



6.0 Community Outreach



6.0 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Guiding Principle:

Develop a vision and plan around broad community consensus and support.

The project is a confluence of many community interests. Careful balancing of those interests and a thoughtful approach to community involvement and ownership will yield a plan that is broadly embraced by the community”.

6.1 THE LAKESHORE PLAZA WORKING GROUP

In June 2003, the Downtown Action Team (DAT) formed a project working group to advance the project from general strategy to a conceptual plan supported by a financial analysis. The Lakeshore Plaza Working Group (LPWG) was composed of members from the Downtown Action Team (DAT), adjacent property owners, Park Board and staff, and representatives from the Arts Commission.

The LPWG formed four committees around key project components identified in an early strategic planning exercise. The committees were:

- *Design and Development* – charged with selecting the design consultants for the project and overseeing the design work
- *Property Owners* – responsible for engaging the adjoining property owners individually and as a group to understand their issues, concerns, and present project updates
- *Public Outreach* – charged with developing a community outreach strategy and working with the facilitation consultant (Norton Arnold & Company) to coordinate communications and community meetings.
- *Finance* – charged with working with finance consultant (Maria Barrientos) to determine project costs, revenues, and funding options.

The LPWG has met thirteen times to date. Each committee and the LPWG and committee chairs have met numerous times.

6.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The conceptual design process was built around a comprehensive involvement process that engaged key stakeholders, Kirkland Downtown on the Lake (KDL), City staff, neighborhood representatives, and the general public. The Public Outreach Committee established a series of three community events that guided development of a conceptual plan. The Committee developed a public notice program to ensure that every possible opportunity was provided for Kirkland residents and businesses to participate in the public process:

- A web page for the site was developed and kept up to date as the project progressed with meeting notices, meeting results, project drawings, and a link for comments. The web address was included in all project notices.
- Three articles were written for the City Update section of the Kirkland Courier.
- Flyers with the meeting notices were sent out as inserts in two editions of the Kirkland Courier, with 24,000 copies each time.
- Project updates and flyers were sent out with KDL newsletters.
- E-mail notices were sent out to meeting attendees and via the Neighborhood Listserve.
- Two project boards were posted on the site with the project description, flyers, and meeting notices.



- Postcards for the community meetings were mailed out to adjoining residential and commercial property owners, attendees of previous meetings, City boards and commissions, and various City-maintained mailing lists.
- Public meeting announcements were included on the City's local access cable channel.

The City Council was briefed by the consultant team and LPWG leadership at a May 2004 study session. The study session presented the work to date, including the results of Public Meeting #2 – Concept Alternatives. The study session was broadcast to the community via the City's local access cable channel.

The result of this extensive public notice program was strong participation in the public process, both in terms of meeting attendance and written comments. Written comments are included per public meeting in Appendices 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3. The date of these comments should be noted in reference to where the LPWG was in the process. Attendance varied from a low of approximately 70 attendees at the second workshop to a high of over 200 at the final open house. Participants in the process were informed on the issues and were able to comment from an informed and educated position. A summary of the community meetings, including meeting goals and findings, follows.

Ongoing:

In addition to structured community meetings, the LPWG extended an open invitation to the City's neighborhood organizations to attend neighborhood meetings to discuss the project. Members of the LPWG have met at various points in the process with the Moss Bay, South Rose Hills/Bridle Trails, North Rose Hill, Market, and Lakeview neighborhoods, as well as the Kirkland Alliance of Neighborhoods. The LPWG and DAT will continue to extend this invitation and look forward to additional dialogue with the residents via the neighborhood organizations.

6.3 PROPERTY OWNERS

The project area is adjoined along Central Way, Lake Street, and Kirkland Avenue by 10 private commercial properties. Members of the LPWG have discussed the project with owners of all of the surrounding commercial properties. The owners were consulted individually prior to any design work, and then invited to two subsequent meetings held at City Hall to review the results of the second and third community meetings.

Based on these meetings, the LPWG identified the following primary concerns of the adjoining owners and presented preliminary ideas on ways to address these issues and concerns. The issues are noted below, followed by LPWG commentary in italics:

A. Lower level retail

- Long term:

- Can lower level retail space be retained and remain functional?

The concept illustrates three primary options for the interface between the building and the plaza/garage

- *A gap that would provide light, air, open space, close in parking and pedestrian access to lower level tenants*
- *New private development filling the gap to come out and meet the plaza*
- *The plaza extended across the gap to meet the private buildings*

We believe that there are ways to configure the project interface so that lower level retail space can be successful and perhaps benefit from the project (close in covered parking, complementary activity, access to the plaza level, etc.).



- What if the project results in the loss of rentable space/income and thereby impacts the value of the property?

