



Community Meetings Outcomes Summary

February 21, 2018

Introduction and Meeting Purpose

As part of the \$54 billion Sound Transit 3 package, Sound Transit will plan and build a bus rapid transit (BRT) system serving Bothell, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, and Shoreline, better connecting these Cities to the region. One of the station options in Lake Forest Park is Town Center, with passenger access platforms on both sides of SR 522, pedestrian access improvements, and a park-and-ride structure with capacity for 300 cars. This investment presents an opportunity for the Lake Forest Park community to shape the long-term vision for the heart of the City.

The City has made important changes in its approach to the Town Center Vision, including narrowing the project's geographic scope and putting a greater emphasis on public engagement. The City and its Consultant Team began learning about the community's vision for its future by holding a series of interviews in December 2017 and January 2018. The information gathered in these interviews informed future outreach, including the content and format of these five Community Meetings held in late January. The goal of these Community Meetings was to learn more about the community's vision for the heart of Lake Forest Park. The outcomes of these Meetings will inform the content of the Workshop series that will be held in late February. The results of all of these outreach events will be included in the Town Center Vision, which will aim to capture the community's long term interests and serve as a framework to help the City Council develop policies regarding land use, zoning, and connections within Town Center.

Meeting Details

January 27, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

January 29, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

January 29, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

January 31, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

January 31, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

All meetings were held at Town Center (17171 Ballinger Way NE, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155).

Agenda

- Welcome (15 minutes)
 - Activity 1: "Where do you live?" Map
 - Activity 2: "Possibilities" Reference Images
- Activity 3: Small Group Discussions (1 hour)
- Report-Out (15 minutes)

Attendees

The events were attended by a total of 123 members of the public and staffed by the following members of the Project Team:

Armaghan Baghoori – Otak
D.J. Baxter – SOJ
Steve Bennett – City of Lake Forest Park
Rebecca Fornaby – 3 Square Blocks
Genevieve Hale-Case – SOJ
Curtis LaPierre – Otak
Finis Ray – Otak
Mandi Roberts – Otak
Pete Rose – City of Lake Forest Park
Anna Snyder Kelly – 3 Square Blocks
Marcia Wagoner – 3 Square Blocks
Julia Walton – 3 Square Blocks
Frank Zenk – City of Lake Forest Park

Volunteer planning students from the University of Washington also helped out at the workshop, including Jessica Jarvi and Adam Witzel.

Public Comment Summary

Activity 1: “Where do you live?” Map

As participants arrived, they placed a sticky dot on a map of Lake Forest Park to illustrate where they lived. The three dot colors represent the three days over which the five meetings were held. It’s clear from the map that participants in the Meetings represented a wide range of neighborhoods from every area of the City.

Activity 2: “Possibilities” Reference Images

The Consultant Team gathered a set of images (see Appendix B) that served as a jumping-off point for conversation in the group discussions. These images were posted on the walls and participants were encouraged to share their thoughts about the images on flip chart paper or sticky notes. The images were grouped into the following categories:

- Transportation Connections—Pedestrian, Bicycle, Driving, Access to Transit, etc.
- Natural Elements/Low Impact Development
- Community Space—Civic Space and Public Space Enhancements
- Future Development—Transit-Oriented Residential and Mixed-Use Development, Transit-Oriented Commercial and Mixed Use Development
- Parking Structures—Integrated with Development, Stand Alone

Written comments on these images were informal and reflected a wide range of opinions. The Town Center Vision team is reviewing these comments and will synthesize the input received to understand common themes and interests. This input will help shape the development of the Town Center Vision. Notes gathered on the images were photographed and are provided in Appendix C. The team will

continue to gather additional input on these possibilities at the community design workshops planned for the end of February.

Note: How things change and develop at the Town Center will be a result of future decision-making by property owners and public agencies (including Merlone Geier, Sound Transit and the City of Lake Forest Park). Ultimately, design decisions and improvements to the site will be heavily influenced by site ownership and leasing arrangements, market factors, technical feasibility, public safety and circulation needs, and a range of other factors.

Activity 3: Small Group Discussions

Participants were seated in small groups, with each table staffed by a facilitator and scribe. Each group was provided with a set of colored index cards, a report-out template, and a notepad. Reference material included an aerial image of Town Center, a map of the new Central Subarea boundary, copies of the “Possibilities” Reference Images posted on the walls, and a Community Ecosystem diagram. (See Appendix D for Small Group Discussion materials.)

