

Task Force Meeting #2
March 18, 2004 6 PM
City Council Chambers

Members of the Task Force Present: Roger Olstad, Dale Cote, Pam Brown, Sally Renn, Lloyd Skinner, Florence Wright, Shary Van

Consultants and staff: Bonnie Berk, Chris Mefford, Courtney Knox, Sarah Phillips, Ty Peterson, Karen Haines, Mayor Hutchinson

Chair Olstad went over the agenda and the discussion summary from the Community Forum on March 4, 2004. He applauded Berk and Associates for facilitating a series of lively discussion of the strengths, challenges, and for the vision for LFP and what people want to see in the next 20 years. There were 189 people in attendance.

At the Forum, attendees were asked to place a pin on the map to show where they lived, worked and shopped. Most pins in the map of where people worked were first LFP, then downtown Seattle, and finally the University area. There was some speculation about why so many people identified themselves as working in LFP. Perhaps retired people identified LFP as place of work; perhaps we attracted lots of people who work out of their home.

The second map showed that people shop in LFP, Alderwood and Northgate areas, downtown and in the University district.

The summary of the March 4 Community Forum is on the City website.

Debrief on Community Forum

What worked?

- The meeting became a community building exercise. Initially, there was a lot cynicism of as people came in. They ended up leaving with a broader

community consensus through the reporting back exercise. It started out somewhat negative but people left very positive.

- In the small groups, everyone got a chance to speak. It was a comfortable setting. The feedback was recorded and reflected back. They got to hear everyone else in the report back portion of the meeting.
- Small groups neutralized some of that negativity - people modified/edited each other
- Reporting was good - it is representative and the lists are good
- Good facilitating
- Good advice regarding the timing of each question
- It was also good to know that there was a back-up from Berk if there were problems
- Task force facilitation and contribution. The reporting back went very well, the timing and the pacing worked well and the task force members were a real asset as facilitators of the small groups.

What could go better?

- Recruit more young families to attend
- Hard to hear at meeting (ambient noise) and in small groups for some attendees
- Noisier further away from stage
- Balance up group size
- Last two questions were a bit redundant
- One group was too big, however, individuals did not want to move

Chris Mefford reported on the Market and Real Estate Analysis. These presentations are on the web site. The draft of the final written report will be delivered next week and sent out to task force members.

Based on the presentation of the findings of the Draft Economic and Real Estate Market Analysis, the following questions/comments were offered by the task force members.

Big questions

- Is it better to have more people buy their consumables here or to have more jobs here?

- Can we make a significant impact on City budget/solve City's financial problems by changing town center? It doesn't appear so, but any increase in sales/property taxes will help.
- Do we need/want to be a destination shopping center?
- We need to explain why jobs are important.
- How can we benefit from being located on major traffic and all the travelers that pass by?
- How to combat lingering images of "former-something" sites?
- How dense/number of units per acre do we want to see? It's our question to answer. The market for housing is there.

Ending comments/remaining questions

- Some things are missing - may not have the data
- Hear a bunch from community that the quality of the retail offerings is missing
- This analysis leads you to believe that it is something about the site that leads to under performance.
- Is it simply that multi-family housing will not happen here? (question of feasibility)
- Wrong side of street idea is interesting. Thriftway on Ballinger Way in Shoreline is on wrong side - does it work because there is better access? It was noted that Albertson's is on the "wrong side of the street" because grocery stores want to be on the same side of the street as commuters who are returning home for the day and can quickly turning to get groceries on the way home.
- About the office demand- other than at-home, what would drive up demand and what would make the at-home businesses be willing to move?
- Is it possible to be thinking about what/who would be likely tenants?
- I'm excited and think that the analysis is cool. But, how can we rectify the limiting factors?
- Concern - "if we just had more up-scale businesses we would be fine" - not sure about that
- Been a lot of redevelopment on Main Streets of older east Coast towns. Does that teach us anything? Could we be a regional draw because we are unique?

- What other ideas besides retail to bring folks in?
- A good bike shop would be a real draw because of the proximity to the Burke Gilman Trail
- Would like to see more retail ideas? We've already talked about music, arts and restaurants.
- What could be niche of center?
- Get actual count of home-based business.
- What do you do about access/transportation issues?
- What kind of market is needed for the 70% under 55 - outdoor recreation/indoor park as a percent of retail?
- How does the Growth Management Act play into all of this?
- This community has big buying power. How could we capture more of it?
- Would like more thinking about the Task Force and our role ahead.
 - Reasonable to not be a destination
 - Could be same amount of space - same space reconfigured?
 - Could be legitimate demand for housing?
- What would be left for potential housing, if we fill the community need for quality retail?
- Should we be cutting off street that goes right through center?
- If we said, we would "like this type of service here" to the development community, would we be heard?
- Know we have 16 acres, could not accommodate very much more retail square feet - somehow need to get housing on site. I'd like to see some scenarios - if we go up X floors, could get Y units.
- Transportation - getting in/out of this space - how can we make it easier?
- We, as a City, should look at how to replace income from B&O if we choose to let it go.
- What are some solutions for parking?

Next task force meeting is April 15, 6 PM City Hall, Council Chambers.