



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 15, 2010
To: Houghton Community Council
From: Angela Ruggeri, AICP, Senior Planner
Dorian Collins, AICP, Senior Planner
Subject: **CENTRAL HOUGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN – REVISIONS TO DRAFT VISION STATEMENT, HISTORIC CONTEXT, AND LAND USE SECTIONS (ZON09-00016)**

RECOMMENDATION:

Review proposed changes to draft Vision Statement, Historic Context, and Land Use sections of the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan to incorporate direction from the Houghton Community Council at their meeting on October 12th. Provide direction to staff if further changes are desired.

BACKGROUND:

The Houghton Community Council discussed the draft Vision, Historic Context and Land Use sections at their meeting on October 12th. The Community Council provided comments and direction to staff for changes to be made and brought back for discussion at the next meeting. These changes are presented in Attachments 1-3 to this memorandum and summarized below.

Vision

The changes to the Vision Statement are shown in Attachment 1. The changes include the addition of an introduction to the Vision, which Community Council members suggested to explain the use of the present tense in the statement. Other changes include minor text changes suggested by the Planning Director for tense consistency, and changes suggested by the Community Council for clarification.

Historic Context

The changes to the Historic Context section are shown in Attachment 2. They include additional information provided by the Heritage Society in response to the Houghton Community Council's questions and comments.

Land Use

Changes in response to suggestions from the Community Council to the Land Use section appear in Attachment 3. Due to staff commitments to other projects, gaps remain in the text provided to supplement the proposed policies. Additional text will be presented to the Community Council at the next meeting on this topic.

Commercial

The revised text includes several minor changes suggested by the Houghton Community Council. Further direction would be helpful for the following policies:

- Policy Ch-1.1: Proposed revisions provide a more detailed description of the overlay area to clarify that land within both the Everest and Central Houghton neighborhoods is included within the area.

Does the proposed revised text address the concerns of the Community Council?

- Policy CH 2.3: An option is presented that would allow uses other than residential to be included within upper stories of buildings developed at Houghton Center. The Community Council had requested that alternative language be provided for consideration that would not preclude office use, but would ensure that it would be subordinate to residential use.

Staff recommends that the Community Council discuss the alternatives presented for this policy and provide direction regarding the preferred option.

- Policy CH-2.4: Community Council members asked staff to revise this policy to refer to modulation, and to eliminate the phrase "high quality".

Staff recommends that the Community Council review the revised text and provide further direction to staff for changes if needed.

Residential

The revised text includes edits requested by the Houghton Community Council at the October 12, 2010 meeting. Two topics were also discussed that required further explanation. They are discussed below.

Small lot Regulations

Policy 4.2 encourages diversity in the size of dwelling units by preserving and or promoting small homes on smaller lots. Similar regulations are already in place in the Market and Norkirk Neighborhoods. The Community Council asked that staff bring back the existing wording in the Municipal Code that regulates small lots in these neighborhoods. The section of the Municipal Code relating to small lots in the Market and Norkirk neighborhoods is included below.

The Community Council expressed concern about the FAR requirements for small lots because FAR is not normally regulated in Houghton. It should be noted that these requirements only relate to the small lots created through this section of the code. They are in place to encourage small homes on the small lots which are allowed.

Staff recommends that the same requirements apply in the Central Houghton neighborhood for small lots only. It is understood that the Community Council is not interested in FAR regulations for the rest of the area.

