



# Small Groups Discussion Summary

## Discussion topics

Workshop 1 participants spent an hour in small groups discussing their vision and interests for Town Center and the Central Subarea. The conversation addressed two major topics:

1. What do you like about Town Center and how would you like to see it improved, and
2. What connections, community features, design qualities, activities, and functional improvements would best help the Central Subarea serve future generations?

## Small groups

The approximately 180 participants broke into seven small groups in Council Chambers and one larger group in a spillover room. The larger group was comprised of residents especially concerned with potential impacts to nearby neighborhoods, and their specific concerns are also outlined in “Local Impacts Concerns” on page 10. In addition, the childcare providers took feedback from the children about their desires for Town Center.

## Report out and ideas prioritization dot exercise

Groups reported their top ideas at the end of the session while note-takers kept a running list of these points. Participants then showed their priorities by placing a heart sticker on the idea that was the most important to them and up to four dots on other ideas they cared most about. Please note that the groups’ reports did not always match the facilitator notes, so both results are included on the following pages.

## Summary

The following summary compiles the top five points regarding the Town Center and Central Subarea from each small group, all the points from the larger group in the spillover room, and ideas raised in the children’s room. Direct quotes from the facilitator notes are listed under the summary statements. Topics are listed in priority order based on the ideas prioritization dot exercise results.

Many additional ideas that were not in the groups’ top five are captured in the full facilitator notes. These will inspire future conversations.

# Town Center

## 1. Increase the amount and variety of businesses and services.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Retain commercial vibrancy and diversity of uses in TC.
- Rec center would be great, like the Mountlake Terrace Pavillion.
- More amenities
- More variety of business
- Urban village feel but affordable and preserve local business
- More services in mall, especially physical activity
- Like Town Center, esp Commons, as is
- Video game/lounge area with couches (children’s room)
- Big – Little area (children’s room)
- Coffee (children’s room)
- Another little bakery (children’s room)

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score*
More variety of businesses, especially physical activity	5	10	25
Variety of small businesses		5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>

\*For this and all charts to follow, the “weighted score” measures each heart as three points and each dot as one point.

## 2. Focus on, preserve, and enhance environmental assets.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Natural assets need to be addressed, cherished, focused on.
- Trees and environment
- Environmental qualities—green building
- Canopy, wetlands, save parks

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Environmental sustainability in design, e.g., green stormwater infrastructure, renewable energy	4	5	17
Trees/preserve parks/wetlands/canopy	1	8	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>



### 3. Work with the community to understand concerns over potential residences at Town Center. Note that a majority of groups support housing in the Town Center zone (5 pro, 2 split, and 1 no mention).

#### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Housing! Mix of uses, better variety
- Some on board with mixed use at Town Center—housing above retail to enable aging in place
- Some more skeptical—mixed use and development better suited closer to I-5 off Ballinger
- Some high density residential, leverage 522 senior living
- Keep footprint of Town Center zone, increase density within
- Some participants wanted no residential development in the Town Center.

#### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Some residential high density	1	8	11
Consider mixed use		7	7
Urban village feel	1	2	5
Affordable			0
Senior housing			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>
Keep zoning/design guidelines as is	1	4	7
Like it as is			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>

### 4. Use the parking garage to add value to Town Center’s pedestrian experience, commercial variety, and environmental sustainability.

#### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- The impact of park-and-ride structure itself should add value: enhance pedestrian experience, commercial on ground floor (if in TC), and tame traffic or not make worse.
- Multi-functional parking facility
- Living wall on garage
- Parking garage will enable more open space and development
  - Creative ways of building them. U Village garage is a good example.
  - Aesthetics are key
  - Accommodate farmers market—roof?
  - Under cover kids area is desired

#### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Parking garage character and location: combine with retail/housing and should add value and access		11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

## 5. Maintain the sense that Town Center is the heart of the community and a community gathering place.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Town Center is currently the heart of the community.
- Gathering space
- More community space
- Sense of community/neighbors

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Community gathering space	2	3	9
See more community gathering space		1	1
Heart of community			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

## 6. Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- We want to be able to walk to and in TC from all directions safely.
- Better/safer pedestrian access
- Safety in access—pedestrian bridge?
- Sidewalks within Town Center. Kids can't go with bikes.
- Walkability

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Walkability		3	3
Small scale, walkable, tactile	1	3	6
Safe routes		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>



## 7. Make use of Town Center’s access to public transportation serving employment centers.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Good access to public transportation serving employment centers

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Access to transit		6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

## 8. Design delightful public spaces with environmentally conscious buildings and landscape amidst a forested character.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Make it delightful—design, parks
- Parking isn’t the first thing you see
- Building character/quality:
  - Woodsy
  - If modern, good landscaping
  - Environmental consciousness
- Balance city amenities with woodsy environment
- Zip line (children’s room)
- Swings (children’s room)
- Spray park (children’s room)

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Balance city amenities with woodsy character		3	3
Streets as public space		2	2
Good design—delightful public spaces			0
Design/character of buildings			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

# Central Subarea

1. In general, do not expand commercial zoning beyond the existing Town Center zone and do not rezone existing residential zones. In some cases, some slightly denser residential and small-scale commercial may be acceptable. (Divided opinions.)

## FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Don't expand commercial beyond existing Town Center footprint
  - Small residential scale commercial within neighborhood (neighborhood business, bodegas)
  - Utilize commercial zones in other parts of town
- There should be no expansion of the current commercial TC triangle.
- Schools and parks may be ok outside the current Town Center but commercial "spillage" is unacceptable.
- Keep area outside of TC triangle single family residence 70%
- Mother-in-law apartments, granny flats—that kind of infill
- Some very opposed to mixed use; smaller group ok with mixed use along key corridors. If rezoning, consider having owners opt in?
- Senior living and variety of living options
- Slightly denser residential
- Rezoning of the single family neighborhoods can have negative consequences on homeowners and the neighborhood in general. For example, rezoning may negatively affect property values and the ability of homeowners to sell their homes. Participants generally do not want to see townhouses or multifamily expand into single family areas.
- Neighborhood stability is important. This is a viable neighborhood and participants are fearful that it could be "broken" by poor planning.

## REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Footprint stays	6	15	33
Keep current TC footprint, up not out		2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>

No re-zoning from current	2	18	24
Maintain single family residential within subarea	2	7	13
Commercial on small scale scattered throughout	1	2	5
Affordable, diverse housing—ADUs, granny flats plus accessibility		2	2
<b>Total*</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

\*These represent a variety of opinions regarding land use and zoning so were not summed.



## 2. Improve walking and bicycling safety and add connections.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Definitely want to maximize the connected nature within the ½ mile walkshed—make sure can walk to TC in 10 minutes safely.
- Bikers and walking improvements (walkable and cyclable)
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety
- More sidewalks, paths, bridges over the highway
- Desire for safe walking areas for all ages—not necessarily sidewalks in all locations
- Sidewalk connectivity—overpasses/underpasses
- Fix dangerous intersections, add crosswalks
- Better lighting for pedestrian safety
- Need sidewalks
- Safe routes on Ballinger and 40th
- An emphasis should be placed on safe streets and access for residents in the neighborhood.

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Pedestrian/sidewalk connectivity, bridge	2	9	15
Walkshed—to TC in 10 minutes safely	2	3	9
Better lighting	2		6
Fix dangerous intersections		5	5
Better sidewalks		1	1
Safe routes – Ballinger, 40th			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>

## 3. Seek opportunities to strengthen the sense of place and provide neighborhood amenities, such as a recreation center, community gathering space, senior center, and daycare.

(This arose under the Central Subarea discussion; not clear whether community members intended this in the Town Center or in the larger Subarea.)

