

Seattle Neighborhood Workshops
CROWN HILL WORKSHOP SMALL GROUP NOTES

November 15, 2016

Note: Yellow highlights for consensus in the indicated group

GROUP 1

Assets

- Businesses along Holman (map note 1)
- Park (northern)
- Restaurants (map note 2)
- Transit access (hub)
- Neighborhood character
- Safeway
- “Safeway” park
- Swanson’s
- Greenway (along 17th)
- Well-established neighborhood (infrastructure) north of 80th
- Alleys
- Neighbors – friendly
- Residential/single family feel
- Walkable
- Pride of ownership
- Parks (southern)
- Cemetery
- Biking
- Carkeek Park
- Gardens (well-maintained)
- Quiet

Zoning Proposals

- Clarification of building heights
- Clarification of commercial areas
- Questions within MHA areas re parking spaces
- Creating opportunity for creating additional parking by developers
- **Group 1 consensus: Not enough discussion re parking**
 - Commitment needed
 - No parking at parks
- Traffic
 - Can’t get out on 85th to I-5 (up to three lights)
 - Poor signal timing

- 16th Ave NW:
 - Size of road insufficient for large apartment buildings
 - Wider north of 85th (no sidewalks)
- Zoning changes are quite large in certain areas, such as 16th
- Changing residential streets to commercial impacts residents with business traffic, delivery trucks, parking, etc.
- Generally narrow roads within neighborhood
- Are real time traffic cameras being used?
- Open lots changing to multifamily apartments
- Townhouses are going in, not meeting what current zoning allows
- Building height jump in certain areas 35 – 75' (single family to RSL)
- 75' too high, hard to retain character, views from Ballard
- If lower height limits, is it possible to not increase heights elsewhere?
- Question re transitions will push more intense development out further
- Option for density to be located along 15th, relieve single family areas
- Density should be clustered along intersection
- Interest in attracting businesses (offices)
- Open space
- Put expansion in the NC-75 area, where height doesn't obstruct
- What is the desired height?
- RPZs to keep parking for residents
- What is the enforcement of incoming residents to not have a car?
- Buildings are being built without parking, although developers often offer it as an amenity
- Shared parking between buildings – great idea!
- Percent of owner/rental, existing and proposed
 - Why not more opportunities for condo ownership?
 - What is City's role in promoting that?
 - Can't require ownership
- Can more affordable housing be [ownership]?
- Burden of renting: first, last deposit
- Interest in increasing diversity of renters

Building Types

- Mary Street
 - Project (low income) housing – poor design, causing issues; good design can address this
 - Concern about whether it brings in problems
- Setbacks insufficient
- Sidewalks missing
- Windows closed off
 - Ground floor uninviting
 - Can't control indoor uses

- NC 75 – how to make sure housing is part of building, not all office
- Not much communal space in neighborhood, is there space for it?
- What possible zoning is there in transition areas – issues of building height is potentially related to
- 15th and 85th should be more utilized, to concentrate height
- Upzoning resulting in increasing property values and taxes
- Safety along 90th – students playing in park – traffic, flow
- What can be done along 16th? Can commercial be aligned facing 15th residential on 16th?
- Desire for design guidelines to allow better design
 - Curb cuts
 - Road island causing issues, traffic redirection
 - Results in negative business impacts
 - Loss of certain business types (mechanics, auto shop)
- Phasing concurrent with putting in of infrastructure (north of 85th)
- Boundary changes
- Question re schools and how increased density will affect them
- Brown areas are biggest issue
 - Current single family
- Boundaries generally make sense
- **Group 1 Consensus: Parking requirement should be in place**
- Neighborhood center plaza behind Petco
- What are tools to help?
 - Development standards (FAR)
 - Incentives
 - Plazas created through development is private, but can be managed by City
 - How to get tools in place
- Zoning changes to support public space, especially behind Petco

