

***Draft Meeting Notes***

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In attendance: Nancy Amidei, Jack Bernatovicz, Chuck Broches David Cohanim, Dan Eernisse, Anne Gantt, Mark Griffin (for a few minutes), Ron Moe-Lobeda, Alfred Mustey Shiga, George Petrie, Barbara Quinn, Miles Richardson, Ruedi Risler, Matt Roewe, Kyle Rowe, Scott Soules, Ryan Thomas, Patty Whisler,

Staff in Attendance: Brian Scott (facilitator), Susan McLain (Seattle Department of Planning and Development-DPD), Radhika Nair (DPD), Tony Mazzella (Seattle Department of Transportation)

**Summary of “What We Heard” from DPD Staff**

The University District has many assets including the fact that it is a transit hub with intellectual resources, major employment and a great retail district. The U District also has a vibrant neighborhood life and character that is unique in the city.

There is interest in a more diverse residential base: to accommodate young professionals who graduate from UW; interest in attracting families to the neighborhood; higher quality housing / design and amenities.

Additional height and density is desirable, especially in proximity to the light rail station, with consideration of the following:

- Take advantage of intellectual capital in the neighborhood, innovation
- Existing neighborhood character and historic resources
- Take advantage of/ extend the influence of transit
- New public spaces and pedestrian connections--alleys & mid-block
- Higher quality existing housing and new construction with good design
- The need for affordable housing and retail
- Street front retail and business opportunities/needs such as parking, traffic
- Integrate homeless population and social services
- Needs of major employers and students
- Public safety
- Weave-together neighborhoods and sub-areas within the District
- Financial feasibility of development
- Scale height in appropriate locations from highrise to low scale residential

**Introduction:** Everyone in the room introduced themselves

**Project Overview and Discussion:**

Brian introduced project all four things going on that are talking to each other

1. Community revitalization plan
2. Urban Design Framework
3. Community Conversations
4. Long-term partnerships

Brian explained that the official mandate is to guide commercial revitalization plan but also provide some foundational ideas for DPD's Urban Design Framework (UDF). Ultimate decisions on the UDF-informed legislation will be made by City Council and Mayor when DPD sponsors legislation.

Susan explained that the FDUD working group should represent a wide array of interests. She said the project is about encouraging investment and density around the station area, and also about community livability. She described outcomes of DPD's process: the UDF document, legislation that will include rezones and development standards, a streetscape concept plan and possibly other outcomes.

Susan also shared a document that outlined some planning aspirations to consider that includes: healthy environment, connected people, shared prosperity and great places.

Ruedi: connections to the light rail station are important. Susan said the UDF will provide direction on connections that will lead to more detailed streetscape design work.

Tony: Noted that the EIS will have analysis that can inform the streetscape concept plan work.

Patty: Noted the three separate station walksheds (these are found in the back of the Existing Conditions report)

Dan: Asked about stated goals or priorities for station areas, distinction between station areas. Susan said that the Brooklyn station is in the middle of one of the City's "urban centers". In the city, urban centers prioritize employment, housing and City infrastructure.

David: said it would be helpful to have information from Metro. Susan said we will present information from Metro, and that Tony Mazzella can provide us with information about transportation elements as well.

In response to a question from Ruedi Risler, Brian Scott said that this working group will report to the steering committee once per month.

Chuck asked how the UW would transmit information to the group. Susan said that UW Architect, Rebecca Barnes, would participate in the working group.

**Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges:**

Strengths	Opportunities	Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walkability</li> <li>2. Existing density</li> <li>3. UW Tower – we have something that’s already punctured the 65’ height</li> <li>4. Intellectual capital/businesses from the UW-demand for the type of buildings that can support urban streetscapes or jobs</li> <li>5. Public transportation hub</li> <li>6. Huge population that turns over</li> <li>7. Youthful academic energy</li> <li>8. Very good employers – the public sector UW but also the Medical Center which is a hybrid</li> <li>9. Integrate students into community more</li> <li>10. Street grid</li> <li>11. Potential for partnerships with UW(especially design)</li> <li>12. Great architectural homes especially related to campus but also off-campus</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better walkability</li> <li>2. Adding density</li> <li>3. Using our alleys for commercial, recreational and pedestrian network</li> <li>4. Think vertically Public transportation can be improved</li> <li>5. Skyline - lot of potential for building up</li> <li>6. Public open space that can support vertical development</li> <li>7. Can be a leader in how to take care of social needs</li> <li>8. Balance of families, long-term residents and students</li> <li>9. Channel youthful energy and get people to stay in neighborhood</li> <li>10. Students should also have place to stay while the district changes</li> <li>11. Opportunities for new businesses with new station</li> <li>12. Mid-block connections for long blocks</li> <li>13. Partnerships with graduate students Runstad Center</li> <li>14. Connections to other destinations - a circulator?</li> <li>15. Burke Gilman Trail – connection to station</li> <li>16. 520 Bridge new connections</li> <li>17. Eco- District Concept</li> <li>18. The station area blocks</li> <li>19. Attracting alumni to live in the U District</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical barriers to walkability like I-5</li> <li>2. Currently a set of neighborhoods that needs weaving together</li> <li>3. Public Transit systems need to be integrated to provide a seamless experience</li> <li>4. Poor quality of housing</li> <li>5. Historic lack of public spaces to reduce crime</li> <li>6. Large transient population</li> <li>7. Changing retail environment</li> <li>8. Parking and traffic</li> <li>9. Freeway stimulates traffic demand</li> <li>10. Limited street space</li> <li>11. Long north/south blocks</li> <li>12. Public safety (people feeling safe walking at night)</li> <li>13. Narrow streets (danger of canyons with high rise)</li> </ol>



**Additional Discussion:**

Matt: "What is the appetite for height over 240?"

Dan: supportive of height but don't discourage height through too many regulations

Patty: supportive of height, but depends on design guidelines; consider clustering high rise and taller buildings; concern about "canyons" resulting from too many tall buildings

Chuck: taller buildings should be located near the freeway

Scott: taller buildings should be located in the core of the District. Like the idea of starting at 240', and then scaling down to 125 and 65'

Ryan Thomas: supportive of height, case studies of height, what has gone well and what has not would be useful

Barbara: additional density must be accompanied by neighborhood amenities; new building north of 50th works because the Ave is wider in that location

Jack: Likes the idea of having variety in buildings; Historical architectural character should be valued

Kyle: mentioned the idea of an EcoDistrict in the University area

Matt: noted that EcoDistrict is an issue of branding; UW already an EcoDistrict in many ways because of the steam plant

Ruedi Risler: A pedestrian only Ave, or pedestrian only at certain times is an idea to explore

*Brian Scott asked what other things should be mentioned*

Ruedi: suggested a pedestrian-only Ave

Matt: suggested streets that are pedestrian-only at different times of day

Anne: how can the U District be a place for alumni to stay and live in the U District

Ruedi: let's plan for the one block around the station area

*Other Information that would be useful:*

- Policies relating to growth, urban centers and station areas
- Information relating to plans for the Brooklyn Station from Sound Transit
- Precedents from other University towns
- Information about the constraints under which we are operating