

Everest Neighborhood Association Meeting

September 25, 2012 Houghton Fire Station (#22)

TOPIC: Houghton-Everest Neighborhood 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

- 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

- 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.