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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
Houghton Community Council

From: Angela Ruggeri, AICP, Senior Planner
Paul Stewart, AICP, Deputy Director

Date: September 6, 2012

Subject: Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Amendments
File No. CAM12-00639

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center amendments and give staff direction.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The City Council directed staff and the Planning Commission to complete work on the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center as part of the 2012 Work Program. The policy work for the Central Houghton portion has already been included in the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan. Now staff will do policy work for the Everest Neighborhood and prepare new planned area zoning regulations for the Neighborhood Center (see Attachment 1).

The Planning Commission met to discuss the amendments and gave staff its initial direction on August 9, 2012. The Houghton Community Council reviewed the Planning Commission comments at its August 27 meeting. This memo summarizes the direction given to staff by the Planning Commission and includes questions raised by the Houghton Community Council.

In most cases the Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council were in agreement, but there are still some differences in the direction given to staff. It is suggested that the discussion at the joint meeting be centered on the areas where there are still differences. A list of questions has been provided to help with the discussion.

Staff has been working with Makers, an urban design consulting firm, to develop drawings that represent the ideas being discussed for the neighborhood center. These conceptual drawings are included in this packet as Attachment 2. The drawings represent the guiding principles that have been discussed to date and show a mix of uses, pedestrian scale and connections, street-front retail, upper story modulation, a central public plaza and internal circulation. These are discussed below. It is important to note that these drawings are illustrative for discussion purposes to note important features, standards or guidelines that could be applied in a variety of development scenarios.

Staff has also included a first draft of amendments to the Central Houghton and Everest Neighborhood Plans that will be necessary if the ideas presented below are to be included in the plans (see Attachments 3 and 4).

VISION FOR THE STUDY AREA

The Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan includes a section in its Vision Statement that describes the character and qualities desired for the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center in the future. It is useful to review this vision as we work on the policies and regulations for the area.

Local citizens value the variety of opportunities to meet in shops and restaurants within the Houghton /Everest Business District, as well as in casual locations in the neighborhood's parks and natural areas. The Houghton/Everest Business District has evolved into a thriving, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use center, with businesses available to meet the retail and service needs of the 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 contributes to an efficient street network, and avoids conflicts with nearby low density areas.

STUDY AREA

The approximate boundaries for the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center are shown in the Comprehensive Plan on a map in the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan. The Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council have agreed on the study area which is shown in Attachment 1.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Should density be determined by the bulk and mass of the building?
2. Should buildings be modulated (2 stories and then stepped back) at the street level?

3. Where should 10' sidewalks be required (NE 68th Street, 106th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE, internal streets)?
4. Should there be internal circulations through the Houghton Center, Houghton Village and Houghton Plaza sites? This would be a general concept for E-W and N-S connections, not a designation of specific locations.
5. Should vertical modulation be required? If so, how? Options include requiring a portion of each building to be lower than the allowed height. Alternatively, height incentives could be provided if portions of a building are kept lower than the required height.
6. Should the existing street trees be maintained to soften the building façade and enhance the streetscape?
7. Where should retail be required (on what streets and/or internal connections)?
8. Should there be on-street parking (see Attachment 5 for two articles about the advantages of on street parking)?

**We will have more information on traffic impacts once the allowed size of development (number of stories and density) is determined. The information will be available for the public hearing in October.

STUDY AREA TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The following is a description of general concepts for the Neighborhood Center and for each study area that were discussed by staff and the Planning Commission at the August 9, 2012 meeting (see Attachments 3 and 4 for necessary changes to Comprehensive Plan language).

General Information

There will be 3 zones (see Attachment 1):

- The West Zone will include Areas 2 and 3.
- The Center Zone will include Areas 1 and 4
- The East Zone will include Areas 5, 7 and 8
- Areas 6 and 9 will not be included in the study area (see below for explanation).

General considerations for the entire study area

This summary of concepts was developed by staff and the consultants. Direction from the Planning Commission is also included. The Houghton Community Council did not agree with all of the concepts and so some require further

discussion and are part of the questions listed above. These concepts were used to develop the drawings done by Makers (see Attachment 2).

- Break the Center Zone up with interior "connections".
- Include a commercial FAR requirement to retain the existing amount of retail in the area.
- Require a minimum depth for retail.
- Require retail frontage on NE 68th Street in front of the Center Zone and also on Center Zone interior streets.
- Consider an east/west "alley" along the northern portion of the Center Zone and possibly West Zone.
- Consider a signal at the mid-block pedestrian connection between Areas 1 and 4 (Center Zone).
- Require connections to the Cross Kirkland Trail (both for views and pedestrian access).
- Require connections between developments in the Center Zone.
- Keep large existing street trees to the extent possible.
- Provide on street parking along both sides of NE 68th Street.
- Minimize turning movement conflicts and consolidate access points.
- Provide bike lane on north side of NE 68th Street.
- Require 10' sidewalks where possible.
- Require plaza areas with new development in the Center Zone.
- Step down the buildings on the south side of both the Center and West Zones.
- Calculate height using average building elevation (ABE) for individual buildings on sites to take topography into account.
- Highlight the four corners at NE 68th Street, 6th Street South and 108th Avenue NE as an important area of the district.
- Require 13' for ground floor office and retail.
- Require design review for entire district.
- Provide building modulation and street orientation design guidelines.

***Planning Commissioner, Andy Held has also provided an article for the group on correcting the problems caused by sprawl (see Attachment 6).*

A description of each of the study areas is provided below:

Area #1: Houghton Center (Center Zone)

- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

New Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan includes:

- Pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development.
- Master Plan including gathering spaces for the community.
- Transportation improvements around and through the site.
- Building heights stepping up to 5 stories with design guidelines.

Planning Commission Direction:

- Allow buildings up to 55 feet in height.
- Require storefronts to be at grade level of street (and/or internal streets).
- No minimum development size, but connections and combined access required between developments.
- May require minimum floor area ratio for ground floor retail (similar to requirements being considered for BC 1, 2 and BCX zones).
- Mixed use including residential (density determined by building envelope), retail and office.
- Include an affordable housing requirement for residential development.
- Require design review with guidelines addressing:
  - Vehicle/pedestrian connections including internal street(s).
  - Road sections with some on street parking.
  - Bike lanes on north side of 68th.
  - Street orientation (to 68th with 10 foot sidewalks).
  - Building modulation (step down on south side adjacent to residential).
  - Parking plan for development.

***Attachment 7 contains 2 letters from Tom Markl about this area.*

Area #2: Waddell Multi-Family Residential Properties (West Zone)

- Presently zoned multifamily residential (RM 3.6)
- New Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan says that this area should be designated for higher intensity use (higher density residential). Height is not mentioned.
- This area is adjacent to the Cross Kirkland Trail.

Planning Commission Direction:

- Allow five stories (55 feet).
- Mixed use including residential (density determined by building envelope), retail and office allowed, but not required.
- Include an affordable housing requirement for residential development.
- Require design review and address:
  - Adjacency to Cross Kirkland Trail and Houghton Center.
  - Building modulation (step down on south side adjacent to residential)

***Attachment 8 contains 2 letters from Doug Waddell about this area.*

Cross Kirkland Trail Photos

Area #3: Lakeview Office Center (West Zone)

- In the Everest Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

Planning Commission Direction:

- Same as Area #2.

Area #4: Houghton Village & Houghton Plaza (Central Zone)

- In the Everest Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

Planning Commission Direction:

- Same as Area #1.

Area #5: Cleaners, 7-11, Etc. (East Zone)

- In the Everest Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

Planning Commission Direction:

- Allow four stories (45 feet).
- Mixed use including residential (density determined by building envelope), retail and office allowed, but not required.
- Include an affordable housing requirement for residential development.
- Require design review that would include policies to:
  - Bring retail to the street.
  - Move access away from intersection.
  - Provide building modulation.

Area #6: Vacant Lot

- In the Everest Neighborhood

- Presently zoned multifamily residential (RM 3.6), but an old lawsuit decision allows first development on the site to be regulated by commercial (BC) zoning requirements.
- There is a stream across the property.

Planning Commission Direction:

Planning Commission directed staff to look into possibilities for this property. Staff recommends that this property be removed from the study area, because the law suit will determine the use of the property.

Area #7: Gas Station (East Zone)

- In the Central Houghton Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

Planning Commission Direction:

- Same as Area #5.

Area #8: Parking Lot (East Zone)

- In the Central Houghton Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)

Planning Commission Direction:

- Same as Area #5.

Area #9: Office Building

- In the Central Houghton Neighborhood
- Presently zoned commercial (BC)
- Larger site (light brown & light red on map) contains a Northwest University office building.
- Majority of the site (light brown) is zoned Professional Office Residential (PR 3.6).

Planning Commission Direction:

- Remove from Study Area.
- Rezone to match PR 3.6 zoning on rest of site.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Information letter has been sent to all property owners, residents and business owners in the study area.
- Contact made with both neighborhood groups.
- Notice signs up by mid-September.
- Webpage and listserv established by mid-September.
- Open House and/or attendance at Central Houghton and Everest Neighborhood Association meetings planned pre-public hearing.
- Joint Public Hearing scheduled for October 11

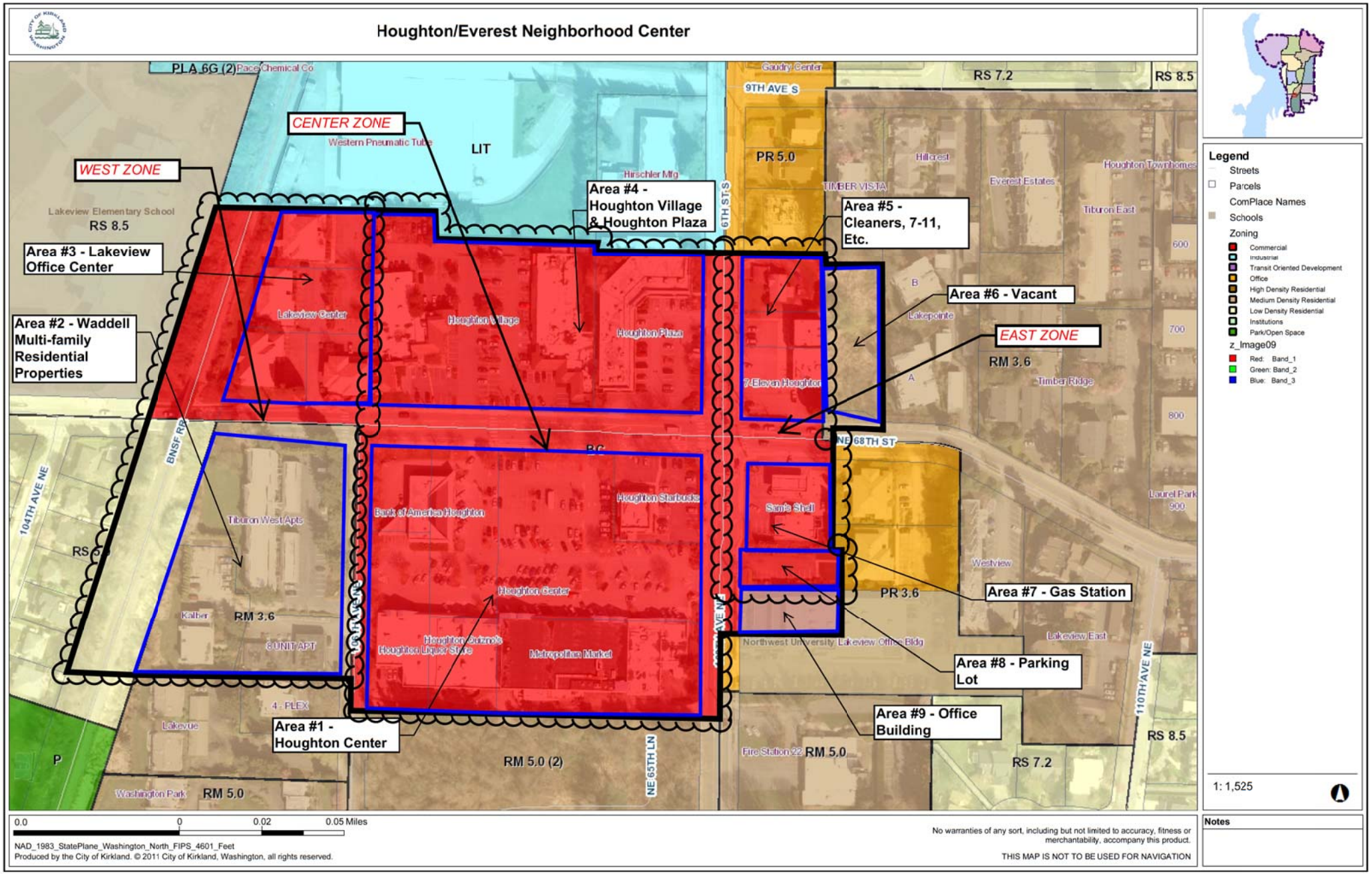
SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule for the project.

