

# Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee

## NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(12/7/09)

*This document contains the Subcommittee's report, including the friendly amendments that were accepted at the NPAC meeting on 11/17/09. Sections I and II of this report were adopted at that meeting as NPAC advice.*

### **SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING(S), TOPICS AND ATTENDEES**

NPAC Co-chair Irene Wall, and Plan Update Subcommittee members John Coney and Heidi Oien, met on August 25, 2009 discuss possible future Plan Update recommendation topics to reflect comments made in the July NPAC meeting.

John Coney and Heidi Oien met on September 24, 2009 to discuss how to incorporate ideas generated at the meeting with Irene Wall into the Subcommittee's next report.

John Coney, Sharonn Meeks and Heidi Oien met on October 6, 2009 to finalize the report.

Co-Chair Irene Wall provided comments on 11/8/09. The subcommittee did not have time to meet to discuss all comments. Therefore, Heidi Oien revised the document based on understanding of subcommittee discussions thus far, and solicited input from the rest of the subcommittee via email.

Coney, Oien, Meeks, Knapton, Wall, Thaler, Bailey, Vinh met on November 24 to revise language referring to design review and incentive zoning in Section II and Section III.

Edits to Section III suggested by Jeannie Hale on November 30 are included in this version, using the Track Changes command.

### **SUMMARY OF SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

- The draft report was revised to reflect discussion.
- The section on General Philosophy was subdivided and now includes a "Recommendations" section.
- Formatting was made consistent and now includes numbering.
- New recommendations and checklist items were added.
- Friendly amendments to Sections I and II from 11/17/09 were added below.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR NPAC**

- Are there any large missing topics?
- Is there anything that needs more detail or discussion before advising DPD?

### **ACTIONS/DECISIONS/DIRECTION NEEDED FROM NPAC**

NPAC adopted Sections I and II of the following report on November 17. The Subcommittee looks forward to a discussion of Section III at an upcoming NPAC meeting.

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### I. GENERAL PHILOSOPHY (approved on 11/17/09 as NPAC advice)

1. Every neighborhood reflected in the existing Neighborhood Plans is different with a particular history, culture mix, physical assets, community services, public realm features.
2. Each neighborhood has unique demographics, existing growth targets, a mix of market rate and subsidized housing, and under-utilized land.
3. As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, the City develops targets for additional housing and employment, based on assumptions from various processes at the city, regional and state levels. The City should work with the neighborhoods to determine how City-wide growth targets should be allocated among them.
4. Neighborhoods with plans that accept new population and job spaces should prioritize needed urban infrastructure, public facilities, and public services that relate to serving the population, including current and new residents.
5. Neighborhoods should have funding to utilize professionals in revising their plans, creating/revising Neighborhood Design Guidelines, Streetscape Plans, etc.
6. A neighborhood plan could request prioritized goals for specific types of Incentive Zoning where appropriate in the neighborhood.
7. All station areas need to be as complete as possible with a diversity of uses/businesses, services, and housing types, consistent with underlying zoning. The station area developments should encourage diverse housing and businesses that serve a population with diverse cultures, incomes, age categories.

### II. RECOMMENDATIONS (approved on 11/17/09 as NPAC advice)

1. The Plan Updates should be web-based (to some degree, depending on neighborhood preferences) and should contain important links to other sources of neighborhood information in the planning area: design guidelines, streetscape guidelines, earlier neighborhood planning documents and graphics, stewardship organizations websites, etc. The DPD website should have a site-map that allows easy access to all the Neighborhood Plans by clicking on any neighborhood planning area on the map.
2. The City should establish an interdepartmental task force with representation from all related city departments to assist Neighborhood Planning efforts along with neighborhood stakeholders.
3. Outside consultants should be utilized for developing plan updates. Since funding will likely not be available for all neighborhoods desiring updates, neighborhood stakeholders should be allowed to assemble, raise funds and hire a consultant to draft individual plan updates.
4. In order to achieve consistency across plans, DPD should develop guidelines for any new plan updates to be undertaken by consultants. Guidelines should be consistent with NPAC Plan Update recommendations within this document.
5. District councils and other stewardship bodies should be active in encouraging stakeholder group participation during a plan update process. DON should provide direct financial and administrative support to regenerate stakeholder groups for each plan update.
6. Each Neighborhood Plan should contain:
  - a) The City's revised growth targets, as accepted by a stakeholder-based planning committee.
  - b) Revised goals, policies, and strategies for achieving the goals related to livability, sustainability, walkability, health, education, reducing car dependency, economic vitality, job creation, and other policies related to the Comprehensive Plan. These should be updated within the Comprehensive Plan as each plan update is done.
  - c) An updated history section, so it is known what has changed for that set of neighborhoods, as well as an inventory of potentially-designated historic structures and districts.
  - d) A survey of the neighborhood's existing physical assets and needed assets, including recommendations on which assets to save/conserves, which to replace, and which to add.

