City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission

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April 8, 2010

Mayor Mike McGinn
600 Fourth Avenue
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Seattle, WA 98124-4749

Councilmember Sally J. Clark, Chair
Committee on the Built Environment
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Councilmember Mike O'Brien, Chair
Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhoods Committee
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Findings & Recommendations for Future Neighborhood Plan Updates

Dear Mayor McGinn, Councilmember Clark, and Councilmember O'Brien,

Thank you all for asking the Seattle Planning Commission for its independent and objective findings and recommendations on the Seattle neighborhood plan updates and status reports.

As the Seattle economy improves providing higher density, transit oriented, affordable and amenity-rich neighborhoods becomes more important. We must seize the opportunities to shape our city and create a livable, sustainable and thriving Seattle.

The attached white paper is focused on Neighborhood Planning in 2010 and beyond. In formulating our recommendations we evaluated the 24 neighborhood plans and considered: population, development, housing affordability, transportation, parks, and neighborhood plan implementation; current neighborhood conditions and emerging priorities; last year's extensive outreach effort that facilitated a discussion between the City and residents regarding the status of 24 neighborhood plans since adoption of original plans in the 1990s; and the knowledge we bring from our long history of involvement in Seattle's neighborhood planning efforts and as the stewards of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

We hope the Commission's work will inform your decision-making process on whether or how to update neighborhood plans now and in the future. Thank you again for asking us to participate in this important effort.

Joshua Brower, Chair

Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Seattle City Councilmembers
Phil Fujii, Darryl Smith, Julie McCoy, Rebecca Deehr; Mayor's Office
Diane Sugimura, Alan Justad, Marshall Foster, John Skelton, Tom Hauger, Guillermo Romano, Lyle Bicknell, David Goldberg, Vanessa Murdock, Nora Liu; DPD
Stella Chao, Kimberlee Archie, Sebhat Tenna, Veronica Sherman-King, Thomas Whittamore; DON
Peter Hahn, Bob Powers, Tracy Krawczyk, Barbara Gray; SDOT
Rick Hooper; OH
Karen Grove; CBO
Rebecca Herzfeld, Norm Schwab, Ketil Freeman, Christa Valles; Council Central Staff

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL:

- Chair Josh Brower disclosed that his firm, Tupper Mack Brower, represents clients to rezone property within neighborhood planning boundaries; he also disclosed that he was the co-chair of NPAC from December 2008 through August 2009.
- Vice Chair Miller disclosed that she is a voting member of the Southeast District Council, a steering committee member of the Othello Station Community Advisory Committee, represents ROSA on the South Precinct Advisory Committee and is a steering committee member of Othello Park Now.
- Commissioner Catherine Benotto disclosed that her firm, Weber + Thompson, works for clients who might develop properties within neighborhood planning boundaries and that a member of her firm serves in a volunteer position on the SLUFAN committee. She also disclosed that she is a member of the West Seattle Triangle Advisory Committee.
- Commissioner David Cutler disclosed that his firm, GGLO, is working on the Mount Baker Neighborhood Plan update.
- Commissioner Chris Fiori disclosed that his firm, Heartland LLC, represents clients who own property within neighborhood planning boundaries.
- Commissioner Colle Hough-Beck disclosed that her firm, HBB, works on projects within neighborhood planning boundaries.
- Commissioner Mark Johnson disclosed that his firm, ESA Adolfson, does consulting work on neighborhood planning.
- Commissioner Marty Kaplan disclosed that he is a member of the Queen Anne Community Council.
- Commissioner Kay Knapton disclosed that she was one of the Commission's representatives on NPAC.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton disclosed that she was one of the Commission's representatives on NPAC and served as the co-chair of NPAC from August 2009 through January 2010.
- Commissioner Chris Persons disclosed that his firm, Capitol Hill Housing, develops projects within neighborhood planning boundaries and that one of his staff members was involved with NPAC.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that he is a member of the land use committee for the Queen Anne Community Council and his firm, VIA Architecture, is involved on the SR520 Bridge Replacement Project.

Background on why these 24 neighborhoods -- The 24 neighborhood plans included in the Status Check are: Admiral, Aurora/Licton Springs, Belltown, Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake, Capitol Hill, Central Area, Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee, Crown Hill/Ballard, Delridge, Eastlake, First Hill, Fremont, Georgetown, Green Lake, Greenwood/Phinney Ridge, Lake City, Morgan Junction, Pike/Pine, Queen Anne, Rainier Beach, University Community, Wallingford, West Seattle Junction and Westwood/Highland Park.

