

August 18, 2016

RE: 145th Street Station Subarea Plan and zoning

Dear Commissioners, Council and Staff,

I (and others) have written and testified previously about the conflicts between the SE Neighborhoods Subarea Plan (SENSP) adopted in 2010, including related zoning which took effect in December 2011, and the proposed 145th Street Station Subarea Plan (145SSSP) and its related zoning. Throughout the two-year 145SSSP process, there has been no observable attention paid to the significant conflicts with the SENSF, beyond a few very brief responses by staff to questions raised during public meetings; these responses merely dodged the issue and attempted to diminish and dismiss the relevance of the SENSF.

It shouldn't be necessary to remind city officials of all that was involved in the SENSF as some current members of both staff and council were serving the city then as now. The SENSF process was extensive, beginning in 2008 and ending in 2011. The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Staff put a tremendous amount of time effort into the process. During the council meeting in which the zoning ordinance was discussed and adopted, staff - in favor of adoption - commented: *...this proposal represents a compromise and the committee was very diverse, with a host of stakeholders involved...[and]...that this has been a three-year process and aspects of this process have been complex.* Indeed, the process was extremely thorough and truly democratic with many views represented; and the result was a very good one. It should be honored.

The final SENSF report acknowledges...***there will likely be a light rail stop near 145th St. and Interstate 5...***then goes on to state...***the City wants to preserve existing aspects of these neighborhoods. The single-family character, friendly atmosphere, natural amenities, and other characteristics are all of paramount importance. Change may be inevitable, but it can be channeled to provide amenities and improvements and prevented from negatively affecting the quality of life that is why people choose to live in this part of Shoreline.*** And yet, the city

ignores not only the SENSP's extensive public process, but also its boundaries.

The most obvious conflict between the two plans is the overlap area from 145th north to 155th and from 15th east to 8th, which is the Ridgecrest Neighborhood section of the SENSP. This section is a very significant part of the SENSP, covering nearly half of the total subarea, containing two parks - one of which is a natural area with critical areas (streams, wetlands, steep slopes) within it and surrounding it. The Ridgecrest overlap area was integral in the development of the entire SENSP, but particularly important in the parks/open space and natural environment sections of the plan.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Goal: To preserve, protect and promote creation of public spaces that balance needs for human recreation, animal habitat, and natural vegetative growth. The subarea contains or is adjacent to several of Shoreline's parks, including Hamlin, South Woods, and Paramount Park and Open Space...The City has an interest in acquiring lands adjacent to Paramount Park Open Space.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Policy Recommendations:

PR1: Support development of a trail/designated pathway connecting the Interurban trail and the Burke-Gilman trail with Paramount Park (upper and lower), Hamlin Park, South Woods, and Seattle's Jackson Park.

PR6: Redevelop paths in Paramount Open Space to ensure at least one year-round connection between the east and west sides of the Ridgecrest Neighborhood.

Natural Environment Goal: To provide a healthy and flourishing natural environment for the benefit of both human and wildlife residents, utilizing innovative technology and conservation measures. The community identified a number of natural characteristics that enhanced the quality of life in the neighborhood and were highly valued. These included the extensive tree canopy, vegetative cover, and prevalent wildlife, notably the varied list of bird species. They also acknowledged other existing, natural conditions that could pose problems in the process of development or redevelopment. These included the high groundwater table, poor soil conditions and infiltration rates that exist on some sites. This section attempts to balance natural capital with development.

Natural Environment Policy Recommendations:

NE4: Link green open spaces within subarea and then link them to those outside subarea to create trails.

NE5: Support creation of contiguous ecosystems, with attention to wildlife habitat, through development of a “green corridor,” as a public/private partnership, including the area between Seattle’s Jackson Park, Paramount Park, and Hamlin Park.

NE6: Protect and renew (“daylight”) streams in the area.

NE9: Develop technical resources for better understanding of overall hydrology, including the locations of covered streams in the subarea, and recommend actions and measures to address existing stormwater drainage problems.

NE11: Retain and establish new trees, open spaces, and green belts.

