

UPTOWN ALLIANCE REPORT 10/13/10

- Uptown Alliance participation in the forthcoming South Lake Union/Uptown Mobility Plan. (Fujii, Coney)

PULLING TOGETHER TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR UPTOWN/SLU

A number of major stakeholders along the Mercer Corridor have funded a Mobility planning process for our urban center and neighboring South Lake Union. Phil Fujii described this process which will utilize consultant Marni Heffron, the transportation planner who has been working with the Mercer Corridor Stakeholders' Group for the past three years. Nelson Nygaard, the firm currently consulting on the new Seattle Transit Master Plan will work on details for improving transit service in the two urban centers. Weber Thompson, the architects who have developed details on land use and street use for the South Lake Union Urban Framework document will consult on the Mobility Plan. Our Transportation and Planning Committee has reviewed the plan proposal and will participate in it. Others in UA are invited to participate.

"Mobility" is a term which brings together all aspects of transportation, and access: streetscapes, street utilization (complete streets), bike/pedestrian facilities, transit service, freight movements, barriers, safety issues. While there have been 32 City-funded studies that have dealt with aspects of transportation in these two urban centers, the City currently lacks the resources to pull this material together and coordinate it with the North Portal street revisions and the two-way Mercer Corridor. It is hoped to fill in this planning gap in a cooperative manner with community stakeholders and City staff by creating the Mobility Plan.

The Plan will include elements relating to Uptown and South Lake Union on:

- How to connect our urban center neighborhoods
- Planning for an integrated system for pedestrians, bikes, and transit service
- Increasing transit options: streetcars, buses, shuttles, transit centers
- Enhancing the street experience
- Safety for pedestrians

Funding for the Mobility Plan is made up of donations from major stakeholders in the urban centers. Among them Vulcan, Amazon, BMGF.

By our participation in the proposed Mobility Plan Uptown Alliance will ensure that elements of the Plan are compatible with our current project endorsements: Streets for All Seattle (complete access on streets for all modes of transportation), Lake to Bay Trail, Waterfront Access Bridge, Uptown Loop connection to the waterfront via Lower Kinnear Park, Mercer West Project safety features for Royi and Mercer Streets..

Participation in the Mobility Plan process was approved unanimously.

UA members will attend the Kick-Off Open House for the Mobility Plan: 4:30 – 7pm, Thursday, Nov. 4 in the Olympic Room at the Northwest Rooms, Seattle Center. Enter off Republican St.

- Counterbalance Park issues: John Gessner:

MAINTAINING COUNTERBALANCE PARK DURING BUDGET CUTS IN DPR MAINTANENCE IN THE TAX REVENUE SHORTFALL PERIOD

Gessner explained that cuts in the Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR) budget in 2011 will mean that UA members will need to perform some clean-up and weeding in Counterbalance Park. We can expect DPR to levy fees for park use by UA events.

A priority activity will be the Roasty/Toasty Holiday event.

Last month's clothing exchange in the Park was successful.

Park Rangers continue to call in at the Park. They have been useful.

- Budget Cuts proposed by Mayor McGinn (Rick Hooper, John Coney)
- Budget Cuts and mitigation efforts

DISCUSSION ON HOW TO INFLUENCE CITY COUNCILMEMBERS TO SPARE UPTOWN ANY OF THE PROPOSED CUTS

UA has been informed by a letter from DON that our Neighborhood Service Center at 160 Roy will be closed after Dec. 31, 2010, and the District Coordinator, Christa Dumpys, will be laid off. Further, \$700,000 will be cut from the Neighborhood Matching Fund lessening the probability that Uptown will receive any future funding for capital projects. It is also proposed by Seattle Parks and Recreation (DPR) to close the gym and associated rooms at the Queen Anne Community Center. Clearly funding for Counterbalance Park maintenance will be reduced. Our Crime Prevention Coordinator at SPD's West Precinct

- Review Letters

CENTER CITY NEIGHBORHOODS LETTER

Coney reviewed a draft letter that will be signed by Center City neighborhoods: Chinatown/International District, Downtown Seattle Assn., Pioneer Square Council, etc.

The letter addresses proposed raises in parking meter rates, extension of enforced meter hours, lay-offs of DON District Coordinators, Neighborhood Service Center closures, parks maintenance cuts, Park Ranger enforcement cuts, Neighborhood Matching Fund cut, etc.