In the summer of 2008, City Council passed an ordinance (#122799) that called for status reports for 24 Neighborhood Plans that were created in the late 1990s. The City began a review of 24 neighborhood plans in 2009, preparing status reports - primarily a collection of data describing a point in time - for these neighborhoods. The review and assessment will result in a "State of the Neighborhoods" report.

The City has 38 adopted Neighborhood Plans which were developed as part of the City's Neighborhood Planning effort established a decade ago in response to the State Growth Management Act and Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, which designated Urban Centers and Urban Villages in these areas. Neighborhood Plans were prepared for these areas that outline how these neighborhoods would accommodate the anticipated growth in households and jobs Most of the city's single family residential areas do not lie within the Urban Centers and Villages and thus are not targeted to accommodate significant residential or employment growth.

Simultaneously to the status check of these 24 neighborhood plans, the City is updating three neighborhood plans in southeast Seattle, all of which contain light rail stations that opened in July 2009. These neighborhoods are: MLK @ Holly Street (which includes the Othello station), North Beacon Hill (which includes the Beacon Hill Station) and North Rainier (which includes the Mt. Baker station). It was widely thought that of the stations scheduled to open in 2009; these three provide the greatest opportunity to maximize the positive impact of the new light rail line.

The other eleven neighborhoods not included in the Status Check have been the subject of recent extensive planning initiatives. These neighborhoods include:

- Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center and Ballard Interbay Manufacturing and Industrial Center, due to the ongoing Industrial Jobs Initiative work program;
- Denny Triangle, Downtown Urban Center Planning Group and Commercial Core, due to 2006 Downtown zoning work;
- Pioneer Square and Chinatown-International District, due to current South Downtown planning efforts;
- South Lake Union, due to ongoing planning efforts;
- Roosevelt due to neighborhood's recent revisions to its neighborhood plan;
- Northgate, due to ongoing planning efforts; and
- South Park, due to recent development of the Neighborhood Action Agenda.

The Commission's white paper does NOT include these 11 neighborhoods or the 3 three neighborhood plans in southeast Seattle currently being updated and therefore are not included in the overall assessment of City priorities.

Seattle Planning Commission

Findings & Recommendations
Future Neighborhood Plan Updates

April 8, 2010

Understanding the Role of Neighborhood Planning

"Neighborhood planning is a way to tailor the comprehensive plan and implement it in areas with urban villages or centers and adopted growth targets. It is also a means by which members of any Seattle community may participate in planning for the future of their area within the context of the City's Comprehensive Plan...

...In early 2000, the City concluded a five-year neighborhood planning process. The City took three actions in response to each plan produced in this process.

From each plan a set of neighborhood specific goals and policies were adopted into the Comprehensive Plan. These goals and policies constitute the 'adopted' neighborhood plans.

The City also approved by resolution a work-plan matrix indicating the intent of the City concerning the implementation of specific recommendations from each neighborhood plan.

Finally, the City recognized by resolution that each plan, as submitted to the City, constitutes the continuing vision and desires of the community. The recognized neighborhood plans, however, have not been adopted as City policy." *

* Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*
8.3 A Neighborhood Planning Element

In this Report –

COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATES

- **Criteria for deciding which plans should be updated**
- **Recommendations for which plans should be updated**

IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGETARY ACTIONS

- **Neighborhood plan implementation**
- **City-wide concerns that should be addressed**
- **Issues of concern appropriate in venues other than urban planning efforts**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Engage the community in neighborhood planning**
- **The role of the community in neighborhood plan stewardship**
- **Neighborhood plans as living documents**

A Technical Addendum: Demographic Data in the Status Reports

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATES

Criteria for deciding which plans should be updated
Recommendations for which plans should be updated

SPC FINDINGS

1. **Seattle's Urban Village Strategy[1] remains a sound and meaningful way to focus jobs and housing growth; additional criteria can help refine decisions about how to prioritize public spending on infrastructure and amenities.**

2. **The vision outlined in most of the neighborhood plans continues to be relevant and accurately reflect the goals of the neighborhood. As such, the plans still provide relevant guidance for future planning and implementation efforts.**
   - While many areas in the city need attention and funding, in most cases the Neighborhood Plan vision, goals and policies are still relevant, but more focus is needed in that next level of planning and implementation.
   - More frequent attention to the Neighborhood Plans in needed. One way to better reflect evolving neighborhood goals is to look for targeted updates to plans during the course of the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle.

