

West Anchorage Planning Group

Land Use Workshop Notes

Tuesday, January 5, 2010, 5:30-8:30pm

MOA Planning Department, Room 170

WAPG Members Present:

John Johanson, TSAIA
Andy Hutzler Lake Hood
Ed Fogels, Sand Lake CC
Mike Carlson, At Large
Jae Shin, At Large
Peggy Auth, Spenard CC
Matt Burkholder, Spenard CC (for Jason)
Cathy Gleason, Turnagain CC
Merle Akers (listening)
Mike Mitchell, Trails & Greenways Coalition

Staff Present:

Tom Davis, MOA
Tyler Robinson, MOA
Thede Tobish, MOA
Jon Issacs, URS
Paul Depalatis, URS
Kim Wetzel, URS

I. Introduction

This is second WAPG special session.

II. 2006 LUPM – Tom Davis

Zoning Decisions are made currently with the Adopted 1982 Land Use Map and the Anchorage 2020 Policy Map.

2006 LUPM started with existing zoning boundaries. Reasons include protecting existing boundaries.

2006 map was approved in concept by PZC- approved the categories (R-4A, NMU, CMU).

MOA re-ran the population projection numbers from Anchorage 2020 to determine land capacity. Most areas, under current zoning, had adequate capacity/housing units. Except NW area was a little short.

Described public process and issues-responses.

Sample: "Spenard Triangle" is within an area that needs more residential and higher density to support the commercial. It's currently filled with small single family. A new district has been applied to it- it allows a lot of commercial, but requires at least 50% residential.

Example densities to consider: 82 dwelling units/acre – Park Plaza next to Mulcahy.

45 dwelling units/acre – the Park Place next to New Sagaya
Something that will allow greater densities is great streets.

B-1A Neighborhood Commercial - An ideal scale would be Fire Island Bakery

What WADP end with?

- We need to cross-reference the categories of use to the zoning designations.
- And they need to be consistent and compatible with Anchorage 2020.
- Every part of the Bowl affects everywhere else. So if you don't provide housing one place, you'll need to provide it elsewhere.
- If you don't follow an Anchorage 2020 or LUPM direction, then you need to explain it.

The LUPM is on the MOA 2010 Work Plan. Map will be adopted as soon as Title 21 is adopted.

Exhibit X that was emailed in advance has some minor errors. Please disregard.

Q: Issues, Goals & Objectives – There could be information from that effort that could be incorporated tonight.

A: That is where we drew tonight's "significant issues" in the agenda.

Q: Go back to tell us about the process. Will we see the final table?

A: You will see it in the Draft document.

Suggestion: The next meeting could be to reconcile- compare our recommendations to the consolidated goals.

III. Significant Land Use Issues

A. Town Centers

They're easier when you can have a smaller number of owners and not a regulatory authority to force it to happen.

A mile radius around Carrs Aurora we have: 2 schools, post office, regional use,

It's also pedestrian unfriendly.

Community Activity Center has all the mix of uses/conglomeration of uses, it already has the uses a Town Center it would need.

Q: How important is it to be schools there?

A: Yes, it contributed to the location in *Anchorage 2020*.

Q: What do you want us to recommend?

A: Design Recommendations and Pedestrian Amenities and High Attraction Uses

Comments about Spenard Rd & Carrs Aurora:

- Even though Spenard is not a major thorough-fare, it is still hard to cross. There are not very many lights and the side streets don't line up.
- Making parking not chaotic around Bear Tooth.
- Property behind LaMex with connex that could be removed and used.
- Fallow lot at Jackie's place
- Alaska Club parking.
- Vacancy west of Carrs.
- Spenard Rd businesses are worried about losing front door parking
- The parking itself detracts from the pedestrian feeling- put it somewhere else, like the back. Make it urban oriented instead of suburban strip mall

Thede: Spenard Rd has relatively low traffic counts. All the traffic is on Minnesota.

Spenard has 13 parking agreements between owners right now. Parking is the time bomb for the area because the attractions keep

Jae: How dense do you want Midtown to be? Downtown looks the way it does because owners don't have to provide parking.

