

From: [Rousseau, Gwen](#)
To: [Lee Sargent](#)
Cc: [PlanningCommission](#); [Brod, Brooke](#); [de Regt, Elizabeth](#)
Subject: RE: Great Neighborhood data collection comment
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 12:45:34 PM

Thank you, Lee, for taking the time to share more of your thinking on these issues. I appreciate how much you've put into fostering good community dialogue throughout this past year. Your suggestions helped us improve the virtual experience for everyone, and we'll continue to glean more lessons learned. We hope to utilize some of what we've learned, including your suggestions, into upcoming engagement efforts even as we reopen to in-person engagement. Also, your passion for preserving trees and for building community is inspiring. I am hopeful that the policies in the plan for Northeast Bellevue reflect those values and will support effective implementation measures in the future.

You mention however a feeling of disconnection, which I believe may stem from the limited geographic scope of the neighborhood area planning process. The limited geographic scope in turn limits the depth with which the process can tackle issues that are larger in context and citywide in scope. Issues important to the neighborhood area such tree preservation, housing affordability, and mobility and access can be supported by neighborhood area plan policies, but often require larger citywide discussions to direct some of the more action oriented measures you desire i.e. adoption of stronger tree preservation regulations or adoption of revised standards for housing development. Within a larger framework that looks at needs citywide, a comprehensive set of policies can be developed to ensure multiple objectives are met. At the neighborhood level in contrast, plans and policies indicate neighborhood priorities and focus in on specific challenges and opportunities to address those challenges.

Fortunately, the city's Comprehensive Plan is due to be updated over the next few years. Getting robust engagement during that process will be key to ensuring the Plan addresses the breadth of issues the city is grappling with at a depth that directs effective action. We look forward to your continued engagement during that and other planning processes.

Thank you,
Gwen

From: Lee Sargent <LeeSgt@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 4:04 PM
To: Rousseau, Gwen <GRousseau@bellevuewa.gov>; Brod, Brooke <BBrod@bellevuewa.gov>; PlanningCommission <PlanningCommission@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: RE: Great Neighborhood data collection comment

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Thanks for your response. I know it does impact other things that need to be done. I appreciate the

time and effort.

First off, I am willing to discuss any of the specifics I mentioned with anyone that has time with a little heads up time for coordination. I know that my abilities are only from the outside looking in and limited exposure but I am sure that I can help in small ways.

There are always drawbacks on what can be done whether in Zoom or direct contact. We share a knowledge of some of the limitations we are struggling with because of COVID forced changes. Some limitations will exist forever for some people like the “fact” that the city bows down to those with money due to the lack of involvement by some of the people. However, there are those that are willing to talk, email, share verbally and do research. With this last group, I think there is opportunity and that is why I am working for that process to succeed on my limited basis. I do share the “why’s” in order to get the ball rolling and show the reasons. The people that seem to be listening have shown up at meetings we have had. They may have encouraged others to do so as well.

Another thing that might be helpful in the future is to provide more granular neighborhood representation as I understand New York City instigated where they got Neighborhoods to set up websites within the city structure with certain clout for the city that the neighbors can see. When we are talking about single family residences as being in Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue that covers territory but probably hosts many different neighborhood ideas of what should/should not be in their neighborhood. Some of those neighborhoods have identities.

Just my normal wordy concerns so you can bypass them if you like. Planning for future goals is always difficult since it is predicated on the idea that we know what the future holds. (I agree with what was mentioned at the last meeting that the plans should allow for leeway with change in mind.) City goals should be intimate with the plans.

- If **tree canopy** is truly important then requirement for tree preservation is important and yet with a limit of 5 trees removed without concern for even the mature nature of the trees for each residential area how is that affecting the plan? Many of the people have expressed their concern over this due to what they see happening now. The talk has been expanding the canopy within the city parks,-how long does it take to achieve that and how many trees will be disappearing at the same time? It seems that the goals are lofty but the results not.
- **Affordability** seems to be a remote thought which decreases as more people pay more for houses and raise taxes on surrounding homes. I am not sure it really is much of a goal. As presented in the phone connection we had from the Silicon Valley woman, she showed a very big interest in restricting who and what can be done. I think that the more people that pay a huge sum for homes will want to keep the riff raff out and they can commute from someplace else. Single family homes of 4000 sq. ft. or more are being built with no restraint and the price tag gives the owners a feeling that they can do what they want with the property.
- **“City in a Park”** vision that depends on the other goals and related plans or not.
- **Diversity as a population**-is a very good goal. We do have a good deal of diversity in age, race, genders, ethnicity but I am guessing we have a growing move to displace the aging. As costs rise the tendency will be to use ADUs whether new or already happening but since a lot of younger family members will have found more suitable circumstances elsewhere and invite

parents/grandparents to move this will change.

- **Traffic (except for the COVID timing.....**
- **Etc.**
- **I could go on but I want you to see what I see.** Normally if I listen to a person say something very good and do something that is not meeting those statements, I call them ... The result of the differences is that I begin to realize that the city I am living in is not what I thought it was and I get overwhelmed. I see that as the problem I am constantly facing from the residents of our neighborhood. When this exists, the people do not see that they are accomplishing anything. This disconnects us from each other and, therefore, the organizations that are frustrating them.

Sorry about the rants. I really don't think that what is being done is bad for the planning. I just worry that while we are talking about very helpful improvements to our living environment there are things that are slipping through that may be more critical in the long term.

Thanks for your time and effort. I know that writing the concerns has allowed me to a cathartic moment.