- **9/13/12** - PC and HCC joint study session to review draft plan and code amendments.
- **9/24/12** - HCC meeting to review draft plan and code amendments.
- **9/27/12** - PC meeting to review draft plan and code amendments.
- **10/11/12** - Joint public hearing with PC and HCC to take public comment.
- **September-October 2012** – Public Open House and/or attendance at CH and Everest Neighborhood meetings.
- **Mid-October 2012** - Complete SEPA and CTED 60 day notice.
- **10/22/12** - HCC meeting to deliberate and make recommendation to PC.
- **10/25/12** - PC meeting to deliberate and make recommendation to CC.
- **12/4/12 or 12/18/12** - to CC regular session for adoption of Comprehensive Plan amendments.
- **1/28/13** – to HCC for final approval of amendments in area of jurisdiction.
- **End of March 2013** – Complete Zoning Code amendments.

Attachments:

1. Study Area Map
2. Concept drawings for the Neighborhood Center
3. Potential amendments to the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan
4. Potential amendments to the Everest Neighborhood Plan
5. Articles about On-Street Parking
6. Article from Andy Held on Sprawl
7. Letter from Tom Markl
8. Letter from Doug Waddell


Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center
CENTER ZONE
WEST ZONE
EAST ZONE
Area #1 - Houghton Center
Area #2 - Waddell Multi-family Residential Properties
Area #3 - Lakeview Office Center
Area #4 - Houghton Village & Houghton Plaza
Area #5 - Cleaners, 7-11, Etc.
Area #6 - Vacant
Area #7 - Gas Station
Area #8 - Parking Lot
Area #9 - Office Building
RM 5.0 (2)
RM 5.0
RM 3.6
PR 5.0
PR 3.6
RS 8.5
RS 7.2
Legend
Streets
Parcels
ComPlace Names
Schools
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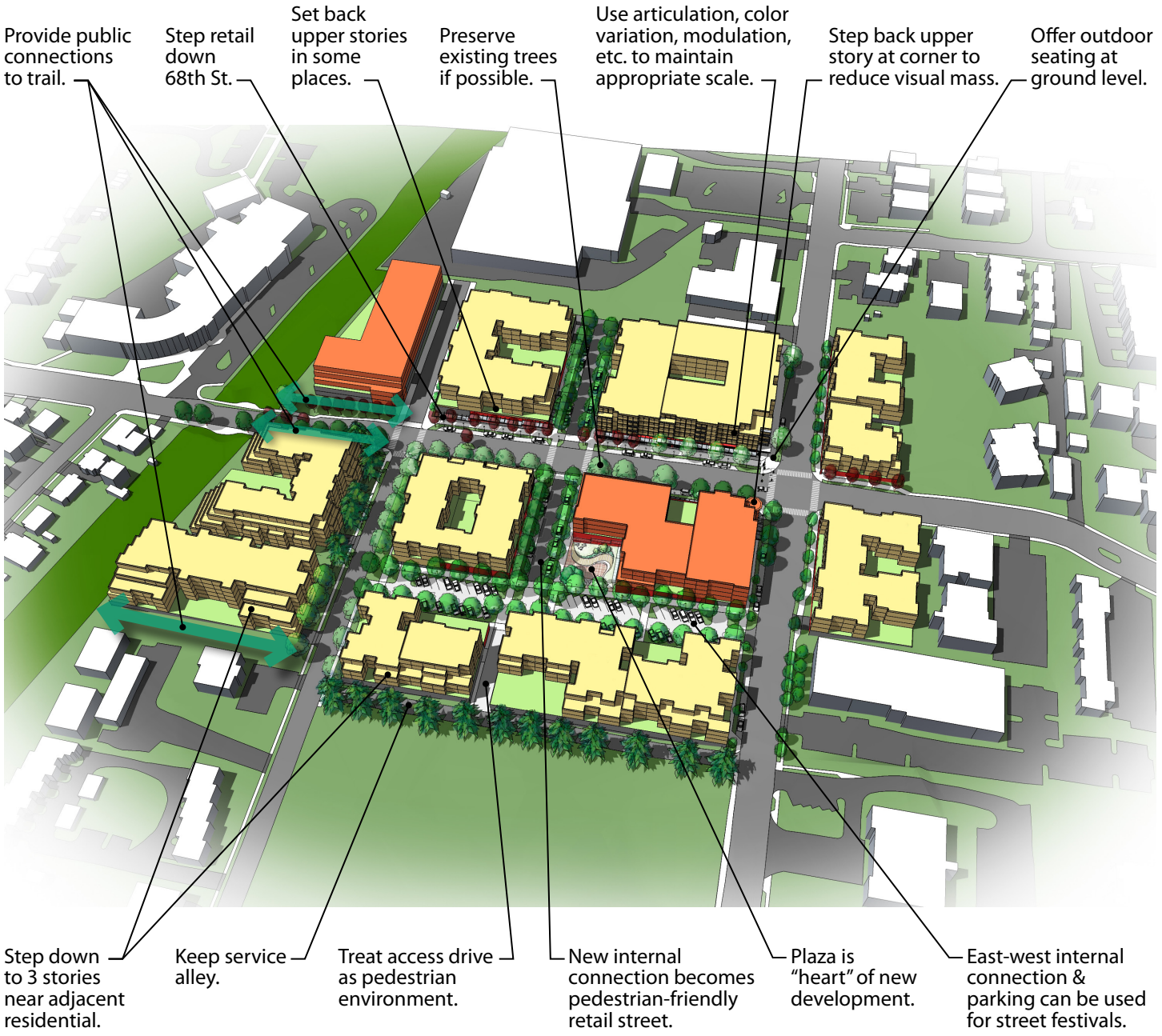
No warranties of any sort, including but not limited to accuracy, fitness or merchantability, accompany this product.
THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION
Notes



Houghton Everest Neighborhood Center **Overall Concept**

Site Plan

Vehicular Circulation

Pedestrian Circulation

Looking west along NE 68th St at 6th St intersection

Looking east along NE 68th St at 106th Ave NE intersection

Looking north along 106th Ave NE near NE 68th St

Birsdeye view of plaza and internal connections (looking northeast)

Birdseye view of new internal north-south connection (looking southeast)

Amendments to Goals & Policies relating to the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center in the new Central Houghton Plan

COMMERCIAL

Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center

The Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center is defined as a "Neighborhood Center" commercial area in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. It includes properties on the north and south sides of NE 68th Street in both the Central Houghton and Everest Neighborhoods.

Goal CH-5: Promote a strong and vibrant Neighborhood Center with a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Policy CH-5.1: Coordinate with the Everest Neighborhood to develop a plan for the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center, which overlays properties along the NE 68th Street corridor in both the Everest and Central Houghton neighborhoods (see inset).

This plan should promote a coordinated strategy for the Neighborhood Center while minimizing adverse impacts on surrounding residential areas. ~~The existing land use map designations will be used until the land use, zoning and development regulations for the entire Neighborhood Center are re-examined.~~

Policy CH-5.2: Encourage a mix of uses within the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center that includes commercial development such as neighborhood-oriented shops, services, and offices, as well as multifamily residential use.

A variety of uses, including retail, office and residential, should be combined in order to contribute to a vibrant mixed use Neighborhood Center.

Policy CH-5.3: Implement transportation improvements that support the existing and planned land uses in the Neighborhood Center and adjoining neighborhoods.

A review of transportation impacts should be done for all new development in the Neighborhood Center. Transportation system improvements should be designed to encourage traffic to use existing arterials and to include traffic calming devices on neighborhood streets. Alternate modes of transportation should also be encouraged.

Policy CH-5.4: Expand the area designated for higher intensity use to properties west of Houghton Center and south of NE 68th Street.

Land located west of the Houghton Center shopping area, directly east of the Cross Kirkland Corridor, has the 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-6: Promote high quality design by establishing building, site, and pedestrian design standards that apply to commercial and multifamily development in the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center.

Policy CH-6.1: Establish design guidelines and regulations that apply to all new, expanded or remodeled commercial, multifamily or mixed use buildings in the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center.

These design guidelines and regulations should support appropriate building scale and massing, produce buildings that exhibit high quality design with a sense of permanence, and incorporate site design which includes pedestrian features and amenities that contribute to the livability of the surrounding area. They should also strengthen the visual identity of the neighborhood center by addressing streetscape improvements and public views to the lake along NE 68th Street.

Houghton Center: The shopping center development located at the southwest corner of NE 68th Street and 108th Avenue NE (shown in yellow on the map) is known as the "Houghton Center." This large strip retail development sits on several parcels occupying approximately five acres. Redevelopment to a more cohesive, pedestrian-oriented concept may be feasible since a single owner controls the bulk of the site. 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 by providing residents and visitors with a welcoming place to shop, congregate and relax.

Goal CH-7: Support the transition of the Houghton Center into a pedestrian-oriented mixed use development, including retail, with office or residential and other compatible uses.

Policy CH-7.1: Promote a pedestrian-oriented development concept through standards for a coordinated master plan for Houghton Center including retail, with office and/or residential and other compatible uses.

A master plan for the Houghton Center should provide for a complementary arrangement of facilities, pedestrian amenities, open spaces, and linkages, as well as

shared parking that meets the needs of Houghton Center and a coordinated sign system.

Policy CH-7.2: Reduce ingress and egress conflicts within and around Houghton Center through creation of a circulation system for vehicles and pedestrians as part of a master plan for development of the property.

The circulation system for both pedestrians and vehicles should provide the minimum amount of ingress and egress locations necessary for an effective circulation system into and through Houghton Center.

Policy CH – 7.3 *will be moved to the general Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center section above and renumbered CH – 5.5. It will apply to the entire Neighborhood Center and not just the Houghton Center (Area 1 on the map). Edits to the wording are shown below.*

Policy CH-7.3: Allow building heights to step up to five stories in the area west of 108th Avenue NE, if careful attention is given to building modulation, upper story stepbacks, and use of materials to reduce the appearance of bulk and mass. Allow 4 stories east of 108th Avenue NE.