Summary

- **Group 1 Consensus re: parking issues**
- Phasing of plan – arterials, infrastructure
- Better pedestrian crossings across arterials
- Infrastructure (sidewalks, stormwater) needs to support development, and feeling that neighborhood has accepted increased density without seeing investment from the City)
- Safety (both in terms of pedestrian/traffic safety, esp along major arterials, and on roads adjacent to parks, and in terms of poor building design leading to areas feeling unsafe)
- Concern about ability of narrow streets to accommodate the larger and more intense development associated with proposed zoning changes
- Concern that transitions between zones are very abrupt
- Interest in other approaches to accommodating growth

- Interest in potential design tools that could support creation of public open space and higher quality of building design

GROUP 2

Assets

- Crown Hill Park, Soundview Playfield; but not enough green and open space
- Overpass over Holman Road
- Trees
- Bike street on 17th, safety for kids on bikes
- Breeze off the Sound – don't want it blocked by tall buildings
- School – Whitman too small now, has 15 portables in use
- Labateyah Youth Home – transitional housing run by Native American organization
- Small businesses – restaurants, bakery
- Street pedestrian area, livability
- Diversity of neighbors

Concerns about Observed Current Development; Implications for Proposed Development

- No sidewalks north of 85th (formerly City boundary), inadequate transportation or pedestrian infrastructure
- Concern that bus service is already oversubscribed and unable to accommodate new growth
- Development standards with upzones -- have sidewalks right at street
- Bus layover zone is dangerous for pedestrians
- Concerns about fire safety due to narrowed ROW
- Concerns about observations about current development include seemingly non-conforming in-street development: buildings to lot line, etc. Skepticism that increased development will be appropriate/nonconforming.
- Lack of green space with new buildings having no set back
- Three stories plus rooftop deck exceeds height limits
- Three-story house with stairs (townhome) – concern that this type of development is being incentivized by current and proposed zoning, but is not accessible for potential buyers/residents that are older or have mobility issues
- New home design doesn't fit neighborhood

Proposed Zoning Changes

- If transit is not for 20 years, why building change now?
- **Group 2 consensus: Don't need Urban Village expansion because the area hasn't built up in the last 20 years since it was designated an Urban Village**
- Crown Hill is doing more than its share
- Do infrastructure first
- Previous upzones did not bring promised development. Upzoning should be implemented on a rolling basis to preserve neighborhood character and support the development of a viable core

instead of dispersed development. Start with 15th, then build out from there. Existing “big box” businesses and surface parking need to go before the UV will be livable and support associated higher-density residential.

- Parking lots on 15th now serve as transit parking, could be developed
- Urban Village status of Crown Hill did not occur, was supposed to have Monorail transit – makes us suspicious of plans now
- Concern that higher-density projects will be built in a non-contiguous manner
- Concern: since developers already do variances under the existing plan, doesn’t give confidence for a new plan
- Added sidewalks encroach on streets; corner bulb
- Danger 15th will ice up in winter with high rises on it
- Streets too narrow to upzone to commercial; 20th up to 89th is an alley, not a street, and won’t support more density; idiosyncrasies of many streets, especially those north of 85th, do not support increased traffic volumes
- Efficiency apartments going in with no parking provided
- Human scale is 4 to 5 stories; not buildings as a wall
- Keep to a human scale to be a “village,” where human scale refers to walkability, encouragement of small businesses, variation in building form
- Need central meeting place, like Thornton Place --provides identity
- Group 2 consensus: OK with building up more along 15th, as long as its drivable; build up to the curve of Holman Road
- Group 2 consensus: 55 feet minimum is appropriate for 15th, many felt that higher density could be accommodated immediately north of 80th, some felt that 75 feet is too high
- Concern about transition from 15th, and where proposing to change from single family to commercial – too big a jump in density use. Group 2 consensus that streets like 16th and Mary Ave on either side of 15th could reasonably support higher density residential, but the proposed commercial uses will bring commercial vehicle volumes and vehicle types (e.g., delivery trucks) that are inappropriate for those streets given how narrow they are
- Don’t put commercial next to 15th; change to lowrise residential
- Topography doesn’t fit plan – hillside along 15th; Crown Hill has more than one hill
- Step down from 15th makes sense where topography is flat (to the east)
- Build out 15th and current boundaries between other expansion
- RSL fees seem too low to support building an affordable unit
- Developers shouldn’t be able to buy their way out of affordable units
- Want a range of housing, including family-sized units, not all single-bedroom apartments
- Incentivize family housing
- Concern re LR1 off of 85th; need for LR1 upzone is seen as an unnecessary step-down to single family residential
- Support for LR upzoning immediately adjacent to 85th in theory; skepticism that development will actually come
- Danger of displacing current owners