UA members voted unanimously to sign onto this letter. The letter is copied below.

Coney reviewed a draft of a UA letter to City Councilmembers addressing our urban center budget priorities: Retention of District Coordinator, Office and meeting space, Gym Access, Public Safety concerns related to budget cuts to SPD. The letter was approved unanimously. The letter is copied below.

Note: The Uptown Triangle Charrette Recommendations continue to be promoted. Coney and Craig Hanway, Ch. QACC Planning Committee presented the Recommendations to the South Lake Union Community Council (successor to South Lake Union Friends and Neighbors.) SLUCC received the Recommendations with enthusiasm. The Charrette Recommendations blend well with the South Lake Union Urban Design Framework which SLUFAN/SLUCC has developed with DPD Staff.

Seattle City Councilmember X
600 4th Avenue, Floor 2
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember X,

We, the undersigned, representing neighborhoods and stakeholders throughout the Center City, are writing to you with concerns regarding the 2011 budget. While we understand that this is an extraordinary budget year with difficult cuts in programs and employees, we believe that some of the proposals before you will harm Center City neighborhoods in unacceptable ways.

Public Safety While the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) proposed cuts officially maintain 2011 officer quotas, we are concerned that the moratorium on hiring more officers, coupled with abrogation of non-uniformed, on the ground Crime Prevention Coordinators (CPCs), means critical relationships between SPD and the communities may deteriorate. Public safety and visible police officers on the street continue to be Center City neighborhoods' highest priority. At the very least, consider reinstating the lost CPCs, given that all new hiring is suspended.

Parking Changes Mayor McGinn has suggested a variety of vehicle-related fee increases to help cover the budget gap, but these changes were proposed without sufficient analysis of how they will impact neighborhood business district and residents. While some communities such as Pioneer Square are losing large areas of parking, other neighborhoods like Belltown and Chinatown/International District rely heavily on after-work patrons of restaurants and bars. **Moreover, Sunday fees on parking in some metered neighborhoods but not others will simply shift – not reduce – parking patterns.**

The economic effects of increased parking rates and hours is unknown and unstudied; and while fees are raised and hours are extended, diminishing Metro Transit service means alternative mobility options will become more difficult to find. **It makes no sense to approve increased costs for parking in business districts without parallel increases in transit service.** We urge you to consider the broader goal of encouraging people to visit a vibrant Downtown while you review these parking changes.

Parks Maintenance Central city parks draw tourists as well as provide needed green space for Downtown residents. And while increased time between maintenance and trash hauling may mean short-term savings, it comes at a cost to all of the parks users. Trash cans are already overflowing – small savings on less frequent garbage hauling in Center City parks could mean huge decreases in parks use for tourists and residents.

In addition, Center City parks absolutely must be active, clean and safe. Center City parks programming ensures our public spaces are inviting and friendly, and discourages negative and unhealthy uses. The Park Rangers program has provided an on the ground enforcement element which has improved real and perceived safety in Center City. The

proposed budget preserves funding for these two critical pieces of a vibrant Downtown – please continue to fund parks programming and the Park Rangers.

Neighborhood Relationships The proposed cut of four District Coordinators (DCs) affects the entire Center City, where our own DCs are slated for abrogation. This represents a more than 57% reduction in a team whose work builds stronger relationships between communities and the City, helps neighborhoods compete for Neighborhood Matching Funds, ensures the public stays in tune with changes in City policy and assists navigation of the City's many departments. Coupled with Neighborhood Service Center closures, approval of these cuts guarantees critical bonds between the City and the community will be lost.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We know that cuts must be made, but we believe the value of these programs and positions go far beyond budget line-items, and that small cuts in public safety, parks maintenance and neighborhood liaison personnel coupled with increased fees may have serious detrimental effects on our Center City. We look forward to working with you throughout the budget process to help identify other areas of revenue or savings.

