

WHITE CENTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (WCCDA)

Community Engagement Report

WHITE CENTER/NORTH HIGHLINE SUBAREA PLAN - Phase 1

August 2021

OVERVIEW:

This report contains information for WCCDA's role in collecting input from BIPOC White Center/North Highline area residents including business district partners and surrounding areas. Beginning in July, we were able to complete 16 presentations in addition to outreach activities that resulted in over 25 group conversations that took place throughout the month of August.

In addition, we launched a community survey that had over 60 respondents. We felt the need to be able to broaden the access to the subarea plan input process for residents who had the capacity to respond electronically. It is our observation based on the input received through the on-line survey (survey monkey), we recognized that some of the responses lacked commitment to racial diversity and equity. We know that many biases come through when individuals are asked specifically about values and the way equity is present. We strongly suggest that King County's RSJI commitment continues to be lifted as a priority for all of the work in partnership with community. King County has prioritized "racism as a public health issue" therefore, we believe that the ability for King County to be accountable to what this means needs to be clear for all residents of King County.

Overall, all 120 respondents did not find any objection to the Community Needs List that was shared. Although the community did not identify "new needs", they emphasized the needs. Much of the feedback provided to us suggests that the County should continue to consider how to further strengthen opportunities for BIPOC families and businesses to be able to live, work and thrive in White Center/North Highline utilizing community led strategies in each of the Community Needs list categories moving forward.

We are attaching supporting documents (data and information from focus groups and community conversation notes) to this report. (See attached).

Participants' prioritization of items on draft Community Needs List, including any ideas not included on the draft Community Needs List;

The White Center Community Development Association affirms that the needs list provided by King County is representative of the diverse and varied needs of our community. Below are themes and needs emphasized repeatedly during discussion, however we acknowledge that all needs of the community are equally important and the list below is in no particular order. We

would like to reinforce some of the following ideas brought up by community during our engagement:

- **Affordability of Housing**
 - Ability for community to rent and purchase homes in White Center. Including equitable programs that assist with affordable homeownership and affordable rental units.
 - Economically diverse neighborhood; with a mix of market rate and affordably priced units.
 - Affordable housing that is beautiful and functional.
- **Support for Small BIPOC owned Businesses**
 - Ability to maintain and acquire spaces for small BIPOC owned businesses.
 - More education, mentoring, consultation, and community investment for existing businesses in the neighborhood.
 - Support a greater diversity of shops in White Center.
- **Displacement of North Highline residents**
 - Families expressed consistently the desire to remain in White Center and not being driven out by rising costs of housing, property taxes, etc.
 - Provide home repair funding for low-income home owners.
 - Provide more programs that would assist with affordable home ownership, rental assistance.
- **Building Wealth**
 - Access to quality well-paying jobs in all industries, job training, childcare options.
 - More resources to help residents pursue microenterprise by providing technical assistance, loans, and/or grants.
- **Programs and Services for Youth**
 - Parents raised the need for supportive services for youth and culturally relevant engagement.
 - Before and after school programming for youth to engage in.
 - Economic opportunity for youth to learn job skills.
- **Community Safety**
 - Increased safety and less punitive measures but more preventative strategies to address crime and drug use.
 - More safety resources for community: Security devices, non-police security, increased lighting.
 - Improve walkability and bike-ability of community so it can be more accessible for those without cars.
 - Community did not see safe injection site being a priority for the White Center community. One concern brought up was that establishing a safe injecting site in White Center will create an opportunity for other cities to send their drug users to White Center instead of creating their own injection sites in their city.

Demographic Information:

The demographic data below is what we collected during our outreach and focus groups. While we have collected data on how many participants there were, race, language spoken at home, age, and sexual orientation, we did not collect data on renter status, income level, or length of time residing in the neighborhood. We wanted residents to be able to respond to survey questions provided without barrier or concern of being identified by the data they provide.