22.28.042 Lots—Small lot single-family.

In the Market and Norkirk neighborhoods, as defined in the comprehensive plan, for those subdivisions not subject to the lot size flexibility provisions of Sections [22.28.030](#) and [22.28.040](#) and historic preservation provisions of Section [22.28.048](#), the minimum lot area shall be deemed to be met if at least one-half of the lots created contain no less than the minimum lot size required in the zoning district in which the property is located. The remaining lots may contain less than the minimum required lot size; provided that such lots meet the following standards:

- (a) Within the RS 6.3 and RS 7.2 zones, the lots shall be at least five thousand square feet.
- (b) Within the RS 8.5 zone, the lots shall be at least six thousand square feet.
- (c) The portion of any flag lot that is less than thirty feet wide, and used for driveway access to the buildable portion of the lot may not be counted in the lot area.
- (d) The floor area ratio (FAR) shall not exceed thirty percent of lot size; provided, that FAR may be increased up to thirty-five percent of the lot size if the following criteria are met:
 - (1) The primary roof form of all structures on the site is peaked, with a minimum pitch of four feet vertical to twelve feet horizontal; and
 - (2) All structures are set back from side property lines by at least seven and one-half feet.
- (e) The FAR restriction shall be recorded on the face of the plat.
- (f) Accessory dwelling units are prohibited. This restriction shall be recorded on the face of the plat. (Ord. 4102 § 1(A), 2007)

Non-conforming density

Policy 4.4 addresses properties in Central Houghton that are developed with legal, non-conforming density. This policy would apply to multifamily structures in the Houghton area that were built before the current zoning was in place, which now contain more units than would be allowed under today's zoning. In some cases, these developments provide housing that is more affordable than newer projects, and redevelopment of these sites may threaten the city's affordable housing stock.

The preservation of existing affordable housing is a top priority for the City in addressing the City's needs for affordable housing. Policy 4.4 would provide an option to owners and developers of property with legal non-conforming density to either redevelop the property with fewer units under current zoning, or to redevelop the number of units allowed under earlier zoning, if some percentage of the new units met the City's definition of affordable. The policy would provide an optional incentive rather than a requirement, to encourage the preservation of some affordability in housing. The details of the program would be determined through subsequent Zoning Code amendments.

Schools and Places of Worship

The revised text includes edits requested by the Community Council. The section on Northwest University still requires additional work to outline the existing Master Plan, but draft goal and policies have been added for Community Council review.

NEXT STEPS:

A tentative schedule for 2011 has been included below. This schedule may be adjusted due to workload.

January: Return to HCC with remaining Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan sections
February: Draft plan to Planning Commission for comment
Draft back to HCC with Planning Commission comments
March: Transportation section to the Transportation Commission for review
Open Space & Parks Section to the Parks Board for review
March/April: Neighborhood Advisory Group update
Public Open House
SEPA Addendum & CTED 60 day review
April: HCC/PC joint public hearing
April/May: HCC/PC Recommendation
May: City Council Study
June: City Council Final Action
HCC Final Action

Attachments:

1. Draft Vision Statement (revised)
2. Draft Historic Context Section (revised)
3. Draft Land Use Section (revised)

cc: File ZON09-00016
Kirkland Planning Commission
Central Houghton Neighborhood Advisory Group

Central Houghton Neighborhood
Vision Statement

DRAFT

The vision statement is a verbal snapshot of the Central Houghton Neighborhood at the time when the goals and policy direction expressed in this neighborhood plan are realized. It summarizes the character and qualities of the community.

The Central Houghton Neighborhood has a rich and unique history. The area's political history as ~~part of~~ a separate city until 1968 ~~has~~ fostered a deep community identity, establishing a tradition in which residents seek opportunities for involvement and stewardship in the neighborhood's future.

The neighborhood's predominantly low density residential character has been maintained, while the changing and varied needs of the population ~~have been~~ are accommodated through a diverse housing stock. Greater housing choices, as well as efforts to preserve affordability ~~in more affordable~~ housing, ~~have helped~~ to expand housing opportunities for all residents within the neighborhood.

Central Houghton is a friendly, accessible neighborhood, with safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle routes. Healthy and active living is promoted through attractive streets and trails. Traffic on the neighborhood's major streets, 108th Avenue NE and NE 68th Street, is managed well, with improvements designed to be compatible with surrounding development. The Eastside rail corridor provides pedestrian and bicycle connections linking the corridor to parks and other neighborhood gathering places.

