



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Planning and Community Development Department
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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 4, 2012

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Paul Stewart, Deputy Planning Director
Eric Shields, Planning Director

Subject: Amendment to the Adopted Planning Work Program

RECOMMENDATION

City Council adopts, by motion, an amended 2012-2014 Planning Work Program (Exhibit A attached). Task 4.2 (Houghton/Everest Business District Subarea Plan) is removed from the 2012, 2013 and 2014 schedules and will be reconsidered at a later time following the GMA required Comprehensive Plan update (2013-2014).

The general role of all Kirkland business districts, including the Houghton/ Everest Business District, in accommodating future growth will be considered during the 2013-2014 Comprehensive Plan update along with an assessment of the Neighborhood Plan process. This assessment will result in recommendations for future planning processes once the Comprehensive Plan update concludes.

Following completion of the Comprehensive Plan update, implementation tasks will be prioritized by the Council. Among those tasks, consideration should be given to preparing a detailed Houghton/Everest Business District plan and zoning regulations in partnership with all affected neighborhoods.

Future planning efforts will incorporate early and meaningful opportunities for community involvement.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

On May 15, 2012 the City Council approved the 2012-2014 Planning Work Program. The adopted work program includes Task 4.2 regarding the Houghton/Everest Business District. At that time, the Council directed staff to move forward with the business district plan, zoning and design guidelines since it was a logical next step following the completion of the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan. The Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan contains policies indicating that a plan for the entire Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center, including property in the Everest Neighborhood, should be a coordinated effort.

In July and August the Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council had initial study session meetings to define the study area, identify discussion topics and set out the schedule for public meetings, community outreach and review by the Planning Commission, Houghton Community Council and City Council. Staff had planned to convene three "Neighborhood Dialogues". The first two would occur at the respective neighborhood association meetings for Everest (September 25th) and Central Houghton (October 3). A third dialogue was held for the general public on October 9th. A summary of the comments from the two neighborhood association meetings are attached (Attachment 1). A summary of the October 9 meeting will be conveyed to the Council. The meeting comments have also been posted on the City's website at the following link: [Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center](#)

In mid-September the City began receiving e-mails from citizens particularly in the Everest neighborhood but also the Central Houghton Neighborhood. A variety of concerns were expressed particularly about the schedule and process (not enough time to be engaged), the potential change in character, land use and design, and transportation (primarily traffic and safety).

On September 24, the Houghton Community Council (HCC) met at a study session on the Houghton/Everest Center. Following comments from the audience and a staff presentation, the HCC voted to recommend that further work on the neighborhood center plan be delayed so that the Everest and Central Houghton Neighborhoods would have time to work together on the plan and zoning.

The Planning Commission met on September 27th on the neighborhood center plan and zoning and to consider the recommendation from the HCC. In response to the concerns expressed by residents of the Everest and Central Houghton neighborhoods, staff recommended to the Planning Commission that the process and timing be reconsidered. The Planning Commission concurred and recommended that the area be included in the city-wide Comprehensive Plan update.

The City Manager responded to the e-mail messages submitted to the City Council stating that he will be asking the City Council to reconsider the timing of the project at the October 2 City Council meeting (Attachment 2). At that meeting, the Council concurred with the City Manager's recommendation to bring back the Planning Work Program to consider options for the Council to amend the Work Program at the October 16 meeting.

As a result of Council's direction on October 2, further study session meetings and the public hearing with the Planning Commission and the Houghton Community Council have been cancelled pending direction from the City Council.

Attachments

Exhibit A:	Planning Work Program
Attachment 1:	Summary of Comments
Attachment 2:	October 1, 2012 Letter from City Manager

Everest Neighborhood Association Meeting

September 25, 2012 Houghton Fire Station (#22)

TOPIC: Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan

Summary of participant comments about the city's planning process for the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center

Prepared by: Marie Stake, Communications Program Manager (Facilitator)

On September 25, 2012, staff from the Planning & Community Development Department and City Manager's Office attended the Everest Neighborhood Association meeting for the purposes of presenting background information regarding the City's efforts to study the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center and to facilitate a discussion around participants' concerns and ideas about the planning process. There were over 60 attendees.

