



CITY OF LA CENTER • WASHINGTON
SUB-AREA PLAN

**La Center Junction Sub-Area Plan
NE Quadrant Small Group Meeting #1 Summary**

Tuesday, May 26, 2009
6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.

ATTENDEES:

Bill Birdwell
Jim Boal

Linda Fudge
Susan Gilbert

Greg Gilbert
Tom Kane

Cindi Kane

PROJECT TEAM AND ADDITIONAL STAFF:

Dale Miller, City Planner, City of La Center
Bart Stepp, Public Works Engineer, City of La Center
Dena Horton, Normandeau Associates

EVENT OVERVIEW:

At a public workshop for the La Center Sub-Area Plan (SAP) held on May 6, 2009, it was requested that an additional meeting with the property owners of the Northeast Quadrant of the Junction be held to discuss specific land use concerns and suggestions for zoning in that area. Subsequently, a small group meeting for the property owners of the NE Quadrant area of the La Center Junction was held from 6 – 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 at the Heritage Conference Room of the La Center Public Works Department located at 419 E. Cedar Avenue in La Center, Washington. In addition to reviewing existing land use and zoning maps, the attendees were provided copies of subarea plan, zoning, annexation, critical areas, and hazardous pipeline information sheets (see Appendix A – Handouts). Project staff members were available to share information and answer questions. Attendee input was recorded on flip charts and map exhibits. Information regarding annexation, sub-area planning, and a copy of the staff report regarding the La Center Junction Sub-Area Plan phase I process were made available to meeting participants (see Appendix C – Open House Handouts).

The small group meeting was promoted via a letter mailed via first class mailing directly to the property owners and through phone calls to the property owners. Sixteen property owners were invited and seven people attended representing four of the properties in the Northeast Quadrant of the Junction.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Dena Horton facilitated the meeting and provided brief welcome and introductory remarks. Dale Miller discussed the project and explained the importance of planning for

the subarea even though the City of La Center has not officially, as yet, annexed the area into the city limits. Dale explained the Growth Management Act (GMA) Hearing Board appealed some of the land under urban growth area (UGA) and provided a copy of the court ruling which recently dismissed this challenge against the plan to expand La Center's UGA (see Appendix B – Court Ruling). The ruling removed a hurdle to annexation and development of the junction.

Dale also provided information on the annexation process. Dale explained the City of La Center has been trying to expand to the junction for approximately 10 years. The subarea planning process will assist in determining how to accommodate the population growth as well as road, sewer, and other service needs over a 20 year period.

Currently, the area remains under county zoning however, it is anticipated that within the next 20 years, the City of La Center will annex the area and the plan will provide the zoning framework when La Center annexes the area. Dale then provided an overview of the proposed zoning for the area in order to obtain input from the property owners to the following questions:

1. Does the proposed zoning of the Northeast Quadrant reflect the desires of the property owners there?
2. Are there alternative zoning schemes or other alternatives, such as transportation, that could be more efficient?

Dale stated that the ultimate goal of the junction is generating jobs. The commercial area is anticipated to have approximately 22 employees per acre and approximately 9 employees per acre for the remaining areas. Dale stated that the City of La Center will probably implement the least cost option.

ISSUES DISCUSSION:

Susan Gilbert stated her appreciation for the public involvement and outreach efforts being made for the subarea planning process and indicated her desire to be involved throughout the process. Then she asked about the status of the future main road into La Center. She believes it is important to understand where the main road will go in order to factor in traffic, traffic flow, etc. when considering zoning alternatives. Dale stated that a second bridge was evaluated during the last Comprehensive Plan update. Parsons Brinckerhoff identified at least one possible bridge location and multiple road alignments as technically feasibility. Conceptually, the bridge would connect Pacific Highway at Larson Road to 24th or 26th Avenue at La Center Road. This alignment will be further detailed in future years. Dale stated that the bridge is needed to accommodate growth over the next 20 years.

Susan also asked about the future of the card rooms in downtown La Center and if there was a plan to retain the vitality of downtown if the shopping and other business is moved to the junction or along the main arterial to town. Dale stated that the City will work with the card rooms to find a reasonable solution. For instance, if the junction area is rezoned, the card rooms can move there, or revitalization efforts for downtown can be done, or a combination of both. The project team will be working with downtown businesses in small group meetings.