3. **The majority of the 24 neighborhood plans reviewed in the Status Check do not need a full scale plan update at this time. However, there are broad concerns that should be addressed.**
   - The need for more frequent and focused planning and implementation to achieve emerging issues and opportunities.
   - The ability to respond to opportunities and challenges throughout the city that require immediate action and attention.

4. **A continuum of planning and implementation tools exists. A Neighborhood Plan update is merely one specific planning process that sets the framework vision, goals and policies.**
   - There are other planning and implementation processes that may be more appropriate than a full scale Neighborhood Plan update including: area-wide planning, subarea planning, rezone proposals, station area planning, action agendas, urban design strategies, or corridor planning.

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[1] The intent of this strategy is to "enable the City to deliver services more equitably, pursue a development pattern that is environmentally and economically sound, and provide a better means of managing growth and change through collaboration with the community in planning for the future of these areas.... [and] to maximize the benefit of public investment in infrastructure and services and promote collaboration with private interests and the community, to achieve mutual benefits." There are adopted 38 Neighborhood Plans; six designated Urban Centers, six Hub Urban Villages and eighteen Residential Urban Villages. In addition, the City adopted Neighborhood Plans for the two designated Manufacturing and Industrial Centers and two communities that were considered "distressed."

SPC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **We recommend differentiating between neighborhood plan updates and other planning tools such as area-wide planning, subarea planning, rezone proposals, station area planning, corridor planning, action agendas, urban design strategy, or other effort.**
   - More clearly defining and creating a common understanding of the various planning tools will help us determine what the appropriate approach is for each specific situation.

2. **The criteria we considered in making our recommendations are as follows:**

   Neighborhood Plan updates warranted-
   - Circumstances have changed (or are anticipated to change) that fundamentally alter the vision of a neighborhood
   - Neighborhood Plan vision, goals and strategies are no longer relevant.
   - Neighborhoods in which the rates of residential and/or employment growth are significantly different than growth rates anticipated under 20-year residential and/or employment growth estimates should be prime candidates for Neighborhood Plan Updates.
   - Neighborhoods where existing infrastructure is already in place to accommodate additional jobs and/or housing.
   - Neighborhoods where growth has already or is soon to exceed existing infrastructure capacity.

   Other planning processes - While most of the 24 Neighborhood Plans assessed in 2009 do not need to receive a full scale Neighborhood Plan update, some neighborhoods need focus in the near future through some other effort; for instance,
   - Areas where a significant transit project in the community warrants a **station area plan or corridor plan** in order to optimize public investment and link public outreach and neighborhood vision with clear implementation strategies and environmental review.
   - Communities where significant and unforeseen development opportunities exist, because of vacant land for example, should respond to those opportunities through a **subarea plan or urban design effort or framework.**
   - In areas where the framework vision, goals and policies outlined in the Neighborhood Plan are still valid an **area-wide planning, rezone proposal, action agenda, or urban design strategy or framework** may be more appropriate to help implement the plan.

Note: The Commission will release a report this summer that considers optimizing regional transit investments by better aligning land use strategies and prioritizing other investment necessary to create livable and sustainable transit communities in Seattle. The report will shed further light on how and where Seattle should focus scarce resources.

3. **We recommend the following neighborhoods receive a significant planning effort; either receiving a full scale neighborhood plan update or some other planning effort to better implement the goals and policies of the current neighborhood plans.**

Note: Urgent Priorities are listed first in alphabetical order followed by Important Priorities also listed in alphabetical order.

- **Capitol Hill** Priority: **Urgent**
  Cal Anderson Park is a thriving new urban open space and LINK light rail and a new streetcar route are coming to the neighborhood. To maximize the opportunity to create a vibrant walkable community served by high capacity transit and optimize regional investments, **we recommend the creation of a precise station area urban design plan** well in advance of the development of the four Sound Transit owned sites (RFP/RFQs to be issued in 2012/13). The continuing work of the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce Transit Oriented Development subcommittee, now the Capitol Hill TOD Champions, provides a structure as well as a solid foundation for the development of such a plan. **Both Pike/Pine and First Hill** will need to be considered in this planning effort because at least part of Pike/Pine would likely fall within a station area urban design plan and the connections between the light rail and the First Hill streetcar will be essential first steps that connect the various modes within our transit system.