Angela Ruggeri, Senior Planner, presented information about how the study came about, recent efforts by the Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council, and the current status of the planning process. Many participants had questions following this presentation. Kurt Triplett, City Manager, and Paul Stewart, Deputy Director, Planning & Community Development Department helped to answer them. During the "Q & A," Marie Stake (facilitator) recorded the various concerns participants expressed. Also, Kari Page, Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator (co-facilitator) recorded comments that specifically pertain to expectations residents have about the planning process.

The two issues that most participants expressed high concern about were: Traffic and Timeline. Below are the concerns expressed which are sorted by "themes:"

Timeline

- How did this (study) become a priority?
- It's a big commitment for residents to attend multiple meetings
- When will the Everest Neighborhood Plan be updated?
- Why the rush?
- Everest Neighborhood Association should have been consulted when the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan update was happening.
- Everest Neighborhood was due for a neighborhood plan update after Central Houghton
- Water Utility Comprehensive Plan updates are required every 5-10 years, why isn't the requirement the same for the (Everest) Neighborhood Plan?

Traffic

- 6th Street South is dysfunctional, broken
- How is the City going to address 6th Street?
- Do developers have to improve 6th Street?
- Google has produced more traffic and reduced parking for residents
- Parking along 6th Street makes it difficult for residents to exit onto 6th Street from 9th Avenue S.
- Too many back ups
- No one is using the bike lanes on 6th; turn them into car lanes
- Traffic Management Plan is needed

Attachment 1

- Traffic is “insane” now; will worsen
- Need to look at on/off ramps at I-405
- Look at back ups at 68th and 108th intersection
- If Neighborhood Center gets to “build out,” traffic will worsen
 - Traffic mitigation needs to extend outside of the Neighborhood Center
- Fix traffic first, then let development happen.
 - The development of the Neighborhood Center has the potential to be larger than Google
- Concerned about child safety around Lakeview Elementary (sidewalks)

Process & Proposed Amendments

- What is the planning process?
- Why did the City spend money on the conceptual drawings?
- Object to the scale of the conceptual drawings; provide alternate concepts
- Concerned that the Comprehensive Plan amendment being proposed for Everest removes language that results in eliminating a buffer for residential development
- The Comprehensive Plan drives the zoning code. The Comprehensive Plan allows five stories in Central Houghton. This will result in amendments to the zoning code that will be the same.
- The Neighborhood Center Plan assumes only local shopping is occurring but shoppers come from other places; the area is “now a destination.”

Study Area

- The property owners/developers in the area want to maximize their property value
- How does “build out” of the Neighborhood Center compare to Parkplace redevelopment?
- Why isn’t the industrial area north of Houghton Village being considered?
 - There is an opportunity to maximize the use of the Cross Kirkland Corridor
- Have the property owners (in the Neighborhood Center) agreed to this study?

Density

- Send density to Totem Lake
- Don’t accommodate growth
- Why do we have to continue accommodating growth?
- Concerned about spot zoning – if this is done without a process for the whole neighborhood plan update

Neighborhood Character

- We don’t want to be like Bellevue
- Keep Everest the way it is; just fix the roads

Public Involvement

- Want assurances our voices will be heard
- Citizens encouraged to comment via email

Information Requested

- Provide topography maps
- Describe what is allowed now (in the Neighborhood Center)
- Provide artist renderings of what is allowed now

Attachment 1

- Tell us more about the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan
- How do the proposed changes compare to the scale of Parkplace or Juanita Village?
- Does the city have plans to update 6th Street sidewalks?

Due to the extended amount of time to answer questions, minimal time was available to complete a comprehensive facilitation around the planning process. Following the "Q&A," Facilitator Stake checked in with the participants on the concerns she had recorded to ensure they were reflected accurately. Participants agreed they were. Participants were asked if any other concerns needed to be added. One attendee asked about a traffic study for the area. This was added to the concern list.

