

City Neighborhood Council
Neighborhood Planning Workshop
April 19th, 2008
8:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Note about the Notes: During each panel, the panelists were given 3 minutes or so to speak to the topic. Then, audience members were invited to ask questions of the panelists. The notes are comprised of several lists of statements from the presentations and the Q&A that followed. These statements are a collection of the contributions each person who spoke gave to the topic, helping to evolve the conversation.

“Problem Statements” are different ways the panel topic evolved as people shared their views. They are structured as “how to” questions to help the group look at the topic from various perspectives and grow their understanding and responses to identify solutions that will work best for everyone.

“Solutions” are ideas people shared about what is happening now, what might happen, and what we or others should do who are concerned about this topic. Because of the Q&A format, people were often disguising their real solutions in the form of a question. Your note taker was using her facilitation skills to reflect what speakers might have really been aiming at in their contributions.

“Concerns” are people’s worries, fears, complaints, experiences that impact how they are looking at the topic, how viable they think a particular solution is, or reveal a better solution.

“Data” are points people made about things that have happened, definitions, perceptions, observations, or facts that are related to the topic. They are not data in the scientific respect. There may be data points and concerns that say the opposite thing. They were just different points of view contributed by those present, and are not a reflection of a summary of the entire audience’s views.

These categories of comment are unique to a style of facilitation called Dynamic Facilitation. To learn more, visit www.dynamicfacilitation.com. It is a way of working with groups to arrive at collaborative action through creativity and heartfelt sharing of individuals. These notes are only a reflection of the individual contributions of those who spoke. Had the meeting been fully facilitated using this approach, the notes would have been a part of a reflective process allowing the group to make shared meaning and action out of what was said. As you read the notes, you might see themes or patterns that reveal shared meaning or action. Please consider putting forth these ideas at future CNC meetings.

Questions or comments on the notes can be addressed to DeAnna Martin (206) 459-8429 or deanna@wisedemocracy.org of the Center for Wise Democracy.

PANEL 1: Why should we do Neighborhood Planning?

Moderated by: Irene Wall

Panelists: Richard Conlin, SCC President; Stella Chao, DON Director; Jim Diers, Author; and Tom Hauger, DPD Comp Plan Lead

Problem Statements:

1. How to approach neighborhood planning in the future for Seattle?
2. How do we bring in new energy and people to the community of those who’ve been doing this for a while?
3. How to put neighborhoods in the driver’s seat for the next stage of planning?
4. How to accommodate the growth and change we anticipate in the next 10 years?
5. How to assure alignment between districts, under-resourced populations, and important issues like sustainability across the city?

Solutions:

1. Plan for citizen engagement just like we plan for infrastructure.

2. City Council has adopted that citizens should be in the driver's seat to develop and/or re-visit neighborhood plans. We need to figure out the parameters, processes, etc. to do this.
3. Take our time. Sing, laugh. Build relationships that connect neighbors and allow us to build trust, work out our differences, and come to the city with a united voice about what we want.
4. Take the lessons learned from the last process, identify the gaps, and make improvements for a new planning process.
5. Focus the planning on neighborhoods that really need a vision and the resources to create what they want.
6. The process should –
 - Be inclusive:
 - a. Involve all stakeholders, including the hard to reach people
 - b. Involve the city, including representation from around the city so it's integrated
 - c. Requires resources!
 - Empower neighbors:
 - a. community feels ownership when they commit their own resources
 - b. they achieve holistic solutions
 - c. creates a stronger sense of community with a common vision