Specific design guidelines should be developed to ensure that modulation is used to break down scale and massing of buildings into smaller and varied volumes, and to provide upper story stepbacks ~~from the sidewalks~~ to improve the pedestrian experience and maintain human scale. Buildings west of 108th Avenue NE should step down to the south where adjacent to residential development.

Policy CH-7.4: Provide gathering spaces and relaxation areas within Houghton Center.

Houghton Center is an important community meeting place within the Central Houghton Neighborhood. Gathering spaces should be provided when Houghton Center redevelops as a way to provide places to meet
neighbors and enjoy the facilities.

The following amendments to the Land Use Map will also be necessary:

- Area #2: Waddell Multifamily Residential Properties (see Attachment 1) will be changed from “Medium Density Residential” to “Commercial”.
- Area #9: Office Building (see Attachment 1) will be changed from “Commercial” to “Office/Multifamily”.

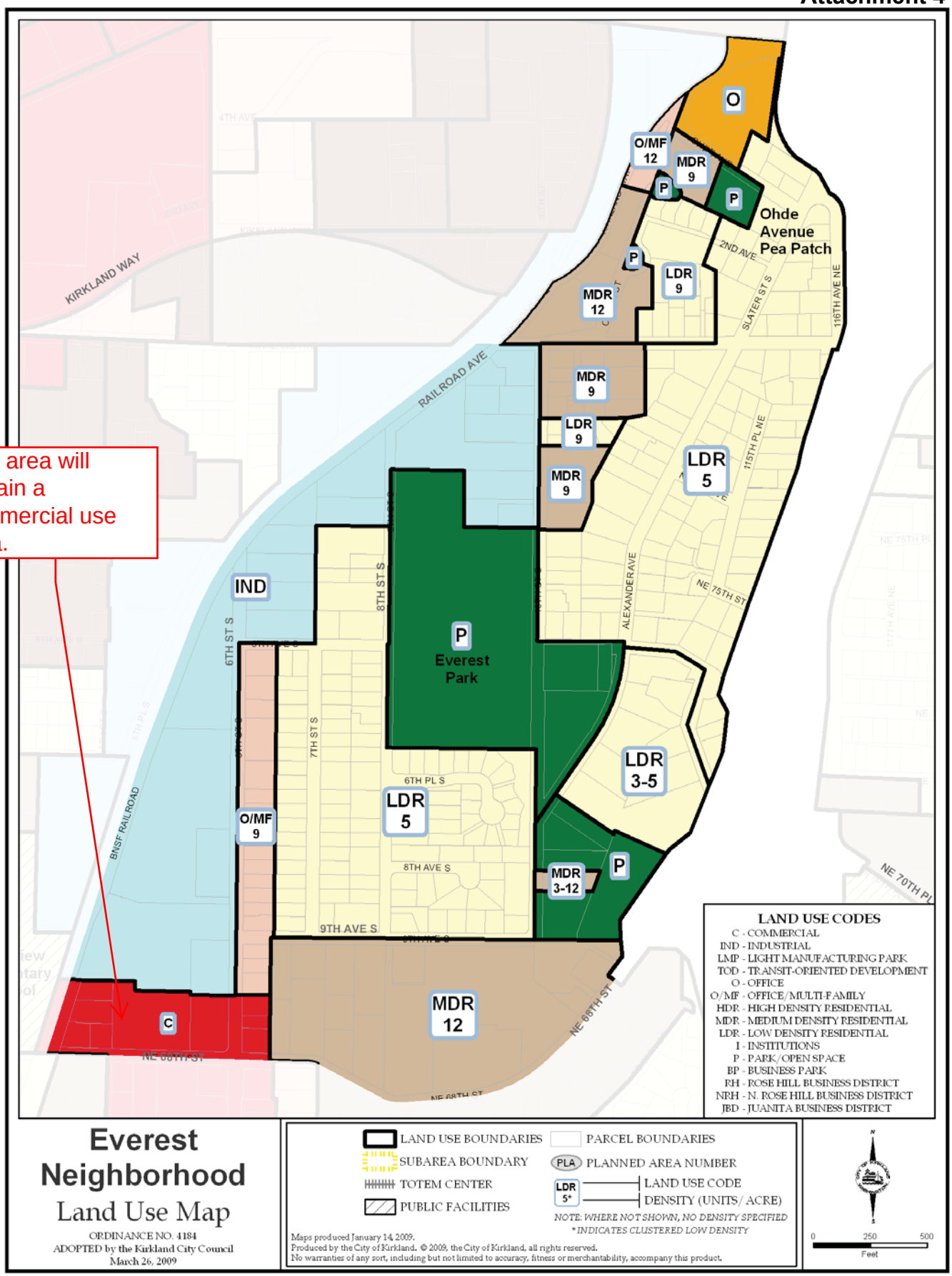


Figure E-1: Everest Land Use

XV.E. Everest Neighborhood

through the low-density area to the north, development density should be limited, consistent with that low-density area, as set forth on page E-4.

Multifamily development along NE 68th Street and east of 6th Street South (up to 12 dwelling units per acre) is to be continued.

The southern portion of the Everest Neighborhood is impacted by the existence of a freeway interchange and by heavy traffic volumes along NE 68th Street. South of 9th Avenue South most land has been committed for multifamily use, although a few older single-family homes and some undeveloped land still exists. Future multifamily development in this area should be limited to a maximum of 12 dwelling units per acre.

4. Economic Activities

The Houghton business district to be contained within its present boundaries.

The Houghton business district is a commercial area lying at the south end of the Everest Neighborhood. Commercial uses in this area should satisfy neighborhood needs rather than include intensive uses which would be located more appropriately in the Downtown or other major commercial centers (see Economic Activities Chapter). The height of structures in this area should not exceed 35 feet.

The existing land available for commercial use is sufficient to meet the needs of the neighborhood. Property along 6th Street South is impacted by heavy traffic volumes and by the existence of industrial activities located primarily to the west. These influences detract from the desirability of this area for residential use. Convenient access, however, makes this area suitable for a variety of economic activities.

Light industry is permitted west of 6th Street South and along railroad tracks subject to standards.

Light industrial uses exist and should continue to be permitted on the west side of 6th Street South and to the northeast along the railroad tracks to Kirkland Avenue (see Figure E-1). Further development in the industrial zones, however, should be subject to the following standards in order to maintain a relatively small scale of development in keeping with the existing character of the area:

(1) Industrial activities should not generate heavy volumes of truck traffic along residential streets. Truck frequency, noise, and hazard can constitute a serious nuisance for residential areas. Therefore, the expansion of existing industrial uses should be permitted only if traffic impacts on residential areas are mitigated.

(2) The visibility of industrial operations (including manufacturing, processing, storage, and shipping/receiving) from nearby residential development should be limited. Such industrial operations must be oriented away from residential uses and must be visually screened or completely enclosed within structures.

(3) The height of structures should not exceed 35 feet.

(4) Hours of operation should be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the potential impact on the neighborhood. Industrial activities during evening or weekend hours may be permitted if they are not disruptive to nearby residential areas.

This section of the plan will be rewritten to include policies similar to those in the Central Houghton Plan for the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center area.

XV.E. Everest Neighborhood

'Pathways' are discussed and identified in Figure E-3.

The major pathways by which the majority of residents enter and traverse this neighborhood are Kirkland Way and 6th Street South. It is along these routes that the majority of the neighborhood's commercial developments are located, and it is along these routes that impressions of the neighborhood character are formed. Therefore, development along these pathways should be of limited size and scale to reflect and emphasize the neighborhood's predominantly single-family character.

This wording will need to be edited or deleted.

In addition to the primarily vehicular pathways which serve the Everest Neighborhood, the I-405 pedestrian overpass at the east end of Kirkland Avenue and the connecting pathways through the north part of the neighborhood serve as important pedestrian links between the Moss Bay Neighborhood and South Rose Hill on the east side of I-405 (see Figure E-3).

'Gateways' are discussed.

Gateways to a neighborhood provide an important first impression of the area's character and quality. Clear and vivid gateways enhance identity by conveying a sense of entry into something unique. Gateways to the neighborhood are identified in Figure E-3.

'Major views' are discussed.

Two major views in the southern portion of the Everest Neighborhood are at NE 70th Street west of I-405 and NE 68th Street at the intersection of 6th Street South (see Figure E-3). Both present sweeping territorial views of Lake Washington, Seattle, and the Olympic Mountain range (see Figure E-4). The NE 70th Street view can be protected by limiting building heights of future structures north of NE 68th Street. The NE 68th Street/6th Street view can be significantly improved by removing pole signs, lowering signs, or placing signs on the face of buildings in the area, and either undergrounding or relocating overhead utility lines.

This wording will need to be edited or deleted.

The other major view in the Everest Neighborhood is located at the intersection of NE 85th Street and Kirkland Way. This location presents a sweeping territorial view of Lake Washington, Seattle, the Olympic Mountains, and Downtown Kirkland (see Figure E-3).

Attachment 5

What Street Parking Can Do For Downtowns

NORMAN W. GARRICK AND WESLEY MARSHALL

May 18, 2008

As in other parts of the country, Connecticut towns and cities are struggling to revitalize their downtowns. Some of the planning and design decisions made in the 1950s and 1960s make this goal more difficult. One such decision is the elimination of street parking from many of our town centers.

Although this practice of not accommodating street parking is now routine, there has been little research done to assess its impact on urban centers. However, a growing number of urban planners have pointed out that centers that have retained street parking, along with other compatible features of pre-1950s town centers, are some of the most successful downtowns in the country.

In order to address this dichotomy between conventional practice and emerging urban theory, we at the University of Connecticut designed two studies of on-street parking and its impact on downtowns. One was based upon case studies of six New England town centers (West Hartford; Northampton, Mass.; Brattleboro, Vt.; Avon Center; Glastonbury Center and Somerset Square in Glastonbury). In the second study, we investigated how street design affected vehicle speeds and safety, based on a study of more than 250 Connecticut roads.

What we found through these studies was that on-street parking plays a crucial role in benefiting activity centers on numerous levels. Here are some of the main benefits.

• Higher efficiency: Users of the downtowns consistently selected on-street parking spaces over off-street surface lots and garage parking. The on-street spaces experienced the most use and the highest turnover.

• Better land use: Using the curbside for parking saves considerable amounts of land from life as an off-street surface parking lot. Medium-sized town centers can save an average of more than two acres of land by providing street parking. This efficiency can allow for much higher-density commercial development than is possible if the center relies solely on off-street surface lots.

• Increased safety: We showed conclusively that drivers tended to travel at significantly slower speeds in the presence of features such as on-street parking and small building setbacks. Slower vehicle speeds provide pedestrians, cyclists and drivers more time to react, and when a crash does occur, the chance of it being life-threatening is greatly reduced. In short, on-street parking can help to create a safer environment.

• Better pedestrian environment: Our study results showed that centers with on-street parking and other compatible characteristics such as generous sidewalks, mixed land uses, and higher densities recorded more than five times the number of pedestrians walking in these areas compared with the control sites, which lack these traits.

Nearly every town in the state has the street space available that could be used for on-street parking. Town leaders should consider it. Our results suggest that on-street parking is a tool that can help create a vibrant and safe town center environment.