Local citizens value the variety of opportunities to meet in shops and restaurants provided within the Houghton Business District, as well as in casual locations in the neighborhood's parks and natural areas. The 68th Street corridor and Houghton Business District have evolved into a thriving, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use center, with businesses available to meet the retail and service needs of the ~~surrounding~~ community. Appropriate streetscapes, site layouts and building designs provide an attractive and coordinated appearance within the district. Careful attention to the placement and design of vehicle and pedestrian access from commercial areas to surrounding streets ~~has contributed~~ ed to an efficient street network, and avoided conflicts with nearby low density areas.

Several schools and the Northwest University campus ~~contribute~~ add to the Central Houghton community, by providing a source of connection between the neighborhood's students, parents, and faculties, as well as with residents of other Kirkland neighborhoods and the larger community. These campuses are ~~strongly~~ valued and supported, not only for their role in providing educational opportunities and fostering community relationships, but for the additional open space they provide and share with the neighborhood.

Central Houghton residents ~~continue to~~ cherish and preserve the territorial views, slopes and natural watershed areas that contribute to the neighborhood's distinctive character. The tree canopy in the neighborhood has been ~~managed~~ maintained and enhanced, and adds to the neighborhood's peaceful setting. The neighborhood's parks meet the needs of the neighborhood's residents. Phyllis A. Needy Park ~~continues to~~ provides a place for active play for the neighborhood's youngest residents, while Carillon Woods meets the neighborhood's recreational needs with a play area and both paved and natural trails. Opportunities for

residents to quietly observe and enjoy wildlife habitat and open space exist at Carillon Woods and at the south end of the neighborhood, in the Watershed Natural Area.

Central Houghton residents take great pleasure and pride in calling this beautiful neighborhood their home.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The following history includes both the Central Houghton and Lakeview Neighborhoods since together they made up most of the City of Houghton until its consolidation with the City of Kirkland on April 30, 1968.

[\(A map showing the original boundaries of the City of Houghton will be included here.\)](#)

Naming and Early Settlement of Houghton: Samuel and Caroline French along with their adult son, Harry French, settled on the eastside of Lake Washington in 1872. The French family was from Maine and had been corresponding with a friend who had settled in Seattle and praised the potential of the Eastside. Mrs. French named their new home, Pleasant Bay.

The French family is considered Houghton's first white settlers. Little has been learned about the earliest Native American inhabitants of the area, but Mrs. French reported seeing them as they rowed their canoes along the shore. The French house was built in 1874 at 10120 NE 63rd and was home to the French family for four generations. The house was moved to 4130 Lake Washington Blvd in 1978.

In 1880, all communities were required by the US Post Office to have a one-word name. The Pleasant Bay community submitted the name Edison, [after Thomas Edison](#), but Edison was already [being](#) used in the Washington Territory. The Pleasant Bay church had been given a [600 pound Meneely & Company](#) church bell by Mr. and Mrs. William Houghton of Boston and so the community of Houghton was named in their honor. [When the congregational churches merged in 1894, the bell was relocated to the Kirkland Congregation Church on 5th Avenue in the Norkirk Neighborhood. The church has been rebuilt, but the bell remains there and rings every Sunday.](#)

[The Suffhoff home was built in 1903 by Kirkland realtor, Charles Parrish for the Morris Orton family. The young widow, Mrs. May Orton rented the home to Dr. George Hudson Davis in about 1910 and it was then used as a hospital and dental office. The home served as Houghton's and Kirkland's first hospital for ten years.](#)

Industry of Pleasant Bay/Houghton: The French family soon had industrious neighbors. The Jay O'Conner's who purchased the Popham/McGregor land, built the Steamer Squak and the large Lake House which was used as a hotel. The John and Abigail Fish family purchased the Lake House and continued the hotel business. The Lake House was in the family for generations and was torn down in 1984. The Curtis family built and operated ferries on Lake Washington for over fifty years. George Bartsch and his brother-in-law, Harrie Tompkins, started the Bartsch-Tompkins Transportation Company in 1904. Mr. Bartsch bought out Mr. Tompkins and then partnered with John Anderson to become the Anderson Steamboat Company in 1907. The Anderson Steamboat Company became the Anderson Shipyard which then became the Lake Washington Shipyard.