Allow the neighbors and city to learn from one another.
 Be done at the neighborhood level, not at the sector level.
 Enable neighborhoods to hire their own process experts so they are ultimately accountable to the neighborhood.
7. Focus the city back on neighborhoods, not developers.
8. The Mayor proposes dividing the city into 6 sectors and look at all the plans in each sectors so we can think about how they are connected.
9. Use data from the state, county, and city to make infrastructure changes over the next 6 years.
10. Design a way to actually implement what we want to name our park and what we want to do in it.
11. Generate community power for our proposals and plans so we can't get kicked to the curb. If we all are committed and involved, they have to pay attention.
12. Involving many in the process makes the voice more powerful and reveals themes across the city.
13. Plan updates need to include cultural identity of neighborhoods.
14. Involve the business community and the school district in the planning process.
15. Learn from our past experience with the school district to involve them early in this planning process.
16. Tell businesses they need to be involved or they'll be left out.
17. DON working to help with outreach on behalf of planning groups so information reaches all parts of the community.
18. Stay involved – get your voice heard in whatever ways are available.
19. Spend the money for planning in the Hillman Neighborhood on implementing the last plan instead.
20. Implement the previous plans instead of re-planning.
21. Old plans will not be put on the shelf. For your neighborhood, do two things:
 - a. Pull together the old plan and all the information about changes that have happened in your area that we didn't anticipate 10 years ago/
 - b. See if your old plan is appropriate to today... if not, make changes, but you don't have to if it's all still relevant.
22. Come to City Council to get funding to implement plan elements that haven't happened yet.
23. Use the planning process to get more people organized to advocate for your plan.
24. DON needs to revitalize looking into diverse representation in the stakeholder planning groups.
25. Our neighborhood in the Ravenna area doesn't have a plan and we want to get involved. We want to include "green" values and ideas in our neighborhood planning and connect with other plans around us to add this same perspective.
26. Use the sector approach to make sure concerns don't slip through the cracks.
27. Do what you want now, don't wait for the planning process to reach you; use the resources available, such as the neighborhood matching fund, Sustainable Ballard-type groups, and Climate Change Now city resources.

28. Need a way to plan for the whole city – not just the district or neighborhood level.
29. Sector approach will allow us to connect the dots between different districts in different areas and address issues where they overlap.
30. We can have dialogue in neighborhoods about whether our needs are being met through our current infrastructure – i.e. do we have enough shelters, food banks, human services, etc. If DON sees common themes around these issues after the plan review, then we can take collective action to address them.

Concerns:

1. We are at a critical point for the next phase of neighborhood planning.
2. Can we continue to fulfill the parks and other commitments?
3. The Mayor's current planning proposal hasn't been fully explained.
4. We need to accept density and plan responsibly for growth.
5. Planning has been a way to sell the city's agenda on the rest of us.
6. People don't relate to a sector. They relate to their neighborhood.
7. Need to anticipate change.
8. Have worked for years in the Central Area on a park project. The Parks Foundation has turned down our work, because it's too black or something. We're disappointed. They are whitewashing the history of our neighborhood.
9. The business community didn't participate in our last plan. The school district has its own process that does not involve the public. A school near us is planning to cut down a number of trees that we feel are significant to fulfilling our plan – but we're having trouble influencing them.
10. Struggled to get invitations to the March 1st event at the Evans School. I was told they were only doing targeted outreach to renters.
11. It's hard to run a business in Seattle. Business owners don't have time to participate.
12. Who are the stakeholders in the plan – right now there is only 1 resident out of 12 on the South Lake Union stakeholder group.
13. Urban villages aren't really focused on housing – they're focused on business and profit.
14. The market determines what happens in these villages.
15. Some communities won't get reached for 6 years under the sector approach.
16. 200,000 people are living on the streets of Seattle without shelter. Why hasn't this been addressed in all this planning?
17. Part of homelessness can be addressed by neighborhood planning and part of it can't.

Data:

1. The Growth Management Act says you have to have a plan for growth. Planning that happened 10 years ago meant that:
 - a. People understand the growth anticipated
 - b. City needs to respond
 - c. Neighborhoods come up with lists of what needs to happen to fulfill the growth requirements of their area
2. There are new growth projections for the next 10 years. Now is the time to think about what's next.
3. City Council never committed to fulfill all 6,000 requests in the neighborhood plans.
4. Our past planning process has been a model around the world. In a recent survey, 93% of people said their plan has made a difference.
5. Neighborhood plans refer specifically to urban centers and urban villages as identified by growth projections and the City.
6. Great to see old faces and new ones.
7. 10 years ago... used neighborhood funding to create plans from the ground up. Neighborhoods:
 - a. planned for what was important to them, not just zoning
 - b. hired their own process experts who could work with people and engage them
 - c. had to match city funding at the neighborhood level so it was "our" plan with the city
 - d. wanted to make sure everyone – all stakeholders, plus the hard to reach people – were involved

8. There are have been changes we didn't anticipate 10 years ago that have impacted things like homelessness.
9. There are new issues with affordable housing and growth that weren't there 10 years ago.
10. There are places that make sense to focus on urban village-type infrastructure investment.
11. There's variability around the city in terms of problems, solutions, and strategies.
12. There is a way for DON to be involved with public schools through their partnership program.

