



Crown Hill Neighbors
2035 Seattle Plan/Growth Meeting
October 24, 2015
Public Comment

Background: Crown Hill Neighborhood Association hosted our annual meeting on October 24, selecting growth and its impact on Crown Hill as the key issue facing our community. Geoffrey Wendlandt, City Planner, was asked to attend and speak to us about the 2035 Plan. The notes below reflect concerns of the 72 attendees who participated in the dialogue with the City.

Speakers/City Staff:

Geoffrey Wendlandt, City Planner, Department of Planning and Development
Chris Gregorich, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor
Patrice Carroll, Department of Planning and Development
Susan McLain, Department of Planning and Development

Crown Hill Neighbors Volunteer Board Members:

Bert Hopkins, President
Dennis Galvin, Member at-Large
Deborah Jaquith, Member at-Large
Ryan McFarland, Member at-Large
Jennifer Smith, Treasurer

For Drainage Issues Call: 206-386-1800

To Review 2035 Seattle documents: www.2035.seattle.gov

City of Seattle 2035 Plan Meetings:

November 5 Leif Erikson Hall, 2245 NW 57th St, Seattle, WA 98107 6 to 8 pm

November 14 North Seattle College, 9600 College Way N, Seattle, WA 98103 10 to 12

Next Steps You Can Take:

1. Give feedback about the plan online www.seattle2035.consider.it/
2. Become a member with Crown Hill Neighbors so your community organization has money to host other events like these, www.crownhillneighbors.org
3. Attend additional City meetings to give more input (per above)
4. Volunteer with us to create good change in our community. Email, membership@crownhillneighbors.org to work collaboratively on the issues that matter to you.

Community Feedback from Meeting:

- The D “Rapid Line” is not meet the definition of “frequent transportation.” It’s not frequent enough, very slow, and overcrowded NOW
- Loyal Heights is the closest true community center but hours and services have been cut with budget cuts. You talk about expansion of services, and particularly parks, but need to invest in existing resources
- Look at housing that’s affordable to middle income too, not just low income. Do we want to chase our small business owners and one-income families out of Seattle?
- Need better and easier communication about what’s planned with existing projects. Where do people go to learn about the construction being suggested and to comment on those projects?
- It’s not realistic to think that people who live in multifamily dwellings won’t have any cars. Why reduce the number of parking spaces required by developers in urban villages? Need parking with new apartments too.
- Need sidewalks in urban villages. The increased density is dangerous without proper pedestrian walkways.
- 87th and 17th NW are part of a brand-new Greenway but floods and completely obscures the right-of-way for cars, pedestrians, bikes on a regular basis with heavy rains. Serious drainage problem that has been reported a number of times. The “fix” (with asphalt berms) has not alleviated the problem at all.
- Small, affordable first-time homeowner type homes are being razed in urban village and replaced with denser but significantly more expensive townhomes, condos, etc.
- Concerns that people will be forced out of their homes due to density. More than one worried that they will be “Edith Macefield’d.”
- Displacement is a real concern for many as they cannot afford to buy in today’s housing market and planned to live in their homes for a lifetime.
- Honor interests of long-standing Seattle residents, not just the new people coming into Seattle.
- Invest in infrastructure commensurate with growth in community, new growth could be beautiful but could also be a real problem.
- City should communicate investments in a coordinated way so that people understand and value the City’s efforts to provide services.
- Houses now are affordable, with places for families and kids.
- Storm water drainage is a huge issue. Suggestion that people adopt drainage areas and help maintain them through community initiatives
- City needs to get information about low-income and affordable housing opportunities for general public. Not enough to post online as city website can be hard to navigate.
- Don’t want to prevent growth but want real dialogue with City and to give input into rezoning and other decisions affecting our neighborhood.
- Think City should focus growth on 15th Ave NW and other major arterials initially. 15th NW is similar to Aurora in terms of esthetics and could be improved with multifamily dwellings/affordable housing.
- D-line route through Queen Anne makes it slower than old 15; though more frequency overall reduces time IF you can catch your bus due to crowding.
- No one wants Seattle to be as expensive as San Francisco.
- Want new housing to be similar in character to the neighborhood in which development occurs.

- There's no monitoring of job sites once approval has been given. Need posted telephone number to call when job site is poorly managed (i.e., excessive trash, lack of weed/dust management, etc)
- Fix issues for residents in urban villages now so that future residents in more densely populated Crown Hill do not have the same drainage, sewer, lack of safe pedestrian walkways, mediocre transportation services, etc.
- Greenways work to calm traffic for pedestrians and bikes, but need sidewalks to be truly effective. And the calming is only for that street, not the adjacent streets to which traffic moves. (eg., new 17th NW greenway—no sidewalks, poor drainage on 87th and lots of speeding cars cutting through on 87th via 18th and 19th.)
- Crown Hill has middle income home ownership, in the 350 to 500k range. Not many Seattle neighborhoods have this so that we can keep middle income families in Seattle rather than pushing them to Shoreline.
- Worry that UV expansion will be done poorly and without true community input
- Concern about density along arterial without parking because cars park in single family adjacent. Need more cohesive planning.
- Support development in areas currently earmarked for density but not expansion.
- Support incentives for development in areas already zoned for density.
- Address infrastructure investments IN PLAN through 2035 as well as growth goals.
- Yes to developer impact fees. [We understand that they are allowed but the City has not chosen to use them, instead relying heavily on property tax.]
- Upzones increase value for developers but what do they do for the community?
- Make backyard cottages and MIL's easier to permit and build for home owners
- Add investment to community with housing density.
- Crown Hill should work with Loyal Heights.
- Make it easier to comment on development projects. Mandate that the info be posted on the proposed site to be developed (it sometimes is and sometimes isn't)
- Need follow upon maintenance of property/planting strip (?)
- Worry that with new development we'll lose our neighborhood feel because new folks in condos, townhouses, etc. don't engage.
- Enforcement of codes needs to be fixed. Developers skirt letter of the law.
- Favor development but feel vulnerable. Want to maintain single family houses for middle class families.
- Cottages are better than row houses
- "Stay" rezones until community can engage.
- City's "pitch" to communities affected should include investments that have been made to pave way for density.
- Using the euphemism "10 minute walk" for ½ mile is disingenuous in that the elderly, disabled, parents with small children and others do not walk at the same pace as healthy young adults.
- There is concern that the City is taking steps that will lead to growth in the near term but that little work is being done on planning to ensure that growth is consistent with maintaining livable neighborhoods. Pledges have been made about sidewalks, transportation improvements, open space and other measures that could help. But residents are not confident these steps will be implemented, especially not at the same pace with which density is expected to increase. Seeing plans for development of these amenities could help alleviate some of our concerns. One example that was offered was planning for the Holman Rd/15th Ave NW corridor. Crown Hill