Sincerely,

Leslie Smith, Executive Director, Alliance for Pioneer Square
Kate Joncas, Pres. Downtown Seattle Association
Don Blakeney, Executive Director, Chinatown/International District BIA
John Coney, Co-Pres. Uptown Alliance

October 21, 2010

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
600 Fourth Avenue, 2nd Floor
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmember Bagshaw:

Uptown Alliance has been informed by a letter from DON that our Neighborhood Service Center at 160 Roy will be closed and the District Coordinator, Christa Dumpys, will be laid off. Further, \$700,000 will be cut from the Neighborhood Matching Fund lessening the probability that Uptown will receive any future funding for capital projects. It is also proposed by Park/Rec to close the gym and associated rooms at the Queen Anne Community Center. Clearly funding for Counterbalance Park maintenance will be reduced. The Crime Prevention Coordinator position has been eliminated. Here are some possible solutions:

RETAINING THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

All the DON staff position cuts proposed by Chao/McGinn are for line staff: 7 of the 13 the District Coordinators out in the neighborhoods. There are some dispensable positions in the top DON management. A few District Coordinators have been made Managers, but typically they spend only about 10% of their time on Managerial functions. By dubbing them "managers" DON's leadership has set them up to be laid-off, since the Mayor and Council are looking for managerial staff cuts. The real, highly paid management structure will remain, while 7 of the 13 line workers are to be laid-off.

- The Queen Anne/Magnolia Neighborhood Service Center has 25 community meetings each month and has 12 groups who regularly use the facility. From January 1 - Sept. 30th the District Coordinator facilitated 9 meetings or tours which brought elected officials into the neighborhood to engage with community groups to better understand first hand issues of concern like Two Way Mercer and Kinnear Park plans.
- During an average month, the QA/Magnolia Neighborhood District Coordinator attends approximately 20 meetings in the community. She stays engaged with all the community groups in the district, helps problem solve and strategize when issues arise, connecting the community to City government staff and resources to accomplish their goals and make Seattle a vibrant community.
- The Mayor's proposal to close 7 of the 13 Neighborhood Service Centers and eliminate half of the District Coordinators will reduce opportunities for people to engage with their community, reduce opportunities for

citizens to help shape city policies and reduce citizen access to community building resources - i.e. grants/leadership training/meeting locations at NSC's.

- The Neighborhood District Coordinators and their Neighborhood Service Centers are a valuable asset to the citizens, businesses and organizations of Seattle - especially now. During tough economic times government relies more heavily on the efforts of community volunteers. Liaisons in the community are more important now than ever.

Our District Coordinators have been dedicated to the ideals of promoting civic participation and providing opportunities to empower communities for over 30 years. The current recession and resulting budget crisis is the worst in recent history that places even more emphasis on their critical roles.

Ideas for alternative solutions: Further Furlough Days, Consolidate Districts.

RETAINING GYM ACCESS AT QA COMMUNITY CENTER

The proposed tenant for the gym at QA Community Center is a TV production headed by Bill Nye, formerly "the science guy." The \$80,000 per year that DPR would earn from Nye's BIZKIDS lease seems paltry compared to the loss of a gym and community center spaces in a hilltop location with no walking and poor transit connections to other comparable facilities. DPR could seek rent from a non-profit that shares the department's goals for recreation and positive teen activities, such as YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs.

ACQUIRING OTHER OFFICE/MEETING SPACE FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE CENTER

Leasing dollars can be saved by DON by making use of vacant office and meeting space at Seattle Center on a temporary basis. Longer term, it is time for City Light to dispose of 157 Roy, the former Neighborhood Service Center location at Roy and Warren. It has been abandoned by City Light and has become a fenced-off, well-tagged blight in a key location in the Uptown Urban Center.

Sale with possible community use of ground floor space could bring in cash to the City while utilizing a portion of a new building for needed community space, similar to concepts being explored for 8th and Roy in South Lake Union.

PUBLIC SAFETY

While the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) proposed cuts officially maintain 2011 officer quotas, we are concerned that the moratorium on hiring more officers, coupled with abrogation of non-uniformed on the ground Crime Prevention Coordinators (CPC), means critical relationships between SPD and the communities may deteriorate. More uniformed officers on the street is our highest priority. At the very least, the City should consider reinstating the lost CPCs, especially when new hiring is suspended.

Families, businesses and organizations have all had to reduce spending in these tough times - and the City of Seattle should be no different. We urge the City Council to work with the Dept of Neighborhoods' Executive staff in helping identify true cost saving measures that don't dismantle DON's own mission statement and help retain the City and community's Neighborhood District Coordinator program.

Sincerely, John Coney, Co-President