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Survey methods could include lists, maps, and/or photographic records of the assets and items listed in the sections below.

- e) A list of target projects related to strategic plans, such as the Pedestrian, Bicycle or Transit Master Plans.
  - f) Updates to outdated and illegible maps, to reflect current conditions (and/or proposals), using current technology and software.
7. Any neighborhood-based steward group hiring consultants and representing the neighborhood should have open meetings and agree to abide by the intent of City Council Resolution 27709 and 28115.
  8. Recognition of existing community organizations and past stewards of neighborhood plans should be a mandatory element of any future neighborhood planning effort.
  9. The Neighborhood Plan Updates should identify and prioritize currently desired public benefits for application in cases where a project in the neighborhood planning area receives additional development capacity under the city's current and any future incentive zoning programs.
  10. Neighborhood plan updates should call for modifications or additions to existing neighborhood design guidelines (or the creation of such design guidelines where none exist) that explicitly identify site and architectural features that will support the Sector Design Review Boards and support neighborhood plan goals and policies related to preserving neighborhood character and buildings identified in the required survey of neighborhood physical and historical assets.
  11. Each neighborhood needs to be explicit as to what elements of its neighborhood character it wishes to see preserved and the preferred legal mechanisms to accomplish that preservation.

### III. A CHECKLIST OF TOPICS FOR STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN REVIEW AND REVISION TO CONSIDER (not yet approved on 11/17/09 as NPAC advice)

In addition to the topics below, Seattle's Comprehensive Plan should be consulted for more planning topics and accompanying commentary.

#### *1. LAND USE*

- a) Evaluate the city's Future Land Use Map and review current land use and zoning designations in your urban village, and make recommendations for maintaining or revising them. Consider preparation of "build out" conditions illustrations for different zoning scenarios.
- b) Be active in the development of zoning law changes that would change or retain the character of your urban village or urban center. Revisions in the multifamily Building Code for both townhouse construction and larger multifamily structures are underway. Stakeholders active in Neighborhood Plan Review and Revision for their planning areas should be aware of proposed changes and how they could affect their urban village or urban center.
- c) Consider zoning law that could provide new public or private open space (or other types of amenities), particularly in dense neighborhoods within your planning area.
- d) Consider zoning and zoning law changes that could offer lower rents or other advantages to new or old locally-owned businesses in new projects in urban villages or urban centers.
- e) Utilize Transfer of Development Rights strategies where appropriate in neighborhood plans to conserve land for the public good in urban villages and urban centers. Specific "sending sites" could be identified within the neighborhood where appropriate.
- f) Specify in the neighborhood plan future development of Neighborhood Design Guidelines or Streetscape Guidelines (if not already existing) to aid the sector's Design Review Board in making new building development more appropriate to the neighborhood character areas.
- g) Facilitate spaces for new public facilities by allowing additional building height or volume in exchange for public facility space(s) in urban villages or urban centers where

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appropriate. This could be accomplished through contract rezones or other strategies for the entire neighborhood, or at specific neighborhood parcels prioritized for public facilities.

### **2. TRANSPORTATION**

- a) Consult the Seattle Transit Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan, and other relevant plans, as springboards for more detailed recommendations to increase transit use, alternatives to the car and improved pedestrian safety. [Note: There are many plans either the city has undertaken or commissioned that are important resources, yet are not “master plan” or officially “adopted.” For example, in the U District, there is a University Area Transportation Study. Nearby, there is a Sand Point Way Pedestrian Study. For the planned U Village Expansion and QFC redevelopment projects, transportation studies will be undertaken. All of these types of studies are important resources.
- b) Review transportation element of Neighborhood Plan for consistency with the growing body of policy and plan direction to enhance alternatives to auto use. Review the relevant recommended improvements in the recently complete master plans, establish neighborhood priorities; and add specificity and/or needed neighborhood guidance on select priorities. Where significant new transit investments are planned, consider transportation within the context of integrating land use and transportation within the station area.
- c) Considerations for urban villages with station areas:
  - Consider elements in station area that are complementary to less dense parts of the neighborhood beyond the urban village boundary.
  - Bike/pedestrian routes to extend the quarter-mile access to station(s).
  - Drop-off facilities at station.
  - Bike storage/maintenance at station
  - Directional signage for bike/pedestrian routes
- d) Considerations for all revised Neighborhood Plans:
  - Evaluate mass transit and bus connections to other key urban villages and urban centers.
  - Review neighborhood bike/ped facilities/routes for conformity with Seattle Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.
  - Evaluate bike/pedestrian facilities/routes improvement potential as supported in those Master Plans.
  - Designate needs for bike/pedestrian connections to key trail system components.
  - Evaluate need for a designated transit hub in the urban village or urban center.
  - Evaluate bus stop locations, bus shelter needs.
  - Encourage electrification of transit.
  - Designate need for improved transit service hours to specific destinations from the neighborhood. Transportation issues should be evaluated in each neighborhood to determine if professional transportation consulting is warranted as part of a plan update.
  - Consider parking needs for local businesses.
  - Provide for development of Neighborhood Streetscape Plans for pedestrian overlay zones.
  - Evaluate pedestrian safety and pedestrian level of service for crossings at key urban village/urban center intersections. Develop recommendations for improved safety features, aesthetic appearance of key crosswalks.
  - Designate areas in need of sidewalks or walkways and sidewalk improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and walkability.
  - Consider traffic calming alternatives to promote vehicle and bicycle safety and walking and biking. Develop safe routes to schools, parks and other public facilities.