The Lake Washington Shipyard was at the site of the present Carillon Point development. One of the original buildings built in 1907 was used as a pattern shop for the wooden ships built during WW I, then as a mold shop for the steel ships built during WW II. The building was still standing until the development of Carillon Point.

The early shipyards were limited to building lake ferries or smaller ocean going boats that could be navigated down the Black River at the southern tip of Lake Washington. In 1916, the opening of the ship canal lowered Lake Washington by almost 9 feet and dried up the Black River. With the opening of the ship canal, the shipyard could build large ocean going ships.

Houghton and the Wars: During WW I, shipbuilding boomed in Houghton, as many wooden war ships were constructed there. Workers commuted from Seattle for the work which ended in 1918. The Second World War again brought tremendous growth for Houghton. The Lake Washington Shipyard built steel hulled ships and they were all in service at the end of the war. The U.S. Government built the Steward Heights housing project on 108th Avenue NE for the shipyard workers. This area is now the Northwest University campus.

Terrace Park - Site of the Houghton City Hall: Terrace Park was originally the site for a community center for the Lakeview Neighborhood during WWII. It was built to service the needs of the Lake Washington Shipyard workers. In the about 1955, the buildings were converted to house the Houghton City Hall, library, fire station and police station. The existing cement pads were used as the floor of the Houghton Police Station.

Livelihood of Houghton Residents. From the early 1870's, Houghton was settled by educated and hardworking families that were established Americans spreading out across the country. They purchased their homesteads and because of their isolation, they all lived off their land. Their close proximity to Seattle also allowed them access to jobs, services and goods. For example, Harry French commuted to Seattle to work in Yesler's Mill. At first workers rowed weekly, returning home for the weekend, and in later years they took a steamer daily. There were jobs in the forest, the coal mines, and the lumber mills, but all required a commute by rowboat, horse or on foot. As more settlers arrived, there was a need for scheduled ferry service, a school, and a place to worship.

School and Worship. Harry French built a frame cabin, which was used by the family until their family home was ready. This cabin later became Pleasant Bay's first classroom and its first Sunday school. A church was then built and the minister, Reverend Greene, began coming from Seattle to make the rounds to the small local churches in the area.

Houghton Resident, John Cort

John Cort had the first legitimate theatre circuit and owned 117 theaters on the west coast. Mr. Cort was also an early founder of the FOE Eagles and was their first President. He was the first in the world to use the new Edison lights in his Seattle Standard Theatre which burned in the great fire of 1889. Cort's last remaining Seattle theatre is the Moore. Cort traveled a great deal to manage his theatres, but his family lived full time on Whisker Farms, his Houghton home, until 1918. Around this time he moved his empire to NYC where he later retired and then died in 1929. Whisker Farms was on Cort Road, now 108th. Avenue NE. The Collins School was built on the burned out ruins of Whisker Farms.

City of Houghton: Until 1968, Houghton was a separate city with a Houghton address and residents that were called “Houghtonites”. When Houghton merged with Kirkland, there was a strong emphasis to retain some authority on land use and zoning issues. State law insured that Houghton citizens would maintain control of their zoning and continued enforcement of their ~~comprehensive plan~~ [land use plan](#). The Houghton community continues to have a Houghton Community Council with veto power over land use actions of the Kirkland City Council which relate to their jurisdiction (encompassing the old City of Houghton). The Houghton Community Council is one of only two such community councils remaining in the State of Washington.

Although the City of Houghton and the City of Kirkland merged over 40 years ago, there is still a strong feeling of community among the residents of the Central Houghton neighborhood because of their unique history as a separate city.

History taken from Primary Sources: Family and State records, the Boston Newspaper, 1889 Kirkland Press and the French Diaries.

