

Public Comment from Fort Lawton Public Meetings:
February, 13 – Catherine Blaine Elementary, Magnolia
February 14 – Seattle Center

1. **Meeting Purpose:** To provide information and take feedback on proposed future uses for surplus property at the fort.
2. **Agenda:** PowerPoint presentation including overview of BRAC, Notices of Interest and guiding principles; broke to four stations (one for the proposed uses that would be conveyed at no cost or at a discount; one for the proposed uses that would be conveyed at fair market values; one for the proposed guiding principles of redevelopment according to previous public comment {environmental stewardship, community connectedness/neighborhood integrity and social responsibility}; and the final station was devoted to taking general questions and public comments). Each station was accompanied by a flip chart where public comment was recorded by community members and/or city staff.
3. **Attendance:** Approximately 40 members of the community attended the first public meeting held at Catherine Blaine Elementary in Magnolia. Many comments were recorded. Approximately 8 people attended the second meeting at Seattle Center and some public comment was recorded.

The comments below are from community members. City of Seattle staff have not responded to the comments in this document. Therefore, in some cases, the comments below may not accurately reflect historical facts or the federal rules and regulations that govern the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) process.

Individually Filled Out Public Comment Cards:

Comment #1

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: It should be neat and practical, without glamorous innovations. Avoid the cutesy, artsy ideas while still keeping good taste.

Other Comments:

The concern for the homeless is very good. There are so many chronically homeless, the City should build many dormitory-like buildings which could house hundreds at low- or no- cost to the poor. A city as rich as Seattle shouldn't have any people sleeping in doorways or under bridges. Community kitchens could augment the dormitories.

Comment#2

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: Don't let it be a bonanza for developers to build expensive condos! We need to help the many homeless, including those with mental disabilities. Many were ousted from mental hospitals or residential protective places and have no ability to adjust to our dog-eat-dog society. They need help! They need places to live, food, counseling and job preparedness.

Others who need help are low-income workers who must choose between rent and food. This includes both families and singles.

Whatever is built, the City must make transportation easy and affordable so people can get to jobs, medical care, etc. Native Americans need special help. Consult with their councils and leaders to develop the best plans.

"Market value" sales should not be allowed. "Values" are constantly inflating. The City – or federal – should retain little to the property. If it's used for any private or semi-private purpose, it should only be with leases, which can be adjusted as time goes on.

With Discovery Park so near, park land is not necessary. It's better to help the people live rather than make more "open space" or animal/plant conservation places.

Comment #3

Other Comments:

Have you looked at the original transfer deed from Seattle to the military? Are there claims by native tribes? Don't sell land because the next generation can't buy it. Study university trust land management in downtown. Everything on a 99 year lease and under an endowment. A large commercial building could pay for up keeping the non profits. Emergency supply disaster supply depot also. Daycare requires subsidies if workers are to be paid fairly.

Comment #4

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: Maximize open space! The City (and the mayor's vision) is seeking to preserve and enhance green space, plant more trees, etc. The site is one of the easier areas of the city in which to make that happen at low cost.

Whatever new development occurs within the site should be done according to a low impact (environmental) plan. This site could be a great demonstration project if the low impact vision guides the planning.

Other Comments:

The mayor's authority to select which elements of the NOI's will be included in the ultimate reuse plan is troubling. The process appears to be headed for a political solution rather than a solution that is truly tailored to best interests of the residents of Seattle.

Comment #5

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: Maximize green space: the minimum number of housing units possible; no access to housing from 36th Ave West; a buffer (greenery) between housing and 36th Ave West; all homeless and low-income housing = drug and alcohol free.

Other Comments:

I'm worried about crime: see an increase in adult and juvenile crime, a decline in property values; traffic – only 3 access roads to/from Magnolia; loss of neighborhood; overall negative impact on Magnolia; limited and difficult bus service for these new units.

