



Envision Midway Summary of 7/30/08 Developers Forum

Key Points:

- Transit is key to support higher density; TOD should be at nodes, leaving auto-oriented development to flourish along SR-99;
- Allow the market to decide the height, bulk and parking requirements – direct development through Design Guidelines and minimum parking requirements w/ parking study;
- Midway has natural advantages that make it desirable – geography, views, location, transportation, college, trees, open space, parks;
- Build TOD around current employment center – HCC;
- Concentrate efforts and define the area so that the outside world can see and will join you;
- Establish view corridors to protect views;
- Land assembly is a barrier where government can assist; and
- Government could build first affordable housing for transition of MHP residents.

General Comments:

- Does higher density have political support?
- Need to create a new place with a desirable character that does not trample on existing uses;
- Have you done a tax base analysis? – This would inform revenue projections;
- There are grants for brownfield identification, and some for cleanup;
- Density needs to be high to support transit;
- 5 over 1 development size works well elsewhere vs. 200' height;
- BTR is essential for ½ mile walking radius;
- Light rail should go down SR-99 – transit on I-5 is a waste of money;
- If you provide density, transit and pedestrian connections – the auto oriented uses will diminish – behavior surrounding the automobile is changing (high gas prices);
- HCC & METRO are engaged in the feasibility of locating BRT stop in HCC north parking lot off SR-99;
- Go light on retail uses – don't cannibalize your historic downtowns;
- Don't replicate Edmonds or Shoreline;
- Midway (study area) is ideal for big box;
- How pedestrian-oriented do we expect SR-99 to become? – a secondary street is more likely to be pedestrian-oriented;
- Protect auto-oriented uses which feed the tax base;
- Conduct a demographic study to understand the market – demographics dictates what you can develop;

- Mixed use can be difficult because the cost of new construction is too high for retail rental, squeezing out the local businesses – only national chains can afford the rent;
- Need east/west pedestrian connections – particularly for the Kent-Highlands;
- Have you considered other sources of contamination? – historic gas stations, dry cleaners, industry;
- Kent-Highlands should have mixed use, not stand alone residential;
- The measure of a pedestrian oriented environment is “would you have coffee at a sidewalk café?”;
- ULI found density needs to be high for transit use and truly reducing greenhouse gases; and
- Are we trying to do too much? – TOD at HCC, vertical expansion of HCC, keep auto-oriented uses for tax base, pedestrian oriented development off 30th.

Parking Discussion:

- Developers spend 80% of their time on parking;
- Don't put constraints on height or bulk, and allow developer to determine parking – the market determines the FAR;
- No minimums, no maximums – justify the change by making all parking is on-site and let the developer demonstrate through a parking study that it is sufficient;
- Forcing more parking than development needs is damaging (i.e., Oswego, Oregon);
- Parking should be peripheral – develop parking co-ops (i.e. Lowes);
- City sponsored areawide parking study – unbiased and repaid by development (ex. South Lake Union);
- Caps on parking – most progressive cities using this strategy (driven by climate change and gas \$\$);
- PAO can stipulate phased development – parking as land bank;
- Set a minimum to protect surrounding community with an option to allow less if developer conducts a parking study (i.e., 1.2/du condo, .8/du in Rainier Valley TOD; and
- With BRT, 1/3 of the residents will use transit to go to work – may only have one car, no car – use flex car.

Rentals vs. Condominiums Discussion:

- Home ownership is difficult right now (to build or buy)
- Rental units near college – likely market demand;
- Renters can help turn a community around – bringing in investment and business;
- School district and PTA is a hurdle – difficult to argue against them;
- Housing values are most stable located by TOD;
- Cooperatives are hard to finance;
- Stop pandering – most good turnarounds have been built on rentals;
- Use non-profits to help with discussion to build multifamily;
- New affordable rentals would be better than what presently exists; and
- Rent to own.

Developers Recommendations to the City:

- Focus TOD/density at nodes;
- Have clear regulations – develop Design Guidelines;
- Help developers with incentives for sustainable development;
- Expedited review;
- Height bonuses for LID/LEED;
- EIS for area to waive SEPA;
- 10 year tax abatement;
- Government provided infrastructure (street, sidewalk, lighting) (i.e., Bel-Red Corridor);
- Some government assistance in land assembly;
- Affordable housing would need a \$5M subsidy to remove the risk
- Contributions for Art; and
- Concentrate on nodes and define so outside interests can see.