[For more information on the history of Central Houghton please contact the Kirkland Heritage Society.](#)

Land Use

Residential land uses occupy the majority of the Central Houghton neighborhood. Schools, including the expansive campus of Northwest University, are dispersed throughout the low-density residential core, while two large park and open space areas, Carillon Woods and the Watershed Natural Area, are located in the central and southern portions of the neighborhood. Multifamily apartments and condominiums are clustered along the northern edge of Central Houghton, where they adjoin the neighborhood's only commercial area, the Houghton Neighborhood Center.

Commercial

Goal CH-1: Foster a strong and vibrant neighborhood commercial center.

Policy CH-1.1: Coordinate with the Everest Neighborhood to develop a plan for the Houghton Neighborhood Center, which overlays properties along the NE 68th Street corridor, in both the Everest and Central Houghton neighborhoods (see inset). The plan should ~~that~~ promotes a vibrant mix of neighborhood commercial and other compatible higher intensity uses while minimizing adverse impacts on residential areas to the south and east



Policy CH-1.2: Encourage a mix of uses within the Houghton Neighborhood Center that includes commercial development such as neighborhood oriented shops and services as well as multifamily residential use.

Text will be added to describe existing uses and conditions in the area. Text will also clarify the types of uses that are considered "neighborhood oriented", based on the definition from the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy CH-1.3: Promote transportation improvements that support the existing and planned land uses in the Center and adjoining neighborhoods.

Policy CH-1.4: Develop design principles that strengthen the visual identity of the Houghton Neighborhood Center by addressing streetscape improvements, public views to the lake, building design and site planning.

Policy CH-1.5: Expand area designated for higher intensity use to properties west of the Houghton shopping center, south of NE 68th Street.

Land located west of the Houghton Center shopping area, directly east of the Eastside rail corridor, has the-to potential to provide higher density residential use within walking distance of retail and business services. The rail corridor provides a wide buffer between this area and the low density residential area to the west.

Goal CH-2: Support the transition of the Houghton Center shopping area into a pedestrian-oriented mixed use district.

The Houghton shopping center development, or “Houghton Center”, located at the southwest corner of NE 68th Street and 108th Avenue NE, lies within the Houghton Neighborhood Center. This large strip retail development sits on a cluster of several parcels occupying approximately five acres under common ownership. Since a single owner controls the bulk of the site, redevelopment to a more cohesive, pedestrian-oriented concept may be feasible. In addition to its potential to serve the community through expanded neighborhood commercial uses, Houghton Center can contribute to the livability and vitality of the neighborhood through providing residents and visitors with a welcoming place to shop, congregate and relax.

Policy CH-2.1: Promote a pedestrian-oriented development concept through standards for a coordinated master plan for Houghton Center.

Policy CH-2.2: Reduce ingress and egress conflicts within and around the site through creation of a circulation system for vehicles and pedestrians as part of a master plan for development of the property.

Policy CH-2.3: Allow buildings to step up to four or five stories, where residential use is included in structures with ground floor commercial uses.

Option: Policy CH-2.3: Allow buildings to step up to four or five stories, where residential use is the predominant use on upper stories.

Policy CH-2.4: Provide careful attention to building modulation and use of materials to reduce the appearance of bulk and mass of buildings in Houghton Center. Break down the scale and massing of buildings into smaller and varied volumes to improve the pedestrian experience and maintain the human scale of development. ~~Emphasize high quality urban and architectural design in the redevelopment of Houghton Center.~~

Policy CH-2.5: Provide opportunities for gathering spaces and relaxation within the site.

Policy CH-2.6: Integrate development of the Houghton Center shopping area with the overall plan for the area within the Houghton Neighborhood Center overlay.

Residential

Goal CH-3: Promote and retain the residential character of the neighborhood while accommodating compatible infill development and redevelopment.

Policy CH-3.1: Retain the predominately detached single-family housing style in ~~the core of~~ the Central Houghton neighborhood.

