

# FORT LAWTON ARMY RESERVE CENTER Public Involvement Process

September 18, 2008





## **Public Involvement Process**

Bounded by Discovery Park, the city's largest natural park, surrounding neighborhoods and vistas of Salmon Bay and the Ship Canal, Fort Lawton's future redevelopment matters to the entire city of Seattle. Acknowledging this the LRA's public involvement component was designed to engage the public throughout the LRA's process of developing the plan for Fort Lawton's future uses.

Under the BRAC process the LRA's public involvement responsibilities were:

- Provide an overview of the citizen participation process
- Make the draft application available for public review and comment periodically as the LRA developed the homeless assistance submission and the redevelopment plan
- Conduct at least one public hearing on the redevelopment plan and homeless assistance submission before submitting these documents to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of the Army
- Include summary of public comments on the redevelopment plan in the submittal to Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of the Army

### **Overview Citizen Participation Process**

The Fort Lawton Army Reserve Center BRAC public involvement process began in September of 2006 with a workshop and tour of the Reserve Center for those organizations interested in the Notices of Interest (NOIs) process for surplus property. The meeting was advertised in the "Seattle Times" with the required notice of availability of property for homeless uses. It also included public benefit conveyance purposes and contact information. The general public was welcome and was among the 33 who attended the workshop.

To ensure the general public had opportunities to understand the BRAC process and what would be happening at Fort Lawton, two meetings were held following the September NOI workshop. The first of these was in October and the second was in December. Due to the significance of both Discovery Park and homelessness services to the broader Seattle community one of these meetings was held in a central city location outside the Fort Lawton neighborhood of Magnolia. The LRA created a webpage on the city's website for all the LRA information on Fort Lawton including meetings notices, BRAC information, meeting notes, etc. An email address for Fort Lawton comments was also provided to the community. Additionally the Seattle City Council website contained a link to the Fort Lawton webpage and notice of the 2008 City Council's Fort Lawton deliberations, dates and times.

**In 2006 Mayor Nickels created a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to advise him. The membership of the TAG was composed of individuals with expertise and representative of the following: homeless, Magnolia neighborhood, finance, urban design, community at large, parks, environment, faith community, and city council staff. The TAG reviewed the NOIs, and from their areas of expertise, provided valuable guidance on the NOIs.**

**In early 2007 two meetings were held in February, one in the Magnolia neighborhood and one in a central city location, to discuss the BRAC process and the NOIs the LRA received in January of 2007. In April a meeting was held by the Magnolia Community Club with the LRA staff discussing the NOIs received and taking further public input on future uses at Fort Lawton. The LRA announced at this meeting that the Army was talking with the LRA about receiving value from their Fort Lawton property. In order to better understand the Army's direction the LRA informed the community that moving to the plan development phase would occur after conversations with the Army.**

**In 2008 a meeting was held in February to announce the LRA's decisions on NOIs received for Fort Lawton property. The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) was introduced as the lead developer and SHA described the community involvement process, based on their HOPE VI projects, they would be beginning in partnership with the LRA. While conversations with the Army were not completed, there was agreement the LRA would move forward with it's the work on planning for the redevelopment of Fort Lawton.**

**The LRA determined the community needed to be involved in developing the redevelopment plan rather than responding to a draft plan developed solely by the LRA. Working from the three principles of Neighborhood Integrity and Community Connectedness, Social Responsibility, and Environmental Stewardship the LRA and its lead developer, SHA, began the next phase of the community involvement process. When the LRA consultant team was hired they joined the public process.**

**To start the planning process, a community organizational meeting was held by the SHA and LRA in March 2008 and the community indicated it preferred five Saturday workshops, of four hours duration each, beginning in late March. An additional one was later added for a total of six: March, April, May, June and two in July. Utilizing the three principles of Neighborhood Integrity and Community Connectedness, Social Responsibility, and Environmental Stewardship, the workshops first focused on completing the work on the vision for the redevelopment of Fort Lawton and then understanding the plan components through informational exchanges with the various consultants from the LRA's consultant team working on the redevelopment plan.**

**While the workshops were going on, the LRA held a separate informational meeting in April on homelessness in Seattle and King County and the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The three selected homeless NOI providers explained their programs and clientele. As a result of this meeting, the LRA agreed to an additional series of three community meetings on more detailed aspects of the homeless providers' programs that could later be incorporated into a Community Relations Plan. The purpose of the Community Relations Plan was for the housing provider, their supportive services partners**

and the Magnolia community to work together and commit to ensuring that the housing for homeless individuals and families at Fort Lawton would be successful. The Archdiocesan Housing Authority, United Indians of All Tribes and the YWCA expressed their commitment to the provisions of the Community Relations Plan and working with the community in the future to finalize the plan. If unforeseen circumstances require significant changes to the provisions of the Plan, the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, United Indians and the YWCA will work with the community on revisions to the plan. The City of Seattle Office of Housing, through its asset management team, will oversee and monitor the implementation and ongoing commitments contained in the Community Relations Plan.

With the completion of the redevelopment plan process, Mayor Greg Nickel's approved plan was sent to the Seattle City Council for their consideration and action. The City Council process included four committee meetings and two public hearings on the plan and homeless assistance submittal before the City Council's final vote on the redevelopment plan. Excluding the City Council meetings and hearings the LRA had eighteen public meetings on the Fort Lawton BRAC closure process and development of the redevelopment plan for the property. The appendix contains information on each of these public meetings as well as the City Council meetings and public hearings.