Informed by citizens familiar with their neighborhoods, a long and wide-ranging process facilitated by city staff, the SENSP offers more specific planning direction within its boundaries than does the 145SSSP under consideration. After two years of process, the SENSP Housing Goal is: ***To promote housing diversity, affordability and adaptability while respecting and maintaining the identified single-family character of the neighborhoods.*** This goal unequivocally applies to the Ridgecrest overlap section of the SENSP, and is very clearly reflected in the zoning map adopted in late 2011, with the majority of this area zoned as R-6.

While my neighbors and I have received no notice of a SENSP/zoning repeal or amendment, it is my understanding that recently something was added to the council docket for later this year - after the 145SSSP is adopted – in order to reconcile the SENSP/145SSSP conflict within city planning documents. I hope I have this wrong because if, after turning a deaf ear to the issue, the city quietly fixes this problem under the radar as merely an after-the-fact housekeeping matter, it would be a demonstration of blatant disregard and disrespect for the entire SENSP process and its participants, for everyone living in the south portion of the Ridgecrest Neighborhood who will be up-zoned unreasonably, and for the need to protect sensitive areas and expand parks within this section of the neighborhood by restricting future opportunities. If changes are to be made to the SENSP, its boundaries, and zoning, there should be a public process. Perhaps

otherwise, the Ridgecrest overlap section of the 145SSSP should simply defer to the SENSP and be consistent with the plan and its zoning.

The Compact Community Hybrid studied in the 145SSSP FEIS includes a phase 2 (covering much the Ridgecrest section of the SENSP) to begin in 2033. While this is a sudden and vast improvement over previous proposed zoning scenarios, it is troubling that much of the single-family R-6 designation in phase 2 would automatically become MUR-35 in 2033. This is unnecessary and unreasonable, particularly as staff and council appear to be sweeping the inconvenient SENSP adopted just a few years ago under the rug. Once MUR-35 is effectively in place, there's no going back. It is only practical that the city would keep its options open for park and open space expansion by retaining R-6 in the Ridgecrest overlap. MUR-35 zoned now for 2033 presumes you know what the needs will be then, but your own experience should signal otherwise.

A resolution in the 145SSSP may be to (1) retain zoning designations consistent with the SENSP in the Ridgecrest overlap area, (2) make the 2033 Phase 2 boundaries the same as the Ridgecrest overlap area in the SENSP, (3) leave future density considerations in that section to the leadership in 2033. Like you, council and staff some years in the future will have different perspectives, pressures, and options available. Hopefully, they will be able to honor what past Commissions, Councils, Citizen Committees, and staff have together thoughtfully shaped for their future.

With our well-loved parks already at capacity and the amount of growth planned in Shoreline, there is an obvious need for acquiring additional parks and open space. The protection of urban sensitive areas, trees, and wildlife becomes even more important and desirable for quality of life in densified rezone areas.

Facilitated by city staff, the CAC actually worked arduously on this issue for our neighborhood. The outcome was contained in the SE Neighborhoods Subarea Plan that the city passed in 2010, and related zoning map in 2011. The SENSP is a good plan for our neighborhood, a more well-thought-out plan than in the 145SSSP for this Ridgecrest overlap area, and so the work reflected in the SENSP should be respected and retained.

Actually, I think more concepts from the SENSP should also apply to the Parkwood Neighborhood within the 145SSSP. Please keep in mind that Twin Ponds Park and its surrounds as well as Paramount Open Space Park and its surrounds exist in lowland areas and have wetlands (inside and outside park boundaries) important to the health of the Thornton Creek Watershed, and to the adjacent neighborhoods, and to all who visit now and in the future. Retention of as much R-6 zoning as possible surrounding these parks in a *2033 Phase 2-density TBD* will not only leave the potential for expanding these parks outward to meet future needs of the residents and the watershed, but also serve to give more predictability to current residents concerning development in the neighborhoods.

I hope you will do the right thing by respecting past work by and on behalf of citizens, protecting sensitive areas from the pressures of increased density, and allowing for potential future opportunities for open space acquisition. In the midst of their TOD-urban-living experience, future residents of this area will want (and need) to enjoy amazing, colossal parks with fully functioning wetlands protected by trees and vegetation that attract diverse wildlife. It could be great.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Shoreline