- It's about people and how they use the area

Design Considerations

- Need variation in buildings, front and side setbacks for light and keep it livable scale, living wall, green roof; desire to avoid "canyons" or "walls"
- More sidewalks, plazas
- Design should be in sync with neighborhood
- Add pedestrian overpasses across 15th, like the one at Holman
- Mandate bike infrastructure, bike storage/racks
- Add green spaces
- Add trees for livability, keep the canopy
- RSL should include green space
- Pocket parks to help with wildlife habitat
- Southwestern part of neighborhood is part of the Rain Wise program – rain gardens – want to keep and expand
- Build on what we've put money into:
 - Rain gardens
 - Pocket parks
 - Bike streets

Question:

- Does RSL have set-back required?
- Would a rooftop deck be allowed for a building at 75 feet, i.e., effect is higher than 75 ft?

Summary Points

- Trees, open space, livable scale
- Design – setbacks, plazas
- Group 2 consensus: Focus density on 15th first, while adding infrastructure
- Transitions in flat areas
- Group 2 consensus: Next to 15th should be low rise residential, not commercial. Nearly all streets aside from 15th/Holman/85th are unsuitable for commercial uses.
- Don't change residential streets to commercial, as they can't handle business traffic.
- Concerns re slope area
- Identify the percentage of new units on 15th to be developed and do that before upzoning side streets
- Group 2 consensus: Keep existing Urban Village boundary, don't expand it

GROUPS 3 and 4

Assets

- Character of single family dwellings
- Small business corners
- Walkability to schools and local shops
- Yards, vegetation, trees
- Family friendly
- Cost off 15th
- Close to things but still small scale
- Small-town feel
- Grocery stores
- Active business district
- Concerned about environment
- Mom & Pop shops
- Lacking quaint coffee shops/cafes
- Community of all demographics currently; new vision may erode existing community with one-bedroom apartments/condos

Questions:

- Where are we in the process?

Zoning Questions

- Dramatic changes to 16th, concerns about commercial traffic
- East side of 16th lacks enough transition, already top of the hill
- Transitions of zone in alleys; prefer to have transitions on streets with alleys as opposed to single family streets
- Too much change in height
- Concentrate development on 15th
- NC 55 too much height!
- More than doubling density
- Not enough parking (on street) for existing residents
- Don't agree in transition of building heights that take too many lots to get to single-family scale
- 15th to get density increase but not a (6)layer transition
- New heights dwarf existing character
- Infrastructure needs to support existing community
- New density will displace renters whose landlords sell or rebuild and cannot afford new housing
- Developer will just pay fee to not have affordable housing and fee will leave the local community
- Intensify existing arterial, not other main streets in the community
- Capacity to add housing to arterial alone

