

Fort Lawton Community Workshop Meeting Summary

April 26, 2008

Today's meeting was the second in a series of five planning workshops focused on the development of a Reuse Plan for Fort Lawton. In addition, a parallel series of discussions will focus specifically on how the housing providers and neighbors can work together to ensure the success of the reuse plan. These meetings will result in a Community Relations Plan.

Today's meeting was divided into three sections.

1. BRAC Process and NOI (Notice of Interest) Review
2. Goals and Visions Workshop 2: Community goals for the Redevelopment
3. Overview of Next Steps: Background Data and Program Options

Summaries of the three forum discussions are included below. All materials and handouts from the meeting are available for download on the website.

http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/public_outreach.htm

8:30- 9:00 BRAC Process and NOI Review

BRAC Overview

As a precursor to the day's planning workshop, the City presented an overview of the BRAC process in general, and the City's involvement to date. A graphic timeline of the process is available under meeting materials on the Fort Lawton website.

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/timeline.htm>

The meeting recapped the BRAC overview that took place at the previous community workshop. A power point presentation entitled *Fort Lawton, Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC)* was presented. The slide show began with a map explaining future uses of Fort Lawton lands. These include:

- Cemetery to be retained by the Army
- Open space areas to be maintained by Seattle Parks Department
- Other lands to be redeveloped

City Designated as LRA: As the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), the City of Seattle is responsible for developing the Reuse Plan, and negotiating with the Army for the property transfer.

Local Control: If there was no LRA, the Army would be the sole decision maker and would only periodically check in with the City. By becoming the LRA, the City of Seattle will be able to lead the community in developing a Reuse Plan. Once accepted, this

binding plan will guide the Army's decisions and eventual disposition of the property. The functions and responsibilities of the LRA were outlined in the power point presentation.

http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/pubs/ft_lawton_brac_ppt.pdf

Project Timeline: The BRAC process began with the 2005 BRAC closure that included Fort Lawton and proceeded onto the notice of interest, public workshops, and submittal dates. The draft Fort Lawton Reuse Plan will be presented to the Mayor in July of 2008, and to the City Council in August. The City Council will take action on the reuse plan in September and submit it to the Federal Departments of Defense and Housing and Urban Development.

Army Expectations: The Army expects **fair market value** from land. **Homeless housing** uses will be given priority for no-cost transfer. Other **public benefit conveyances** will be closely scrutinized.

BRAC Plan Guiding Principles:

- **neighborhood integrity**
- **community connectedness**
- **social responsibility**
- **environmental stewardship**

Questions

Q: What **level of detail** does the reuse plan need/have?

A: The plan is required to delineate **proposed land uses only**.

Q: **How long does the Army have** to respond to the reuse plan?

A: Once the Army receives the plan **they do not have a time limit** for review of implementation.

9:00 Welcome

Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis,

The City wanted to be the local authority in order to ensure that the final decisions would benefit the local community. SHA has demonstrated great design success with High Point and other communities. The City is committed to working with the community to reach the best possible outcome.

9:15 Team Introduction

Various members of the redevelopment team were introduced. Team members at the workshop included:

City of Seattle: Linda Cannon, Office of Intergovernmental Relations (BRAC Process); Mark Ellerbrook and Chris Jowell, Office of Housing

Housing Partners: Brian Sullivan, Seattle Housing Authority Project Manager; John Hickman, Archdiocesan Housing Authority; Tom Gaylord, Habitat for Humanity; Elizabeth Tail, Alesek Institute/UIATF

Planning Consultants: Brian Scott and Rob Lloyd, EDAW

EDAW will be facilitating the workshops and leading the public through the reuse plan process over the next several months. EDAW has considerable experience with BRAC, having worked on about a third of all BRAC projects to date.

EDAW is a multi-disciplined design firm with housing and community planning experience in Seattle and Portland. Brian Scott, project director, has experience on City Life, a Portland multi- and single-family housing infill project. Rob Lloyd will be EDAW's project manager. He has experience working with Brian Sullivan on the High Point community.

GGLO is the architectural partner on the team. They have experience designing similar projects and bring a strong portfolio of Seattle work.

9:20 Process Overview

Brian Sullivan spoke to a process graphic which describes the timeline and importance of beginning the community process early. Information on the process as well as notes and materials from the workshops will be provided on the website. There will be parallel meetings (Community Relations Plan) on Monday evenings concerning the homeless housing.

http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/public_outreach.htm

Community workshops will cover the following topics:

1. Community process
2. Goals (community priorities)

3. Information collection (-part of today's and next meeting)
4. Site alternatives
5. Conceptual plan - Leading to final plan

9:30 Goals Discussion Conclusion (hand out of goals from last meeting with Number totals)

Workshops focus in integrating housing: Representatives of the City reiterated their intention to develop the property in question with housing as the primary use. The purpose of this series of workshops is to allow for stakeholder input in creating the best possible plan with the established housing program. Alternate uses such as dedicating the land to the park or school would need to be considered by City Council, and should be taken up with a Council person or other avenue.

