

Seattle Neighborhood Workshops
AURORA LICTON SPRINGS SMALL GROUP NOTES
November 29, 2016

Note: **Yellow** highlights for consensus

GROUP 1

Assets

- Schools, especially the new school being built
- Convenience to downtown
- Transportation
- Licton Springs Park (although not accessible for residents west of Aurora)
- Greenway at 92nd that is planned
- Future pedestrian bridge, Licton Park
- Market at Oak Tree that serves the Asian community
- Institutions – North Seattle College, City Light
- “What makes it special is its lack of identity”
- Character sustained over the years – the elephant is still there, though the tepee is gone – not a bland place
- Identity of Licton Springs – Native American roots, history
- Lighting of Licton Springs Park for the holidays

Concerns

- Safety
- Affordability
- How the affordable housing program will be paid for
- Quality of life
- **Don't feel like an Urban Village because the area does not meet all the criteria:**
 - **No community space or accessible parks**
 - **No commercial hub, grocery stores, pharmacy, bank**
 - **Not walkable**
 - **City designated this an Urban Village but has not lived up to this designation.**
- Lack of sidewalks, safe places for kids to play, elders to walk
- “Aurora isn't a place. I say I live in Greenwood.”
- HT Market is a wasted opportunity—poor use of space at the logical center of the community
- Need ways to build sense of community, such as:
 - Start nodes of shops and activity
 - Find ways to connect the two sides (across Aurora)
 - Make the most of planned greenways at 92nd and 100th
 - More pedestrian activity – amenities, walkable, livable

- What we want to be known for:
 - Artsy, eclectic place
 - “Old Seattle neighborhood” remnant
 - Middle class, single family, kids, places to eat (e.g., Burgermaster)

Proposed Zoning Changes

- Hydrology concerns –
 - Old stream, Licton Springs to Pillings Pond
 - Make sure there is adequate drainage, understanding of wetlands in neighborhood
- Add pedestrian and bike connections across Aurora/the Urban Village; enhance the planned greenways at 92nd and 100th
- Like the change to NC zone along Aurora, to have commercial at the ground level
 - Would like to see pharmacy, bakery, small and local businesses there
 - Like the example of Lantern Brewery, which took over an industrial space and is now more of a community meeting place
 - Existing commercial zone shouldn’t be in an Urban Village
- Concern that the cost might be too high for small business in the NC commercial spaces
- Does the change incentivize Dunn Lumber to leave?
- Want to see the added value go into affordable housing
- Need more parks and open space with the increase in density
- Area where police station is could be changed to open space
- Need design guidelines – open space between developments, human scale, sidewalks, trees
- Parking issues – Not reasonable to assume residents of new developments won’t have cars
- Bigger opportunity for residential in orange hatched areas, both sides of Aurora; developers could connect to the adjacent LR3 areas
- Some suggested allowing more height if the rest of the parcel is open public space; others thought this would still lack character
- Look for opportunity to build a community center with a P Patch garden – no agreement on which side of Aurora this should be
- Ask University of Washington architecture/planning students to model the possibilities in 3D so community members can see what different options would look like
- Include larger, family-sized housing in new development of affordable housing
- Concern about displacement in the northern part of the Urban Village, which currently has the most affordable rentals and homes
- New development should incentivize solar roofs
- Take a more aggressive approach to adding sidewalks

Urban Village Boundary

- Group not agreed on whether boundary is in the right place
- Possibly make the Urban Village smaller

- Create nodes of activity at 85th and 105th

Summary Themes

- City owes the community a “real” urban village
- Need design guidelines – street trees, sidewalks, open spaces, walkability
- Focus density on Aurora
- Like the NC2 and NC3 zone for Aurora
- Green space and community gathering space is lacking
- Aurora bisects the community – need pedestrian and bike crossings, better cross streets
- Nodes of activity at 105th & Aurora, and 85th & Aurora
- Improve safety
- Concern for displacement of existing affordable housing
- Cost for MHA requirements is too high – change to lower the MHA to attract new development
- City should develop massing diagrams or models so community could see what we’d get
- Make sure housing is family-sized
- Connect to North Seattle College’s Master Plan, especially for student housing, and the parking that will be needed
- Do more outreach on parking
- What should be done first:
 - Change to NC zone
 - Add sidewalks
 - Make neighborhood grants
 - Studies to finish the planning

GROUP 2

Assets

- We are missing a lot of Urban Village assets
- Oak Tree Village
- Licton Springs Park
- Pillings Pond
- North Seattle College
- Schools – will be, when completed
- Decent transit – good frequency, but very crowded
- Used to use cemetery, but people no longer go there (drugs, camping)
- City Light right-of-way (not maintained)
- Most amenities are east of Aurora Ave., not west
- Have some affordable housing
- Go to Lantern Brewery (favorite space) for meetings – don’t have a public meeting space
- Music Center/church, Epic Life, other faith communities

- Have to go to Northlake, Greenwood, Greenlake
- Northgate light rail could be an asset if accessible
- Sense of community is growing

Concerns

- Aurora divides Urban Village into two communities
- Don't have sidewalks north of 85th
- New buildings are mini-storage, pot and adult shops
- Safety issues at intersections

Proposed Zoning Changes

- NC3 along Aurora makes sense based on past input to city
- State Highway (99) gives priority to auto-oriented businesses – will inhibit pedestrian, walkable business district
- Livability factor doesn't happen; need as a companion to density
 - Sidewalks and other infrastructure
 - Forgotten this element of the Urban Village strategy
- Commercial zoning to NC makes sense – should be applied citywide
- City can use its assets to improve the neighborhood
 - Old school
 - Oak Tree Market – UW Capstone project
 - Seattle Public Utilities
- Could start in the heart of district at Oak Tree Village
 - Or start at intersections, create nodes at Aurora and cross streets
 - Has happened in a limited sense at Oak Tree Village
- The transition “stepping down” is exactly as described in presentation – makes sense, but will it happen?
- Want zoning categories that provide homes for families
 - What is being built? Small units
- If we are adding capacity on Aurora, why not phase in the SF zone changes later?
- People used to share SF homes; they are getting pushed out
- Whole focus is on number of units, not type of units
 - Just adding a floor will continue current trend
 - Zoning based on “pillow count” (Whistler)
- Concern about design quality – A.L.S. gets developers who do the bare minimum
 - Need design guidelines
 - Example: Need eyes on the street, activation to deal with crime
 - Entrances on street, transparency
 - Some of this can be incentivized/required in NC zones
- Lake City got investments and better designs
 - Need planning study, transportation study

- Zoning/new development can both exacerbate problems and create opportunity to address neighborhood challenges
- How can we say higher/lower if we don't know if we are going to get assets that we need? Feel skeptical that city will provide needed infrastructure
- We could come up with more opportunities/creative solutions if we had a longer, more involved planning study
- If we rely on development to provide assets (sidewalks), it can be scattered and less impactful
- Is there a way the city can spark new, quality development – either city investment or incentivize private investment
 - Transit
 - Streetscape
 - Affordable housing
 - Example: Lake City, Greenwood (putting forward vision is first step)
- Need more context-sensitive planning
- Health impacts – trees to mitigate
- Need an urban planning study that is site specific