- **Columbia City/Hillman City/Genesee** Priority: **Urgent**
  Light rail has begun service to the neighborhood since the plan was passed in the 1990s. Realigning land use strategies and public investments to create a vibrant, walkable community served by high capacity transit is warranted, given the investment in transit. **A fully developed station area plan is recommended** in order to capitalize on the public investment in transit and respond to market forces that are stronger here than in other areas in the city.

- **Queen Anne / Uptown** Priority: **Urgent**
  The Uptown Urban Center has experienced considerable growth and will continue to undergo some of the most significant investment and change in Seattle including the realignment of the street grids around the the SR99 tunnel north portal and the Mercer Corridor Project. The Gates Foundation campus is underway and will create 2,000 new jobs, the Seattle Center is executing a new $500 million master plan and RapidRide service is coming to both Elliott and Aurora Avenues of Uptown. Significant development changes are underway and zoning adjustments are due in the Denny-Broad-Aurora Triangle, which presents a great opportunity for new jobs and housing growth in concert with new connections to South Lake Union. **A subarea plan is recommended to consolidate all these opportunities.**

- **Rainier Beach** Priority: **Urgent**
  Since its plan was approved more than a decade ago, light rail is now operating in this neighborhood. Realigning land use strategies and public investments to create a vibrant, walkable mixed use community served by high capacity transit is warranted, given our regional investment in transit. **A fully developed station area plan is recommended.** We recognize that the City has identified this area as place for an immediate planning effort and we concur with that assessment.

- **West Seattle Junction** Priority: **Urgent**
  An unanticipated, significant development opportunity exists in this neighborhood planning area because Huling Brothers Automobile has vacated/sold several acres of land. The redevelopment opportunity at the "gateway" to West Seattle, in combination with the future

RapidRide stations, warrants **a precisely focused subarea plan and urban design effort** that would implement goals already outlined in the neighborhood plan; the current neighborhood plan calls for redeveloping this area and improving the gateway. We understand that DPD's City Planning office has begun a small planning effort here and would encourage more resources for an interdisciplinary approach that includes transportation, housing, parks and economic development in addition to land use and urban design that will result in right of way improvements, urban design, zoning and land use. We also strongly recommend enhanced efforts designed to create transitions between the new development and the retail core on California Avenue that serves as West Seattle's downtown heart.

- **Aurora/Licton Springs** Priority: **Important**
RapidRide service is planned for this neighborhood. To take full advantage of the opportunity to create a vibrant walkable community served by high capacity transit and optimize this regional investment **we recommend the creation of a corridor plan.**

- **Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake** Priority: **Important**
RapidRide service is planned to connect the **Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake** neighborhood with Shoreline and downtown Seattle. Planning around this anticipated service is warranted to optimize this regional investment and create a vibrant, walkable community. **We recommend the creation of a corridor plan.** We recognize that the City recently announced that the Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller Lake neighborhoods will begin an update of their neighborhood plan. While important, we are surprised that it was picked as a top priority as compared to the neighborhoods where significant transit investments have already begun or will start in the near future or where additional planning efforts are time sensitive and important to review in the next 18 months.

- **Crown Hill / Ballard** Priority: **Important**
This neighborhood has experienced tremendous residential growth at a rate that was unanticipated when its plan was approved 10 years ago potentially creating unintended results. In addition, the neighborhood will be served by a future RapidRide route. **A Neighborhood Plan update is recommended.**

- **Delridge** Priority: **Important**
Recent assessments have shown that current infrastructure exists to support additional jobs and housing growth in this neighborhood. A neighborhood plan update would look fully at the opportunity this presents and also allow for planning that considers whether, where and how additional growth should occur. **A Neighborhood Plan update is recommended.**

- **Lake City** Priority: **Important**
A significant development opportunity exists in this neighborhood because many acres of auto-oriented land has been sold and vacated, and there are many other undeveloped parcels that could potentially contribute to a vibrant Lake City Way Corridor. Action is needed to take advantage of this opportunity. A neighborhood plan update is not needed but **we recommend a planning and urban design effort to implement the goals and policies of the current plan.** In addition **corridor planning** focused on Lake City Way is essential too.

