

## CENTRAL HOUGHTON ADVISORY GROUP - MEETING NOTES

(REVISED 6/10/10) May 25, 2010

---

Date: May 25, 2010

### I. Transportation Presentation

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with a presentation on a wide range of transportation related projects and programs, with comments from David Godfrey and Dave Snyder of the Public Works Department, and Sandeep Sindhal from the City's Transportation Commission.

The Central Houghton and Lakeview Advisory Groups left the Council Chambers and went to separate meeting rooms following the transportation presentation.

### II. Transportation Discussion

At 8:15, Betsy Pringle, chair, welcomed the members of the Central Houghton Advisory Group. She suggested that the members begin to discuss transportation issues by addressing the questions posed in the staff memo for the meeting.

- ◆ In response to the question regarding connections to the rail corridor or other linkages that should be cited in the Neighborhood Plan, members suggested that connections from the rail corridor to each park should be provided:
  - Terrace
  - Watershed
  - Carillon Woods – with a note that the connection for foot traffic is difficult due to instability at this time. Could support a connection in the future if the area is restored.
  - Connections could also occur at street ends
  - Key connections are at: 68<sup>th</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, South Kirkland Park and Ride and Terrace Park

Members concluded that the Neighborhood Plan should include a goal or text in support of connections to the rail corridor at all street ends or other natural connection points, noting that east/west streets should access the rail corridor whenever possible. Suggested text was discussed to state that these connections should be **“encouraged wherever feasible”**.

Additional comments regarding pedestrian connections included:

- Priority should be given to connections at NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street, where Houghton Center, Lakeview Elementary and other uses are located.
- The eastside rail corridor is an important part of the neighborhood's non-motorized plan. Language such as **“The trail is a major transportation option in the neighborhood”**, and **“Neighborhood-oriented access to the trail should be available for non-motorized options, including walking, biking and transit”** should be included.

Further discussion also included comments regarding opportunities to encourage transit connections to the eastside corridor, particularly at Houghton Center or the multi-family area west of the Center. This discussion followed the subject of a Park & Ride or station on/near 68<sup>th</sup> to offer Houghton residents a chance to access the future rail. Members did not generally support the idea of a rail station in this area. Transit improvements and increased frequency

were also discussed. The concept of a transit center or hub at the Houghton Center was generally supported.

- ◆ The second question related to a policy to support efforts by the City to acquire potential pedestrian connections with new development. Comments included:
  - Large parcels should maintain through connections
  - Lighting on pedestrian connections should be sought to improve safety and appearance of paths. Lighting should be an objective for connections.
  - Group supported policy language suggested in the memo, **“As development occurs, the City should seek opportunities for potential pedestrian and bicycle connections and require them accordingly”**.
  - Policy language could also include something regarding funding such as, **“Funding opportunities for non-motorized connections should be sought”**.
  - Bike connections should be completed along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as at the intersection of 108<sup>th</sup>/NE 68<sup>th</sup>
  - Continuity of connections is important – paths should be completed, even if bikes are diverted to another street with a safer connection
  
- ◆ The third question addressed by the group asked for suggestions for future improvements the group would like to see on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and what might be done to make the street more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Comments included:
  - Overhead utility lines are unsightly and detract from the street's visual appearance.
  - A landscape strip should be located between the curb and sidewalk along 108<sup>th</sup>, and could possibly be acquired with new development.
  - Suggestions for language also included, **“Look for opportunities to remove obstructions in the sidewalk, and to improve sight distance at intersections”**.

Discussion continued.

Comments on the issue of impacts from institutional uses included:

- Offsite parking from institutional uses – churches and NW University is a problem in the neighborhood. These uses should either provide sufficient parking for major events, or be limited in hosting events and leasing space and facilities for additional use.
- Suggested language to address this problem, **“Institutional uses should be required to mitigate impacts to surrounding neighborhood”**.

Comments on the issue of allowing additional height or commercial uses in the multifamily area west of Houghton Center included:

- Residential development built at greater densities than would currently be allowed (legally non-conforming) should be allowed to remain, and the density should be allowed if the development is rebuilt, but affordability should be required in redevelopment. Some additional height may be appropriate, perhaps with the provision of a greater amount of affordable housing.

## CENTRAL HOUGHTON ADVISORY GROUP - MEETING NOTES

(REVISED 6/10/10) May 25, 2010

---

- Since there was not specific direction on this issue, staff told advisory group members that they would bring options for the group to consider to the next meeting.

Comments on the issue of building height at Houghton Center included:

- Tom Markl, representative for the owners of the Houghton Center property discussed challenges related to redevelopment of the property in the future, and the possible need for additional building height, if sufficient parking to support additional floor area is to be provided.
- Several members noted that additional height had been discussed at the last meeting on this topic. The question of whether additional height in the zone should be allowed outright or whether some form of public benefit should be provided to achieve the height was not clear.
- Since the group did not provide specific direction on this issue, staff agreed to bring options for consideration to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.