

Seattle Neighborhood Workshops
BEACON HILL WORKSHOP SMALL GROUP NOTES
October 20, 2016

Note: Note: **Yellow** highlights = consensus

GROUP 1

Assets

- Commuter bike route on Beacon Ave. to 15th or alternate on 17th for greenway route
- Signaled crosswalks: at library, by light rail, by park, at Hanford
- Library
- Zen Garden (at Beacon/Lafayette)
- Jefferson Park and community center
- Other parks: Triangle Park, Pagoda Park, Katie Black's Garden/park at 13th
- Overlooks with benches on west side of hill
- Walk from Denise Louie Child Care to park
- Soccer Field
- Plaza Maestas, with public space and food vendors
- Festival street
- Commercial hub along Beacon Ave.
- Jose Marti Child Care
- Transit hub – light rail station, buses
- Three schools: Kimball, Mercer, Beacon Hill International
- Church at McLellan
- Fire Station by Jefferson Park
- Public art at Jefferson Park and library
- Mountains to Sound Trail
- The Red Apple – only grocery store for Beacon Hill! Also used by Georgetown residents
- Stevens Place Park

Problem Areas

- Steep area east of Beacon Ave., avoided by cyclists
- Traffic congestion by light rail station
- Some concerns about homeless use of Stevens Place Park

Discussion of Proposed Zoning Changes

- Map isn't showing many upzones, more a difference in height.
- Need amenities from transit station all the way to Jefferson Park. Map is showing two gaps along Beacon Ave. near the park.
- Beacon Hill is underserved with only one commercial area—Beacon Ave. Other neighborhoods have several shopping streets.
- **CONSENSUS: More growth could be put into the core.**
- Suggest more upzone on south fronting the golf course and filling in the gaps in Beacon Ave.

- Don't put growth at the north or south.
- Concern about the look and feel of Beacon Ave getting closed in if buildings get too tall.
- Keep Beacon Hill a residential area; people like the family-community feel of Beacon Hill.
- Like the current pedestrian scale, trees, open feel
- **CONSENSUS: Keep an open feeling with buildings that include common areas such as plazas, setbacks, expanding the width of sidewalks.**
- Constraints on development: Land/parcel sizes, costs added. Diagonal parcels along Beacon Ave. are not likely to get tall buildings, limit what can be built. Currently getting only townhomes.
- Questions on the speed of turnover of property to make the changes.
- Commercial zone should be for commercial use, not townhomes or live/work units. Commercial zone needs to benefit the whole community.
- Concern about traffic and noise with too much commercial development.
- Concerns about barriers of cost and process for owners to develop ADUs and DADUs. Concern that MHA will reduce interest in adding ADUs and DADUs.
- **CONSENSUS: Consider an exception to MHA for ADUs and DADUs.**
- Need for more family-size units in multifamily buildings, not just studios and one-bedrooms.
- Light rail should have more density nearby.
- Consider walkability to light rail stations, both the current Beacon Hill station and new station(s) for the line out I-90.

Questions:

- What level of development triggers MHA in the "M" zone? Would MHA requirement apply to a property owner adding an ADU or DADU?
- Is MHA too onerous for a small-scale developer and not providing enough impact from a large developer?
- What is NC1 vs. NC2?
- Is the fee mandatory for developments in the RSL zone, where limited number of units means that the percentage approach to affordable units can't be achieved?

Transitions

- Lack of density one block off Beacon Ave, such as SE near Jefferson Park.
- Would like to see higher density in block next to Beacon Ave., as a way to step down into residential.
- Questions on the difference in zoning for north and south parts of Beacon Ave. and transition between.
- Piece of Beacon Ave by Jefferson Park could be NC1.
- SE corner of Urban Village could expand out more.

Summary Points:

- Concern that MHA requirement could actually impede development, especially in RSL zone
- Opportunities for infill development around Beacon Ave. for commercial
- Opportunities to expand zoning of Urban Village to the SE and shoulder areas, and along Jefferson Park

- Change zoning to provide better transition from Beacon Ave., especially SE
- Upzone around light rail station(s)
- Consider new parks

GROUP 2 (facilitator's notes)

Neighborhood assets (general consensus on all)

- Light rail station/El Centro/new development at El Centro—strong neighborhood center
- Red Apple grocery
- Jefferson Park
- Pacific Tower/PacMed—lots of nonprofits
- International School
- Library
- Small green spaces/undeveloped lots
- 12th Ave Lookout

Overarching values (strong consensus on these)