#### Periodic Public Review and Comment

Once the LRA conducted the 2006 and 2007 initial meetings on the BRAC process and the homeless provisions in BRAC, the LRA determined that ongoing community involvement in developing the redevelopment plan was desirable. Working from the three principles of Neighborhood Integrity and Community Connectedness, Social Responsibility, and Environmental Stewardship, the LRA and its lead developer SHA began the 2008 phase of the community involvement process and when the LRA consultant team was hired they joined the process. This process addressed both issues in the Redevelopment Plan and the Homeless Assistance Submission. Additionally issues reflected in the latter document were further discussed at the meetings on a Community Relations Plan.

The community requested a series of five Saturday workshops, which later grew to six, to work on the redevelopment plan. The March and April meetings focused on the vision for the redevelopment – open space, heron/wildlife habitat, market-rate housing, and housing for homeless individuals and families. At the May meeting the consultant and SHA team began discussing with the community how the vision balance could be developed. Building off of the work of the May 31<sup>st</sup> workshop, the consultants work on the residential housing analysis and the traffic circulation were presented at the June 21<sup>st</sup> workshop along with options on site alternatives. Portions of the draft Redevelopment Plan were presented at the July 12<sup>th</sup> community meeting and a refined draft version was presented at July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. The draft plan and Homeless Assistance Submission were on the Fort Lawton website July 18<sup>th</sup> with some draft plan sections up earlier that week.

The three community meetings on a Community Relations Plan addressed many of the topics in the Homeless Assistance Submission. These sessions were held for the housing provider, their supportive services partners and the Magnolia community to work together



and commit to ensuring that the housing for homeless individuals and families at Fort Lawton is successful in the community. These meetings were held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, June 2<sup>nd</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Redevelopment Plan and Homeless Assistance Public Hearings**

As the legislative body of the City of Seattle, which is the Fort Lawton LRA, the Seattle City Council held seven official meetings in August and September on Mayor Nickels' proposed Fort Lawton Redevelopment Plan. The City Council Housing and Economic Development Committee held committee meetings on the plan on August 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and September 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Opportunity for public comment occurred at the beginning of each of these committee meetings. On August 21<sup>st</sup> and September 4<sup>th</sup> the Seattle City Council held public hearings on the proposed Fort Lawton Redevelopment Plan. The purpose of these two public hearings was solely to take public comments on the Fort Lawton Redevelopment Plan that was approved and passed out of the Housing and Economic Development Committee on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

The public notification for these two public hearings followed the council standard procedure, which is posting on the city council website under the calendar of events at least a week in advance and an email message to interested citizens who sign up for contact on Housing and Economic Development Committee meetings. The committee meetings and hearings and the testimony given at them were recorded by the Seattle Channel. The City Council took final action in September adopting the official redevelopment plan for Fort Lawton. A copy of that resolution is attached.

### **Public Comments Summary**

The appendix contains detailed questions and comments from the public meetings. While through the course of the 18 community meetings many questions were raised and many preferences and opinions were offered, there were some that were consistent throughout the process and were also reiterated in the two City Council public hearings. This section summarizes them:

- **Discovery Park –**  
Fort Lawton property should be incorporated into Discovery Park  
Discovery Park Development Plan calls for all former Fort Lawton land to become part of park  
City gave land to Army
- **Housing –**  
Market-rate and homeless housing proposed is not appropriate  
Market-rate and homeless housing appropriate  
Homeless housing not appropriate- no services, isolated area  
Density too much  
Townhouses, too many or none  
Serve only one type of homeless, elderly not families
- **Heron and Wildlife Habitat/ Trees**  
Protect trees on site  
Habitat for herons & other wildlife protected

- **Conceptual Nature of Plan**  
**Extend plan develop for 180 days**  
**Street and traffic system more defined**  
**Firm number of homeless units**  
**Firm range of market-rate units**

The 2006 meetings were focused on the BRAC process and the availability of BRAC property for homeless uses. The public comments at these meetings involved questions clarifying BRAC, the homeless component and what it meant for Fort Lawton. Among the BRAC questions were ones about the decision making process and the role of the LRA, park space, homeless and housing uses, NOI process, and the Army's value needs.

The 2007 meetings focused on the NOIs received, the BRAC process, and the Army's need for value from the property. The public comments at these meetings involved basic BRAC process, Army value, homeless impacts on existing neighborhood, and wildlife habitat questions.

The 2008 meetings began by focusing on the LRA's NOI decisions and beginning the Redevelopment Plan process and then moved onto the actual development of the plan and the homeless Community Relations Plan work. The questions and comments after the first few meetings focused on specific aspects of the plan such as types of housing, numbers of homeless units, homeless services, overall density, park land, traffic volume and circulation, and impacts on existing neighborhood.

The public testimony at August 21<sup>st</sup> and September 4<sup>th</sup> City Council public hearings is attached. A general summary of the comments follows:

- Supportive of plan and homeless housing
- Supportive of forested areas preserved as addition to Discovery Park
- Supportive of plan and homeless housing for Native Americans
- Concerned about density, reduce number of housing units especially townhouses
- Concerned about traffic and transportation, policing, schools and other infrastructure impacts
- Concerned plan won't be implemented in adopted form, want assurances
- Wanted 180 day extension of plan due date
- Wanted grand entrance to Discovery Park as part of project
- Concerned grand entrance will destroy trees

Attached is information on the individual public meetings leading up to the LRA plan, City Council committee meetings discussing the plan, City Council's two public hearings on the plan, chart of the 18 public meetings, some public comments via email and letter to the Mayor and Chair of the Housing & Economic Development Committee, and City of Seattle resolution adopting the redevelopment plan.