- Participants: Focus Groups – 53/On-Line Survey 67 (as of 8/17), Total of 120 Participants.
- Race: Asian, Black, White, Latino, Jewish
- Languages spoken at home: Khmer, Vietnamese/Cham, Somali, Spanish, English
- Age groups engaged: 16-75
- Sexual orientations engaged: Heterosexual, LGBTQIA
- Renter or owner: Not collected (data on homeownership in WC shows majority renters)
- Length of time lived in neighborhood: Not collected (majority of respondents have been residents of WC avg of over 5 years)

Strategies Used to Engage Community:

Utilizing our connections in White Center, the CDA was able to reach out and engage communities who are historically underrepresented in planning processes. Our strategy focused on amplifying BIPOC voices within the subarea plan. Time constraints can be problematic, so our ability to rely on existing relationships was key in this process.

The importance of being flexible when working with diverse communities such as White Center cannot be overstated. For example, one meeting with LGBTQIA youth was conducted in person, using slides from the previous meeting as well as engaging other community members over ZOOM.

- Meetings were primarily conducted over ZOOM over various days and times.
- Ensuring the availability for participation from community, residents, and businesses by providing a variety of times and days that are most convenient.
- Utilized existing relationships with parents and other community leaders for translation/interpretation services
- We pared down the entire needs list and edited the list into a more accessible presentation format, using graphics that created a list that was more user friendly and accessible to youth and families. We translated the presentation into Spanish (given the largest ethnic population is Latinx in White Center/North Highline. It is extremely helpful to break down discussions into more digestible overarching themes.

Presentation by Groups - 8 total (virtual)

Southwest Youth & Family Services – 7/13/2021

Spanish Parent Group (WCCDA) – 7/15/2021

LGBTQIA Youth Group (WCCDA) – 7/22/2021

Native Parent Group (WCCDA) – 7/22/2021

Somali Parent Group (WCCDA) – 7/28/2021

Vietnamese/Cham Group (WCCDA) – 7/29/2021

Khmer Parent Group (WCCDA) – 8/3/2021

White Center Business Alliance – 8/9/2021

Outreach Done and Events Attended - 6 total

COO Partners Meeting – 7/22/2021

Feeding El Pueblo (WCCDA) – 7/21/2021

Lake Burien Partners Group – 7/22/2021

Healthier Here Coalition Meeting - 7/27/2021

Duwamish Vaccination Events – 7/28/2021 (In-Person)

WCCDA Board Meeting -7/29/2021

Online Survey Distributed Widely to Community

- Survey was provided in English only

Proposed changes to the draft vision statement:

Overall, throughout our community discussions, members felt that the vision statement did not reflect the ideas, issues and priorities that surfaced but did not express any specific changes to the vision statement

Below is a collection of comments collected from our online survey. The collection of online feedback contains more general comments with a handful of comments containing specific word suggestions regarding community values and community amenities and mention missing words or themes regarding affordability and BIPOC communities.

- Don't sell the proximity of our space to people who are not from white center.
- Please clarify what “urban amenities” means
- The vision statement is generic and could be for any neighborhood. Be more specific rather than using urban amenities.