### **3. HOUSING**

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- a) Specify need to develop policies that encourage integration of affordable housing units into market rate residential projects.
- b) Specify need to develop Neighborhood Design Guidelines that encourage ground-level housing designs that are appropriate to your multi-family zoned neighborhoods.
- c) Consider the physical transition between multi-family, neighborhood, commercial, and single-family blocks or land parcels in your planning area.

#### *4. CAPITAL FACILITIES (Existing and needed for increased density)*

- a) Parks
- b) Libraries
- c) Public K-12 Schools
- d) Higher Education/Job Training
- e) Fire/Emergency Services Sites
- f) Recreation Centers
- g) Service Centers
- h) Facilities to serve the needs of senior citizens
- i) Health Services

#### *5. UTILITIES*

- a) Underground or co-locate with public facilities or housing new or renovated power substations.
- b) Designate pedestrian walkways for pedestrian lighting, bus stop lighting.
- c) Reduce unsightly pole-located transformers adjacent to public open spaces.
- d) Coordinate with, or identify gaps in, the long term capital and maintenance programs of public utilities.
- e) Consider the location of utility's facilities and their impacts.

#### *6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

- a) Recommend a Merchants Association, Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Development Authority or Business Improvement District where appropriate and encourage cooperation with the local community council.
- b) Neighborhood Plan stewardship groups could establish a Land Use Committee which could include, residents, property and business owners, and developers.
- c) Develop parking strategies using available tools that support local businesses.

#### *7. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING*

- a) ~~Each neighborhood must consider current urban village boundaries and evaluate whether or not they should be revised based on neighborhood changes subsequent to their designation.~~  
[Note: The existing statement is much too broad without criteria or direction provided.]

#### *8. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*

- a) Public Schools K-12
- b) Community College space
- c) Job re-training space
- d) Higher education sub-campus space
- e) Health care/wellness facilities

#### *9. CULTURAL RESOURCES*

- a) Improve/construct Rec. Centers
- b) Improve/construct children's play facilities, other park facilities.

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- c) Where appropriate, specify that live/work units suitable for artist lofts be among preferred residential unit types – an element in a Neighborhood Design Guidelines proposal.
- d) Provide for historic preservation recommendations for appropriate structures or for a contiguous character area.
- e) Provide for a public art program with a suitable neighborhood arts organization.
- f) Develop recommendations for a Neighborhood Design Guidelines document that encourage appropriate public art for the neighborhood in new development projects.
- g) Consider designation of an Arts Zone Overlay District.

*10. ENVIRONMENT*

- a) Utilize Incentive Zoning as appropriate to encourage developers to provide public open space at street level, view corridors, improved streetscapes.
- b) Identify sites that are not practical for development in the future that can be acquired for public open space, recreation, pea-patches or sustainable farming, bike station, etc.
- c) Specify preference for appropriate sustainable design standards in new construction.
- d) Consult the most progressive neighborhood sustainability guidelines, currently LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND), during the neighborhood plan update process. LEED ND concepts include: compact development, prioritizing brownfield redevelopment, historic preservation and re-use of historic buildings, reduced parking footprint, local food production, animal habitat restoration, innovative storm water systems, housing-job balance, heat island reduction, and reduced water use.
- e) Investigate neighborhood planning opportunities for more sustainable, "low impact development", creek day-lighting, natural storm water management in new street improvement and large development plans.
- f) Investigate opportunities for partnerships to build energy-efficient district heating and cooling (shared between several buildings) or renewable energy sources.
- g) Investigate opportunities for creation or restoration of wildlife habitat.
- h) Promote biking and walking routes and facilities for public health and carbon emissions reductions.

*11. EMERGENCY PLANNING*

- a) Each plan update should include emergency preparedness strategies and identify local resources to cope with emergencies.