PANEL #2: How should planning be done and by whom?

Moderated by: Chris Leman

Panelists: Tom Veith, Wallingford; Greg Davis, Central/Rainier; Mark Johnson, Planning Commission; Susie Burk, Fremont

Problem Statements:

1. Who should be involved in city planning and how?
2. How to apply the lessons learned from the last planning experience to this time around?
3. How to assure our work/the public isn't screwed over in the end of the process by citywide changes made by council along the way (such as zoning changes)?
4. How do we assure stewardship during and beyond the planning process – in a way that can't be jeopardized by city decision-making?

Solutions:

1. Bring together groups and individuals in your neighborhood. Find out what's important to them. Address what was there before, come up with new things if needed. Organize a strategy to address the issues uncovered. Deal with internal politics. Hire/use facilitators. Have leadership to oversee and coordinate the process. Assure accountability.
2. Neighborhoods can't be restricted in their planning... It shouldn't matter whether they are in or out of urban centers... We need the right to have all our plans be considered equally under the law.
3. Planning needs to happen in the context of concurrent infrastructure improvements, which we are paying for. Developers in Kirkland and outside Seattle who don't pay a Seattle B&O tax should have to pay for these improvements, too.
4. This process needs to be open to everyone, we should hire our own consultants, we should drive the planning.
5. City officials, elected's, the executive, and local folks – all need to be involved. Everyone needs to be really informed at the beginning as to the kind of changes occurring, what's being planned or considered in terms of zoning or affordable housing, etc. by the City.
6. Vigilance is key. Pay attention to the very large institutions in your neighborhood. Identify them and make them participate.
7. Neighborhoods should review each plan annually and have conversation about what's needing to happen. Reinvigorate this original part of the process into the new process.
8. Don't let the planning be done by default. Get in front of the process, rather than in the trail or victimized by it. Instruct neighborhoods in developing a culture of planning and the importance of this.
9. Call it something else that appeals to the community though... Develop a culture of ____.
10. We need our own plans.
11. City Council is considering update to comprehensive plan to allow all neighborhoods to have a plan.
12. Don't let "them" divide up your neighborhood. Hold the City's feet to the fire to assure the existence of village, economic, transportation viability in your neighborhood. The plan is not stagnant. It is a living document. Use it to continue to advocate with the City and others.
13. Involve Seattle Housing Authority and provide resources for translation services to include many in our neighborhoods who don't speak English.
14. Use the internet to help with participation, outreach, and translation – and to address the edges where our neighborhoods border each other and other districts. Learn about what each other is doing to inform our own planning.

15. Involve knowledge, community-based history, and wisdom of community-based organizations and residents in the planning.
16. Embrace complexity – issues that haven't been addressed, borders, etc.
17. Capitol Hill Stewardship Council wants to retain its leadership role for the planning.

Concerns:

1. It is challenging to hire a consultant, especially determining if their background caters to our neighborhood needs and interests.
2. Mayor's plan was targeted at 6 plans – now it's re-looking at all 39 plans.
3. How many of us live in areas affected by development pressure? Many.
4. We were not granted funding for our Mapleleaf park because they wanted to do the plan, not us.
5. City accepts comments from residents – that's not motivational or inspiring – and it creates resentment.
6. How many here have ever agreed with a city consultant's plan or recommendation? Not many.
7. My fear about how this will go is...
 - a. Mayor decides a sector to start with
 - b. Gives information and a year to do something
 - c. Committee assembles its regular group
 - d. They decide they don't have enough information
 - e. They create a sub-committee to gather more information in a database
 - f. They have a meeting attended by 1% of the neighbors
 - g. Give some recommendations
 - h. Meanwhile the City has been making changes at the big picture level and we feel short-changed.
8. Why did we ever stop doing planning?
9. When Northgate plan went up against developers – it lost.
10. When neighborhoods are divided up it causes competition and stewardship becomes confusing.
11. The border problem is when plans don't connect to one another and no one talks.
12. Seattle Housing Authority needs to be added to the list of schools, businesses, and other institutions or agencies that need to be involved in the process.
13. Important to include people who don't speak English.
14. Scared about making the process simpler and faster – that doesn't always mean better.