Norman W. Garrick is an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and director of the Center for Transportation and Urban Planning at the University of Connecticut. Wesley Marshall is a doctoral candidate in transportation engineering and urban planning at UConn.

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Attachment 5

formerly New Urban Network
CITIES&TOWNS ONLINE

The importance of on-street parking

Blog post by Steve Mouzon on 10 Aug 2011
parking safety walking

Steve Mouzon, New Urban Network

On-street parking is important to good urbanism on many counts. Let's have a look at some of the most important reasons why it's essential:

Commercial parking lots

If people can't park on-street, then off-street parking lots are essential in all but the most highly walkable places where cars are unnecessary (think Manhattan.) Surface parking lots do lots of damage. First, if they are built in front of a building, then they pretty much guarantee that nobody will ever walk on the sidewalk that runs between the parking lot and the street. Pedestrians aren't stupid... you'd be taking your life in your own hands by walking in a place like this because you have no protection from cars zipping by just a few feet away from you.

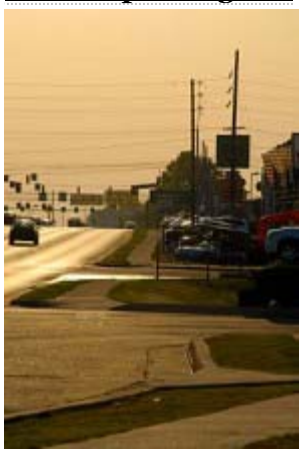
The second-worst place for a parking lot is beside the building because this creates a big gap in the urbanism. This condition is known as a "snaggletooth streetscape." One of its worst features is that it interrupts the continuity of the street face, making the place seem incomplete, or decaying. Another really bad feature is the fact that it bores the pedestrians, because when they're walking beside it, they get a steady view of cars that doesn't change very quickly. Unlike a parking lot in front, which completely kills pedestrianism in only one block, parking lots beside buildings only injure it, and the extent of the injury to walkability depends on how big the gaps between buildings are.

The third place for a parking lot is behind the building. This isn't as bad as the other two places, but it has problems as well. If everyone parks in back, then it seems logical to the building owner to put the front door in the back. This not only creates a weird and confused floor plan, but it also means the building is less likely to pay the proper attention to the street, usually resulting in boring the pedestrians. And all parking lots have the unfortunate distinctions of being really bad heat sinks, and of creating lots of stormwater with all that impervious asphalt or concrete.

On-street activity

Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Surface parking lots



Would you be caught dead on this sidewalk? Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Driveway parking

There's almost as much driveway as there is front yard in this subdivision. Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Attachment 5

Residential parking

Subdivisions that ban on-street parking force the paving of much of the lot because you've gotta have enough parking places for all of your family plus all of your guests... at your biggest party or other gathering of the year. Many builders will build a double-wide driveway all the way to the front facing garage of their "snout houses" so visitors can park on all that extra paving. This has all of the environmental problems that parking lots do: double-wide driveways are big heat sinks with lots of stormwater runoff. Big heat sinks aren't just environmental problems; they hurt walking as well. By heating up the micro-environment around them, they make it more uncomfortable to walk in their vicinity. And if driveway crossings take up a big percentage of the length of the sidewalk, then much of a walk along that sidewalk is spent subconsciously aware that cars might back out of the driveways and hit you. When fear arrives, pedestrians depart.

Parking decks

A parking deck next to a sidewalk creates a terrible pedestrian environment, as you can clearly see in the fourth image on the right. First, it's the most boring thing possible to walk beside, and most of the time, it's terminally ugly because people don't generally lavish a lot of money on a parking deck.

Bore the pedestrians, and they won't walk there. Build ugly buildings, and they'll abandon your sidewalk as well.

But that's not the worst of it. Parking decks are broadly perceived as being scary places. How many movies have you seen where the ax murderer waits in a dark corner of the parking deck for his next victim? The only thing worse for pedestrians than boredom and ugliness are danger and fear. So put a parking deck right beside those sidewalks where you never, ever, ever want pedestrians to walk.

Liner buildings

It is possible to fix parking decks by building what is known as a "liner building" between them and every adjacent sidewalk. A liner building is a thin building that "lines" the parking deck's outer edges. You see the storefronts of the liner building's shops at the first level and you see the windows of the offices or apartments above. It looks like any perfectly normal downtown building... it just happens to not be very thick, and to have a parking deck behind it. Liner buildings are hardly ever more than 30 feet thick. 18 feet is a good thickness because that's often the depth of a

Parking deck

Here's a parking deck next to a sidewalk. See any pedestrians there? Of course not. Who would want to walk in such a dreadful place unless their car broke down there or something? Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Liner buildings

This liner building is in Bath, England. It is less than 12 feet thick, and it has some of the coolest shops in town. Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Parking as protection

Thriving sidewalk cafe scenes depend on on-street parking for protection. Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Thriving Retail

Courtesy of Steve Mouzon.

Attachment 5

parking space. But they can be even thinner, like the one shown in the next image.

The pedestrian shield

Clearly, forcing cars off the street has lots of negative consequences. But on-street parking isn't just a car storage device. There are other benefits as well. Remember what we said earlier about "when fear arrives, pedestrians depart"? One major source of fear is the possibility that a car might run off the street and hit you. On-street parking alleviates this fear, because each of those parked cars acts as a shield of several thousand pounds of metal between you and the moving traffic. People don't consciously realize this all the time, but you've never seen a sidewalk cafe next to the expressway, have you?

Thriving retail

Retail expert Bob Gibbs says that every on-street parking space in a thriving retail district is worth $250,000 in sales to the nearby merchants on that street. People will walk much further along an interesting Main Street to get from their parking space to the store they're going to than they will walk from a parking lot. I blogged about Pedestrian Propulsion a couple years ago; that post explains why this is so. Simply put, if you want to kill the businesses along a thriving commercial street, just remove the on-street parking. Works every time.

Steve Mouzon is principal of Mouzon Design, an architecture and urban design firm, based in Miami Beach, Florida, and author of The Original Green, *book and blog.*

Comments

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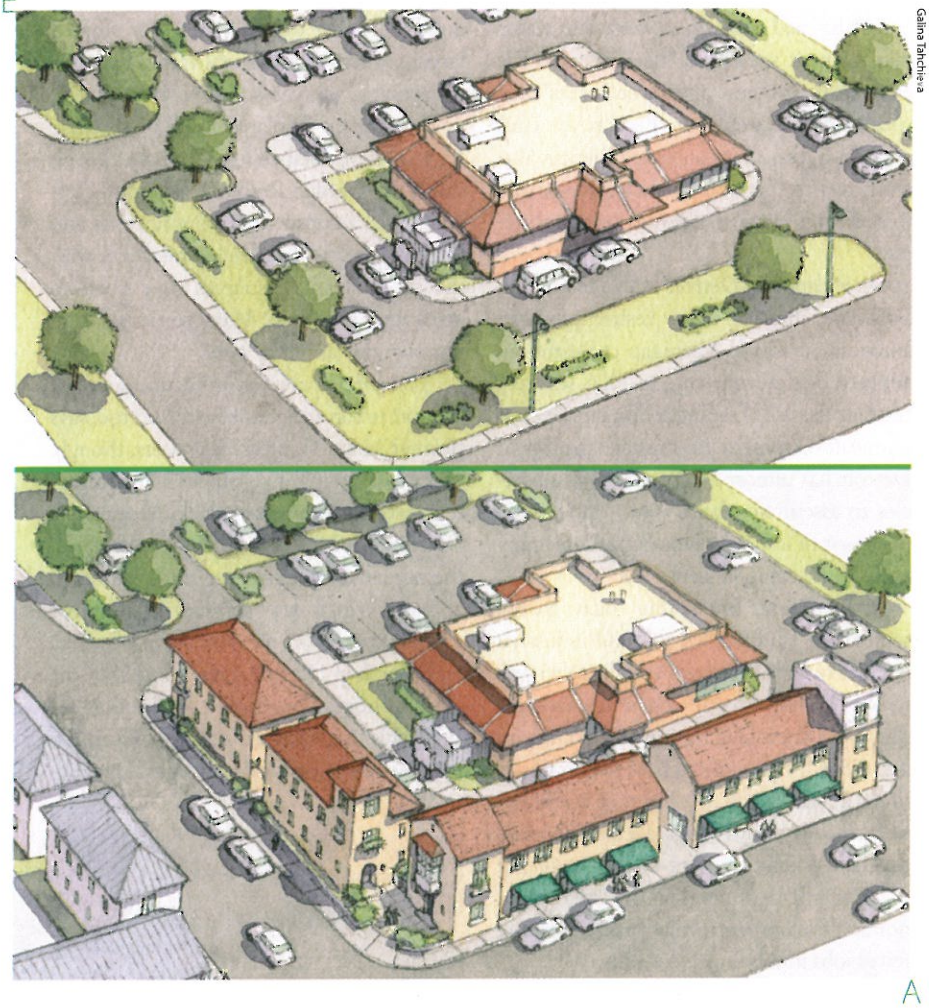
By Emily Talen, AICP

Fixing the M

BEFORE



Galina Tachieva

AFTER

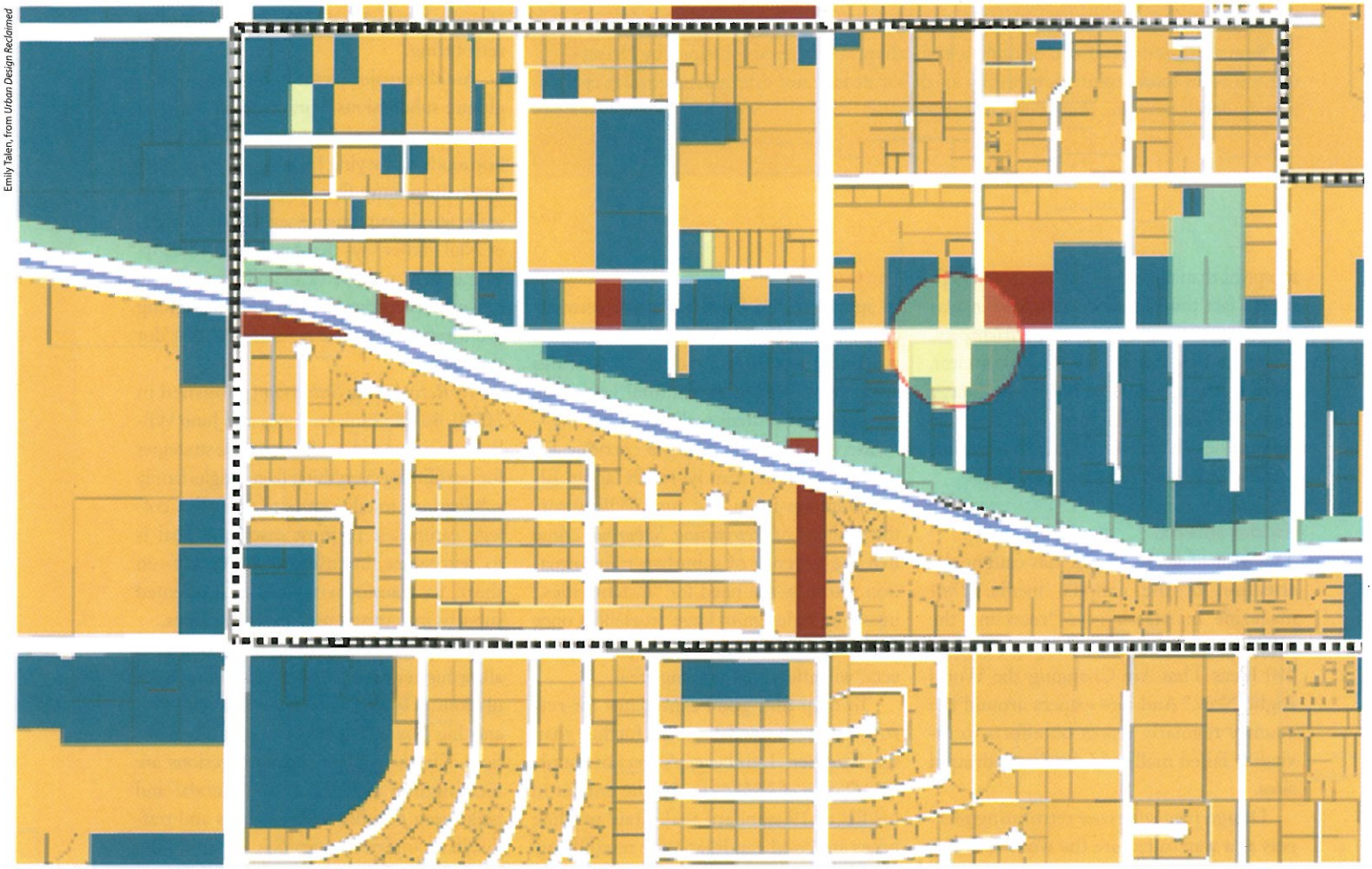
Right: Before- and after-renderings of an existing suburban restaurant and what the site might look like if it were surrounded by other uses.
Across: One strategy: Focus on a location that could become a new center of activity (such as the circled intersection) because publicly owned land and retail space are clustered there.

