

## **Aurora Avenue Land Use Visioning and Urban Design Study Summary from Community Meeting #1 – November 10, 2008**

Approximately 45 community residents and business people were in attendance. Paul, Gordon and Eric previewed the study effort and why we were there, as a first meeting to brainstorm about needs, opportunities, visions and values.

### Top actions/agenda items heard and discussed at the Community Meeting

#### **1. Increase pedestrian-oriented uses**

PCC, Bagley School, Beth's and pubs along the lower stretch of Aurora corridor seem to be the heart of the community but a few community gathering places exist north of 78/80<sup>th</sup> Street. Suggestions include: a desire for more of these types of uses in the middle and north segments of this study area, as well as others such as coffee shops, small corner deli marts, small commercial/retail stores and services, computer stores, stationery stores, and more and better restaurants.

#### **2. Mitigate traffic speed, quantity, and especially noise.**

These were identified as the biggest problems now that crime and prostitution have moved northward. Cut-through traffic on side streets, and new development with parking off the alley is also of concern to local residents. Suggestions include: slower speeds, more police presence, keep on-street parking, "quiet" pavement with rubber in the asphalt - as is present in the Kirkland I-405 corridor.

#### **3. Improve aesthetics and upkeep**

The area generally looks rundown. Suggestions included: rebuild and landscape the median and sidewalk areas, façade improvement program/grants, limit blank walls and increase eyes on the street, design guidelines, more lighting and street amenities, fewer visible auto lots, more varied shop window displays to attract more shoppers to the corridor. Some liked the more historic highway/commercial strip type signage and suggested this as a possible corridor theme.

#### **4. Create an identity for the Aurora corridor**

The Aurora corridor lacks a (positive) identity, and a sense of civic or community connectedness. Add a planted landscape median wherever possible; add street trees or other plantings, new lights, artworks, and wider sidewalks along the entire corridor.

#### **5. Provide better connections into the surrounding community**

Suggestions include: a park in the northern area, a crosswalk traffic signal at 88<sup>th</sup> Street with a new relocated street, pedestrian overpasses, better connections along Green Lake Way including bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks, improve sidewalks on side streets and organize parking.

Pedestrian ease of movement, accessibility and safety in crossing are all concerns along Aurora. Otherwise, jaywalking will continue to occur. The signal timing for pedestrians crossing Aurora and left turn intervals are too short. Corner pedestrian waiting areas at

major intersections are too small for pedestrians to feel safe from large truck turning movements that often cross onto the curb. Suggestions include: a comprehensive sidewalk plan and wider sidewalks.

#### **6. Create wider sidewalks on Aurora**

Existing sidewalks are too narrow and not safe – car speeds are high and there is no protection from traffic in the curb lane. Splashing water onto the sidewalk is a problem much of the year from buses, etc. Narrow and rough sidewalk sections near trees and telephone poles were noted as a pedestrian impediment. Suggestions include: a greater balance between pedestrian and vehicle needs. Existing conditions favor vehicle and regional traffic needs. The pedestrian environment should be improved significantly as BRT and revitalization activities occur.

#### **7. Businesses need more parking, visibility and patrons.**

Suggestions include:

- Extend the current system of on-street parking during off-peak hours north from 80<sup>th</sup> to 90<sup>th</sup> Street and beyond.
- Allow additional building height and/or expanded width of the commercial zoning boundaries for mixed-use residential development on parcels that currently have a short depth dimension, in order to allow for wider sidewalk area.
- Consider larger parcels for redevelopment with parking on-site and/or underground, which would incorporate height transitions to adjacent single family areas.

Transition of land uses is of general concern, between commercial buildings and nearby single-family residences, especially on the west side of Aurora.