

**CITY OF MILL CREEK
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2019**

Approved December 19, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Design Review Board Chair Gunter called the joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Chair Stan Eisner
Vice Chair Matthew Nolan
Commissioner April Berg
Commissioner Brian Hyatt
Commissioner Daniel Mills (absent)
Commissioner Nicolas Marin (absent)
Commissioner Dennis Teschlog

Staff and Consultant:
Tom Rogers, Development Services Manager
Sherrie Ringstad, Associate Planner
Mandi Roberts, Otak

III. WORK SESSION

Mill Creek Boulevard Subarea Plan

Planning Manager Tom Rogers stated that this joint workshop has been scheduled to gather input on the Mill Creek Boulevard Corridor land use and infrastructure subarea plan. He noted that the plan is intended to provide a long-term vision for the subarea as well as address short-term infrastructure needs. The subarea extends from Town Center on the north to the commercial properties just south of 164th Street SE and from the Bothell-Everett Highway on the east to North Creek on the west. Mr. Rogers reviewed the schedule and noted that the initiate and communicate phase includes a series of focus group workshops, which includes the one with the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission this evening. Multiple workshops have been scheduled with three specifically for the business and property owners, one for HOAs, several for the various City Boards and Commissions, the Youth Advisory Board, and the seniors group. Mr. Rogers introduced Mandi Roberts, who is with Otak and is the project manager.

Ms. Roberts introduced herself and her team and talked about the sub-consultants specializing in transportation and economic development. She noted that there is a strong emphasis on public engagement in the planning process that includes a walking tour, open houses, web based engagement, and a texting service. The focus group workshops will take the different groups through a similar set of questions to the ones that will be used tonight. In addition, she noted a Workshop for the general public has been scheduled for October 2nd at 6:30 p.m. in room 201 in City Hall North. This meeting is open to public and she encouraged the members present to share the invitation with their friends, family and neighbors to help get word out and encourage participation.

Ms. Roberts reviewed potential ideas and opportunities, such as the SWIFT – Green Line running down the Bothell-Everett Highway and the Orange Line opening in 2024, which has the potential to serve the subarea more directly and connect to the broader region. The plan will look at

multimodal issues such as roadway and pavement needs, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and access to transit. She stated that because this area is where City Hall is located, there is also a potential for a civic campus or community gathering space. She shared some examples of what this might look like, including a festival street, public art, pop up parks, and wide sidewalks that would accommodate sidewalk cafes.

Ms. Roberts reminded the board members that a majority of these properties are privately owned and what happens will be based on what the property owners want to do in the future. Development can take many forms such as minor rehab, infill development, and redevelopment. She shared slide of what these different types of development could look like, as well as slides showing current trends such as market hall/food hall and co-working and work sharing spaces. The final slides showed ideas for what could be done with North Creek and Pond 6 to make them more of an amenity.

The Workshop Exercise consisted of several questions as follows:

1. Overall Community Character: What word or phrase best describes the Mill Creek character as a whole?
2. Issues and problems: What are the issues and problems in the subarea today that this plan should address?
3. What is working now? What should stay the same?
4. Planning for Growth: According to the growth projections prepared by Washington State, by 2050 Snohomish County will have an additional 424,000 people and 225,000 jobs. Should this future growth be an important factor to be considered in the plan?
5. Of the elements listed below, which are most important to you? Pick up to three elements or write in an element:
 - a) Thriving businesses, b) access to transit, c) increased pedestrian and bicycle connectivity/safety, d) more places to live/variety of housing choices, e) creating a stronger civic core/civic campus for our community, f) places for events and festivals, g) parks and green spaces, h) enhancing North Creek, i) place making – creating places that attract people and business, j) more opportunities to _____, k) _____ (your choice).
6. Successful process: To have a successful planning process, what are some of the most important factors, criteria, and values to consider in preparing the plan?
7. Possibilities/opportunities: Think ahead to 20 years from now after this plan is implemented, what would you like to see in the subarea? What has changed for the better?

The Board members had a dynamic discussion sharing the following ideas and thoughts:

- Most people coming from the west to Town Center turn north on Mill Creek Boulevard rather than the Bothell-Everett Highway; thus, Mill Creek Boulevard has become an

unofficial gateway to the City and the Town Center. Right now you essentially see the back of a store and it is not much of an entrance.

- We need to look at what businesses are thriving – the City seems to be a magnet for restaurants – it is hard for retail shops unless they have an internet presence. Over the next 20 years how does that trend change?
- Technology will also have an impact.
- We need to cultivate a niche.
- We are still a commuter city – with employment centralized in Seattle. Should we try to plan for jobs?
- We should plan for what we want – an active community – a place where families want to live.
- Open space draws people but not if you can't get in and out – a lengthy discussion on traffic and access issues ensued. Connectivity, traffic and parking were a big concern for a majority of those present.
- We should design something that will attract people and businesses.
- Encourage more variety in businesses.
- Keep the small town atmosphere.
- This area could be very walkable if we do it right.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Eisner asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Vice Chair Nolan moved, seconded by Commissioner Hyatt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Submitted by:

Sherrie Ringstad, Associate Planner