, and more sharing of information. Ridgefield is moving towards a performance based code, with grants from the Department of Ecology. Pete noted that an expected outcome of this project is the development of a web-based tool for local jurisdictions to share and easily access information. Anya asked if they were looking just at residential in order to get affordable housing grants since the RCW requires a certain green building standard. Kelly said they were looking at residential.

**Minimum parking** - Steve Stuart reported. Their group is of the opinion that people are building as many parking spaces as needed, developers know what they need and do not build more or less than that. He said there needs to be less requirements. Possible issues include how you put a value on street parking. One suggestion was to start with a pilot project or area to see if they are still building parking space. Potential to just let the market determine those maximums. Why do we even have standards for parking? No one is really sure, but the group agreed they seem out dated. It was suggested to let the market decide how many parking spaces were needed.

*At this time the committee members either switched to another group of interest, or stayed with their previous group to resume discussions. The following is a report of the second round of small group discussions.*

**Priority Permitting** - Webb reported that adopting a SW Washington wide standard through NAHB standards, could use colors to indicate standards/levels to help with marketing. Within an agency a group has to understand the tricks and interrelationships between the codes and the problems being solved. He said we need to create a culture of common knowledge.

**Cottage Housing** - Steve talked about Cottage Housing. The group discussed the need to allow cottage housing in all residential or mix used zones, with less setbacks. It would also help to allow zero lot lines as long as they meet minimum standards, and green space delineation as amenity. Ron Onslow said it would be helpful if a project in the area had a “show and tell” of their cottage to allow others to have a tour and become more informed.

**Minimum Parking** - Katie Spataro talked about minimum parking. Maybe we need to look at what we want parking to do on a site, not just think of it as a place where a car sits. Residential and commercial parking should be looked at and evaluated differently, they have different needs. One solution could be a maximum requirement to limit impervious surfaces. Analysis needs to be done holistically to see where parking is going in the future, not just what we are dealing with today and what has been done in the past. She said that lenders also need to be on board.

**Building Codes** - Kelly summarized the group’s discussion. She said that building codes are not keeping up with advances in technology. How do the new technologies come in without being held up by

outdate codes? Developers want certainty. They fear extra costs and time delays just because they don't know what was required of them.

### **Next Steps**

The group discussed possible topics for the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. Suggestions were:

- Building code (green, regional, NAHB/ICC 700), including voluntary green standards. Issues around this topic that were raised by the group included how to get people to use the standards. It was also noted that an initiative such as this would likely generate favorable press on the topic.
- Code for small scale energy. It was noted that the existing financial incentives are upside down related to energy codes.
- Solid Waste
- Some members inquired about how to carry the outcomes of this group back to their jurisdictions and specifically the elected officials. It was suggested that the project culminate with a summit for elected officials. A few members requested the meeting summaries so they could use them to report back to their jurisdictions.
- It was suggested to create an Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding between local jurisdictions to establish geographic based sustainable development initiatives (i.e. between Ridgefield and Battle Ground, Camas and Washougal or Clark County and Vancouver).

The next meeting will be held on November 19<sup>th</sup>, from 2-4 p.m. at the CTRAN Fisher's Landing Passenger Service Office Rose Besserman Room, 3510 SE 164th Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 p.m.