- Diversity. Ethnic, racial, and socio-economic diversity is highly valued—this attracted people to the neighborhood and they don't want to lose it
- Affordability (housing and commercial space).
 - Keeping the neighborhood affordable is extremely important, even if it means concentrating affordable housing in Beacon Hill. Buildings where 100% of units are affordable are desired.
 - Make sure fees-in-lieu paid in Beacon Hill are used to provide affordable housing in Beacon Hill (and willing to accept affordable housing from fees-in-lieu paid elsewhere)
 - Affordable commercial/office/nonprofit space is very important, not just affordable housing

Connect across disconnections (zoning)

- Continue neighborhood commercial zoning in the small pocket of residential zone on Beacon Ave to make a continuous strip of retail/restaurants
- Continue neighborhood commercial zoning on Beacon Ave to Jefferson Park (to connect to that asset). Allow small commercial on the north side of Jefferson Park, like an RC zone. Bring more energy to this area by allowing higher intensity uses, but require 100% affordable housing here.
- Continue neighborhood commercial zoning to Pacific Tower on the north end to connect to this asset (specific area marked on map)
- But beware of diluting City resources and support for businesses (e.g., business associations) if commercial area grows larger

Strategic planning for affordable housing and other amenities

- Proactively seek out, acquire, land bank, work with partners, etc., to make affordable housing happen on underdeveloped properties in Beacon Hill. Be strategic and forward-thinking, not just waiting on small amounts of affordable housing to happen with redevelopment or the hope for fees-in-lieu to manifest.

- Plan green spaces for Beacon Hill. Identify important parcels for green space now, and also require green spaces or community gathering spaces with new development.

Building design

- The transect from Beacon Ave east and west made sense with zones stepping down to SF.
- Some concern over Beacon Ave having a long linear strip of tall buildings close together. Make sure design guidelines/development standards prevent a canyon effect.

Neighborhood planning

- Rainier Village relationship. Plan the relationship between the Beacon Hill and Rainier urban villages more. One person suggested preserving a larger swath of traditional SF between the two, especially given the steep slopes, but another wanted more development capacity. One common route between the two is marked on the map—group wasn't sure if it would be better to preserve that route as it is now as a quiet green street or encourage more activity on it.
- UV boundary. The urban village boundary should not be tied to a 10 minute walk, but should relate more to the assets, especially PacMed and Jefferson Park. On the southeast boundary, the steep slopes make the walk more than 10 minutes to light rail, but still an easy walk to other assets, so articulate a clear rationale for the boundary.

Other

- Better visualization for more informed dialogue. The group wanted a 3D (digital) model of Beacon Hill showing existing conditions vs. maximum buildout to better understand and visualize the distinctions between the zones and proposed vs. existing zoning. This would be especially helpful given the complex topography.
- Development economics and unintended consequences. Make sure the RSL zone doesn't make it more expensive to develop in Beacon Hill.
- Green character. The amount of green (trees/landscaping) currently in Beacon Hill is appreciated. Keep that as the neighborhood changes.
- Parking. One person made strong argument for no parking minimums; another person (citywide perspective, not from Beacon Hill) expressed concern about no parking minimums.

GROUP 3

Assets and Issues

- Elderly aging in place
- *Concern:* Affordability for renters – remaining in Beacon Hill; transit between north and south Beacon Hill
- *Concern:* Current dev. huge/unaffordable
- Appreciate economic/cultural diversity
- *Concern:* How zoning impacts health care
- Very accessible to the rest of the city
- Beacon Hill is a very engaging community, very diverse community
- *Concern:* Through expansion we may lose the diversity, sense of engaged community

Key Hubs within Beacon Hill (see aerial map)

- Can people who have children or accessibility/mobility issues make the 10-min. walk? Is that realistic?
- Sidewalks are more infrequent toward edge of Urban Village boundary.
- Transit #36 bus frequency issues.
- Grocery stores – culturally sensitive, affordable – Concern that will change with expanded Urban Village and associated development.
- Lack of set-back requirements are crowding out single family units; character impacts.
- Need a clearer explanation of the different zones.
- *Concern*: How is the community being made aware of these zoning issues?
- *Concern*: Maintenance of smaller parks within the Urban Village of Beacon Hill.

Building Types

- More green space would be nice on lots.

Summary

- Stem the flow of displacement of diversity.
- Is the 10-min. walk shed realistic considering traffic, sidewalks, topography, elderly, kids?
- Relationships between parking and transit unclear.
- How effective is the communication to the neighborhood or any initiative?
- *Concern*: Interaction of new development with existing properties (setbacks, green space, etc.)
- *Concern*: If a developer doesn't want to build the required percentage of affordable units but pays into the housing fund, will that money get invested in affordable housing in the Urban Village of the original development?
- *Concern*: Ripple effect of market-rate higher density on lower density single family units.
- Should LR2 zone between the NC areas Beacon Ave. S. & Stevens & S. Hanford be an NC area as well?
- **CONSENSUS: Lack of parking with increase in density is concerning.**
- *Concern*: People flood into neighborhood to park for major events downtown.
- Accessibility issues to people living outside the Urban Village.
- Makes sense for transitions in building height in densest area.
- Take advantage of existing density patterns in urban villages.
- *Concern*: Impact on road infrastructure with these zoning changes.