In the 1950s and '60s, the "next big thing" was urban renewal. In the 1970s and '80s, it was environmentalism. In the 1990s and early 2000s, it was smart growth. And today? Think of sprawl repair: retrofitting abandoned chain stores, dead malls, disconnected apartment complexes, and segregated housing pods. If the 19th century was the century of rapid city growth and the 20th century was marked by rapid suburban growth, the 21st century could be the time to correct the mistakes of the past.

Planners are used to suburban makeovers—what we used to call revitalization and renewal. They have been working on sprawl repair for decades, doing their best to create walkable, mixed use, sustainable neighborhoods—in the city as well as the suburbs. What is different now is the severity of the problem. We have developed a pattern of wide arterials, separation of uses, huge parking lots, and complete car dependency. And this pattern is ubiquitous. It has put its mark on upwards of 50 percent of

eSS We Made

How to correct the problems caused by sprawl.



Emily Talen, from *Urban Design Reclaimed*

the built environment in the U.S. (the percentage of developed land in the suburbs, according to the U.S. census). It's not that all suburbs are bad, but at least some of them are going to need fixing.

In the short term, sprawl repair, or suburban retrofit, is driven by failing malls, widespread housing foreclosures, and the need to stimulate new forms of investment. But there is also something more principled at work: Americans' realization that it makes sense to reduce energy consumption, to reuse existing infrastructure rather than to build new, and to provide denser, more walkable housing options in response to demographic change. The question is how planners can use their skills to transform "a thousand-square-mile oasis of ranch homes, back yards, shopping centers, and dispersed employment based on personal mobility"—as sprawl in Phoenix was described by Grady Gammage, Jr., in a 2003 book—into something more sustainable.

Sprawl repair requires both big thinking and political moxy. But unlike the simple technological fixes that we think of as "sustainable," it will take something else as well, and that is substantial behavioral change. That means accepting the loss of automotive freedom and making walking the main mode of travel, being willing to live more compactly, and tolerating far more social diversity and varied land uses.

The need for such behavioral shifts is indisputable. We know that detached, single-family housing has a higher carbon

ON A RELATED TOPIC

Five Steps to Sprawl Repair

Not every place can be transformed into a walkable urban neighborhood overnight, especially in cities dominated by sprawl. Instead, find places where there is some evidence of urban quality and build on that by following these steps:

Locate structural potential. Look for areas that are near commercial intersections and have (relatively speaking) potential for relatively good street connectivity and shorter blocks.

Find pockets of density and diversity. These areas are more diverse socially and economically (mixed land uses and housing types).

Locate nodes. Nodes could be municipally owned land or commercial intersections where at least two corners are occupied by buildings, not parking lots.

Select strategic areas. Combine the above layers to find places that have at least a few assets to build on.

Begin implementation. Stimulate investment in targeted locations by changing the rules (code reform), investing in public space, and offering incentives for private developers (tax breaks or small grants).

footprint than apartment buildings and high rises, a fact thoroughly documented in David Owen's recent book, *Green Metropolis*. Compact neighborhoods, he makes clear, allow us to drive less, to lower our energy costs, and to strengthen social and economic connections. They have intrinsic environmental, social, and economic benefits.

An idea spreads

The idea of sprawl repair has caught the attention of the national media. *Time* magazine in March gave "recycling the suburbs" number two ranking in its list of "10 Ideas That Are Changing the World Right Now." And newspapers around the country regularly report on efforts to revitalize failed malls and derelict industrial sites.

Design magazines see retrofitting projects as a way to feature the work of architects. *Dwell* recently sponsored a suburban design competition called "Reburbia," devoted to "envisioning different scenarios for the future" (www.re-burbia.com).

In part, this interest is spurred by investors seeking new development opportunities and by local governments looking for creative ways to revive the shopping districts that were once their major revenue generators. The Rauch Foundation in October announced the winners of the "Build a Better Burb" ideas competition to retrofit Long Island's suburban downtowns. The competition's slogan: "The time for cautious thinking is over."

The targets

In sprawl repair, failed malls are converted to main streets, McMansions become apartment buildings, and big box stores are reenvisioned as agricultural land. The projects can be small-scale interventions—"pulse development" along a corridor, for instance—or they can be much larger. Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, the authors of *Retrofitting Suburbia*, argue that the urgency of suburban transformation warrants the need for "instant cities," involving redesign of large areas all at once in the hope that large "single-parcel projects" will affect surrounding areas.

To help find good candidates for retrofitting, one need look no further than Christopher Leinberger's recent book, *The Option of Urbanism*. All the entries in his list of 19 standard real estate product types are good candidates for retrofitting. Galina Tahchieva's book, *Sprawl Repair*, capitalizes on this standardization: Each product type can be redesigned and recoded, from dead malls to McMansions. In their usual optimistic way, the new urbanists describe all this redesigning as simply another form of "successional planning," with one form of development molting into another.

Suburban retrofitters have generally focused on transforming dead malls, in part because they are so prevalent. The International Council of Shopping Centers reports that the vacancy rate of U.S. shopping centers is now 11 percent. The 1990s saw some successful mall retrofits, including Santana Row in San Jose; Mizner Park in Boca Raton, Florida; and Belmar in Lakewood, Colorado, near Denver.

The basic steps involved in reviving shopping centers were laid out recently in the proposed State of Florida Sprawl Repair Act, written by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company. The act spells out the legislative steps needed to encourage developers to undertake the conversion of traditional shopping malls into "dense, walkable, mixed-use town centers." An appendix lists 48 enclosed malls in Florida that are in need of retrofitting.

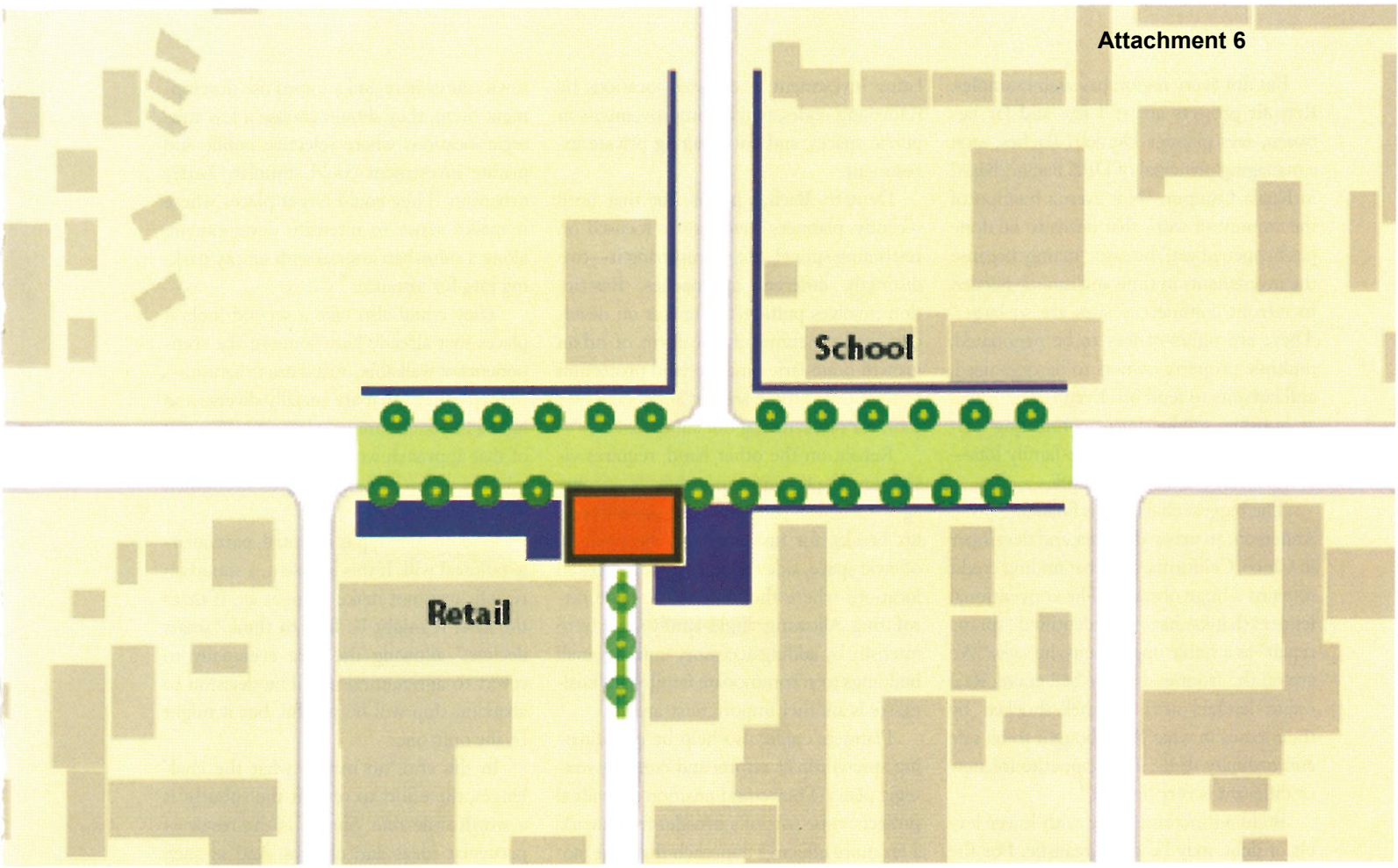
Another major target is low-density, single-use subdivisions. Sprawl repair seeks to turn housing "pods" into mixed use neighborhoods by varying housing type, infilling lots with granny flats, and allowing small-scale, family-run businesses. Urban designer Neil Heller says that his Fayetteville, Arkansas, firm anticipates an unlimited supply of work in reprogramming and redesigning the thousands of quarter-acre lots that dot the town.