- Add a parking garage behind the Northrim Bank- smaller ones in numerous places (3 story to stay in scale w/ neighborhood). Retail on the bottom floor and parking on top. Calculate how many parking garages would eliminate the need for mandated parking. 350 sq ft per stall.
- The Piper Street 5 story parking lot at Providence is the worst mess.
- Parking lot behind the Johnson's Tire, encourage commercial on Northern Lts. The cost of parking structures needs to be incentivized.
- We are lacking aesthetics and landscaping! It would draw people in.
- Put powerlines underground for aesthetics.
- Shorten the block lines to make it pedestrian environment. Ex. Break the REI mall.
- Good traffic flow on Northern Lights with timed lights. Keep in mind people who drive and commute- don't disrupt that flow.
- Getting groceries from Carrs and walking is difficult
- Reduce # of lanes on Northern Lights from 4 to 3.
- Consolidate commercial driveways- sometimes they're too frequent, too close to corners
- Businesses sharing parking: encourage parking consolidation
- Center: Northern Lights Mall
- You can't ignore the activity generated at Carrs & the school tho.
- Benson has a frontage road which consolidated driveways. Benson acts like an arterial.

- Emphasize commercial mixes along Spenard Rd, not within the interior streets.
- Snow storage separates sidewalk from road.
- Don't use parallel parking on Spenard Rd. That space is better-used for landscaping and snow storage (grass in summer), summer bike lands.
- The driveways out of Alaska Club has inadequate sight distances- either by landscaping or trucks/campers parked up against Northern Lts.
- Defining Characteristic: There are stores that people want to do several stops. Unlike convenience stops.

Spenard & Wisconsin

- There is an elementary school, a lot of pedestrian traffic
- PSAs: Basic rules about how cars & pedestrians should interact. Educate drivers to stop for the pedestrian light. Disallow Right on Red. Ex. Wisconsin & Spenard
- Coffee shop
- Is there a way to capture the train traffic off International? At some point, there could be transit stop
- Recreation on Lake Hood – pedestrian connection to the lake

Jewel Lake & Dimond

- It doesn't appear to be a regional draw.
- Has a fairly large servicing area.
- Shoddy layout, especially at the Northeast Quadrant
- Great hardware store, but no one's ever walked between Carrs and the hardware store.
- Mini Alaska Club
- Never had the slightest urge to walk in that intersection- there's tons of parking. No don't see people crossing there.
- Even kids from Dimond drive there.
- There's no book store, post office, library...
- Fred Meyer is a long drive so there's a lot of potential here.
- If parking was flipped in the back.
- Address it as a neighborhood center, not a town center
- A lot of density on 88th
- Two empty parcels (west of Carrs and east
- Huge sprawling parking lot/Breakup sea of asphalt
- Traffic volume is not too fierce there.
- Fix aesthetics

B. Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Northwood & Raspberry – it's currently zoned for business, and you don't want a neighborhood

- A lot of resistance from neighborhood
- Wetlands on north side of road

- How much more would be wanted by the neighborhood b/c of noise, light & traffic associated with gas station-type development. The recent rezone debate during the Sand Lake CC was ugly.
- It's not walkable- it's far from the neighborhood.
- Carr Gottstein property is a high value wetland. They were denied permit to create a gas station ~10 years ago. Consider it as a wetland mitigation trade.
- Let there be a back entrance from the neighborhood to the commercial.

C. Density Upgrades – not addressed

D. HLB Parcels (non-airport)

- Dr. Mike Burn land- the L shape between Sand Lake & Sundi Lake. Recommendation to be preserved.

Q: When there's a recommendation with HLB document to be transferred to Parks & Rec. Why does it take so long? WADP should resolve the transfer of HLB land. One big Assembly vote to take care of hanging uncertainty. We need some historical perspective and housecleaning. HLB is not intended to exist in perpetuity. They should dispose of their properties.

- HLB, Class B wetland between Minnesota and Strawberry Rd – Cathy wants buffer to major roadway. Maybe with residential and some buffer.
- HLB, east side of Minnesota & International

E. Protecting Neighborhoods – not addressed

Items from the floor?

Andy Hutzler – handed out lighting scheme