Facilitators opened the discussion with an overview of the project background, outreach completed to date, and goals for the meeting. The discussion itself was structured around three themes: “Preserving What Works,” “Investing in Change,” and “Envisioning the Future.” Questions 1 and 2 prompted a discussion of participants’ positive memories and asked them what they would like to see “stabilized” at Town Center, Question 3 prompted a discussion of how investment from Sound Transit could benefit the city, and Question 4 asked participants to share the kinds of experiences they hope to have at Town Center in the future. For each question, participants recorded their answers on a color-coded index card and then shared their answers in a round-robin. After each round of discussion, the scribe helped the group find common themes and key points. The scribe then recorded these on the template provided. At the conclusion of each meeting, a volunteer from each small group presented highlights from that group’s discussion to the rest of the attendees. The summaries below reflect overarching themes and key points from each of these discussions followed by direct quotes from participants (see Appendix E for a more detailed summary of the Small Group Discussions).

Question 1: What’s your favorite memory of Town Center?

Participants’ favorite memories highlighted Town Center’s role as a center for the community.

Memories included:

- When Third Place opened
- First date 1967
- Seeing my daughter and friends playing Dungeons and Dragons in the Commons
- Seeing faces I know in the Commons and talking to them
- The bookstore—a great indicator of a well-read community
- Watching kids build independence on their own at Town Center
- Becoming part of the community over 27 years
- A safe place to go when our house was robbed

The programming at Town Center was also a common theme in participants' responses:

- Dancing to swing music on Saturday nights
- Concerts with my kids!
- Cool, crisp fall morning. Sunday with full sun and farmers' market has every stall filled with fresh produce, prepared food vendors, and wine tasting.
- Barbara Kingsolver author talk

A third theme that emerged highlighted the function of Town Center as a "one stop shop" for daily living:

- Local shopping without chaos
- Running errands with the kids
- Picnic supplies from Albertsons in the hot summer
- "Transitioning" from a City Council meeting into some after-the-fact discussions over beers at the grill

Residents treasure memories of the natural environment at Town Center:

- Seeing a salmon in Lyon Creek in 1964 before construction began
- Beautiful willow trees along the creek, covering 522, I loved sitting under there when it was warm in summer

Question 2: What does "stability" look like at Town Center?"

With regard to transportation (including pedestrian, bicycle, driving, access to transit, etc.), residents felt that walkability to and within Town Center was the greatest indicator of stability, with a secondary focus on access to the surrounding neighborhoods, amenities, and transit:

- Walkability—the ability to do errands without driving too far
- Pedestrian-friendly to and from Town Center
- Pedestrian-friendly parking areas
- Safe pathways and intersections
- Integration with surrounding neighborhood
- Easy transit
- Access to bus and Burke-Gilman
- Flow between commercial and residential (parks, trails, courtyards)

Participants also indicated that “stability” could be realized through the celebration and preservation of Town Center’s natural amenities:

- Connections with the natural environment—our natural surroundings need to be elevated
- Keeping the tree canopy
- Placing an emphasis on natural environment preservation and beautification
- Retaining ecological sensitivity of LFP citizens

In terms of community, civic, and public space, participants articulated that a strong, organized community is inherently “stable,” particularly if it places an emphasis on community activities and multi-generational inclusiveness (serving the needs of the full community and residents of all ages):

- Keep the concept of the Town Center as a community center
- Retain community ambiance!
- Organized neighbors supported by city and good communication
- Strong community meeting place for farmers market, music, art, family activities
- Adolescent youths in Town Center on their own
- Community stability depends on multigenerational growth—families generate “stickiness” with lifestyle, economy/jobs, education that makes it worth being and staying in the community

With regard to development, “stability” means retaining the character of Town Center while encouraging a mix of “everyday” businesses that serve residents’ needs. Comments also indicated that development should be supportive of people of a range of ages and socioeconomic statuses:

- Keeping character as-is, feels like a small town, local—not corporate—businesses
- Keeping the spirit of the Commons in the new development in addition to having space and reason to grow
- Keep it relevant, useful, practical—library, stores that sell food, hardware, pharmacies, and restaurants mixed with more frivolous stores (candles, etc.)
- Functions for local life—grocery, community gathering space, farmers market, bookstore, café
- Full occupancy of retail spaces, long-term tenants
- Allow for multi-generational living, the ability to live and age in place
- Allow for a variety of socioeconomic status residents—stability in vitality, not static
- Integrated housing, retail and transit in efficient and feasible plan to maintain balance in community
- LFP should work for all ages—commercial uses should serve and support multi-generational use
- Preserving immediate area surrounding Town Center as single-family residential. Do so by making efficient use of Town Center property. To me this means building “really” tall—all need to be beautiful!
- Maintain a non-commercial meeting and event space *while* allowing development and growth *and still* be affordable enough for retirees and working class families to live here. A community of only the well-off is unstable.

One comment tied these categories together, stating that the relationship of Third Place Commons to the food, library, retail, and City Hall represents “stability.”

Question 3: Major public investment is coming to Town Center. What are amenities and improvements that you would like to see associated with this investment?