In *Retrofitting Suburbia* (published in 2008), Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson summarize various creative strategies for retrofitting everything from single-family subdivisions to edge cities to suburban college campuses. In most cases, the goal is to reurbanize, intensify, and diversify—in short, to transform typical auto-oriented suburbs into mixed use, walkable places.

Often this work involves upzoning to allow higher densities and relaxing use regulations. Houses become live-work units and big box stores become schools or offices. Thoroughfares and intersections are reconfigured to be more multimodal and pedestrian friendly, with medians and traffic circles inserted at strategic locations. Big boxes might be wrapped with smaller retail outlets, parking garages could be converted to loft housing and McMansions transformed into senior housing or family-run businesses.

In Lakewood, Colorado, for example, the Belmar project transformed a "dead" enclosed regional mall into a 23-block walkable neighborhood.

Another approach is to use nature as the retrofitting agent—turning abandoned malls into parks, nature preserves, and wetlands. This was the approach taken by residents on the East side of St. Paul, Minnesota, who helped to create Phalen Village, a



Emily Talen

Conceptual design for a neighborhood node. The aerial shows where public investments would be located—between the school and retail area.
Above: the redesign adds a plaza to an unused street that dead-ends at a canal.

mixed use development that features green space and wetlands. In Atlanta, a nonprofit group called Red Fields to Green Fields is dedicated to turning unused urban commercial property into parkland.

How to get there

There is no shortage of creative ideas. The challenge is to move from a single innovative project to a broader, communitywide transformation. Any proposal to intensify development is likely to be challenged by those who want to hold on to their low-density, car-based life style. That's true even in the face of declining tax revenue, boarded-up big boxes, and unused parking lots overgrown with weeds.

Residents may legitimately feel that sprawl repair amounts to putting "parsley around a pig"—simply gussying up car-dependent and unsustainable malls with the aim of attracting customers. A mall renamed a "lifestyle center" is still a mall. And adding a pedestrian path does not automatically make a development less automobile-dependent. Similarly, a "village green" that is not surrounded by housing is not necessarily sustainable.

In a recent blog entry, *Chicago Tribune* architecture critic Blair Kamin described a halfhearted effort to retrofit Randhurst Mall, a 1960s shopping center outside Chicago. The developers scrapped the 200 apartments they had originally planned because they would be too expensive to build (and therefore to rent). Instead they used the space for a parking lot "dolled up with more landscaping."

One worry is that investing in retrofits on the suburban fringe detracts from investment in the older suburban downtowns. But, according to Kamin, mall retrofits actually promote interest in the real thing. "If shoppers like the mix of stores . . . more sophisticated retrofits—and a more urbane version of suburbia—seem sure to follow," he writes. According to an Urban Land Institute report, this is exactly what happened in the Denver area, where the Belmar retrofit led to plans for revamping eight other regional malls into walkable retail centers.

But not every region has such examples. Retrofit projects are still few and far between, says planner Demetri Baches, AICP, a managing principal of DPZ Pacific, based in Kuala Lumpur. "Not even a fraction of the amount of work that needs to be done has happened yet," he says, "mainly because the investments in time and money needed to retrofit commercial sites are so large." There are rights-of-way to be negotiated, multiple property owners to be organized, and lawsuits to fend off. Even repair aimed at housing subdivisions—connecting cul-de-sacs or aggregating single-family lots—is extremely difficult to pull off.

The biggest challenge is financing. John Anderson, an urban designer and developer in Chico, California, says that finding credit remains a huge obstacle. The conventional lenders (banks) have not identified "sprawl repair" as a viable opportunity, he says. "We are on the front end of the bell curve. Real estate lenders are still shell-shocked by their losses in what they thought to be safe and ordinary deals. Their appetite for new or different is very limited."

Building incrementally, with lower levels of debt, may be more realistic. For the purpose of sprawl repair, however, smaller projects may not have the heft to establish a fundamentally new type of urban pattern. As Anderson notes, "sprawl sites can require a lot of remodeling if they are to demonstrate the amenities of urbanism."

In some cases, environmental regulations may inadvertently thwart sprawl repair. Paul Crabtree, a civil engineer based in Salida, Colorado, says new stormwater approaches advocated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency to replace the old "pave, pipe, and dump" engineering could actually encourage sprawl and hamper retrofits. The new techniques require sites to emulate natural hydrological conditions. That's easy to do on greenfield sprawl sites and could be hard to accomplish in retrofits, he says.

The task for planners

Ultimately, true sprawl repair will require macro-level change—with new financial tools and new government policies. And those things are generally beyond the scope of planners' jobs. But there are specific things planners can do to motivate sprawl repair. One is to make sure that existing rules and regulations facilitate repair. For suburban planners that means stimulating investment in targeted locations by reforming codes, making improvements in public spaces, and encouraging private investment.

Demetri Baches points out that until recently, planners have mostly focused on restricting sprawl, not on repairing it—two distinctly different approaches. Restriction involves putting the brakes on development, sometimes in the form of urban growth boundaries and wetland protection programs. Yet these are not always the best tools for rejuvenating our suburbs.

Repair, on the other hand, requires vision and a proactive approach. It encourages targeted planning and investment: tax breaks, for instance, and the creation of civic space, sidewalks, and street trees in locations where they might stimulate retrofitting. Allowing single-family suburbs to intensify by adding accessory units or small buildings to accommodate family-run businesses is another important strategy.

Planners could also help by coordinating sprawl repair efforts and creating strategic plans. They could position individual projects to be part of a broader framework, a far more effective approach than one isolated mall retrofit at a time. Small projects may be easier—and cheaper. But unless they are part of an aggregation of efforts, they aren't likely to do much to change auto dependency.

Of course, not every suburban area can be retrofitted. So planners must set priorities, determining which projects are most worth the effort. Instead of calling for a town center here and a mixed use development there, they should choose a few strategic locations where selective public and private investment could stimulate better urbanism. They could target places where it makes sense to intensify development, along a suburban arterial with empty parking lots, for instance.

They could also take a second look at places that already have some of the components of walkable, mixed use urbanism—perhaps places that are socially diverse and have a few well-connected streets. The goal of that approach would be to look for sustainable urban potential and to strengthen it wherever feasible.

Good leadership is essential, particularly political will. If this is absent, a suburban retrofit may not make sense at all. If that's the case, it might be best to think "smart decline," allowing the area eventually to revert to agricultural use. The decision to abandon ship will be painful, but it might be the only one.

In the end, no matter what the challenges, the effort to retrofit the suburbs is a worthwhile one. Sprawl is the result of particular ideas and choices. And as such it can be changed. Planners are in the best position to influence the direction of that change.

Emily Talen is a professor in the School of Sustainability and the School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning at Arizona State University in Tempe. She is the author of *Urban Design Reclaimed*, published last year by APA Planners Press.

RESOURCES

FROM APA	See APAPlanningBooks.com for *Urban Design Reclaimed: Tools, Techniques, and Strategies for Planners*, by Emily Talen; *Phoenix in Perspective: Reflections on Developing the Desert*, by Grady Gammage, Jr. (2003); and *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*, by Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson (Wiley, 2008), winner of a 2009 PROSE Award for Excellence from the American Association of Publishers.
CONFERENCE PANEL	Emily Talen is scheduled to participate in a panel on sprawl repair sponsored by APA's Urban Design and Historic Preservation Division in Boston in April.
OTHER SOURCES	"Cityscapes," Blair Kamin's blog, is at www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/blogs. DPZ's Sprawl Repair SmartCode Module is at http://transect.org/docs/SPRAWL_REPAIR.pdf. For information about the ULI report on developers' perspectives, go to www.uli.org. Christopher Leinberger's 2008 book, *The Option of Urbanism: Investing in a New American Dream*, was published by Island Press.
MORE READING	*Big Box Reuse* (Julia Christensen, 2008) and *Malls Into Mainstreets* (CNU, 2005). *The Sprawl Repair Manual* (Galina Tahchieva, 2010) is an excellent sourcebook of design and planning ideas. So is *Suburban Transformations* (Paul Lukas, 2007).

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September 6, 2012

Houghton Community Council
Kirkland Planning Commission
Kirkland City Hall
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Amendments

Dear Council and Commission Members,

I represent the owners of Houghton Center and the separate owners of the Houghton Starbucks. Although I will be traveling and unable to attend or speak at your joint study session on September 13, 2012, I wish to offer some thoughts regarding the future redevelopment of the Houghton/Everest business district for your consideration. A number of my comments will amplify statements which I made to the Houghton Community Council at the August 27, 2012 meeting or grow out of the discussion of the Council during that session. I also wish to call to your attention my letter of August 20, 2012 which was previously distributed to both the Houghton Community Council and the Kirkland Planning Commission.

1. Building Heights. The Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan calls for building heights on our properties "stepping up to five stories with design guidelines". At its meeting on August 9th, the Planning Commission suggested heights up to fifty-five feet. In addition, it has been suggested that ceiling heights of 13 feet (14 feet floor-to-floor) be required for ground floor retail. I further understand that parapets and mechanical equipment/screening are not included when determining building height.

   Assuming that all of the previous statements are eventually reflected in the codes, then a five story building with ground floor retail and four units of residential could be constructed in the future at Houghton Center. However, four stories of office on top of retail would not work. Offices require higher ceilings and larger floor-to-floor clearances. To achieve four stories of office on retail will require allowing building heights at a minimum of sixty feet, ideally somewhat more. If we wish to achieve true mixed use on the Houghton Center property and create a place where the community can live, shop, gather and work, I request that you reconsider the fifty-five feet height limitation.

   In addition, members of the Houghton Community Council discussed modulating both walls (step backs) and building heights. We appreciate the aesthetic desirability of doing this and don't oppose this as a concept. But, please consider that the loss in leasable area can adversely impact the economic feasibility of future redevelopment. This is especially true, since denser

development in the future will require the construction of structured parking on site at great cost.

Perhaps, at Houghton Center one solution lies in taking advantage of the topography of our site. From the highest (southeast) to lowest (northwest) point at Houghton Center there is an approximate thirty-five foot elevation change. If somewhat taller structures are allowed on the west side of the property, height and wall modulation and four stories of offices over retail could be accommodated both aesthetically and economically.

Overall, if redevelopment is to occur in the Houghton/Everest business district, building heights must be adequate to provide the volume of leasable space necessary to generate sufficient revenue to repay the debt incurred for construction of the building and the expensive structured parking required, cover operating expenses, and generate a return on the invested equity. It appears that a minimum average height of five stories for office and residential will be required. Losses in leasable area for modulation, public areas or other design features need to be economically offset by means to increase revenue (floor area) or provisions to reduce cost.

2. Ground Floor Retail for Mixed Use. I request that you consider my comments on this subject contained in my letter of August 20th. Ground floor retail is likely to be very appropriate and successful on our property along 68th and at the corners with 106th and 108th. However, lack of traffic and, therefore, customer visibility along 106th and grade differences along 108th make retail problematic. Likewise, retail space on the "interior" of the site, lacking good street visibility, generally would be unattractive to retail tenants.

