

Let's Talk Seattle!

West Seattle

June 28, 2014

Public Comments at the Let's Talk West Seattle Event

The following statements were provided by members of the public on our presentation boards and verbally.

Seattle 2035/Updating the Comprehensive Plan

- We need impact fees!
- Require creation of parks, schools, bus service, improvements as part of increased development – “impact fees”.
- Comprehensive Plan: Look at parking requirements by neighborhood / community.
- Look at cumulative impact of development in larger geographic areas / neighborhood areas.
- Don't concentrate growth in one area.
- What are crime statistics from neighborhoods where growth has occurred?
- Have urban village boundaries changed?
- The premise is wrong. We don't need 120,000 people imported to Seattle.
- Include policy about better transit integration between Metro, Sound Transit, etc.
- What drives estimates for job growth? How do we address the lower number of jobs than was expected over the past 20 years?
- Make Seattle affordable for teachers, social service workers, etc.

Location-specific concerns

Re-zone other areas

- Rezone 35th behind lumber yard, etc.
- Rezone 35th to allow more people there.

Single Family

- Single family houses are allowed to rebuild to a larger scale with no additional parking.
- New houses are too big and out of scale.
- New homes are too big and block views. McMansions don't fit in.

Low-Rise

- LR2 recent change resulted in more density no Design Review required.
- Modulation eliminated with last change to Lowrise zones.
- Floor area ratios in LR zones – 41st Ave Oregon & Genesee – 4-story frontage below-grade units.

Westwood / Highland Park

- Westwood Village became a transit hub but nothing has been done to make pedestrian improvements around the center. The commercial areas are disconnected. Need better transit and pedestrian connections.
- Let's talk [to people in Westwood Village]! We're YIMBYs ☺
- What's the plan for annexation for the area south of Westwood/Highland Park?
- Westwood Village – would like to see more development. Mixed Use. Be a hub.
- Roxbury should be annexed to Seattle.

Project review & Permitting

- Question whether we are following the code, appropriate provisions. Allow too much development flexibility.
- Some form of informal design review for development of multiple homes on a site. For example, one large lot can be built with 3 new homes without notification.
- Developers get departures from the code, but not homeowners. Perception that developers are provided more leeway.
- Better quality control by DPD before permitting.
- Look at multiple homes on a lot as a “package” so can know larger impact on the neighborhood – how can these be flagged?
- Developers “getting around” rules/codes.
- How can land use rules be reviewed to identify where developers stray from the Code?

Project appeals

- Cost to appeal is costly for homeowners / neighborhood.
- Public funding (city attorney) to pay for appeals – neighborhoods do not have similar access
- Homeowners are not able to fight big \$ developers. The City being used by developers.

Parking

- Who is estimating right sized parking?
- Encourage car share in new development, perhaps w/incentive/
- 5 cars for all these units? Someone is smoking something after the marijuana! NO WAY! Where will the other billion residents park?
- Street parking too crowded.

Transportation

- Traffic congestion from West Seattle ~ I-5 north/
- Too much density without adequate transportation options.
- Transit center needed like Burien’s. Include this in the 2035 Comp Plan.
- Parking at TOD locations.
- Transit cuts at Morgan/California resulted in service that is not frequent.
- We need more buses to do a loop of West Seattle.
- Frequent transit service should be regarded 10 minutes or less!
- Transit infrastructure and utilities should come before density.
- Why aren’t we envisioning using water corridors for moving people? Establish public/private partnerships for piers/access.
- Rail to West Seattle is missing.
- 35th and Barton should have a protected left turn signal.
- There should be “jitneys” or buses that loop around among the junctions so people don’t need cars to run errands.
- Mercer Street construction/traffic in South Lake Union ends up impacting travel times for people in West Seattle, particularly to and from events at Seattle Center.
- Buses are full by the time they reach and leave the Junction to downtown. They are trying to fit too many people onto buses.
- Bicyclists should be subject to license fees.
- People are driving to the Junction and parking to take transit.

Communication & public review

- Better publicity and more time for these discussions.
- Better access to info on-line.
- Allow info to be pushed out automatically to neighborhood media, blogs, etc.
- Better notice and education about development codes.
- Figure out best times for community meetings / conversations.
- Regionalize DPD and have regular neighborhood meetings.
- Use Survey Monkey.
- Put more fliers in new buildings to get renters involved!
- Expand 300ft notification radius (500'? 1000'?)
- Need notice about development.

Hospital

- No hospital in West Seattle, no jobs. The City should provide liaison to commercial banks.
- Someone should facilitate a conversation with hospitals re: locating to West Seattle.
- We need a hospital.
- Hospital access is a major concern.

General development comments & concerns

- Can development just point to precedence within a flexible code?
- Need better coordination between departments.
- Cost of permit fee to pave driveway and build garage – can't pave, but paving happening elsewhere.
- Density has turned into over-crowding e.g. SW Avalon. Seven stories seems unreasonable.
- "Cap & Trade" affordable housing.
- Single family & multifamily displacement.
- We don't want to become Ballard.
- Density and vibrancy are getting old.
- Development isn't compatible with neighborhood. Too much hard surfaces at 80% footprint.
- Long-term viability of apartment units.
- Lower income housing concentrated in 1 building.
- When people call and complain, there needs to be someone to talk to.
- New development isn't lowering rent.