

April 12, 2009

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Question: Why did you choose to live, start business or shop in your neighborhood?

- Lots of Oromos reside in the area.
- Convenient location for transportation, schools for our children and ourselves, mosque, churches and community center, shopping center as well as its diversity.
- Affordable housing and weather.

Issues to be addressed:

- More shopping centers of different kinds to cut the commute
- Announcements, notices, information and documents should be available in Afaan Oromo as well
- More services should be available to our youth, elders, and young children that are culturally appropriate.
- Community center should be culturally appropriate
- There are no ESL classes and our people travel far away to find one. Such centers should be available and accommodate our elders and disabled ones who are willing to learn.
- Skill trainings should be available in the neighborhood where people can reach easily.

Desired types of housing and other issues:

- More affordable housing should be available for rent, this includes single family houses and apartments.
- Buildings should be energy efficient; high costs of utilities have been an issue in our neighborhood.
- Per the Seattle Housing Authority, the New Holly neighborhood water was supposed to be free but the promise has never been kept and the high bills have hurt our people.
- Builders, service providers as well as the City should live up to their promises.
- We want buy houses but we want City to create no interest mortgage system to assist the Muslim home buyers - this will contribute to the growth of the city economy.
- City needs to build shelter that will be used in case of a disaster like the apartment that recently burnt on Henderson Street and left many Oromo and Somali families homeless.
- The City failed to help its people who are victims of the fire and need to avoid the same mistakes in the future.
- Many of our people apply for Habitat Humanity assistance because it has no interest and is affordable but only very few were accepted. We want the City to work with the agency to make more opportunities available for many of our people.
- More housing for elderly population to rent; there are very few such rental buildings available now - we wanted to see more

Parks and recreation:

- We need clean, safe and comfortable parks and play areas for our kids. The current parks lack a lot of things and need to be reviewed.
- Signs and postings should be available in Oromo and other languages as well for easy access.

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- The privacy of public restrooms at the parks is not convenient and need to be revisited. The men's and women's restrooms are open in some areas and no doors to be closed, some are too close to each other and open.

Types business we wanted to see in our neighborhoods:

- Our people should be allowed and supported to own businesses.
- Open spaces in the neighborhood should be available for minorities to build and rent.
- New or existing businesses should be beneficial to neighborhood residents.
- Goods and services should fit the need of the neighborhood.
- More schools that accommodate the needs of the immigrant and refugee population should be available or the existing schools should accommodate these populations.
- Service providers should come from within the community.
- School dropout should be eliminated by creating important services to deter youth violence.
- We want to see more bilingual centers and staffs in order for our people to get help with their needs.
- New businesses that move into our neighborhood should recognize the existing businesses and allow for growth.
- No night clubs, theaters, or fast food franchises.
- More restaurants from different diverse backgrounds should continue to exist.

Sustainability:

- Better security systems should be established in order for the safety of the businesses as well the safety of our residents.
- More police patrols in many neighbors should be seen.
- In the case of bigger stores closing for whatever reason, similar stores should replace the closed or moved stores.

Other issues:

- We want the city to create services that will help the new comers to USA to easily adopt with the existing population
- Ethnic based communities should be supported to continue to exist and funding should be created to create more services for our people.