- Not opposed to 75 feet along arterial
- Access roads cannot handle increased density and population
- What is Crown Hill's new population goal and justification to infrastructure?
- Arterials (80th) too busy for existing residents
- Developers should be paying for infrastructure (light rail), not taxpayers
- Concerns that developers won't build affordable housing locally
- Ensure quality of development
- Ensure longevity of development
- New development taking up too much of the lot, wants requirements to keep yards and greenery
- Will the city provide displacement assistance?
- Displacement of middle income residents (renters and home owners)
- Affordability is extending too far from Seattle downtown
- Quality of life – streets too busy with cars and not enough parking
- Shopping district needs additional parking – flow on local residential streets
- Reality is that people own cars and need to accommodate for this
- Need to balance new development with enough parking
- Car-free lifestyle is not practical for everyone; riding a bike is not practical for everyone
- Where is the “village heart”?; currently has a lot of little hearts; focus efforts on a “heart” of the community
- Existing lots are already very small with single family
- Parts of the neighborhood without sidewalks to include with new development
- Concerns over developers buying several lots and redeveloping a mega-lot (joined building)
- Single family zone – developers are buying and building mega-mansions, not affordable housing
- Not all lots and streets can handle increased density
- Retain existing village boundary

Design

- Developers to offset development with open space
- How do we require good design in zoning (front of block court yards)
- Open to good design, but current development doesn't give confidence in the future!
- Need incentives for better urban design
- Arterial is unpleasant to walk along
- Design standards that retain existing character

Summary Key Points

- Keep density on arterial
- Need infrastructure to support existing before new
- Parking impacts – already maxed out
- Value existing mix of people, new development might decrease diversity
- Developers will pay fees to avoid affordable housing

- Affordable housing needs to be local
- Development design is really important
- Open space
- Middle income displacement
- Not too concerned with height transition
- Need a “heart”
- Environmental impacts of development
- RSL too dense

GROUP 5

Assets

- Open space, large trees, mountain views
- Not many public parks – pocket parks
- 85th / 15th transit hub, 17th Ave bike path
- Businesses, like HOP[?] Shop, small local restaurants, which have been long-term gathering spaces
- Community center and park at top of hill, on Holman
- Underutilized spaces like parking lots

Orientation and Zoning

- Transition in zoning should go street to street
- Concern that shops could be displaced if apartments / NC come in. Do you have to have commercial on the bottom in NC?
- There is some affordable housing single family; concerned that they are going to tear down existing affordable housing only to build more
- Less restrictive zoning for homeowners to develop the lot
- Rezoning in a radius instead of linear preferred
- 15th transit issues – needs improvement
- Concern about density and transit able to serve that density
- Parking, sidewalks, drainage needed
- Less on-street parking on 85th
- In favor of residential small lot: affordability; scale; character
- Suggest if owner occupied and built that owner should be exempt if they stay on the development
- NC on small side streets seems impractical, impacts residents with commercial traffic and parking. NC splits single family.
- In favor of moving commercial to small streets to promote pedestrian environment.
- Concern about the lack of parking within the Urban Village
- Important not to limit commercial to multilane arterials

- Walkshed – nod for clusters of commercial stores
- 20th Ave NW, west side 19th Ave. – street too small to handle a large increase in traffic
- Crown Hill needs to see more green space
- Arterials on 18th are dangerous for pedestrians
- Border of Urban Village should not be shrunk any more
- Focus on areas where there are not any Urban Villages to take pressure off density here
- Want Crown Hill to be more of an Urban Village – doesn't feel like a "village"
- Phased approach on NC corridor – if open all at once, hard to control development
- 15th major arterial – is it because evacuation truck route?
 - How does that affect zoning?
 - How do you take a truck route and make it pedestrian friendly?

Design and Building Form

- Lack of cohesive design development
- Could you add green infrastructure improvements along 15th?
- Importance of public art – contributes toward cohesiveness
- Concern about scale affecting the sense of human scale
 - Set backs
 - Vegetation
 - Both possible to offset the inhuman scale
- No guarantee a good mix of businesses/services will happen in future
- Lack of office space, street level no desired
- Consider vacancy rates in implementation

Summary

- Lack of reliable mass transit/infrastructure in general/sidewalks
- Potential to phase, focus on arterials
- May not be enough to address affordability
- Revisit parking requirements
- Conflict with MFTE program
- Include green space for walkability
- RSL is good solution
- Less consensus on size of transitions