Comment #6

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: After homeless service providers get at no cost – offer units and (homeless services should be provided on site). Public benefit conveyances get at no cost – offer their deals. Then all the open space left should go to the parks department at no cost and become part of Discovery Park. The open space should be connected with Kiwanis Ravine and become a wildlife corridor as it already is.

Other Comments:

The Army provided for the above. We should keep it open space for the park. There should be no market rate housing. All should be done by general "green" principles.

Comment #7

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: With 50,000 Native Americans living in Seattle,

1. They need a Native American college
2. Veterans housing
3. Homeless housing
4. Homeless family housing

Comment #8

Q: What would you like the future of Fort Lawton to look like?

A: The majority of the land needs to go to the Parks Department. It is vital to protect this environmentally sensitive area. Retain the barrier between Texas Way and 36th Avenue West as the Army did out of consideration to the neighbors. If housing has to be built, then do so for low income elders.

Other Comments:

1. No private person or developer is to get a hold of this property. It was given by City to the US government to build Fort Lawton and now is surplus back by US government. I want it back to City of Seattle to own all construction or property development.
2. Keep-up the cemetery.
3. Who in Seattle government is in charge of watching the LRA timeline for the maximum benefit to City of Seattle?
4. There is already plenty of park.
5. Please get comments to the City Council so they also know what is being considered.

FLIP CHART COMMENTS from 2/13/2007 and 2/14/2007 public meetings:

Summary of Concerns:

- Practicality/compatibility of homeless housing at the former Fort Lawton site
- Property values
- Density of proposed housing
- Quantity of and accessibility to open/green space
- Transportation feasibility and traffic impact
- Increased crime/reduced safety as a result of homeless housing
- Retaining sense of community
- Market rate housing
- Access to and traffic on 36th Avenue West and Texas Way
- Heron habitat
- The City's role in acquiring surplus property

I. General Comments

Homeless Housing and Other Proposed Uses

- Concerned that we seek a proposal with greatest chance of success; believes homeless families have greatest likelihood (good fit) to succeed given location.
- Market rate housing – do not support.
- Supports density – not self help housing; also wants open space and sensitivity to building a community.

- Homeless housing needs to be integrated into every neighborhood – makes for healthy communities.
- Build a community!
- Focus on homeless veterans, seniors and Native Americans.
- Does not support chronic homeless – thinks people will come and go – thinks this is more appropriate downtown.
- Homeless seniors, then families, then artists (preferred).
- Ownership – HFH – preferred over rental.
- Allow pets in homeless housing.
- Don't prioritize homeless artists – no priority over any other occupation.
- Support for veteran services.
- Support for homeless families.
- No market rate development.
- Financial management services for homeless (needed).
- Counseling/support services.
- Need transition for homeless people – you can't segregate (help with rent when leaving transitional housing).
- No private development.
- Native College and homeless housing (vets, families).
- Wants City to own the property.
- Reconstruction and new construction – be "green."
- Have City retain ownership of property and develop it with a Native American College, homeless housing, especially for vets.
- We have enough parks.

Infrastructure and General Impact on Community

- Concern about density – 291 units.
- Concern about impact on schools.
- Questions about level of services and staffing.
- Traffic – street access.
- Like Texas Street as sole access.
- Safety concerns for existing neighborhood.
- Need accessibility – universal design.
- Chronic homeless – concerned this might move into the woods.
- Crime/safety issues/screening.
- Buffer between 36th and Fort Lawton.
- Access to Magnolia – only 3 ways on/off Magnolia.
- Impact on Seattle property taxes.
- Minimize impact of traffic.
- Don't tax infrastructure (water, electric, etc.).
- Impact of 300 housing units in an isolated area of the city, far from adequate schools, services and roadways.
- Is this site the right site for the services and uses being proposed – land swapping?
- What will happen to property values?
- There are only three ways in and out of Magnolia!
- Limited bus services and other services, medical, schools, etc.