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Community gathering space—a sense of place
- Rec center
- Senior center and daycare

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Rec center	2	14	20
Senior center and daycare	1	7	10
Gathering space as heart of community	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>

## 4. Preserve and enhance the natural environment.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Focus on natural features—creeks, shoreline, and Burke-Gilman Trail
- Retain environmental character, promote alternate energy, and promote environmental enhancements
- Daylight creeks to attract salmon
- Preserve green space/wetlands/canopy and have healthy creeks
- Sustainable
- Keep the streams.

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Sustainability, encourage design for renewable energy	1	3	6
Green spaces, salmon/creeks, rain gardens	1	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>

## 5. Maintain the residential, forested character of the subarea.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Residential, forested character of the subarea should be preserved
- Keep the mix of single family and trees.
- Want good schools, amenities, land around the house, quiet friendly neighborhoods—don't want to change feeling and lifestyle

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Keep the forest in Lake Forest Park		4	4
Balance access to cities with sense of community			0
Keep neighborhood feeling			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>



## 6. Preserve and advocate for public access to Lake Washington.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Public access to lake, preserve and advocate for

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Lake access		4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## 7. Study traffic impacts from any potential rezones and potential park-and-ride.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- There is a concern that zoning could severely increase traffic. The neighborhood is already impacted by traffic. Any planning must address traffic congestion.
- The City should carefully evaluate traffic impacts.

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Less traffic on the small streets		4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## 8. Host a transparent conversation about and study benefits and impacts of potential park-and-ride locations.

### FACILITATOR NOTES:

- Transit near density
- Participants were not sure if the ST garage is a good idea in the TC. Participants asked if the garage location was a “done deal.” There is a question of who would use the garage.
- The City should carefully evaluate traffic impacts.

### REPORT OUT/PRIORITIZATION DOT EXERCISE:

Idea	Hearts	Dots	Weighted score
Careful siting of the parking garage		3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

# Local Impacts Concerns

*The following are the notes from the larger group in the spillover room, where participants were especially concerned with impacts to the local neighborhood surrounding Town Center. This discussion happened simultaneously to the small group discussions in the Council Chambers. Participants were encouraged to air all concerns. The following notes are also included in the summary on the previous pages.*

There was general dissatisfaction with the questions regarding current policies prior to breaking into small groups. The statements to be evaluated were too general and contained multiple subjects. (For example, participants were asked to evaluate a statement that addressed objectives for housing, transportation, and other issues.) Participants noted that people generally do not read Comprehensive Plans and are unfamiliar with their wording. Participants stated that this problem should be acknowledged in any report back to the public. In the future, when asking questions, break the issues down for clarity.

Participants were in general agreement regarding the following points:

- There should be no expansion of the current commercial TC triangle.
- Rezoning of the single family neighborhoods has negative consequences on homeowners and the neighborhood in general. For example, rezoning may negatively affect property values and the ability of homeowners to sell their homes. Participants generally do not want to see townhouses or multifamily expand into single family areas.

- Neighborhood stability is important. This is a viable neighborhood and participants are fearful that it could be “broken” by poor planning.
- There is a concern that zoning could severely increase traffic. The neighborhood is already impacted by traffic. Any planning must address traffic congestion.
- An emphasis should be placed on safe streets and access for residents in the neighborhood.
- Some participants wanted no residential development in the Town Center.
- Schools and parks may be ok outside the current Town Center but commercial “spillage” is unacceptable.
- Keep the streams.
- Keep the mix of single family and trees.
- Participants were not sure if the ST garage is a good idea in the TC. Participants asked if the garage location was a “done deal.” There is a question of who would use the garage.
- The City should carefully evaluate traffic impacts.
- Participants wanted a neighborhood representative on the ISC.
- Special consideration should be given to the Brookside Triangle residents.

A volunteer neighborhood member presented the key points to the larger group at the end of the workshop.