Ultimately, the Army is the entity that must approve the plan. There are elements, such as homeless housing, that the Army expects to see in the plan. If the Army does not approve the City's plan, they can proceed to sell or develop the property without further public consultation.

Dot Exercises

Participants were asked to comment and vote on three topics.

1. A review and confirmation of overall planning goals expressed at the previous meeting.
2. Possible site uses in addition to housing.
3. Circulation

1. Community Goals Continuing the previous meeting's visioning session, community members were asked to vote on topics they saw as most important to the planning process. A list of topics from the previous meeting was posted, and participants commented or added topics to the list. There was some debate over what constituted a goal versus a design option. The intent was to focus on overall goals which would inform design options considered in the following workshops.

Participants were asked to take red dots if they were a Fort Lawton neighbor and green dots if they were another interested citizen. The voting process is summarized below. A complete list of the voting options will also be posted on the website.

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac>

Top three goals were as follows:

- Neighborhood Integrity and Community Connectedness
- Blend community with the surrounding Magnolia neighborhoods (architecture, people)
- Final community should enhance surrounding neighborhood quality and values

2. Additional Site Uses Participants were asked to comment and then voted on site uses which could be integrated with the housing.

The following three uses received the most votes:

- Schools (on or off site, it is important that schools have sufficient capacity for neighborhood children.)
- Reduce impact of Veterans Building parking lot (underground parking or smaller lot?)
- Police Station

3. Circulation Goals for site circulation design were discussed. Residents commented on limitations of the road network serving the area, and expressed interest in finding balance between the various site access points, and between neighborhood and Discovery park needs.

Most votes for circulation went to:

- On 36th Ave W., maintain restricted access to existing neighborhood only
- Create pedestrian friendly, safe streets
- Minimize impact on traffic flow and congestion on 36th Ave W.

Participants asked about several parking related topics including reducing the FLARC/VA parking lot. As that property will remain under Federal ownership, the City will not have control over what happens on that site. Connections to the existing neighborhood fall more within the purview of the Fort Lawton Reuse Plan.

Overall parking concerns related to Discovery Park were also deemed beyond the scope of the BRAC plan.

Circulation is an important topic, and Brian Scott reiterated that it would be studied throughout the planning process.

One topic that was discussed was the goal that the proposed development will result in no net increase in impact from current use levels.

Summary Votes and comments were discussed. Brian Sullivan presented a wrap-up of voting results. Three important categories of project goals were presented:

- **Integrity and connectedness**
- **Social responsibility**
- **Environmental stewardship**

For detailed voting tallies, please see the Fort Lawton Website.

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac>

11:15 Community Visioning: High Point Case Study

Brian Sullivan made a presentation on Highpoint. Features/aspects that were discussed include:

- The community had a role in the design
- The design is intended to promote a sense of community
- High quality design was a goal
- The neighborhood is pedestrian-oriented
- Reconnects with the surrounding neighborhood – architecture, planting, open space
- Parks are integrated into the neighborhood, as are a p-patch and market garden
- Design standards for maintenance and future development are in place
- Natural drainage systems are addressed by the design through Low Impact Development (LID) strategies. Audience members were not all familiar with LID, so an explanation of how bioswales operate was provided
- The intention is not to repeat High Point at Fort Lawton, but to give an example of a successful mixed-income community developed through a community-oriented design process

11:30 Community Visioning: Fort Lawton

Brian Scott noted that as consultants are just beginning their work, more detailed analysis of the site would be completed for the next meeting.

A worksheet was handed out for note-taking and recording comments.

The context of the site was presented raising the following topics:

- Housing variety in the area
- Cemetery and habitat
- Existing buildings on site – newer FLARC building to stay
- Opportunities at the site exist, including access to Discovery Park and Daybreak Star Cultural Center
- Almost the whole reuse site consists of paved areas or buildings
- Significant slopes exist on the site and on surrounding properties
- 36th Ave. integration needs to be considered

Members of the community noted corrections which needed to be made to site maps.

- 36th Ave does not extend to Commodore Way and extending it is not an option due to slopes

- Other road connection options were discussed. The attendees were divided on best way to resolve circulation

Brian Sullivan explained what is considered affordable in terms of area median income and noted that affordability needs to be addressed early in the process for it to be properly integrated.

