



HIGHLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

March 29, 2017

Public Workshop Synopsis

Approximately 30 members of the public attended. Following a staff presentation, they were invited to review displays, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff.

Steve Langdon presented a slideshow reviewing issues that will have some bearing on the area's comprehensive plan designation and will ultimately drive its zoning. There will be an additional, citywide neighborhood workshop, probably at the end of April. He anticipates having hearings in June.

Questions and comments made during the presentation as well as afterward focused on:

- When there the current densities and zoning applied to the area? Apartments and duplexes that have been built in the area “look like cr-p.” But, apartments are not always a bad plan. Alternate opinions: Lowering the allowed density will reduce property values in the area, vs. the area should be zoned for single-family only.
- Complaint regarding drinking water quality.
- There aren't street lights. The darkness of the neighborhood invites crime. Other safety concerns focused on trash and vehicles being abandoned along Oregon Way. Illegal dumping is a problem on private property and in alleys. Baltimore Street is a bad part of the neighborhood.
- Redevelopment options at different densities within the area. How to address redevelopment constraints given the small lots in the area. How to encourage redevelopment such as allowing smaller multifamily structures, relaxing parking requirements, reducing setback requirements, etc.
- What should happen along Oregon Way? Due to the medians, left-turn movements are limited. Will Oregon Way stay two lanes each way? Yes, there are no plans to change this.
- Is there a grant or funding for the neighborhood that goes along with this? Not per se, but Steve explained that the comprehensive plan will help to direct future public investments. There's already a plan, but no funding, for Archie Anderson Park. There's been a lot of funding spent on downtown, why not move on to investing in the neighborhoods? There were additional questions about the plan for Archie Anderson Park. They call for baseball field removal. Parks & Recreation wants to update the master plan.
- There are group homes in the area. The relationship between the planning process and the shelters issue was questioned, and it was clarified that this is not about shelter siting.

- Traffic coming off Industrial Way onto Douglas is a problem. Access is limited (one way in/out) and is not hospitable to apartments. The roundabout has an impact by forcing traffic down 32nd/33rd. This is a neighborhood safety issue. This is a walk-only school district with no school buses, so children are forced to walk.
- Will properties be condemned to make people sell for redevelopment? What about that “guy in the middle” who refuses to sell for redevelopment? No, this is not about condemnation, and that process could not be used to spur private redevelopment.
- What does the City see for houses that are deteriorating? In order to redevelop existing single-family properties, a developer would need to buy up 36 lots to produce 100 multifamily units. There have been a number of new single-family homes built in the area; for example, Habitat for Humanity has replaced homes that have burned down.

In addition, a number of written comments were received either at the meeting or via email, as well as a couple of voice mails. Some of the written comments received overlapped discussion during the meeting.

- Would it be possible for the City and/or County to purchase this area and convert it to a greenbelt with bike/pedestrian path with trees, benches, and mini-parks (i.e., playground equipment) spread along the length? Hopefully, this could tie into the lake area.
- We **OPPOSE** the rezoning of the West side of Oregon way that is currently zoned commercial. **Changing our zoning would not only devalue our real estate but would impede our future development plans.** We currently own three commercial buildings in this area that front Oregon Way/SR 432. We are strongly opposed to zoning this into an R-4 density category. Since zoning changes take so much time and energy, wouldn't the City want to expand growth along State Route 30? This would allow for better land use, future tax revenue, and creation of new jobs. We have plans to develop this property for additional commercial use because of the state highway proximity and the future port expansion. Please put it on record that we are **FIRMLY OPPOSED** to the rezoning of our land. (Specific properties and ownership information was included.)
- I purchased eight homes in the Highlands 10-12 years ago and am selling them due to the lack of police support. For example, on March 18 my tenants (husband, wife, 2-1/2-year-old daughter) in the 300 block of 25th Ave. called the police at about 8:00 pm regarding a drunk woman in her pajamas attempting to force her way into their home. The police came made the woman empty her beer after she attempted to flee. The police officer then told my tenants this is a victimless crime and “What do you expect, you live in the Highlands and this is Saturday night.” They could not sleep all night worrying about the possibility of her return. In any other city this would not happen. I have fixed up my homes and when I call the police they do little to nothing. They have failed the people living in the Highlands who are for the most part law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. I pay my taxes, fix the properties, and get the same cr-ppy attitude when complaining about the few drug/problem people bothering my properties. I have given up on Longview and want no part of the apathy and lack of desire to make this a beautiful bedroom community for Vancouver and Portland. I need to move onto a more proactive community. Best of luck, Longview.

- Property owner who lives in Vancouver area called to say he owns a small rental home on 16th. He understood “that half block is going to go light commercial” or that it has already been changed. He relayed an example from the Vancouver area, near Peace Health in Mill Plain, where some of the existing single-family homes have been transitioned into light commercial uses focused on professional offices, many medical related. Since this neighborhood isn’t as close to St. John’s maybe that wouldn’t work but it could be converted to other light commercial (one example: florist).
- A property owner who owns three single-family homes that front onto Oregon Way called to say he wants the City to keep the General Commercial zoning district in that area.
- With limited street parking, having single family homes would be better for the neighborhood.
- Absolutely against the apartments on Douglas St. We have one building apartment with two dwellings now and have garbage and junk cars. We clean up garbage every week due to the slob. The owners of rental houses don’t take care of them, and there is a problem with garbage. Junk cars and trucks make it hard for us to park. There are also a lot of children in area. It’s too highly traveled for cars to be parked on both sides. There are a lot of hit and runs on our street.
- We have a lot of walking traffic that goes back and forth to the store. They leave papers and garbage in my yard. Cars sideswipe mirrors off cars parked on the street. Neighbor had dogs and cats poop in front yard. Renters don’t keep up their place nor do owners. Renters don’t seem to care, they just move on. We have a lot of drug people on Douglas Street; a lot steal from owners and snoop. What will it be like if we have a lot more people coming and going?
- Connectivity – continuance of bike paths & alternate transportation routes are needed. High density will offset parking for alternate routing or “flyways.” Always consider air space above roadways for future commercial emergency services such as “drone” traffic.
- No on R-4 zone. Allow for new single-family homes with fewer regulations.
- Decrease parking requirements, four-plexes or smaller. Tax breaks for investors revitalizing neighborhoods.