With the next level of study, it will be important to share information and analysis and discuss the short and long term benefits and the short and long term impacts of the project. Each owner will have different needs and objectives for their property and each parcel will require its own unique solutions. We should continue to work together to identify all of the issues and find the solutions.

- Short term
 - How would tenants be impacted during the construction phase? How can we mitigate these impacts?

With a construction project of this magnitude will come impacts from loss of parking, noise, dust, vibration, etc. The plaza would be a challenging infill project, but many impacts can at least be partially addressed to minimize disruption through phasing, time, and construction techniques.

B. Upper level office & retail

- How do existing buildings access plaza?

Direct and convenient access to the plaza deck is key to both the adjoining owner and the plaza. We think that good access onto a significant amenity only enhances the value of the adjoining properties. We also know that providing commercial activity around the perimeter of the plaza adds energy and vitality to the public space. We hope that all owners will view accessibility as a benefit and will work with owners to create that synergy.

- What changes should be made to existing building exteriors to provide a coherent, integrated feeling to plaza?

Some owners may wish to redevelop or remodel their property in conjunction with the project. In either case, it may be prudent for the owners to collaborate on the design, colors, materials, etc. of their buildings to create an environment that helps establish "the destination". The project may be able to create opportunities for low interest financing or design assistance to help make the design and feel of public and private components more cohesive.

C. Service access

- How would parking be impacted during construction? Can construction be done during off-peak, winter months?

We have not studied project phasing yet, but there will be disruption of parking availability at the Lakeshore lot during project construction. As noted below, there may be opportunities to time the most disruptive elements of construction during off-peak months and open the new garage prior to full completion of the project. Based on the recommendations of the Parking Study, the City has started a parking mitigation plan to find new supply and optimize the existing supply. The mitigation plan will evolve as the downtown grows and strives to find long term parking solutions.

Access to parking in the existing private garages will need to be accommodated during construction.

- How would garbage collection be handled?

Garbage collection will need to be coordinated between the project and existing buildings. This can be resolved with coordinated pickup within the garage distributed to a central location outside the garage for pickup by the City's waste management provider.

- How would deliveries be handled?



Delivery access could occur to the lower level through the garage, although there could obviously be height limits within the structure.

F. Code compliance

- How do we address code issues/nonconformances that are triggered by the project?
Most of the private structures around the project perimeter are nonconforming as to current building codes (e.g. – sprinklering, unprotected openings at the property line, etc.). As the plaza/garage structure moves closer to existing buildings, codes will require that certain nonconformances be addressed. The alternative would be to hold the plaza and garage back significantly from the adjoining retail properties, which does not meet the objective of “connecting downtown to the lake and the lake to downtown”.

One of the critical next steps we have identified is retaining a code consultant to conduct a detailed analysis of the issues and develop an approach for the project.

- What are the costs and logistics of sprinklering existing buildings to comply with codes?
Depending on proximity and the code analysis, existing buildings that do not have fire sprinklers may need to be retrofitted. The financial analysis assumes a cost of about \$5-7/s.f. to retrofit existing structures. We have used a high number, assuming that this would need to be accomplished with minimal disruption to tenants (phased, off hours, etc.). We also plan to explore public finance mechanisms that could help to finance these changes.
- Is fire truck access accommodated during and after construction?
The construction methods would require review by the Fire Department to ensure that emergency access is provided during construction. The Department has conducted a very preliminary review of the proposal and has indicated that the project should provide truck access at the promenade (between Kirkland Avenue and Market) and provide staging areas and standpipes at appropriate locations on the plaza deck.

G. Project timing

- When could the project start?
We estimate that if the project is received favorably by the Council, by voters (if voter bonds are required), and by development partners, the project could occur within approximately 5 years.
- How long would it take to complete the project?
We estimate that construction would take approximately 18 months. There may be opportunities to phase the project or complete portions sooner (e.g. – the parking garage).

H. Plaza management

- How will activities and commercial elements of plaza be managed? Can existing property owners participate?
Once built, the plaza can't be left to fend for itself. The area will need to be maintained, activities will need to be programmed, events coordinated, and new commercial space managed. A partnership entity would need to be created to perform these functions and the next phase of the project will start to define what that partnership should look like. Any managing partnership should include some representation by property owners to ensure that the mutually beneficial elements of the project are not lost.

The conclusion of these meetings was agreement that the project deserves further consideration and a willingness to work with the City and the DAT in seeking solutions to the identified issues. The owners agreed that they would like to work together on common interests and suggested that the next phase of study should help provide them with the tools to understand their options and how the project could relate to their properties. Owners suggested both design, building and fire code analysis, and developer assistance in this next phase of study.