GROUP 4

[Assets]

- Strong sense of community
- Small local businesses surrounding the light rail
- ***El Centro building**
- ***Jefferson Park**
- ***Cultural community – community serving institutions**
- ***Cultural hubs** – Lee Family Assoc.; elements celebrating Chinese heritage; strong sense of belonging in neighborhood in function and character

- *Ethnic groceries – many along Beacon
- *Red Apple
- Strategies for local businesses to stay and thrive
- *Beacon Ave from Lander to Park – key pedestrian stretch
- *Beacon/College St. through Jefferson
- LR along Beacon could accommodate more housing
- Be careful of creating a gap in pedestrian character along Beacon
- Also consider (RC) overlay to allow commercial in more places
- *Library
- Parks, schools and place of worship important to celebrate

Happy	Concern
Retaining cultural heritage, landmarks	Parking and demands with growth
Support low-income housing, encourages everyone to participate in affordability program and limit displacement	Parking
Concerns shared by group reflect what has been heard in previous community forums	Concurrency planning and investment in schools, transit, and parks to support additional people and density as projects happen
Support commercial district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disconnection at Beacon Ave - Pedestrian zoning at Beacon Ave, no Live-Work Units 	Schools, parking and transit
Mostly a consensus on boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current Urban Village Boundaries should be expanded to respond to neighborhood assets - Connecting to Mid-Beacon 	Parking is an ongoing problem, as some people believe commuters are parking in adjacent residential areas to be near light rail station, others experience
Sensitivity to transitions on the whole is reflected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority for thinner transitions vs. larger Urban Village expansion. Use more zones to transition between areas where it is feasible. 	Parking, safety and lighting at night
Appreciation for the Yellow/RSL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retaining family sized housing throughout urban village, support to promote more family sized units in mixed use and multifamily buildings 	Increase of police presence could assist response to neighborhood issues and perceptions of safety for some
Support Cultural Hub and choices for renters throughout the neighborhood of all family types and sizes	Quality of street - “potholes” and other infrastructure investments
Transitions are responsive to established areas and topography but could benefit from some minor changes	Neighborhood Commercial and local businesses benefit from people living close by and having access. Fear that limiting growth in areas around the core will weaken the success of the business district

[zoning discussion]

- Use flexible strategies to manage parking
- Let parking fees support community investments and projects
- Parking fees and minimums may not be needed if other strategies are used to manage parking demand
- How to balance the concerns about increased demand for neighborhood assets/livability with need for responsiveness on affordability issue
- More tweaking could be done to establish parking minimums and support increased transit-use
- Link up to Commercial area to south along the western edge of the park
- Allow some type of commercial in south pocket. May be a good opportunity to use residential commercial zones to support a shift in scale but still allow for more flexibility in use.
- Topography can support transition to Residential Small lot to the south
- Zones are four properties deep-- could use space to transition between zones
- Thinner and more stepped zoning would support better transitions
- Important pedestrian (P) overlay to emphasize commercial district and encourage active ground floor uses
- Extend (pedestrian overlay) to more places outside of Beacon Ave
- Including southern pocket as connected to benefits of Urban Village even if boundary is not expanded further to be included. This area needs support to become more walkable.
- N Beacon Council to include South Beacon Council, the council has been responsive to hearing from one
- Think of link to McPherson versus to Red Apple. Which one would people be more likely to walk to for affordability and proximity at northern edge of park.
- Parking strategies for neighborhoods and buildings are needed to meet residents' and businesses' needs
- Balance parking with additional housing choices
- Strong desire to create two parking buildings to benefit district and alleviate parking conflicts
- *The park is an important asset; however there is not much transit and commercial around park.
- Considerations for boundary refinement:
 - Terrain and topography- Consider walkability challenges and impact of height plus hills on transitions and visual impacts
 - Maintain high frequency and reliable transit in area and support ability to handle higher volumes on already full buses and trains.
 - How to maintain transit to job centers for people throughout the village within a close walk. As you provide additional housing choices on the edges of the village, ensure that that walking environment is safe, well-lit.
- Retain rental throughout district including family-sized units
 - Create additional affordable home ownership opportunities for working families
- Increase opportunities for more commercial and transit accessible to southern end of urban village