Data:

1. The previous planning effort was initiated at a meeting like this.
2. In the Central Area, we had a consultant and a district council. In Rainier Beach, we had a consultant and no district council. The process was different in both because of this.
3. Need a culture of planning in the neighborhood.
4. Capitol Hill Stewardship Council was created by City Council to oversee the plan.

PANEL #3: What does success look like? What should result from neighborhood planning?

Moderated by: Irene Wall

Panelists: Dennis Ross, Admiral Plan; Richard Dyksterhuis, Broadview/Linden; Susie Burke, Fremont

Problem Statements:

1. How to assure success?
2. How to make our neighborhood plans living documents?
3. How will we move forward?
4. How can we get City Council to take us seriously?
5. How can we meet together in a way that stimulates collaboration, action, and change?

Solutions:

1. Suzie volunteers to talk with your neighborhood businesses about why they should be involved.
2. City Council needs to resolve its inconsistencies between transportation, zoning, etc. – issues that are leftover and newly created since the last plan.

3. Maintain commitment to city resources to help with neighborhood planning and needs, i.e. the matching fund and other grant programs.
4. Involve renters and condo owners.
5. Focus on building infrastructure before talking about houses, parks, etc. Structure for cars, bicycles, pedestrians, buses, and trucks should be a priority.
6. Prioritize your community needs – can't have everything! Establish infrastructure and utilities first.
7. Need to include food security and access to it as part of planning.
8. Use parking strips to grow food to donate to food banks.
9. We need to say to the council, "This new planning process won't work until we implement the old ones..." Say, "Get done what we wanted 10 years ago."
10. Advocate with the Mayor and Council that this process needs to be from the bottom up. Mayor should give all neighborhoods access to experts in transportation and other issues and ask us what we need and explain what's happening,
11. Our plans need to be the Bible for everything that happens in our geographic area. Our work needs to be respected and used in an ongoing way.
12. Each plan needs a groups to meet monthly to address plan issues – do it ongoing and get City people there to assure the plan is followed.
13. Show us where the money has gone and is going on the web, make it transparent.
14. Link our efforts – see each other's plans and help each other get our plans implemented. Use email to allow all of us to help each of us.
15. Look at both the local and citywide level.
16. Success has to do with participation. We need to:
 - a. Come together in new ways so we can make progress together.
 - b. Use new meeting processes to be with one another.
 - c. Not just preach to the choir, but do stuff together.
17. Commit redevelopment income to building infrastructure. It's up to City Council to assure concurrency with funds available. Have to go to City Council to use what's coming and use it well.
18. Go meet with developers and the Department of Design and Planning at design stage and show them your plan when they are designing new projects in your neighborhood.

Concerns:

1. City needs to resolve consistency issues in responding to transportation and zoning requests that have come from our plans.
2. On Linden, we don't have completed streets for an area of 47,000 people!
3. The infrastructure is in our plan, but it hasn't happened.
4. What we say won't matter anyway.
5. Transparency is critical! Show us the plans, show us where the money went!
6. Our plans aren't considered binding by Council... or SFOT or other city departments either.
7. Just keep coming to meetings without the feeling of accomplishing anything. There is value in learning from past, but... we need to organize for the future together.
8. Developers have money and power... They get what they want. Neighborhoods have plans not being implemented. How are we supposed to feel empowered?

Data:

1. Success in Fremont looks like:
 - a. There used to be 1 restaurant in Fremont, now there are 42 and the 1 that was there remains.
 - b. An increase in economic activity, commercial services, and jobs.
 - c. This economic increase without the traffic problems.
 - d. Neighbors and businesses took different areas of focus and made progress on them.
 - e. Bring people together, focus on the most important thing, with the City's help.
2. Success looks like:
 - a. Completion!
 - b. Consistency
3. We are at a crucial time for people involvement and participation.
4. We do these meetings to energize and connect you.