GROUP 6

*Note: This group appears to have marked their summary points with a red dot. These are noted below with an ***

Assets

- Area has a lot of trees (large trees)
- Cemetery
- Labateyah Youth Home
- **Diversity of lot size, building size, history
- Diversity of people (renter, owner, age)
- Natural affordable housing
- Bike path on 17th
- **Cute Tudor single family homes – Character (existing)
- Businesses on 85th
- Smaller lots, smaller homes, still single family but less environmental impact, affordable
- Parking
- **Walking distance to grocery
- Parks (Baker, Crown Hill) – well maintained
- **13 ravines, 3 watersheds – Natural features
- Crown Hill Center
- Diverse, ethnic restaurants within walking distance

Boundary/Zoning

- School should not be included, will increase pressure on School District to sell
- **Like having more commercial businesses to walk to, just on ground floor
- **75 feet is way too high to back up to a neighborhood
 - Too little access to light
 - Plus topography means it is even higher
- Do want to focus on arterials
 - Define arterial
 - Streets off 15th are not arterials and can't take commercial traffic
- **If back of NC faces residential, back should be residential
- Nothing over 55 feet on 15th, anywhere in Crown Hill
- (Another view) "I want 100 feet"
- Vision was center and closer to 89th
- Between 83rd and 85th is a large slope, will impact feel of height and drainage
- Would like senior housing
- **75 feet feels more appropriate on the southern part of the Urban Village, as you get closer to downtown
- If we want growth on arterials, are we disincentivizing/discouraging in M2 zones with higher requirements? (On arterials, where we want it.)

- Won't developers just pay, and we won't actually get any [affordable housing] here?
- If we don't want to go higher on 15th, could we go higher on 85th?
- Developers will go straight to RSL/SF, that is where the money is
 - Harder to assemble commercial, larger property on arterials
 - Prioritize; what is the motivation for developers?
- Don't need to push RSL this far into the neighborhood
- Where does middle class go?
- Or move it (density) down south along 15th, where transit is
- 75 is "high rise" in building code, more expensive housing type
- # want a height cap, so no concessions for additional height for roof access, etc. (if 75 feet, buildings should not go higher)
- Better transition where 75 ft to RSL
- **Leave at 55 or lower if there isn't room for transition (Urban Village not deep enough)
- Trying to get PR2, people park in front of house, don't move car for three weeks
- **Transit not keeping up with development; don't reduce parking; tie to policy
- This is an auto-oriented area; will take a lot of time to be appropriate for car-free
- It is unsafe when people park across 15th to go to a building with no parking
- Traffic gets backed up from I-5
- Buses are full; need more buses on routes
- We want light rail (now) – Aurora Lichten Springs is getting it
- **Livability means people can get to and from work
- When you think of a village, you think of a center of the community – this is too linear
- We should have a community center – a public/city one, not the privately owned one
- Aggregation of businesses, like Ballard Avenue (restaurant hub)
- If we as residents can't having parking, shouldn't have huge parking lot at Safeway
- Begin at two notes, then fill in (15th/85th, 90th)
- **More strategic use of "P" to support business districts
- Require sidewalks; 17th no sidewalks and flooding = unsafe because people are walking in street
- Safeway is a good place for development, underground/garage parking, residential above commercial

Building Design

- Need design standards
 - Want transitions within zones, not just from zone to zone
- Ground floor set back, covered walking area, increase pedestrian right of way
- **Impact fees could help build sidewalks – neighborhood specific – right-of-way improvements
- RSL should have same set back as single family; create visual continuity along street

SEPARATE SHEET/DIFFERENT HANDWRITING – NOT CLEAR WHICH GROUP

Assets

- Near Seattle
- Undeveloped potential
- Fairly inexpensive single family housing
- Feels like a neighborhood – homes and parks
- Small town feel
- Schools and parks
- Close to work
- Small kids can ride bikes
- Good quality brick houses, vintage 1950+