12:50 Wrap-up / Tour Setup

The agenda handout was discussed

http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/public_outreach.htm

- It contains questions that the community can answer and provide to the project team
- If completed at this meeting, the handout can be left with the project team
- If completed later, it can be mailed to EDAW; contact information is provided on the last page of the handout
- The team would like to receive any answers within 2 weeks

12:55 Meeting Feedback

Suggestions for the next meeting and general comments were solicited:

- Capturing categories using wall graphics works well
- Provide more food
- The process chart is good
- The public needs more information on communications between entities, particularly with regard to homeless housing providers
- The subject needs more coverage in the newspapers. Response: updated and new information has recently been placed on the official website. The URL for this website was provided
<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac>

Questions and Comments and Community Visions (from all stages of the meeting)

Background Information

Information needed as a basis for the planning process.

Housing Program

Questions

Q: The overall vagueness of homeless housing plans being developed by YMCA and the Archdiocese is a concern. How many homeless people will be housed on the site? What is the structure?

A: The City will convene a series of meetings based on the Community Relations Plan. Details of the homeless housing program will be addressed during these meetings.

Q: It is unclear what the City Council is supporting: 200 units of homeless housing or 66 units?

A: Because homeless housing was not included in plans for the Capehart site, the Council stated that at least 66 units of replacement housing will be provided.

Q: Does High Point include homeless housing?

A: 20 units will be included in Phase 2.

Other Land Uses

Questions

Q: How large is Harvey Hall Theater?

A: 250 seats

Q: What does VA plan to do with the FLARC property?

A: Drills still occur at the Fort, but only 5 to 10 percent are in full-time use. Planning team does not know what specific use VA is proposing. It has been stated that uses from other facilities will be consolidated on this site. The existing building has capacity for 300-400 reservists.

Q: What land will be retained for the cemetery?

A: This needs to be clarified with the Army, and will be presented at a future meeting.

Q: Is there any retail at Highpoint?

A: There was an attempt to include retail as part of the project, but it was difficult to find interested parties. Existing retail is present near Highpoint on an adjacent arterial.

Zoning/Density

Questions

Q: What is the current zoning?

A: Current zoning is SF 7200, but zoning does not need to be addressed in the reuse plan.

Q: What does current zoning allow in terms of number of residences?

A: Based on a rough analysis of zoning, approximately 304 residences would be permitted on the site. This subject will be covered at the next workshop.

Q: What is proposed number of residences?

A: This is not known at present.

Q: Is there an unstated goal of maximizing density?

A: Reuse planning will look at housing market, zoning options, available buildable area, and Army goals.

Q: What is actual buildable area of the site?

A: 31 acres includes steep slopes and wooded portions; the buildable area of the site has not yet been measured; the goal is to have this information for the next meeting.

Q: Do other housing projects shown as examples have much higher density than proposed for Fort Lawton?

A: In locations where other housing developments are situated, strong transit connections and other factors allow development to be at a greater density and still present a character appropriate for their communities.

Q: How much income does the Army want to get out of project? Will non-subsidized housing be high end?

A: Army would like a respectable return on the property but also has other requirements.

Design/Community Character

Questions

Q: Who maintains homes at High Point?

A: The Seattle Housing Authority maintains their own properties while owners or owners associations maintain private property.

Q: Who maintains open space at High Point?

A: The Seattle Housing Authority maintains their laws and open spaces and an Open Space Association (OSA) maintains other open spaces

Q: What does neighborhood interface mean? (Referring to Opportunities and Constraints map)

A: This highlights edges of the site where the base redevelopment will interface with the neighborhood.

Environmental / parks and open space

Questions

Q: What is a market garden?

A: It is a community garden that allows residents to sell what they grow. It serves as a money-source for some residents, particularly certain immigrant groups. P-patches could also be provided.

Q: Would native plants or lawns be used?

A: Probably a mixture. Some grass swales are provided at Highpoint where open play space is needed for children.

Q: Will any toxic waste cleanup be required?

A: Environmental review has not been completed at this point.

Circulation / Parking

Questions

Q: How will neighborhood be designed so that there are community connections between existing and proposed development?

A: Options for making these connections will be studied in upcoming meetings.

Community Process

Questions

Q: Will there continue to be recap meetings before workshops?

A: There was a recap meeting at 8:30 and there will continue to be recap meetings before each Saturday workshop so that the rest of the workshop can be most effective.

Q: What happened at the community meeting that took place earlier this week (Monday)?

A: The idea for a Community Relations Plan came out of that meeting. There will be other meetings in May and June. These meetings will be the forum for discussion of homeless housing, so that the Saturday meetings can focus on moving the reuse plan forward. Information is available on the website.