- **University Community** Priority: Important

The University Community is one of six designated regional Urban Centers in Seattle. Urban Centers are the areas targeted to receive the most housing and job growth yet the University Community has received a lot less attention as compared to the other designated Urban Centers. Two new light rail stations are coming to this area (at Brooklyn and at Husky Stadium). To take full advantage of this major public investment and to better implement the neighborhood plan goals and policies, **we recommend the creation of a station area plan for the Brooklyn Station to consider zoning changes and an urban design plan** focused on creating a vibrant, regional center. A significant portion of the land around the **Husky Stadium station area** is part of the University of Washington campus. Planning for the University of Washington is done in the context of Major Institution Master Planning. **We recommend that the University updated the MIMP to account for the station and that that the City should work closely with the UW to identify ways to integrate transit with the campus community.** A small amount of land within ¼ mile of the station is not owned or controlled by the University: a small pocket of single family homes on the south side of the Montlake Cut north of SR520, and the large MOHAI site that will be vacated when the museum moves to South Lake Union. In addition, the future SR520 work will significantly impact the pedestrian and bike access routes to the station from these areas and areas further south – with everything funneling over the Cut. These will need to be addressed in any planning effort for the University station.

IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGETARY ACTIONS

Neighborhood plan implementation
Citywide concerns that should be addressed
Issues of concern appropriate in venues other than urban planning efforts

SPC FINDINGS

1. **Achieving citywide and neighborhood goals and priorities require on-going implementation through a cogent, consistent and transparent process as plans and projects are being developed.**

2. **Long-term planning efforts, sustainability and social justice goals, and strategic visions are reinforced by leveraging related investments within the areas where we focus growth and related infrastructure and amenities.**

3. **Growth and development plans, including neighborhood plans, should clearly align with the City's Capital Improvement Plan and departmental capital planning.**
   - The Pedestrian Master Plan is a great example of an implementation document that accounts for expected growth and density and aligns it with project-level funding prioritization. This should be used as a model approach throughout the City, including in neighborhood planning.
   - Prioritizing funding allocation to specific projects is only as good as the consistency and adequacy of the funds themselves. Adequate funding sources are essential to realize the efforts of good planning.

4. **The Status Check identified a number of common issues that have a citywide scope and are not specific to any single neighborhood.**

   Examples of citywide urban planning or implementation issues:
   - Transit service (public desire for more frequent and reliable service)
   - Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
   - Parking
   - Townhouse design
   - Consistent implementation of design guidelines

5. **The Status Check identified a number of common issues worth considering for action through other city programmatic or budgetary efforts.**

   Examples of issues better dealt with outside the context of planning:
   - Crime and public safety
   - Schools (quality of education, enrollment issues, etc.)

SPC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Neighborhood plan implementation needs to be better aligned throughout City plans and programs. A citywide development strategy should be created to provide additional focus to the Urban Village Strategy to prioritize where resources are spent. In addition, improvements are needed to better ensure the leveraging impacts of coordination and deliberate forward progress in order to implement neighborhood plans.**

2. **Ensure that a city-wide perspective balances other pressures to allocate scarce City resources.**
   - Without clear alignment, funds are more influenced by political pressures than adopted neighborhood vision and goals.
   - While it is valid for neighborhood organizations to advocate for their own needs, we also need to keep an eye on the big picture to ensure we are adequately, equitably and strategically spending our scare resources.

3. **Use the next Comprehensive Plan update to spur our vision for the future and encourage broad-reaching, interconnected and innovative ways to approach City planning at the neighborhood level.**
   - Establish a collective, citywide vision that acts as the roadmap for consistently updating Neighborhood Plans, identifying actions that the City, residents, and other agencies can take to ensure that each neighborhood continues to thrive and improve as Seattle grows.
   - Outline a coherent Neighborhood Planning process that follows a larger comprehensive vision and operational mission associated with meeting this vision over time.

4. **Transit service, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and community parking strategies should be the highest priorities in the update of the Transportation Strategic Plan which addresses the City's comprehensive transportation framework and informs Walk/Bike/Ride project and capital planning.**

5. **Updating the land use code and consideration of administrative design review programs should continue to be a high priority.**
   - The Commission is currently working with DPD and City Council to revise these regulations as part of the update to the lowrise section of the Multifamily Code.