3. Requirements for Inter-Property Connections or Through Connections with City Streets. Also addressed in my letter of August 20th, this requirement seems problematic and possibly unnecessary. Unnecessary, if new development is pulled to the sidewalk, since the sidewalks will become the primary pedestrian connector between properties. Problematic for three reasons: first, the first owner to re-develop would optimize his/her property, placing a neighbor at a disadvantage, since the neighbor would need to accommodate, and, possibly, significantly sub-optimize his/her development to achieve connectivity; second, depending on the nature of such a requirement, it might be construed as a public taking; and, third, requirements for additional roadways or sidewalks would effectively reduce the available developable land, which would increase the cost of development and raise the necessary rents on developed space and reduce affordability and/or desirability.

My letter of August 20, 2012 addresses several other subjects and considerations which I feel are germane to your deliberations. I request that you review it along with this letter prior to your meeting on September 13, 2012.

Finally, I wish to make the following general suggestions:

1. Unless absolutely required, please avoid requirements to address these matters. Use incentives. Requirements are generally inflexible and compliance can result in outcomes that disappoint everyone. Incentives will challenge the creativity of the architect, contractor and owner to create win-wins.

2. Recognize that re-development will require structured parking at $25,000 to $30,000 per stall (today's dollars). To make this cost pencil-out, reasonable

levels of density and height will be required. If the numbers don't work, the project will not be built.

3. Take the topography of the area into account when considering building heights.

4. Keep in mind the factors that make retail spaces successful: high visibility and ample, convenient parking. This also attracts great tenants. Foot traffic alone will not provide adequate traffic to support a retailer. There are more examples of unsuccessful mixed use retail than successful examples.

Thank you for considering my thoughts. I look forward to attending future meetings with you.

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas L. Markl
CEO

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August 20, 2012

Houghton Community Council
Kirkland City Hall
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Amendments

Dear Council Members,

Angela Ruggeri was kind to contact and advise me that work had begun on developing a coordinated plan for the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center along the 68th Street corridor (the "Corridor"), as recommended by the Central Houghton Advisory Group and incorporated in the Central Houghton Neighborhood Plan. She provided me with a copy of the August 2, 2012 memorandum to the Kirkland Planning Commission (the "Commission") on this matter. I reviewed the memorandum and, although I was unable to attend the Commission meeting on August 9, 2012, I did listen to an audio recording of the proceedings made available on the City of Kirkland's website. I am writing to express some thoughts and concerns which I would like you to consider:

1. Ownership of Houghton Center and the Houghton Starbucks. Staff discussed the requirement to master plan properties in the Corridor with the Commission. There was conversation regarding whether the Starbucks property and Houghton Center should be required to be master planned as a single assemblage. I wish to remind you that the two properties are owned by separate legal entities. Both of these entities ultimately trace their ownership back to members of the Nelson family. However, the Nelson family consists of five siblings, their twelve children, and, at the moment, the estates of the siblings' deceased parents. So, the ownership of these two properties is separate and somewhat complex. Perhaps, at some point in the future these two properties can be treated as one, but I request that this not be assumed or required.

2. Ground Floor Retail for Mixed Use. Our vision, like yours, is for ground floor retail in a mixed use development when Houghton Center is redeveloped sometime in the future. However, ground floor retail appears only to make sense for the ground floors facing onto public (City) sidewalks on major corridors. Retailers generally want their stores to be highly visible on high traffic corridors. Where might ground floor retail not make sense? On that portion of the property facing onto 108th that is below street grade; on 106th since it is neither a significant vehicle or pedestrian corridor; or, possibly on ground floors facing into the interior of the property, depending on the use and design of the interior spaces. However, ground floor retail along 68th and on the corners would provide the kind of visibility that retailers and customers find desirable. So, the

requirement for ground floor retail in mixed use needs to be judiciously applied taking into consideration the location and orientation of the structures.

3. Requirement for Roadways and Sidewalks within Properties to Connect with Other Properties or City Streets. This also came up in conversation during the Commission meeting. This is different than regulating or dictating access locations from public roadways. This type of requirement has two drawbacks. First, this would reduce the land available for redevelopment, constrain redevelopment alternatives, and increase the effective cost of redevelopment. Second, it is possibly unlawful, if this requirement is viewed as the public taking of private property for public use/benefit without compensation.

4. Making Individual Properties/Developments Work as a Whole. The Commission discussed the Houghton Village and the Houghton Plaza and observed that these properties have their backs turned to each other. The commissioners expressed the desire that properties complement each other and be oriented to provide for easy movement between properties. The buildings on these two properties today were designed for easy auto access and convenient parking, hence their site placement and orientation. If future development is required to be built to the sidewalk, the problem of orientation and inter-property movement and access will be largely solved. Retail entrances will be at the sidewalk and movement between businesses will be on the city sidewalks. The larger issue will be cross property parking: a customer that chooses to park on one property and shop at another or shop at multiple properties. It is reasonable to expect that, given the cost of constructing parking structures, that someday property owners will implement a system for parking validation and paid parking.

5. On-Street Parking on 68th. On one hand, on-street parking helps ground floor retail today in the current auto dominated environment. On the other hand, creating on-street parking is problematic. It would require condemnation of private land to widen 68th. This in conjunction with the plan to require ten feet wide sidewalks would result in reduction in developable land. In addition, when allowances are made for driveways, crosswalks, transit stops, and no parking areas to provide sightlines at intersections and driveways, there would be very little parking created.

   When we think about the mixed use redevelopment of Houghton Center, we try to imagine the Houghton, Kirkland and Eastside environment of fifteen to twenty years in the future. We envision a more densely developed and populated Corridor and an environment where travel by car is both more difficult and less necessary. Although we will need to provide parking, undoubtedly in structures, we anticipate a large number of residents in the area will walk and bicycle to Houghton Center.

   Although one of the Planning Commissioners commented that "leases are written to be broken", this is not the case. There are significant constraints in our leases with Metropolitan Market and other tenants regarding redevelopment of the current parking area. This is not to say that a lease cannot be renegotiated if the economic concessions to the other party are attractive, but it would be expensive.

6. Buffers between the Sidewalk and the Street. This idea also came up at the Commission. We suggest that this is not a good idea. Again, this would require sacrificing more developable land. Making mixed use work in an urban or exurban setting involves bringing the retail establishment to the street for visibility and access. This is done by building up to the sidewalk and being close to the

street. Anything that moves the building away from the street reduces the likelihood of success for the ground floor businesses and the development.

7. Design Standards for Five Story Buildings. We understand and support the desire to reduce the appearance of bulk and mass from large structures. Our counsel is to avoid being overly prescriptive. We have all seen a mixed use design somewhere which seems to work and which we personally find attractive. However, the success of a specific design may be because it is uniquely suited for a specific use, location, traffic pattern, fit with or within a neighborhood or larger development, the demographics of a specific area, or other factors. Just as one size shoe does not fit everyone's foot, design standards which are too prescriptive may result in a business district which doesn't work.

8. Staged/Phased Redevelopment. On a property the size of Houghton Center any redevelopment would likely occur in stages over a period of years. This will be due to the cost of multi-story mixed use development with structured parking, the need to build only as fast as the market can absorb new capacity, and the requirement to meet obligations to and hopefully retain existing tenant businesses. We request that requirements for ratios, uses, etc. accommodate phased construction, and provide flexibility to accommodate changes in the marketplace.

I plan to attend your meeting on Monday, August 27th, speak to you, answer any questions that you may have, and listen to your deliberations.

Thank you for considering our thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas L. Markl
CEO

WADDELL PROPERTIES INCORPORATED

September 7, 2012

Houghton Community Council
Kirkland Planning Commission
Kirkland City Hall
123 5th Ave
Kirkland, WA 98033

Re: Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Amendments

Dear Council Members & Commissioners:

This letter is in reference to the properties currently referenced as Waddell Multi-Family Residential Properties. I would like to expand on my previous letter which I have included, and the Council/Commission discussions.

Throughout the community plan process and specifically the Houghton Neighborhood Group meetings, it was clearly desired and voted that these properties should go to a more affordable, higher density residential and/or commercial use. These meetings were attended by dedicated residents and property owners who were willing to invest the time to fully evaluate the issues and make objective decisions. Signs were posted, notices mailed and many public hearings were involved to get us there. I attended several of the Houghton Community Group meetings that were chaired by one of the HCC council members, and the vote to do so was very decisive (unlike most votes in my Lakeview Community Group meetings). I believe the vote was 7 in favor with 2 against. One of those against just wanted to make sure it was vetted at the same time as the Everest neighborhood.

In late 2007 and through 2008 we had a purchase agreement to sell two of the three parcels (6705 & 6711-106th) to a developer for 11 new homes; 7 stand alone and 2 side-by-sides (see attached site plan). This would be actually less units than are there today and they would be expensive. After a year or more of entitlement work with the City, they were about to pick up their permit when the recession hit and this transaction was shelved in December 2008 until better times. Over the past 12 months or so, things have slowly but steadily improved. We are not quite at those previous values but we are about halfway there.

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Economically, today I can realize about the same profit selling the land to the homebuilder for eleven homes as I can realize by constructing a four story apartment building. This assumes that the density with four story construction is limited in the usual fashion with normal setbacks and requirements, in other word limited by the size of the envelope. This is what I meant when I told the Houghton Council at the August 27th meeting that it was a 50/50 proposition. Since selling property does not entail the risks of redevelopment, selling to the homebuilder would be a more prudent move for my investors. On the other hand if five story construction is allowed, or some favorable mix of five and four story with density determined by the size of the envelope, then redevelopment of my property for multi-family provides a better value and justifies the additional risk. So your decision on allowable heights and letting density be determined by the size of the envelope for my property will determine whether the Houghton/Everest business district gets much needed multi-family or more single family homes.

In addition, there are three other factors which you may wish to consider. First, if I sell my property for single family development, this would probably preclude a public access to the Cross Kirkland Corridor Trail. Second, if allowable heights make multi-family redevelopment attractive for my property, I will agree not to build ultra-small units (i.e. 200 square feet); this was a concern of the Houghton Council. Third, at the Houghton Council meeting it was mentioned that row houses with front stoops would be desirable up to the sidewalk. Although less efficient and more expensive, I think this could be achieved in combination with a 5 story building, see the quote below from an architect I asked the question to.

To answer your direct question: yes, you'd still have good density if you were to do a 2-story "rowhouse" type along the main frontage. You wouldn't have to set back the rest of the building the entire depth of the rowhouse - could set back 10 or 15 feet to give it the feel you're going for...