Next Facilitator Stake explored the comments recorded by Co-facilitator Page about the process. Again, addressing the current traffic issues before starting any evaluation of the Neighborhood Center and creating a realistic timeline to complete the Neighborhood Center Plan were very important to participants. The Summary below reflects the thoughts of the attendees:

- Conduct system wide traffic study first
- Provide artist renderings of current zoning
- (Citizens need) Better understanding of growth management requirements and Kirkland's status
- Look at Capital Improvement plans for 6th Street, NE 68th and 108th
- Everest Neighborhood felt it should have been consulted on the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan
- Follow typical planning process (Plan, zoning, permit, build)
- Provide more than one conceptual option
- Look at economic incentives
- Conduct parking study. Address parking needs
- Provide realistic timeline like other Neighborhood Plans were allowed
- Develop Neighborhood Center Plan at same time as (citywide) Comprehensive Plan

Wrap Up:

Facilitator Stake advised participants that the summary of comments would be posted to the City website and those who have subscribed to updates will receive an email that the webpage is updated.

Central Houghton Neighborhood Association Meeting

October 3, 2012 Houghton Fire Station (#22)
TOPIC: Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan

Summary of participant comments about the status of the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan

*Prepared by: Kari Page, Neighborhood Services Coordinator (Facilitator) and Marie Stake,
Communications Program Manager (Facilitator)*

On October 3, 2012, staff from the Planning & Community Development Department and City Manager's Office attended the Central Houghton Neighborhood Association meeting to provide an update on the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan and to facilitate a discussion around participants' concerns and ideas about the planning process. There were over 25 participants.

Angela Ruggeri, Senior Planner, discussed how the study of the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan (Business District) came about and that last night the City Council agreed with the City Manager's recommendation to delay the Neighborhood Center plan update. She stated that there is currently no development application (within the Business District) on file with the city.

Ms. Ruggeri explained the purpose of the City's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) as a "vision" document that is intended to plan for growth in Kirkland and that neighborhood plans are a section of the Comp Plan. She explained that an update to the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan was completed in 2011. The updated Neighborhood Plan only addressed the portion of the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center area that is in the Central Houghton Neighborhood (south of NE 68th Street). It stated, however, that the Houghton Neighborhood should coordinate with the Everest Neighborhood to develop a plan for the entire Neighborhood Center. The City has received feedback from both neighborhoods that it is important to look at the Neighborhood Center as a whole.

She recognized that the City was moving quickly on the Neighborhood Center Plan and in response to citizen feedback the Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council recommended to slow down the process. She stated the City Council agreed with the recommendation on October 2 and will be presented with a revised Planning Work Program on October 16.

She stated the City will initiate a 10-Year update to the Comp Plan in 2013 which is a process that takes two years to complete.

Facilitator Stake introduced herself and Kari Page and opened the conversation with the following question: "What is the most important issue the planning process should address?" She explained that question applies to the 10 Year Comp Plan Update, the Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan update or updates to a Neighborhood Plan. Below is a summary of concerns and questions raised by participants.

Traffic was the greatest concern expressed by most participants. Traffic subthemes included: provide more pedestrian and bicycle safe routes and connections, evaluate parking conditions (now and with future development), and study traffic to and from key destinations and city wide.

Traffic (including pedestrians and bicycle safety)

- Provide surface parking (better for neighborhood).
- Provide free parking (if private developments start charging for parking – it will kill the neighborhood/community feel of this center.
- Slow traffic.
- More pedestrian/bicycle friendly roads and crossings.
- Too much backup during rush hour (east on 68th and north on 108th).
- How can we add more development with existing traffic being so bad now.
- Provide safe place for ICS students to stand and wait for the bus (this helps keep cars off the roads)
- Determine what roadway improvements need to be made if area is fully developed (regional approach – Google, transit oriented development, downtown, Houghton shopping center, etc.)
- Create a walking community
- Schools want more students to walk and bike
- Not enough room for bicycles on NE 68th Street (feel like you get squeezed next to the curb in places).
- We aren't a walking City like Seattle – it isn't going to happen in the suburbs – no matter how much you want it.
- Provide consistent sidewalks and consistent bicycle widths throughout the City and people/families will use them more.
- Create a safe passage corridor (like spokes of a wheel) to schools, neighborhood center, and shopping. Have dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks leading to key points/destinations.
- Look at fixing traffic flow to and from key destinations: I-405, South Kirkland Park and Ride, downtown, Carillon Point, SR520.
- Need better integration with Metro – restore 234 and connect better with Microsoft and Houghton and restore 255 back like it was.
- Consider impacts from Google if they expand.
- There is limited access both in and out of neighborhood as well as in and out of Houghton Shopping Center. Exiting the shopping center during rush hour is hard.
- We need a Pedestrian/Bicycle Commission – not just a Transportation Commission.