6. **Review the implementation of neighborhood design guidelines.**

7. **Citywide efforts are needed to address public safety issues at the neighborhood level, including addressing perceptions regarding safety and crime in individual neighborhoods.**

8. **Consider allocating City resources to help Seattle Public Schools better align choices about school closures and siting with the City's residential growth estimates.**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Engage the community in neighborhood planning
The role of the community in neighborhood plan stewardship
Neighborhood plans as living documents

SPC FINDINGS

1. **Seattle's Neighborhood Planning effort in the 1990s established a strong foundation of civic engagement.**
   - Seattle's neighborhood planning process empowered neighbors and community stakeholders to act as neighborhood stewards who, as laypeople, have developed a language for planning and have the technical skills to advocate for the needs of their community. We should keep with us the successes of this planning effort and combine those with lessons we have learned about representation and building community.

2. **Ensure that diverse neighborhood voices and perspectives are actively engaged in the planning process.**
   - Traditional public involvement processes tend to disenfranchise communities of color, immigrant communities, socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, renters, younger people, non-English speakers, and those with less time to attend public meetings. New efforts and community engagement strategies are critical to ensuring decisions are based on comprehensive input and diverse values.
   - The new engagement strategies used during this past year are a good first step in broadening the civic dialogue. More effort is needed in this endeavor. The City's use of the 'trusted advocate model' via the Planning Outreach Liaisons raised the standard for public involvement, bringing many new voices into neighborhood planning. It is critical that these new voices continue to be heard.
   - This past year, the Commission learned the power of alternative outreach methods first hand. The Commission hosted a virtual meeting where over 4,500 participants shared feedback about their neighborhoods. Using the internet and other technology successfully broadens public outreach. It enables solicitation of opinions from those who are not comfortable with or lack time for a public meeting.

3. **Seattle's community stewardship approach should be reassessed.**
   - Community stewardship of neighborhood plans is an essential component of successful implementation. Recent assessments of our community stewardship structure indicate that the current approach needs to be revisited to ensure all community members are enfranchised to become stewards of their neighborhoods. Allocating ongoing neighborhood plan stewardship to one community group per neighborhood not only stresses the volunteer efforts of groups that naturally wax and wane with time but also disenfranchises the values and input of community members outside the group's membership. A more creative and inclusive method of stewardship is critical to the plans' ongoing success and good communication with the City on planning matters.

4. **The City needs to communicate with citizens more effectively and articulate how plans are being implemented in a way that is more accessible to the public.**
   - More can be done to communicate with citizens and help them understand the purpose of neighborhood plans and how they are implemented.
   - While much has been done to implement neighborhood plans, particularly in providing public facilities such as libraries, community centers and parks, many people do not think of these projects in terms of their neighborhood plans. To the contrary, many people, particularly newer residents, are not familiar with any neighborhood plans.

5. **The approval and adoption matrix is inaccessible for many community members and does not clearly illustrate how neighborhood plans have been implemented.**
   - The City needs a more accessible way to track implementation of the neighborhood plans that focuses on implementing the broader goals and policies, while allowing for the flexibility of finding the best solutions.
   - Implementation should focus less on specific/discrete projects within the neighborhood and more on overall goals and strategies. For instance, instead of asking the community to suggest implementation measures such as a traffic circle being installed at a specific location, traffic calming measures should be considered and proper analysis done to find the right solution to address the need.

SPC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Create an inviting, consistent and comprehensive public process.**
   - Create an ongoing and consistent system for dialogue about neighborhood needs, allowing for the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities or meet challenges as they arise. This process should be consistent across the city and its neighborhoods to achieve equity and ensure a holistic approach.
   - Go beyond public meetings to take advantage of more cost-effective and comprehensive outreach efforts to engage the community. Options may include the trusted advocate model; established community and district councils; traditional and online surveys, blogs, or wikis; or random selection "jury" processes; and others. Since we are a diverse city, we should use a diverse set of outreach tools.
   - Trusted Advocates or Public Outreach Liaisons may benefit from a formalized City-sponsored training and education program. By formally recognizing the neighborhood leaders in our community, we create an opportunity to build a stronger and more frequently travelled bridge between neighborhoods, businesses, and the City government.
   - The City should help create and support a dynamic online presence for individual neighborhoods to facilitate engagement, education and information-sharing.