It was suggested that a grocery store be located in downtown La Center as opposed to the junction.

Susan Gilbert mentioned that she read Bonneville Power Administration would like to run a transmission line through Clark County to Castle Rock. Dale stated he would follow up to learn more about that issue.

Jim Boal asked if property is annexed, then what is the City's obligation to that annexed area in terms of providing services? Dale responded that the City would be obligated to make available the basic City services it provides to the rest of the City including roads and sewer. Property owners will of course pay for connections and service. This planning effort is intended to find a least-cost solution for everyone.

ZONING DISCUSSION:

Dale provided a brief explanation of the current county zoning and the City of La Center's proposed zoning. The City's zoning is intended to be more urban and diverse than what the County currently has zoned for the area.

When asked if the proposed zoning of the Northeast Quadrant reflects the desires of the property owners there? The responses were as follows:

- Linda Fudge – Commercial zoning of her property makes the most logical sense.
- Jim Boal – Agreed that his property should remain zoned as commercial.
- Cindi and Tom Kane – They would like to leave their property zoned as multi-family residential.
- Susan and Greg Gilbert – They proposed swapping the zoning for their property and the property immediately to the south of their property. Instead of their property being zoned as light industrial/employment campus and the property to the south zoned as mixed use, they would rather see their property zoned as mixed use, with perhaps some additional multi-family residential (which could be high end condos), and the property to the south be zoned as light industrial/employment campus. Susan believes that locating the light industrial/employment campus closer to the main road and freeway will prevent large trucks from driving through the mixed use area to get to the light industrial/employment campus area. This arrangement will also locate the mixed use and multi-family residential near parkland as opposed to the freeway and major arterial. It is believed that having the mixed use next to the multi-family residential would be less intrusive than having light industrial/employment campus next to the multi-family residential.

It was suggested that perhaps some residential could be located near the freeway, however, there would be increased safety risks such as potential increases in child abduction.

Cindi and Tom Kane asked for clarification of the pipeline safety issues with respect to zoning and development of their property. Dale explained that a federal formula suggests a 641' potential impact radius around the Williams Pipeline, which overlaps with a section of the Kane property. Regardless of how the property is zoned, a

proposed zoning overlay district would preclude multi-family development within the safety zone. However, since much of their property in the overlapped section has slopes and canyons, they could be allowed to use the area as greenspace if needed.

ZONING ALTERNATIVE:

Dale would like to have at least two, perhaps three, alternatives to review in the process. The current proposed zoning is as follows beginning at the northern boundary of the subarea to the southern portion of the Northeast Quadrant :

North:	Light Industrial/Employment Campus	Multi-family Residential
Middle:	Mixed Use	Light Industrial/Employment Campus
South:	Commercial	

The discussion at the small group meeting led to the following alternative to be examined in more detail and discussed at the next project open house workshop. The alternative includes:

North:	Multi-family Residential Mixed Use	Multi-family Residential
Middle:	Light Industrial/Employment Campus	Light Industrial/Employment Campus
South:	Commercial	

EFFICIENCIES DISCUSSION:

Dale Miller asked if there are there alternative zoning schemes or other alternatives, such as transportation, that could be more efficient. He stated the City would like to maintain as many of the existing connections in the transportation system as possible. He also explained that a 120-space park-and-ride is located near the community center and that La Center will continue connector service which functions as a dial-a-ride service. Greg Gilbert expressed concern about the ability of the main road being able to handle the traffic capacity coming off the I-5 into the area.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The attendees were informed that project information could be found at www.ci.lacenter.wa.us and they were also invited to attend the next public open house workshop on Tuesday, June 23, 6 – 8 PM at the Community Center at 1000 E. 4th Street, in La Center, Washington.

FOLLOW UP:

- Dale Miller will find out what the tax implications are to the property owner from simply changing a property's zoning.
- The property owners present will consider drafting a letter requesting their properties be annexed to the City of La Center.

Appendix A – Handouts

Appendix B – Court Ruling