

NORTHGATE COMMUNITY CENTER
Community Meeting - Aug. 16, 2001

North Seattle Community College
Public Comments

City and County employees in attendance:

Kate Kaehny, Planner
Tim Motzer, Project Manager
Margaret Anthony, North Division Manager
Maureen O'Neill, NE Parks & Recreation Manager
Erin Devoto, Capital Improvements Division Director
Joelle Ligon, Public Relations Specialist
Bill Blair, Pro Parks Planner
David Kunselman, Library
Ann Sutphin, Strategic Planning Office
Phyllis Shulman, Aide to CM Richard Conlin
Henry Markus, King County, DOT TOD

Meeting overview:

The meeting began at just after 7 p.m. Margaret gave an overview of how the meeting would proceed, followed by an overview of the Northgate Community Center project by Tim Motzer. Maureen discussed the three potential locations for the community center and described the types of activities that could occur at the center. Kate explained that we were at the meeting to gain community input into the siting process. Margaret explained the criteria that should be considered when looking for a site. David Kunselman from the Library provided an update of the new library's siting process.

Meeting Comments:

Meeting attendees made the following comments regarding the three top sites.

Bank/Goodyear Tire location:

- Will there be money constraints because we would have to demolish buildings?
- Have you considered purchasing property behind this area? There is some vacant property on 8th Ave NE that could be utilized.
- Along 5th Ave. the Northgate Comprehensive Plan stresses a pedestrian friendly environment. The community center would be a great magnet for future development.
- Along Thornton Creek park #6, the natural area currently owned by the park, would be a great location for educational opportunities in a natural habitat.
- It is very valuable to have co-location with the library, but we should reserve discussions until after 5th Ave. street design efforts are finalized.
- The idea of a Park and Ride underneath this site is an "abomination."
- This is no place for dedicated storage of cars for commuters.

- Asked for a show of hands to support the previous statement: most people were against a park and ride underneath a community center.
- A Park and Ride draws too many vehicles to the area.
- 487 cars are in a residential neighborhood. They have to move and no one else wants them
- The best way to handle this is without a Park and Ride
- A Park and Ride would need a significant bus system to handle the cars. A parking lot would consolidate all the traffic into the area of the community center.
- A Park and Ride simply creates a lot of congestion.
- Cars tend to park in the adjacent neighborhoods when park and ride lots are not available. Why not put a 6-story parking garage next to the highway. (Henry Markus: Sound Transit has looked into structure parking near I-5, but the cost is about \$23,000 per space. In order to accommodate the number of vehicles, the buildings would have to be 8 to 12 stories high.)
- There's no law that says we have to have parking spaces. It's a county agenda.
- Turning left from 5th Ave into the community center- how would that impact 5th Ave.
- 105th is a very underdeveloped street. How would that street be dealt with? How would you get people back and forth across the street.
- There is a giant outflow pipe that runs from Northgate Mall to the area around 105th, how would that be dealt with.
- Co-location idea is "absolutely wonderful," but traffic would be a problem
- There is a critical environmental area behind that lot. This plan will impact that.
- Current park and ride will be a park. Could we put an underground parking lot there?
Not really. The water table is really high at park and ride north of Target.

Park and Ride

- Pedestrian access would be worse at this location.
- Location just behind Target means that the property will be in significant shadow during the winter.
- I feel that there's a bias by the parks department for large playfields . There's no other urban centers with big playfields. I would like to see emphasis not on playfields. (Margaret: We do not anticipate putting playfields at the park on the North Park and Ride.)
- School district is spending money on playfields at 130th and Meridian. We need trees and green spaces. (Margaret: We are focused on what the community wants. We do not have a bias towards athletic fields.)
- The community center would take up too much green space there.
- We would like to see a senior facility
- The site is quite a wetland. There is an underground tributary of Thornton Creek and other various headwaters. It would be nice to have water daylighted in that area, even if it's only a pond.

- Why is the county going to give you money to purchase property from the county? (Henry: We are required to charge fair market value, and the money comes from different pots.)
- I looked at the property values on the internet for this site and it's about \$1.6 million. That would be in our budget. (Answer from staff: We do not believe that would be the actual selling price. We believe it would be quite a bit higher than that.)
- I do not want the community center on the park.
- Northgate Way and 5th Ave. is always congested

South Lot

- Can't we force the developer to do what we want?
- It would be great to have a community like Bitterlake on the south lot.
- It would be good to have a playfield
- There would be a savings if the community center could be built with other buildings planned for the site.
- Arguments for co-location of the library and community center are relevant to this site. Co-location does not have to mean absolute adjacency.
- A community center in this area could be dwarfed by future development of large buildings.
- Is there a way to accommodate or bring the city in on the South lot? Can we coordinate with the county?
- There are huge funding opportunities: transportation, wildlife, education, impervious surfaces. Millions of dollars are out there just for the asking.
- Why is county funding being neglected at this site?
- What about condemnations?

General comments at the end of the session:

- I don't like any of these sites. Why not use North Seattle Community College?
- South lot is a nice area. You almost have to buy the whole piece. You could get funding from several different sources.
- Could co-location be in the same building? It would reduce costs. (Maureen: Peak hours of operation for the community center and library are the same, but the library needs quiet and community centers tend to be loud places. In addition, the rules of behavior at both areas are different.)
- Could building be sound proofed like Benaroya Hall?
- Build an urban village on the South Lot. The city could sell commercial properties in order to recoup costs.
- 5th Ave. Street Design Plans: Could be in the next few weeks that these plans firm up and we could see some new alternatives.

Ideas for new spaces

- NW corner of 5th and 105th Aves at old Ernst/Malmo site. (Northgate Mall owner Simon is considering a detention facility at this site.)
- The old Ernst/Malmo site is on a bluff -- would be a great place for a library or community center. We could make things happen in that corner.
- A year ago North Seattle Community College was on the site list. Why is not now? (Margaret: They have 62 acres here. They can sell us the property. They are open to our purchasing it. The president of the college doesn't see it as a problem; he sees us as a great partner. Parking would never be a problem. We could have student interns and access to the library. There would be many, many opportunities here.)
- Where on campus? 92nd Ave., west of the freeway on the SE corner.
- Should we add it? By a show of hands, raise your hands if you support a site at NSCC: about half thought this was a good idea.
- NSCC is too far for seniors.
- Vans would be available.
- Community Center should be located closer to urban center.
- Co-location of library and community center may not be able to happen at NSCC (David: NSCC is not on the library's short list).
- NSCC has its own mission. We could end up putting too many of our eggs in one basket at NSCC.
- Meridian and Northgate Way at old Barnaby's should be considered