

Seattle Neighborhood Workshops  
**AURORA LICTON SPRINGS SMALL GROUP NOTES**  
November 29, 2016

Note: **Yellow** highlights for consensus

**GROUP 1**

**Assets**

- Schools, especially the new school being built
- Convenience to downtown
- Transportation
- Licton Springs Park (although not accessible for residents west of Aurora)
- Greenway at 92<sup>nd</sup> that is planned
- Future pedestrian bridge, Licton Park
- Market at Oak Tree that serves the Asian community
- Institutions – North Seattle College, City Light
- “What makes it special is its lack of identity”
- Character sustained over the years – the elephant is still there, though the tepee is gone – not a bland place
- Identity of Licton Springs – Native American roots, history
- Lighting of Licton Springs Park for the holidays

**Concerns**

- Safety
- Affordability
- How the affordable housing program will be paid for
- Quality of life
- Don't feel like an Urban Village because the area does not meet all the criteria:
  - No community space or accessible parks
  - No commercial hub, grocery stores, pharmacy, bank
  - Not walkable
  - City designated this an Urban Village but has not lived up to this designation.
- Lack of sidewalks, safe places for kids to play, elders to walk
- “Aurora isn't a place. I say I live in Greenwood.”
- HT Market is a wasted opportunity—poor use of space at the logical center of the community
- Need ways to build sense of community, such as:
  - Start nodes of shops and activity
  - Find ways to connect the two sides (across Aurora)
  - Make the most of planned greenways at 92<sup>nd</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup>
  - More pedestrian activity – amenities, walkable, livable

- What we want to be known for:
  - Artsy, eclectic place
  - “Old Seattle neighborhood” remnant
  - Middle class, single family, kids, places to eat (e.g., Burgermaster)

### **Proposed Zoning Changes**

- Hydrology concerns –
  - Old stream, Licton Springs to Pillings Pond
  - Make sure there is adequate drainage, understanding of wetlands in neighborhood
- Add pedestrian and bike connections across Aurora/the Urban Village; enhance the planned greenways at 92<sup>nd</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup>
- Like the change to NC zone along Aurora, to have commercial at the ground level
  - Would like to see pharmacy, bakery, small and local businesses there
  - Like the example of Lantern Brewery, which took over an industrial space and is now more of a community meeting place
  - Existing commercial zone shouldn’t be in an Urban Village
- Concern that the cost might be too high for small business in the NC commercial spaces
- Does the change incentivize Dunn Lumber to leave?
- Want to see the added value go into affordable housing
- Need more parks and open space with the increase in density
- Area where police station is could be changed to open space
- Need design guidelines – open space between developments, human scale, sidewalks, trees
- Parking issues – Not reasonable to assume residents of new developments won’t have cars
- Bigger opportunity for residential in orange hatched areas, both sides of Aurora; developers could connect to the adjacent LR3 areas
- Some suggested allowing more height if the rest of the parcel is open public space; others thought this would still lack character
- Look for opportunity to build a community center with a P Patch garden – no agreement on which side of Aurora this should be
- Ask University of Washington architecture/planning students to model the possibilities in 3D so community members can see what different options would look like
- Include larger, family-sized housing in new development of affordable housing
- Concern about displacement in the northern part of the Urban Village, which currently has the most affordable rentals and homes
- New development should incentivize solar roofs
- Take a more aggressive approach to adding sidewalks

### **Urban Village Boundary**

- Group not agreed on whether boundary is in the right place
- Possibly make the Urban Village smaller

- Create nodes of activity at 85<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup>

### **Summary Themes**

- City owes the community a “real” urban village
- Need design guidelines – street trees, sidewalks, open spaces, walkability
- Focus density on Aurora
- Like the NC2 and NC3 zone for Aurora
- Green space and community gathering space is lacking
- Aurora bisects the community – need pedestrian and bike crossings, better cross streets
- Nodes of activity at 105<sup>th</sup> & Aurora, and 85<sup>th</sup> & Aurora
- Improve safety
- Concern for displacement of existing affordable housing
- Cost for MHA requirements is too high – change to lower the MHA to attract new development
- City should develop massing diagrams or models so community could see what we’d get
- Make sure housing is family-sized
- Connect to North Seattle College’s Master Plan, especially for student housing, and the parking that will be needed
- Do more outreach on parking
- What should be done first:
  - Change to NC zone
  - Add sidewalks
  - Make neighborhood grants
  - Studies to finish the planning

## **GROUP 2**

### **Assets**

- We are missing a lot of Urban Village assets
- Oak Tree Village
- Licton Springs Park
- Pillings Pond
- North Seattle College
- Schools – will be, when completed
- Decent transit – good frequency, but very crowded
- Used to use cemetery, but people no longer go there (drugs, camping)
- City Light right-of-way (not maintained)
- Most amenities are east of Aurora Ave., not west
- Have some affordable housing
- Go to Lantern Brewery (favorite space) for meetings – don’t have a public meeting space
- Music Center/church, Epic Life, other faith communities

- Have to go to Northlake, Greenwood, Greenlake
- Northgate light rail could be an asset if accessible
- Sense of community is growing

### Concerns

- Aurora divides Urban Village into two communities
- Don't have sidewalks north of 85<sup>th</sup>
- New buildings are mini-storage, pot and adult shops
- Safety issues at intersections

### Proposed Zoning Changes

- NC3 along Aurora makes sense based on past input to city
- State Highway (99) gives priority to auto-oriented businesses – will inhibit pedestrian, walkable business district
- Livability factor doesn't happen; need as a companion to density
  - Sidewalks and other infrastructure
  - Forgotten this element of the Urban Village strategy
- Commercial zoning to NC makes sense – should be applied citywide
- City can use its assets to improve the neighborhood
  - Old school
  - Oak Tree Market – UW Capstone project
  - Seattle Public Utilities
- Could start in the heart of district at Oak Tree Village
  - Or start at intersections, create nodes at Aurora and cross streets
  - Has happened in a limited sense at Oak Tree Village
- The transition “stepping down” is exactly as described in presentation – makes sense, but will it happen?
- Want zoning categories that provide homes for families
  - What is being built? Small units
- If we are adding capacity on Aurora, why not phase in the SF zone changes later?
- People used to share SF homes; they are getting pushed out
- Whole focus is on number of units, not type of units
  - Just adding a floor will continue current trend
  - Zoning based on “pillow count” (Whistler)
- Concern about design quality – A.L.S. gets developers who do the bare minimum
  - Need design guidelines
  - Example: Need eyes on the street, activation to deal with crime
  - Entrances on street, transparency
  - Some of this can be incentivized/required in NC zones
- Lake City got investments and better designs
  - Need planning study, transportation study

- Zoning/new development can both exacerbate problems and create opportunity to address neighborhood challenges
- How can we say higher/lower if we don't know if we are going to get assets that we need? Feel skeptical that city will provide needed infrastructure
- We could come up with more opportunities/creative solutions if we had a longer, more involved planning study
- If we rely on development to provide assets (sidewalks), it can be scattered and less impactful
- Is there a way the city can spark new, quality development – either city investment or incentivize private investment
  - Transit
  - Streetscape
  - Affordable housing
  - Example: Lake City, Greenwood (putting forward vision is first step)
- Need more context-sensitive planning
- Health impacts – trees to mitigate
- Need an urban planning study that is site specific