Residents expressed interest in improvements to circulation, access, and wayfinding for all modes in and around Town Center. Comments highlighted interest in a circular trail around Town Center, an under or overpass for pedestrians and cyclists crossing SR 522:

- Defined pathways to get to shops, separation of cars from pedestrians
- Green pathway through the Town Center
- Pathway around Town Center
- More sidewalks leading to center from neighborhoods
- Graceful pedestrian bridge over 522 linking the lake and Town Center
- Safe, easy access to Burke-Gilman

The desired investments in the natural environment at Town Center focused on building a stronger interface between the community and its natural amenities (creeks, trails, and Lake Washington) as well as restoring native flora and fauna in order to better reflect the community’s values:

- Access to trails, lakes, and creeks
- Create “people space” along the creek, make the creek a destination
- A walking trail along Lyon Creek instead of a solid fence
- Daylight the stream
- Habitat for fish and wildlife
- Native plantings

Participants expressed a desire for investment in community, civic, and public space to take the form of indoor and outdoor (covered) gathering spaces that are actively programmed and inviting to residents of all ages:

- Outdoor community gathering space
- Meeting/activity space for seniors
- Community centers for seniors and youth
- Open wifi, outdoor fire pits, pickle ball court, and drinking water bottle fill stations
- Picnic tables near the farmers market (with green space)

In addition to a high level of support for a range of high-quality, affordable shops, restaurants, and services at Town Center, residents expressed mixed levels of support for residential uses at Town Center. Support for multifamily housing at Town Center highlighted an interest in mixed-use development with affordable and/or senior housing over commercial uses.

- Better supermarket
- Affordable daycare
- Multifamily inclusion within Town Center
- Low-income senior housing for aging in place
- Store fronts on bottom level, housing on top
- Build up while preserving character, no tall buildings
- Invest in building out residential housing at the Town Center—residents living here would help obtain the critical mass of customers needed for a stable, ongoing, vibrant commercial space
- An opportunity to provide homes—such as condos and apartments—in four to five stories over shops or garage for Lake Forest Park residents to downsize. Some units should be earmarked as affordable.

Participants sought improvements to parking at Town Center in the form of a concealed parking garage to address the parking shortage and create opportunities for other uses and improvements:

- Parking for cars using Burke-Gilman
- No more park-and-hiders
- Need to increase parking for businesses that exist and even more for additional businesses that may come
- Parking garage to enable existing parking areas to be enhanced cosmetically and provide safer pedestrian use
- Stacked parking to increase capacity and reduce footprint
- Concealed parking
- Get rid of the huge asphalt by adding a parking garage
- Covered parking area with businesses and views on top and businesses on perimeter of whole property would be best
- Create parking structure to accommodate under cover—in a really fun-friendly way—a year-round farmers' market!

Question 4: What experiences would you like to have at Town Center in the future?

Participants vision for the future of transportation at Town Center:

- Walking with friends in and around a well-landscaped Town Center
- Walking and biking in and around Town Center, and jumping on the bus if the mood strikes me
- Jogging the circular trail around the perimeter
- Bussing in and out of Town Center

Participants vision for the future of the natural environment at Town Center:

- Not just shopping, but enjoying the creek, the crows, and hanging outside with community
- Fishing or watching fish in a daylighted creek
- Walking along the creek with outdoor seating and lighting and tables
- Feeling like Town Center is more green than gray
- Enjoying a beautiful space with landscaping, art, etc.

Participants vision for the future of community, civic, and public space at Town Center:

- Gathering with friends at a safe, vibrant indoor or outdoor commons
- Holding meetings in dedicated meeting spaces
- Continuing to go to Third Place
- Getting produce at a larger, year-round farmers market
- Sharing resources, like a tool library
- Spending time with my grandson doing things he will think of as fun
- Enjoying fun, memorable, exciting community events, senior dances
- Taking advantage of multigenerational spaces and events—for families, teens, and seniors
- Browsing a bigger library with longer hours

Participants vision for the future of development at Town Center:

- Having a complete experience close to home
- Spending three hours with the family
- Taking care of my day-to-day needs—shopping, bank, dining out, library, hair salon—and I can walk to it all; going to the post office; shoe repair; high quality medical offices
- Retiring to an apartment above Town Center with a Mt. Rainier view
- Enjoying evenings out with my wife
- Riding my bike and returning to an outdoor garden patio pub
- Timeless northwest style design—James Cutler-style
- Meeting with clients, colleagues, and Meet Ups at a co-working space

Participants vision for the future of parking at Town Center:

- Using a dedicated park-and-ride
- Using managed parking for business owners
- Taking in the view from a rooftop park or restaurant

Next Steps

Materials from this and other events are available at YourLFP.com. The next public outreach event will be a set of Community Design Workshops on February 28 from 4:30 to 6:00 pm and 6:30 to 8:00 pm (participants should plan to attend the time that works best for their schedule).

Appendix

- A. "Where do you live?" Map Photo
- B. "Possibilities" Reference Images
- C. "Possibilities" Reference Images Feedback
- D. Small Group Discussion Photos and Materials
- E. Small Group Discussion Templates Summary - Detailed