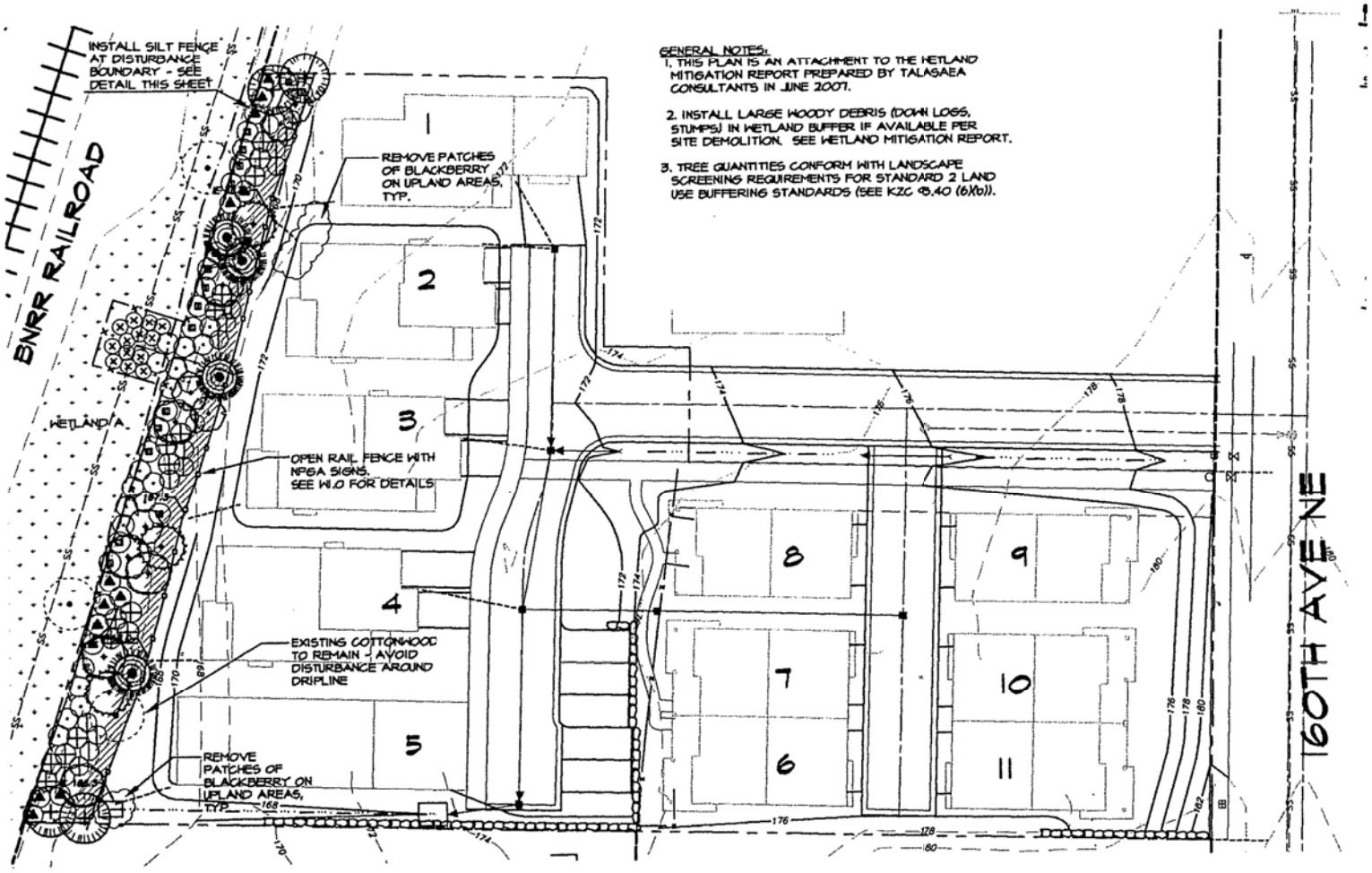
This would help eliminate a solid high wall along the front and achieve the more layered back (wedding cake) modulated look that seemed to be desired. I am not sure if the whole frontage should be that design but I could see parts of it to help break it up and to help add interest. Again, with this design, I believe we could provide access to the Cross Kirkland Corridor Trail on the south end of these parcels.

The neighbors that have been intimately involved with this process are in favor of this change. We all know however, that there will be plenty of outspoken neighbors opposing any change, many of which just don't want change at all or are not willing to really look at all sides and the long term need of the larger community as a whole. This property really screams out for this type of use for all of the reasons many groups have been discussing and agreeing to for years. It is never easy to make the tough decisions with emotions flying, however this is definitely the better direction of the two scenarios for the long term. I just ask you stay the course.

Sincerely,

H. Douglas Waddell
President

NE1/4, SW1/4, SEC. 8, T. 25N., R. 5E.



GENERAL NOTES:
1. THIS PLAN IS AN ATTACHMENT TO THE WETLAND MITIGATION REPORT PREPARED BY TALASAEA CONSULTANTS IN JUNE 2007.
2. INSTALL LARGE WOODY DEBRIS (DOWN LOGS, STUMPS) IN WETLAND BUFFER IF AVAILABLE PER SITE DEMOLITION. SEE WETLAND MITIGATION REPORT.
3. TREE QUANTITIES CONFORM WITH LANDSCAPE SCREENING REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARD 2 LAND USE BUFFERING STANDARDS (SEE KZC 95.40 (6)(b)).

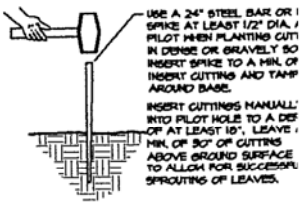
PLANTING PLAN

GRAPHIC SCALE (IN FEET)
0 10 20 40
SCALE: 1:20

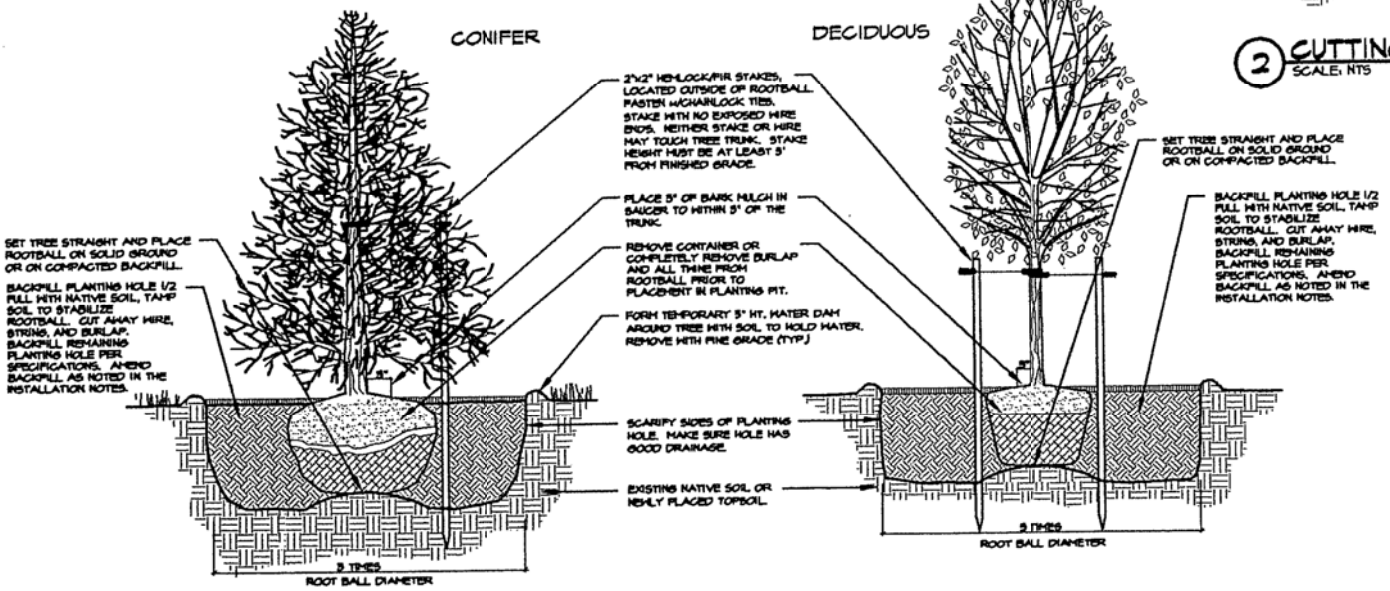
NORTH

GENERAL PLANTING INSTALLATION NOTES

1. PLANT TREE &/OR SHRUB 1/2" HIGHER THAN DEPTH GROWN AT NURSERY.
2. FOR CONTAINER TREES &/OR SHRUBS, SCORE FOUR SIDES OF ROOTBALL PRIOR TO PLANTING. BUTTERFLY ROOTBALL IF ROOT CIRCLING IS EVIDENT.
3. AFTER PLANTING, STAKE TREES ONLY IF NECESSARY (LEANING OR DROOPING) OR IN EXPOSED AREAS.
4. TREE STAKES TO BE VERTICAL, PARALLEL, EVEN-TOPPED, UNSCARRED AND DRIVEN INTO UNDISTURBED SUBGRADE. REMOVE AFTER ONE YEAR.
5. WATER IMMEDIATELY AND THOROUGHLY, HEAVIER AT FIRST, 2 OR 3 TIMES PER WEEK THROUGH THE DRY SEASON, THEN LESS UNTIL ESTABLISHED.
6. FERTILIZE ALL TREES AND SHRUBS WITH AN APPROVED SLOW RELEASE FERTILIZER APPLIED AT MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RATES.
7. ALL PLANTING PITS SHALL BE AMENDED WITH A SOIL MOISTURE RETENTION AGENT TO ASSIST IN KEEPING THE SOIL MOIST DURING THE DRY SEASON.



(2) CUTTING INSTAL
SCALE: NTS



(4) B&B TREE PLANTING (TYP.)
SCALE: NTS

August 8, 2012

Kirkland Planning Commission
123 5th Ave
Kirkland, WA 98033

Re: Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Amendments

Dear Commissioners:

I represent the ownership of three parcels located on the southwest corner of NE 68th Street and 106th Ave NE, just west and across 106th from the Bank of America in Houghton Center; 6705, 6711 and 6719 106th Ave NE, currently titled Waddell Multi-Family Residential Properties. These properties are within the Houghton/Everest Neighborhood Center Boundary and per the Comprehensive Plan Policy CH5.4, this designation is intended to "**Expand** the area designated for higher intensity use" and to "provide higher density residential use within walking distance of retail and business services".

Throughout the community plan process, and after many, many meetings, it was my understanding that this was to "square out" the red zone with zoning the same as the other 3 corners. I did understand that 5 stories **may** not be accepted and that it was unclear whether retail would work or be required. Nothing was ever mentioned about density. I was shocked when I saw it mentioned in the memo from the Planning Department.

No matter what, I think we all (City Council, Planning Commission, Houghton Community Council, Central Houghton Advisory Group, Planning Dept. and property owners) know that the intent was to go with higher density housing, with a goal to make it more affordable and work towards the goals of the Growth Management Act providing density and housing close to retail, business and employment. It would be nice to provide housing, rental or owned, that people can afford to live in. There is a school across the street, businesses all around, a grocery anchored shopping center, restaurants and more new and expanding employment (i.e. Google) every day. In addition, some of this area we are working on could very well add new office and employment. The goal should be to create a vibrant, compact mixed-use neighborhood offering transit that provides concentrated access to housing, jobs, amenities, activities, and transportation.

As I am sure you have heard numerous times, for this to happen and to make it work, it needs to be 4 to 5 stories. Density should be controlled by the volume of the building with a focus on building design and street character. I cannot think of another City that does it differently. When working for instance in Queen Anne, Capitol Hill, Wallingford, Freemont, Bellevue, Newcastle, Redmond and even most of Kirkland where higher density buildings are allowed, volume and size of units is the determining factor of the number of residents. This is an infill property; density limits are usually more suburban.

It is my very strong opinion that anything less than 4 stories and/or a density limit would put us right back where we were three years ago and nullify all of the progress that we have collectively worked so hard for.

I would be happy to discuss with any or all of you if you have any questions or concerns. I will be at the meeting on Thursday as well.

Sincerely,

H. Douglas Waddell
President