



**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Janice Coogan, Senior Planner  
Adam Weinstein, AICP, Planning and Building Director

**Date:** February 4, 2019

**Subject:** Rose Hill and Bridle Trails Neighborhood Plan Update – Evaluation of Process  
File Number CAM18-00082 #1 and #4

**Staff Recommendation**

The Planning Commission should provide ideas to improve the planning and public outreach process for the next set of neighborhood plan updates in 2019 which include the Market, Norkirk, Highlands and Moss Bay neighborhoods (subject to final approval of the 2019-21 Planning Work Program).

**Background**

In 2018, the City engaged in a very ambitious pilot project to complete the update of four neighborhood plans – the North and South Rose Hill Plans, the NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street Subarea Plan, and the Bridle Trails Plan – in one year rather than taking the typical 2 years. This quick timeline was unique in the context of previous neighborhood plan updates in that it utilized the new Neighborhood Framework process, three neighborhood plan updates were consolidated into one public planning process, two neighborhood plans and one subarea plan were combined into one Rose Hill neighborhood plan, and approximately 10 requests for land use changes were studied. Both neighborhood plans were adopted on December 11, 2018 by City Council. The Houghton Community Council took final action on the Bridle Trails Neighborhood Plan on January 28, 2019 by approving the plan.

Here’s a recap of the 2018 neighborhood plan update process:

- The new [Neighborhood Plan Framework](#) was used as a toolkit or handbook for staff and the neighborhood participants throughout the process. The Framework describes the expectations and responsibilities for participants, provides a scope of work describing the process, a conceptual schedule for minor or major updates, a plan outline, and a “cookbook” of policy questions to consider.
- The joint working group made up of leadership representatives from each neighborhood organization was extremely helpful throughout the process as a sounding board for staff to receive input on key issues, as a conduit between city staff and their constituents, helping staff facilitate public meetings, reviewing draft policies and providing direct public input to the Houghton Community Council, Planning Commission, and City Council.

- As you recall, a large number of citizen requests for land use changes (rezones or code amendments) were studied during the process. Some were controversial and caused anxiety among residents because people felt there was not enough time for the public to weigh in on what was requested. Staff developed new evaluation criteria to help assess the rezone requests and how they met city wide goals. These evaluation criteria included consideration of access to transit, the 10-minute neighborhood goal, the Housing Strategy Plan, Comprehensive Plan and code amendment criteria.
- Various public outreach techniques were used to encourage public participation:
  - Project webpage on the City's website
  - Email list serve announcements
  - Outreach to key stakeholders, businesses, institutions, non-profit organizations, etc.
  - Periodic City update articles in email blasts
  - Fire Station reader board announcements about meetings
  - Postcards and courtesy notices were mailed to property owners and residents throughout the process to inform about the neighborhood plan process, prior to Planning Commission and Houghton Community Council study sessions, public hearings, and to notify about proposed land use change study areas
  - Public meetings were held: visioning workshop, open house
  - Survey conducted
  - Neighborhood association meetings held to inform and solicit comments
  - Park Board, Transportation Commission, Planning Commission study sessions
  - Public notice signs installed throughout the neighborhoods and for potential rezones
  - Public notices mailed to property owners surrounding rezone study areas to advertise public hearing

*Process Evaluation*

Planning staff met internally with staff from other departments and the Working Group to evaluate the successes, challenges and opportunities for improvement of the 2018 neighborhood plan update process. Attachment 1 is a summary of the questions and responses.

*Planning Commission Discussion*

We'd like to hear your thoughts about what could be improved in preparation for the next neighborhood plan update in 2019.

Attachments:

1. Summary of comments from staff and working group

cc: File Number CAM18-00082 #1 and #4

## Evaluation of the 2018 Neighborhood Plan Process - January 2019

At conclusion of the 2018 Neighborhood Plan update process, City staff asked the working group and other department staff to evaluate how the process went and suggestions for improving the next update process. Below are the questions we discussed and summary of responses.

1. What made the neighborhood plan update a successful process?
2. Are we/you satisfied with the overall process that was used to arrive at the final plans?
3. How well do we/you think the working group interfaced with the plan development process?
4. Do you believe you were able to function effectively as liaisons to the community?
5. What were the challenges?
6. What are the solutions for those challenges? Was the level of public participation adequate?
7. How could we improve with the next neighborhood plan update process?

<b>Successes</b>
<u>Working Group comments</u>
Good job in completing the update in one year; it was a shorter process; less of a time commitment
Acceptance from neighborhood in increasing missing middle housing in neighborhoods
Good level of neighborhood involvement
Public felt City staff, boards and commissions were open to suggestions from citizens
Working group didn't need to wordsmith draft plans
At meetings there was an openness to new ideas
Liked alternative public outreach techniques to gather input i.e. online survey
Positive response from public about workshops; right amount of public outreach
<u>City staff comments</u>
Overall a good process
Diverse, innovative public outreach
Right number of check-ins with HCC/PC/CC
It helps to use City Council subcommittees to discuss issues; receive direction
Cross department staff coordination worked well
Accomplished update in 1 year; but stressful for staff (worked extra hours; tight schedule; impact on family life)
New graphically oriented format is visually attractive and in booklet format
Working Group worked well together
Good collaboration with current planners; continue succession planning by having current/senior planner teams
Intern help is essential
Evaluation criteria was useful for assessing land use change requests
Result was great plans with right amount of policy changes

Challenges	Solutions
<u>Working Group comments</u>	
Would like to have met independently of city staff	City staff encouraged this and for them to do independent outreach
Would have liked to take more time as a group to discuss land use change requests to come to consensus	Have earlier deadline to accept requests for land use changes; allow public discussion about pros/cons of requests at public meetings
Needed more public discussion of Bridle Trails Shopping Center amendment request (and other requests)	Future code amendments to site, involve Redmond residents; describe existing zoning requirements then proposal; facilitate a design charrette meeting; focus on form based (architectural and site design) code requirements from pedestrian perspective
Neighborhood Association social media people need to communicate with city staff and visa-versa to update webpages, email announcements etc.	Suggest the City provide a public outreach "toolkit" for neighborhood associations ( <i>neighborhood services we may already have one</i> )
After Plan adoption there are code amendments and other implementation that is necessary requiring public input that is time consuming for people to participate in	Communicate that this is the case. Clearly describe the two-step process. Clarify that City Council may disagree with recommendations and makes the final decision.
Have a formal Citizen Amendment Request (CAR) application process; Explain and study the exact requests that are proposed	Conduct public meeting earlier in process to discuss land use change requests; combine with visioning stage of process
<u>City staff comments</u>	
(CAR) process	Publicize CAR's earlier and more effectively Earlier deadline to accept requests Create formal application: add justification; notify adjacent properties Increase update process time if CAR's and draft code amendments are considered (1.5 years) Need early direction from City Council on CAR's Public notices signs-Sign shop capacity for installation
More detailed quantitative analysis of CAR's (traffic analysis, economic development impacts, massing study)	Emphasize the degree that CAR location does or doesn't promote transit use Expertise is needed from PW Transportation Division or require applicant to provide information
Aggressive schedule to complete in 1 year	Create first draft Plan earlier in process Utilize <i>SCRUM Team</i> for public outreach Vision Statement check- in with CC
Working group efficiency, consistency with CC input	Add tour of neighborhood with working group/staff Improve role of getting message out to constituents
Timing, disconnect with Bridle Trails Plan update/amendments	Need staggered approach to Plans and code amendments (1.5 years)
Survey logistics- lack of staff resources to manage	Need survey software; staff training; or help from other departments; eliminate 2 <sup>nd</sup> survey