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac>

Q: Does EDAW have a financial interest in the density of the project?

A: No, EDAW has no financial interest; EDAW was hired by the City to help facilitate an open planning process, and is developing the plan based on the City's objective of developing mixed-use housing.

Q: What are the City's goals and objectives?

A: The City's goals are included in the goals presented at this meeting

Q: Will there be any public vote?

A: The plan will be developed in consultation with the community and then go to City Council for approval. There will be no direct vote by the community.

Participant Comments

Housing Program

Comments

- A partnership with the City to provide workforce housing for teachers, firefighters, etc. is desirable. (Response: the City is looking for creative development options and has existing workforce housing programs that could be integrated into or applied to this project.)
- A retirement component to the development, with community features, is desirable.
- The type of housing that would be preferred is housing for first-time homebuyers and working homeowners. This was not a high-end neighborhood ten years ago.
- Demographics in other areas where housing development have been located are closer to low-income; lower-income housing isn't a good fit for this neighborhood.
- The program for the site needs to take into account available school capacity, and not provide housing for families if there is not adequate capacity.

Zoning/Density

Comments

- High Point looks dense. (Response: Density varies within Highpoint. Some portions are dense, for example, due to elder housing, which consists of apartments.)
- Area cannot contain density – not enough access without Texas Way

Design/Community Character

Comments

- Building should be high quality and significant architecture.
- Architecture should be environmentally sensitive.
- The existing character of the area, particularly older buildings, is nice. This issue needs attention.
- Existing buildings are too dissimilar in their style and will be hard to reuse. One shouldn't be able to tell proposed buildings apart.
- Buildings or building materials should be reused.
- Smaller, higher quality development is preferred.
- Buildings should be no more than two stories tall.
- Would like development to be single family dwellings.
- In defense of mega homes, siting of these homes is the problem, not their size.

- The design should exhibit sensitivity to scale, particularly in the transition between FLARC and existing residential development.
- Buildings should use natural materials.
- The proposed development should fit the Magnolia and community character. Continuous development isn't wanted.
- There is too much paving on the existing site.
- A long common boundary exists between existing development (175 units according to neighbors estimate) and proposed development (300+ units?).
- Native artists should be used on-site. A longhouse is another possible feature.
- This neighborhood is very quiet compared to other Seattle neighborhoods, except for the occasional train.
- Some emblematic features on the existing site could be retained; building material reuse should be considered.

Environmental / parks and open space

Comments

- City park (Kiwanis Ravine) should be indicated on maps.
- Huge trees exist between Texas Way and 36th Avenue West.
- Use of a park corridor to break up proposed development is a good idea to decrease visual impact. This would divide the residential development into two smaller (~150 dwelling) sections.
- Tree preservation is important.
- Connections to park from the development and park-style amenities would be nice.
- Connecting the Kiwanis Ravine to Discovery Park would provide a habitat connection.
- Use of native plants is desired.
- Preserve the Berm along Texas Way.
- Natural areas should not be disturbed. Development should stay within paved and developed areas.
- To the east of existing development is impassible forest; this area is generally isolated by green areas/lack of roads.
- Portions of the Fort not covered by the reuse plan shouldn't be mapped as green, as this looks like vegetation.
- Maps need to show more area to the east (heron habitat/ravine), to the west (Lawtonwood, Daybreak), and to the south (main park entrance; referred to as the "Olmstead plan area").

Circulation / Parking

Comments

- There are traffic issues at the main entrance due to the number of intersecting roads. Plans to create a roundabout at this location have been proposed.
- Maps need to show park entrances and parking areas.
- Consider locating an entrance at NW corner of the site.
- On-street parking in the area is often used by park visitors.
- There is the opportunity to create structured parking near the large retaining wall on the site. This would hide the wall. (Response: This would be located on VA land.)
- Parking on the site will be used by park visitors.
- 36th Avenue West is a local road while Texas Way is a through-route to the Park and Lawtonwood. 36th Avenue West should not become a through-route.
- A route from West Government Way through the park to the back of site is desired.
- Many other options for access, besides access via Texas Way or 36th Avenue West, are possible.
- When there is a snow closure of roads in the park, residents from Lawtonwood travel via Texas Way.
- Texas Way should be moved further from 36th Avenue West.
- This neighborhood shouldn't include a high-speed thoroughfare, but access through the site should be permitted.

Community Process

Comments

- A representative of the VA should attend meetings.
- Groups responsible for homeless housing should be briefed on the need for providing information to the public.
- Program for the VA facility (existing FLARC building) should be considered / acknowledged.