Vaya con Dios,

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From: Rousseau, Gwen [<mailto:GRousseau@bellevuewa.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 1:39 PM
To: Lee Sargent; Brod, Brooke; PlanningCommission
Subject: RE: Great Neighborhood data collection comment

Thank you, Lee, for your thoughtful comments. Below are responses to the excellent points you made. However first, I would like to highlight the concerns you raised about invalidating our city goals and plans in the short term and your hope that long term planning does not justify business separation from family housing. Could you please elaborate on your specific concerns so that we better understand them?

Yes, more representative data collection and participation across the community spectrum can always be improved. Building a robust culture of community engagement is an ongoing process, and we will certainly glean lessons from this last year of engagement.

As you know this past year has presented many challenges for engagement. While Zoom provided an important platform for engagement, it does have its limitations. One thing we found is that the length of time people are willing to spend in a virtual meeting is shorter than an in-person meeting.

That meant we had to cover more content in less time, which impacted the agenda for each meeting. Another challenge you noted is the need to create agendas that are appropriate to people across a range of knowledge and experience with engaging. We found that at each neighborhood planning meeting we gained new participants, which meant that we had to cover some material that was a repeat for other participants. We continue to think about how to address these challenges, and appreciate your perspective

We greatly appreciate your efforts in encouraging people to get involved and to let their voices be heard; your positive comments on Next Door were great as word of mouth from a resident carries a lot of weight.

Your ideas for improving meetings via Zoom are all very relevant. We will work to further incorporate them into future planning processes. We are looking forward to having more flexibility again soon in how we can hold public meetings. It will be interesting though to see how we might continue to include Zoom options once things begin opening up. As you point out, the format has its pros and cons. It is great that people can participate during their lunch hour without having to spend time traveling from one place to another. Yet, in person meetings can allow for greater sharing of ideas amongst participants.

Thankfully, many ideas have been brought out and surfaced by the community.

Again, it would be great to hear more about the concerns you raised. Please let us know if you would like to jump on a quick call to provide more explanation.

Thank you,
Gwen and Brooke

From: Lee Sargent <LeeSgt@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 2:02 PM
To: Brod, Brooke <BBrod@bellevuewa.gov>; Rousseau, Gwen <GRousseau@bellevuewa.gov>;
PlanningCommission <PlanningCommission@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: Great Neighborhood data collection comment

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I shared some of Anne Morisseau thoughts about the data collection process while I was involved in the GN process. I wasn't able to focus the misgivings as well as she did.

Having a local general meeting to assess ideas, usually, needs to be focused since it can go far afield from the specifics quickly needed. Without providing focus the meeting is not able to get the interest of people quick enough, thus losing

participants. Focusing on dislikes gets quick reaction but potentially fails to generate cooperation to accomplish fleshing out what can be done. General meetings can connect people with city personnel and reduce anonymity. Having experts in city processes at these meetings allows for connection and opens the understanding of the city. (Having commissioner participation might generate some understanding of the participants and make some of the ideas more understandable.)

Gathering participation/input from different generations is a difficult process for those that are in the community. I have invited people to participate by telling them what is available, what can be worked on and ways to work on problems especially with the Great Neighborhoods-when and where they let me. I, like so many others, have definite ideas about some of the issues but I try to listen to others including those that have different ideas. This may lead to difficulty in getting some to be involved. I always try to share that if they have different ideas then bring them up at the meetings since it is their opportunity as well. In general, getting people to present their ideas is not easy whether in an actual meeting, Zoom meeting, survey and/or in-person. I think a lot of the people feel that no one will listen especially government. I point out that if they do not share their ideas then why would the government know what they want or how much they want it.

I think the problems Zoom has for a general meeting:

1. It requires education for new people to the meetings to use the tools. Which may distract or cause some to not participate as well as they could have. Some of those that already know the features of Zoom will find this a waste of their time. This might cause the knowledgeable to not attend.
 1. (I suggested the training time be specified a certain time before the start the meeting starts and allow practicing in the learner environment. I shared this previously and training was decreased in time so that the flow would start and stop for everyone at the same time.)
 2. (Maybe providing YouTube video links of the new options before the meeting might help cut the time in the meeting and reduce the need for city resource people and keep the Zoom literate connected to the gist of the presentation.)
 3. Time is precious when on lunch breaks or at dinner time.
2. The explanation-bringing people up to speed-part of the meeting takes a good deal of time. This causes people to not knowing how long before they can share their thoughts.
3. The breakout rooms discussions, people and updates to viewed documents were not discussed in the body of the whole which limits the sense of what was discussed. Leading to little direct communication when rejoining the body as a whole.
4. Break out room being randomly assigned may have hindered discussion amplified discussion that similar generations might have had

I think the problems Zoom has for the commission meeting are:

1. We know who presented visually and numerically because of the video feed.
2. We also know who the city representatives in various categories were because we saw them for the most part
3. We did not know the total number of attendees so when we are presenting we might feel a little intimidated since we know the city is so well represented visually. (If we were in a conference room, we would get a sense of community that is missing in this environment.)
4. (I was quite impressed by the variety of people that attended the meeting especially the younger ones. I also know that the time I get from this group normally is exceedingly limited when talking to them And I liked the comments made.)
5. (I was also very impressed by the double extension of time on the meeting because of the unknown number of attendees that remained present.)

These are my thoughts regarding the meetings, Zoom and what seemed to work and what needed some review. Overall, given the length of time and the efforts given under mostly Covid conditions, I think a lot has been brought out and a lot has been surfaced from the community. My concern remains on what is being done as we speak/write that invalidates our city goals and plans in the short term. (I hope that the long term planning put in place does not justify the skeptics regarding business separation from family housing.)

Respectfully,
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Sherwood Forest Community Club
President
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