Process & Proposed Amendments

- The plan should address the great connections that can be/should be made with Cross Kirkland Corridor (connections to schools, parks, shopping, commercial areas).
- The proposed plan didn't fit into the neighborhood scale or character.
- Was the proposed plan more about Growth Management Act – instead of neighborhood character?
- Consider the traffic impacts – when we appear and feel like we are at capacity now.
- Looking at the entire City first makes the best sense – plan regionally first – then locally.
- Consult businesses who are there now. Neighborhood doesn't want them to move.

Attachment 1

- Foster neighborhood scale retail development, diverse businesses, and keep properties affordable for the businesses.
- Height and density is out of scale with what we want and the neighborhood. If you change retail to commercial you will totally change the character of the neighborhood.

Study Area

- Where does the Neighborhood begin? (Lakeview Elementary School catchment area all care about this center). Look to everyone who is impacted and how they are impacted to determine who should be involved.
- 8-9 schools in the area – schools should get involved as they are all impacted.

Density

- The plan should be about who is there now (the businesses and the residents). The plan should be about the existing neighborhood (not increasing density).

Neighborhood Character

- Preserve our quality of life.
- Keep pedestrian overpasses across I405.
- Keep/foster/preserve the businesses that are there – they serve the neighborhood.
- Create a community center for the neighborhood.
- Think of neighborhood first – not the businesses.

Public Involvement

- Use post card mailings to residents to keep them informed (especially when there is a proposed development).
- Use schools and PTSA's to help get meeting notices and information out (many people who showed up tonight heard about the meeting through the PTSA at Lakeview).
- (City should) Assume the public is "stupid – like Planning for Dummies." Use word we understand and illustrate to us what you are talking about so we understand.
- Note many people can't attend so many meetings. Can you have fewer but more meaningful/productive meetings?
- Involve us when there are only 3 options or so (boil it down so our time is productive)
- Email is useful.
- Notify us of the process early – not so late in the process.
- Meetings are better than emails as you can really work on issues and hear from your neighbors.
- Summers don't work for residents – many on vacations and neighborhood associations don't meet in the summer.
- Use post cards – small – red – catch our attention.
- Pictures help – maybe do what you did this time – show outlandish diagrams. It worked!
- Web site is good as people can fit reviewing/reading into their own schedules.
- List serves help for getting word out and help to keep people involved who want to stay informed but can't come to meetings.
- Press Releases.

- Non computer users – don't forget them. Use mailings. These are the people who usually can't come to meetings either. Don't leave out their input.
- Kiosks (wish the bus stop was still there).
- Join up with the Kirkland Reporter (public/private partnership) and restate the neighborhood section (as people really liked this – felt it was a great way to stay informed in their neighborhoods – and heard the news from their own people). This also gets the people who aren't connected electronically.
- Before a neighborhood plan is finalized, it would be helpful if the planners summarized the big changes. It is so hard to read through a whole plan and try to figure out what changed and what was significant and what wasn't. Some read the new Houghton Plan but didn't notice the move to allow 5 stories.