- We're a community that is interconnected and reliant on family, friends, wider community and government institutions and elected officials, not self-reliant.
- North Highline is displacing long time low-wage multi-generational BIPOC families and businesses. So, the vision should mention and include the vision to sustain BIPOC, immigrant and refugee households, organizations and businesses.
- We value the stories, culture and languages our families hold. We value our ability as a community to increase equity, care for those at risk of displacement, own land and support reparations and our ability to care for our elders.
- We don't necessarily value our parks but we value the well-being and healthy living that occurs when we are able to engage those spaces more regularly, thoughtfully and creatively.
- Not urban amenities, but more specifically proximity to spaces and places that cultivate healing, celebrate our history and give our youth and children places to create, play and learn.
- Respect Native Land.
- This is not consistent with the prior statements but this encapsulates a strong vision statement for the community.
- The region needs to put pressure on the port to preserve the park we share and not pave over the park land for employee parking
- much of it is NOT close to accurate under current King County regime
- Having White Center officially, legally become a part of the city of Seattle.
- Good start. Can we get there?
- Family-Friendly means putting some hard lines in the sand for the protections afforded to children. Children before addiction
- I love the statement and would like to see the area embrace this and live it.
- The statement feels too generic and doesn't seem to directly address many of the goals laid out in the subarea plan. If affordability is a main goal of the plan, it should be directly addressed.
- Agree, but I don't really see this in full effect. If someone just moved to White Center and has no friends here, what events and things to do that let them meet locals? The only thing I can think of is walking a dog at Westcrest park (which is in Seattle). Hicks Lake Park and the Steve Cox Memorial Park are cool, but it would be nice if they were connected by walkable streets. Like when I bike through Madrona neighborhood, its safe, quiet, and bikeable. When I go through White Center, I feel like I got to make sure nobody is going to do something weird.

North Highline Vision Statement

Residing on the traditional land of the Duwamish people, North Highline celebrates its ethnic diversity, inter-generational roots and our ongoing inclusivity of diverse families and individuals, especially those most isolated and vulnerable. We call out race and place-based inequities and are committed to dismantling systems of power, privilege and racial injustice.

With mutual support and respect, we value and live out our brilliance and power through community-led initiatives, creating thoughtful development without displacing longtime residents and small business owners, forming and owning the policies that impact us and building our individual and collective wealth, health and well-being.

(Vision statement can stop here or can continue with the following)

We support a thriving and equitable economy, with strong, community-minded small business owners, entrepreneurs and employers. All residents are supported, especially children, youth and young adults in cultivating their passions and life goals. Valuing community stability, residents are supported to grow their work interests, skills and wages, building their quality of life.

We live in thoughtfully-designed housing and commercial spaces where inter-generational households and legacy businesses can stay and where affordability and ownership are realized.

We enjoy accessible, safe and clean parks, community gardens, open spaces, and community centers that provide year-round, innovative and culturally appropriate programming for our youth, adults and seniors. We enjoy seasonal inter-generational community events surrounded by accessible and safe streets, roads, alleyways, with well-connected hiking and biking trails. We see the results of long-term investments made in prevention focused on root causes of crime, providing options to those who need alternative supports.

We are proud of our community and continue to share our collective history with others, continuing to invest in this place, our home away from home.

When contracting with community-based organizations, the county needs to form project timelines that works for and with community. County continues to use timelines that fit their processes, their budget cycles, their council members' parameters rather than timelines that are committed to doing the best possible work and supporting thoughtful processes that usually need more time than what is given.

Prior to beginning, County needed to prepare and conduct more robust research of how planning policies impact/resist displacement occurring across the region/nation. The subarea planning discussions needed to use an anti-displacement lens. Possible Questions:

- How does increasing residential and commercial density impact affordability and displacement?
- How does density, new developments impact your property taxes?
- Are neighborhoods impacted differently when developments vary in type and affordability?
- How does housing and commercial displacement and affordability relate?
- How are housing prices impacted by installing a transit rapid line?
- Why is North Highline overall AMI lower? What are the AMI differences?
- What is happening in Seattle, Burien and other cities surrounding North Highline economically and how are the changes impacting unincorporated neighborhoods negatively and positively?
- What does place and race look like in North Highline? Where are BIPOC communities living? Where are white communities living? Why do we see concentrations in those particular areas? How is your health and well-being impacted by where you live geographically?

But more importantly the planning process needed more space for residents to go beyond what the county can do for us, but rather what community members can do to be part of the solutions.

King County DLS staff needs to be in deeper relationship with more community members. Each staff person cultivates 50 resident/business owner relationships rather than just relying on CBOs to do the work to answer the question, what does community need and what are the priorities?