residents are eager to engage with the city on long range planning for improvements that should be made as density and traffic increase. Unfortunately, some of us feel the city is not taking a long-range view, and engagement with residents on the project has been more of an afterthought.

- The new construction of higher density housing trends toward shorter term tenancy, and less commitment/involvement in the local community. This is VERY evident in the Ballard HUB urban village. The Central Ballard Residents Assn is having difficulty getting involved neighbors in the large condos and apartment buildings which have gone up in the last decade. Ultimately that makes for a weaker community.

Crown Hill Neighbors' key points:

Displacement and affordable housing:

- The City model of assumptions about displacement of marginalized populations within UV's is unclear under the four alternatives presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- Existing single-family homes and apartments in Crown Hill have a lower cost than nearby communities with sidewalks and better infrastructure. In addition, single-family homes that would be sold to developers are often low-cost rentals. New construction rentals and homes that have been developed in the Crown Hill Residential Urban Village (UV) to-date appear to have higher prices than the structures that they replace.

Parking and Transit:

- Parking in the Crown Hill UV is already a challenge due to lack of sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The growth plan does not appear to address any expectations for developers to include parking as part of the increase in density.
- Transit use on the D line has increased over 39% since 2012 (<http://blogs.seattletimes.com/today/2014/07/rapidride-use-is-way-up>); many buses are already at or over capacity during peak hours. There is no mention in the plan on how the City will collaborate with Metro to assure improvements are made to the existing transit infrastructure to support growth.
- In 2013, the City had to pass a special property tax to maintain existing services on Metro due to the economic downturn. The City has little ability to control how Metro allocates transit service.
- Data suggests people will walk about ¼ of a mile to a local transit stop but about ½ to ¾ of a mile to a rapid transit stop (identified as a train or light rail). The proposed new City standard is ½ mile for local transit (bus); whereas in the past it has matched established standards.
<http://www.humantransit.org/2011/04/basics-walking-distance-to-transit.html>

Infrastructure/Concurrency:

- Adding a new level of density will only exacerbate existing infrastructure issues unless there is a plan in place to address them. There major flooding issues in the Crown Hill Urban Village. On 87th the street is flooded during heavy rain storms and not crossable for pedestrians, bicycles or cars. Street run-off drains routinely into the basements of homes. There is high-volume pass-through traffic during peak commute hours. Sewer issues, lack of sidewalks or gutters, and crumbling roads also add to challenges for this neighborhood.

Ballard District Council member Steve Cohn comments:

1. The HALA committee brought up the issues of need for affordable housing and housing choice, but seems to treat them as one and the same. They're not. They have some overlap, but mostly they're different issues and require different solutions.
2. HALA solutions seem to focus on 5-7 story condo/apt complexes and 4 and 6 pack townhouses as alternatives. There are several others, including "mother-in-law apts" that would fit better into Single Family (SF) neighborhoods. The city should try to be more creative and talk with Suburban Cities (such as Shoreline or Bellevue) that have been thinking about these questions (and how to deal with parking) and have developed some creative solutions.
3. Newly constructed housing is never going to be affordable (to 60% of median income) unless it is subsidized in some form (built by the city, offered by the developer in exchange for extra density etc). Doesn't it make more sense to preserve the existing housing stock and figure out how to re-purpose it (thru tax reduction or some other incentive) for the demographics of future generations?
4. There is no need to expand either Ballard or Crown Hill HUB Urban Centers to accommodate the 20 yr housing targets currently envisioned. The reason for expansion as we understand it, is to provide additional density near some of the "major" bus stops. Unlike light rail transit stations, bus stops can be (and have been) moved with a few months' notice. But zoning is forever (or is in any case, difficult to reverse [i.e., monorail and Crown Hill]). We don't understand the reasoning of expanding Urban Center boundaries until light rail is funded and future stations actually located on paper.
5. When specific transit stations are defined, there should be discussion about whether a 1/4 mile or 1/2 mile radius is the appropriate distance for additional density. How did the city choose to use a 1/2 mile radius?
6. One of our main concerns is traffic congestion. Doesn't it make sense to encourage both jobs and housing to locate in the HUB Urban Centers? How do we encourage businesses that pay a living wage to locate in Ballard?