Open & Green Space

- Off-leash area for dogs; concrete not park.
- Have arborist inspect trees.
- Save wood lots.
- Save tall fir trees please!

Public Process

- Open forum discussion in future meetings.
- More community unifying process.

Other

- Mayor's vision: what is it?
- Look at Avondale Park in Redmond as a good model – redeveloped Coast Guard site – self-help and homeless families in affluent neighborhood.
- How to enrich the community and not fragment it?
- Will there be hearings on the zoning?
- What does Army consider “balance” to mean?

II. Fair Market Value Housing Comments

- Mix of uses well considered/compatible/complementary with broader community.
- Like blend of market rate housing and self help housing.
- Likes shared use of facilities, e.g. auditorium, day care, garden.
- Mixed use including retail and needed services for individuals and families so residents without cars or means don't have to be bused to stores, etc.
- Integrate retail with housing to create pedestrian-friendly community where healthy living (walking) is encouraged and safe.
- Day care will require operating subsidies. Suggest a lease to income-generating uses to support public benefit uses like day care.
- Keep the cemetery maintained.
- Save the buffers on 38th West and West Lawton Street (along the parking lot through the end of the street).
- Would like to see specifics in selected proposal (thought UI's proposal did that).
- Will there be a traffic analysis on the proposed uses?
- Suggest that fair market value uses should be consistent with adjacent residential neighborhood: single family, some townhouses, small condos – prefer that scale.
- Suggest using current auditorium (was recently re-done).
- Favor affordable multifamily or homeless housing – not market rate.
- Prefer green space.
- Not concerned about traffic (reserve traffic will go away).
- Would like the office space on site to house homeless – serving uses and daycare.
- Encourage green building energy-efficient development standards.
- Likes Native American college – 50,000 city residents are Native American.
- Comment from United Indians: description should have included fact that housing would be drug/alcohol free
- Would like to see housing for homeless veterans.
- Want to hear mayor/City's vision for the site.
- Please don't schedule April meeting during school break.
- Question about archeological ruminants – anyone checking on these?

III. Comments on Guiding Principles

- Security – concern about kids and elderly – what kind of screening of residents, services, etc.?
- Impact of additional kids on neighborhood schools, especially high needs kids who require services.
- Give preference to office space for nonprofits that work with homeless.
- Maximize open space and connections to Discovery Park – maintain access through property to park.
- (Make redevelopment) ADA accessible.
- (Obtain) pre-approved building plans.
- Keep 36th a dead end; keep traffic off 36th; respect agreement made with army about this, maintain a barrier between Texas Way and 36th.

- Keep open space.
- Include community connectedness in the process. Maintain a dialogue from community to community – Community Council.
- Is this the right site for the proposed uses? Traffic? Available public services? Wildlife proximity, isolated spot in Seattle?
- No market rate housing.
- No private development.
- Homeless veterans (preferred).
- Build “green” housing.
- Homeless families (preferred).
- Native University/College
- Density – keep scale “right.”
- Low-impact development (preferred); storm water demonstration project; retain existing vegetation, big trees.
- Retain tree buffer along 36th West and Lawton Street; steep slope at north edge should be heron habitat.
- No houses around cemetery – retain as sacred place.
- Green initiatives: Seattle put your money where your mouth is. (This is) one of the best opportunities that will never come around again to promote environmental causes. Not reasonable site for density and use purpose. Market rate housing elsewhere.
- Compatibility is important.
- Integrated community and low-density housing, if any (preferred).
- 40-50 small children in immediate area just east of Fort Lawton – they need a play area.
- Sustainability includes affordability at all income levels and diversity.
- Don’t box people by their age or income.
- Focus on housing should not be that we isolate communities - integrate!
- Habitat for Humanity creates community.

***** *The comments on the “free/discount” proposed uses were not identifiable on the flip chart note pad pieces. They are most likely mixed in the general comment section.***