Information Requested

- Determine how the proposed zoning and subsequent development will impact the neighborhood. For example, Google has impacted Everest but no one told them how much it would – before they moved in.
- Create a pedestrian/bicycle overlay over the neighborhood plan and strategize ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and circulation (include social paths/trails).
- Are we close to capacity at the intersection of 68th and 108th Avenue NE? How do we get beyond current capacity without widening streets?
- With more development, we get more kids, need more schools, where do we put them? Is someone planning with the school district as zoning changes to bring in more people?
- What if Waddell applied for redevelopment now under the new Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan? Would he be able to build 5 stories? How can we stop this now from happening – if we are going to hold off on the shopping center planning process? Can't afford to wait/sit on the existing Central Houghton neighborhood plan now that it has been changed.
- Will 5 stories be allowed in at the shopping center now?
- What part of the Houghton Shopping Center plan will be part of the Citywide Comprehensive Plan? How do we know where to be involved?

KEY ISSUES THE FUTURE PLANNING PROCESS SHOULD ADDRESS

- How do we know what process to be involved in during the Comprehensive Planning process? What key words do we look for or special meetings that will address traffic and eventually have an impact on what gets planned for the Houghton Shopping Center?
- Need data on demographics, population, school capacities, business plans, traffic flows, etc. Better understand the development impacts on each of these elements before you change the zoning.
- Address pollution of adding development and cars.
- Create a community gathering space (like North Kirkland Community Center).
- Bring people together like tonight – to brainstorm what we want in our neighborhood as you go into the planning process. We didn't know this was done for the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan.
- Use pictures like you did with the proposed plan – helps us visualize better than reading through a planning document.
- Use words that everyone understands – rather than planning terms.

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- Can we relook at the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan – specifically the Houghton Shopping Center piece. We didn't know it was being changed so dramatically. Would have liked to know this before it was passed by Council.
- Do an economic feasibility of the comprehensive plan changes before they are done. Can we support this level of development (economically) before we change the zone – as we do not want someone to build and leave a ton of vacant space that the economy can't sustain.
- Include PTSA and Schools around the area – as there are so many and they should be part of the planning process as they have to "house" the people who move here. We are an "education center." (NW University, Lakeview, ICS, Community School, Lake Washington High School, Adventist School, Day Care, Emerson High School, Northstar).

Attachment 2

Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan Update

Monday, October 1 2012

Dear Houghton-Everest Neighborhood Center Plan Update Subscriber,

In response to the concerns expressed by residents of the Everest and Central Houghton Neighborhoods, I am recommending that the process and timing of the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center (Business District) be reconsidered. At its meeting last week, the Planning Commission recommended that the area be included in the City's 10-year Comprehensive Plan Update. The Houghton Community Council recently recommended that the Neighborhood Center Plan be delayed so that the Everest and Central Houghton Neighborhoods would have time to work together on the Plan.

On Tuesday, October 2, the City Council will be asked to reconsider the timing of the project and on October 16 it will be presented options to amend the Planning Work Program. During the next two years, Planning Department resources will be focused on a City-wide update of the Comprehensive Plan as required by state law. One option may be to evaluate the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Plan as part of that update in 2013/2014. Another option would be to complete the Comprehensive Plan update prior to preparing a more detailed plan and zoning for the business district. In either case, a new timeline and approach would be developed that will include community outreach.

The October 25 joint public hearing before the Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council on the Neighborhood Center plan is postponed. If the City Council decides not to suspend the project, a new public hearing date will be scheduled with additional opportunities for public involvement.

City representatives will be at the October 3 Central Houghton Neighborhood Association meeting to provide updates and to get feedback from participants about the planning process. This was done at the Everest Neighborhood Association meeting on September 25 and a [summary of concerns is posted to the website](#).

If the City Council concurs with reconsidering the plan, the neighborhood dialogue meeting on October 9 may either be cancelled or might be focused on community interests, concerns and process. To subscribe to receive email notices regarding meeting schedules and project updates, go to www.kirklandwa.gov/neighborhoodcenter and click the "[Kirkland Email Alerts](#)" icon.

We appreciate the feedback we are receiving from citizens and take that input very seriously. You are encouraged to stay informed and involved. Should you have specific questions, please contact Angela Ruggeri, Senior Planner at 425-587-3256 or aruggeri@kirklandwa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kurt Triplett
Kirkland City Manager