2. **Work to constantly redefine and reassess who constitutes the "neighborhood."**
   - Use Census Bureau surveys and other available demographic data to understand diverse and changing demographics within the city.
   - Incorporate new civic engagement strategies that better recognize Seattle's diverse communities and populations to help form a comprehensive and accurate picture of Seattle's current and future needs.
   - Use new technologies as a tool to encourage wider audience participation as well as a portal for constituents to receive important information.

3. **Review the community and district council and neighborhood stewardship structure to make them more effective.**
   - Any advisory body, whether citywide or at the community or district level, needs built-in clarity of charter and purpose, and accountability around representation. Additionally, no one group should be made responsible for "holding" an individual neighborhood plan.
   - Supporting local community groups in taking ownership of their plans must also include a stronger mechanism for empowering new residents, workers, and businesspersons to engage in the implementation of the goals and policies of the neighborhood plans. All voices should be welcome and heard at the table.
   - Civic engagement should ultimately be about creating shared-ownership in both the process and the plan. The responsibility and ultimate ownership of the neighborhood plans including establishing strong communications and engagement processes rests with the City, which has the authority and means to implement the plans.

4. **Effective and transparent implementation of the neighborhood plans requires community involvement.**
   - Working with communities to implement plans needs to be done in a more effective and transparent manner.
   - The City should be honest and transparent about where and how neighborhood input is used and how engagement affects the decision-making process.
   - The City should be more nuanced and sophisticated about planning and prioritizing the use of our City's resources with long-term, strategic goals in mind. Larger strategies and a citywide perspective need to be communicated to neighbors effectively so the conversation can occur at a higher level of understanding.
   - Consider an education component regarding what neighborhood plans can and cannot achieve. Work to address neighborhood concerns as needed outside the planning process to avoid the plans becoming overburdened with overly specific or unachievable goals.
   - The City should also establish a new way to track the implementation of neighborhood plans that will make it easier for people to understand how the plans are used.

Demographic Data in the Status Reports
A Technical Addendum to the Planning Commission Findings &
Recommendations for Future Neighborhood Plan Updates

Councilmember Clark sent a letter to the Planning Commission in which some questions were posed about the usefulness of 2000 Census data to develop the neighborhood Status Reports and other suggestions for ensuring that the Status Reports useful tools for neighborhoods.

Commission Demographer Diana Canzoneri has provided the following remarks in response to this question.

The 2000 Census data were included in the Status Reports because they remain the most respected, comprehensive estimates available for population and household characteristics at the neighborhood level. At the same time, DPD staff was able to draw on permit information and other data sources to provide up to date estimates on *the numbers* of housing units, households, and persons currently in the city's neighborhoods.

Still, the inclusion of nearly decade-old data is a concern that the Commission members and I share, and a concern mentioned in feedback received from the public. To help address these concerns, I provided the Neighborhood Planning Team with additional context which they are including in the Status Reports to explain the rationale for including the 2000 census data given constraints in data availability. I also provided highlights on the 2011 through 2012 timeline upon which new neighborhood-level data will become available from the Census Bureau.[i]

Public and stakeholder feedback revealed particular concern with presenting housing price and rental data from the 2000 Census in the pie charts highlighting key neighborhood demographics. In response, the pie charts with outdated Census data on housing affordability are being removed, and that the more recent information available from Dupre+Scott and other data sources have been moved closer to the beginning of the report.

The Planning Commission and staff understand that the Neighborhood Planning Team intends to work with neighborhood stakeholders to make strategic use of both the 2010 Census and forthcoming American Community Survey estimates for neighborhood planning. I've let them know that I am available to provide assistance and consultation on this.

Other public comments revealed that many people did not realize that the Status Reports contained more than the citywide "wrapper" and four-page "highlight" piece. DPD and Planning Commission staff made several suggestions on presentation of the material, for example, including a table of contents, or box outlining "what's inside."

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[i] **When New Neighborhood-Level Data will be Available from the U.S. Census Bureau**

The 2010 Census will provide states with block-level counts for population by race and ethnicity and housing unit counts by occupancy status by March 2011. Other data products for basic population and housing characteristics covered in the decennial census will be released later in 2011 and 2012. Detailed information on the release schedule for 2010 Census Data products at www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/c2010products.pdf.

The new American Community Survey (ACS) is a continuous survey that collects data on the broader array of demographic and housing characteristics that used to be covered in the long-form portion of the decennial census. Neighborhood-level data from the ACS (down to the block group level) will begin to be available at the end of 2010, although these data will only be released as five-year aggregations.