5. There's a lot of money there for concurrency.

CONCLUSION: Exchange with Council Members Sally Clark & Tom Rasmussen

Problem Statements:

1. How can we address or deal with turnover of leadership on City Council and within city departments?
2. How do we use the plans to make ongoing policy changes and to set funding priorities?
3. How to have departments serve the plans, not the Mayor and developers?
4. How to communicate that last statement in a way that brings the right people on board?
5. How to hold the Department of Planning and Design accountable to following design requirements?

Solutions:

1. Council Member Rasmussen has taken notes and will relay what he's heard to the Committee of Land Use, Planning & Neighborhoods.
2. Find a way to enable those that are not urban center to have a plan.
3. Figure out where all the consultants came from last time, how much it cost and where the money came from that paid for them.
4. Make it bottom up, involve 15-20% of those in the community.
5. Council needs your help to prioritize.
6. Include social issues in your planning, such as homelessness.
7. When City grantors overwhelm neighborhood vision and goals... 1) go to the Parks Commission... then, 2) go to City Council. Homer Harris Park should reflect all the neighbors think it should. Come to City Council if that isn't happening. Invite (Council Members) me/us to your neighborhood... Show us/me... Walk me down your streets so we can see your needs.
8. Start planning now – find, develop, etc. the right leadership so neighborhoods have the capacity to create their plans.
9. All departments and City Council should be stewards of the neighborhood plans. Get to know what the Mayor thinks about these plans, if he's not supportive of them, no department will steward them.
10. The Mayor's proposal isn't so bad... It's missing some things and needs some changes to address that.
11. The Executive needs approval from us (City Council) to release funding for this... Sally is suggesting a Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee be formed for this planning process, like we had one for the last time around.
12. Council could use multi-family zoning code changes as an opportunity to link zoning back to neighborhood plans.
13. Council is exploring "cultural overlays" for the City to incentivize the retention of neighborhood character.
14. Work slower and smarter to use multi-family zoning to incentivize the type of development we want, not just development for development's sake.
15. Build into this process a way for us to have input and approval on what happens from the beginning all the way through until it's implemented.
16. Resources need to be distributed to line departments in order for plans to be implemented.
17. A Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee could address these issues of stewardship and implementation... so that things are implemented regardless of who's in office and stewarded in a localized way, but with access to City resources and not controlled by the City.
18. Need to pull Department of Planning & Design back into compliance with code and plans.
19. Ask Diane Sigamura about this when she's giving her next director's report to the Council.
20. Accountability is more up to design review committee, not necessarily the Department of Planning & Design.
21. Use the census data to connect community wisdom to the planning process.
22. Re-open commercial zoning conversation along with multi-family zoning so we can assure that impact and ease of use make sense.

23. Cascade Neighborhood Council wants to be the stewards of their neighborhood plan, not a check-off box for developers and businesses to say they had public input.

Concerns:

1. Police, fire, housing, and human services are also things we're trying to fund – not just infrastructure.
2. It's a balancing act we're taking into account between property owners, residents, business owners, public property, and market forces.
3. As elected officials change, so do their ideas and the City's commitment to your plans.
4. Shorten the timeframe of planning will have it compete with other funding needs, such as the parks and police/fire levies that are about to expire.
5. We're not far enough along to know the "who" yet, or be able to balance all the "who's" that need to be involved.
6. There will always be differences of opinion about how well a plan has been implemented.
7. Multi-family zoning changes aren't the only threat to unique neighborhood character.
8. We need to understand the impact of zoning and parking changes before they take place.
9. State laws are not on our side when it comes to establishing design guidelines. Washington is big on the right of property owners.
10. Meeting members don't want to get involved and excited about something that's not going anywhere.
11. One meeting member doesn't believe the Department of Planning & Design is committed to fulfilling plan requirements as demonstrated by several projects in the Madison Valley.
12. Fear, uncertainty, and doubt are preventing volunteers from materializing for our plans.
13. Zoning isn't always the best route for assuring plan follow through – Can't predict market factors that will impact things in years to come.
14. I've been the subject of 10-1 and 9-1 votes on the Cascade Stewardship Council where I am the only resident of 12 members. Residents need more power on these councils.

Data:

1. There's a lot of positive things that have come out of the first planning effort, including the Parks levy.
2. Many developers do pick up the plan before designing and building. They care about how the people who live there will live.