(Map of Houghton Center to be inserted here)

Central Houghton is a well established neighborhood that has

predominately low-density (five to six dwelling units per acre) traditional single-family residential development. The land use transitions from low-density residential to medium-density multifamily and commercial development in the northern portion of the neighborhood near NE 68th Street. ~~Maintaining the A~~ mix of housing styles and sizes is important to the neighborhood's character.

Goal CH-4: Allow alternative residential development options that are compatible with surrounding development.

Policy CH 4.1: Allow a variety of development styles that provide housing choice in low density areas.

Providing housing options for a wide spectrum of households is an important value to support and encourage. Alternative housing provides more housing choice to meet changing housing demographics such as smaller households. Allowing design innovations can help lower land and development costs and improve affordability. Compatibility with the predominant traditional detached single-family housing style in the neighborhood will determine the acceptance of housing alternatives. Styles such as cottage, compact single-family, common wall (attached) homes, accessory dwelling units, and clustered dwellings are appropriate options to serve a diverse population and changing household size and composition. ~~Standards governing the siting and construction of alternative housing types in Central Houghton should be consistent with citywide regulations.~~

Policy 4.2: Encourage diversity in size of dwelling units by preserving and/or promoting smaller homes on smaller lots.

Diversity can be achieved by allowing properties to subdivide into lots that are smaller than the minimum lot size allowed in the zone if at least one of the lots contains a small home. This incentive encourages diversity, maintains neighborhood character, and provides more housing choice.

Up to 50 percent of the lots ~~to be subdivided in a subdivision~~ should be allowed to be smaller than the zoning designation allows if a small home is retained or built on the small lots. The lots containing the small homes should be no less than 5,000 square feet in the RS 7.2 zones and no less than ~~8000~~6000 square feet in the RS 8.5 zones. The size of the homes on ~~one or both the~~ small lots would be strictly limited by a reduced floor area ratio and all other zoning regulations would apply.

Policy 4.3: Within the mixed use area, the residential Landland south of NE 68th Street, and east of the Houghton Shopping Center is suitable for medium residential densities.

Policy 4.4: Where legal non-conforming densities already exist, redevelopment should be allowed to occur at existing densities, if affordable housing is also provided as part of the development.

(A map of the properties with legal non-conforming densities will be included here to make this policy more specific.)

Schools and ~~Churches~~Places of worship

Goal CH-5: Acknowledge the value of schools and ~~churches~~places of worship to the community.

Policy 5.1: A strong relationship between schools, ~~churches~~places of worship and the surrounding community is a key ~~factor to~~ ensuring compatibility and minimizing conflicts.

Map of schools and churches in the CH Neighborhood inserted here.

Those who attend the neighborhood’s schools and ~~churches~~places of worship are a part of the Central Houghton community. (More explanation is necessary here to flush out the meaning.)

Policy 5.2: Provide opportunities for early community involvement in any expansion plans for schools and ~~churches~~places of worship.

Early community involvement is important in addressing issues that may affect the surrounding area and the neighborhood as a whole. Such issues as parking and public safety impacts should be taken into account when considering expansion or new facilities and enforced once the facilities are completed.

Northwest University (Planned Area 1)

Northwest University is designated as a planned area because of its unique conditions including large parcel ownership, interface with the surrounding community, traffic patterns, and topographic conditions. The complex issues unique to this planned area can best be dealt with through coordinated development of the whole area.

Map of the Northwest University Boundaries inserted here.

The planned area designation permits the application of special development procedures and standards to minimize adverse impacts resulting from the natural growth and operation of the facility.

(A summary of the conditions listed in the Master Plan will be inserted here.)

Goal CH6: Further development on the Northwest University campus should be reviewed by the City to provide consistency with the approved Master Plan and reduce impact on surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Policy 6.1: Expansion of the University shall not occur beyond the approved boundaries in the Master Plan.

Policy 6.2: Large structures on campus should be located to reduce their impacts on single family residential areas adjacent to the University.

Policy 6.3: Traffic should be routed away from local residential streets to the extent possible.

Policy 6.4: University activities should be buffered on all sides with special emphasis on adjacent single family residential development.

