May 5, 2024

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to you in response to your request for comment on the draft One Seattle Plan. My name is Mike Dey and I am the President of the Fauntleroy Community Association (FCA). The FCA has been in existence for over 45 years representing the Fauntleroy catchment area of about 3,000 residences. We currently have an active membership of about 200 residences and approximately 20 small businesses in the Fauntleroy area.

A part of the One Seattle Plan is to designate an area in the Fauntleroy Community around 45th Ave SW and SW Wildwood (Endolyne business area) as a Neighborhood Center. The Neighborhood Center designation is proposed to extend approximately 800 feet or about 3 city blocks from major transit stops such as RapidRide bus stops. The proposal suggests that other areas along Barton, Fauntleroy and California Ave, where RapidRide stops exist, could also be places for the proposed higher density buildings that come with the Neighborhood Center designation.

At a recent meeting of the OPCD and 4 West Seattle Communities we listened intently to the presentation by Michael Hubner and Brennon Staley and to the comments and concerns of residents and attendees at the meeting. Additionally, we have sought input from the Fauntleroy Community on the plan proposals. Our comments below reflect the issues and concerns of the Fauntleroy Community. A summary of the concerns and position of the FCA is provided at the end of this letter.

It was noted at the meeting that OPCD had not reviewed or considered existing neighborhood plans or zoning. Such a review is important since the existing zoning or neighborhood plans may satisfy or even improve any concept the city has with a change in zoning. For example, an area around the Endolyne business area is currently zoned LR2 allowing for increased density in the small business area. The major portion of the LR2 area already has multifamily homes and apartments in place. Much of the area north and west of the Endolyne business area is a watershed for Fauntleroy Creek, a salmon spawning stream that has been rehabbed over the last several decades.

Feedback from community residents has been understanding but firm that along with a list of specific concerns listed below creating a Neighborhood Center in Fauntleroy is not wanted. The existence of the LR2 zoned area is adequate to allow for increased density in the area. Further expansion of that zone will significantly aggravate already existing traffic and parking problems. A community study of the merchants conducted in 2021 revealed complaints from customers because of the lack of places to park. Residents are also concerned about the reduction in their quality of life as a result of the increased noise, traffic, loss of greenspace, increased crime and other negative attributes of increased population density as a result of a change in zoning.

Other expressed concerns include the loss of greenspace that is proposed by the plan. It is one thing to increase the height of buildings and yet preserve the tree canopies, the back yard space for kids to play and dogs to run. It is quite another to essentially eliminate those areas and provide no remediation for their loss. The whole idea for increased density is to allow families to find "affordable" housing. So where are the children to play? Where are the adults and families going to have time to share time in a quiet setting? Without more green space set aside to provide those pocket parks and compensate for the loss of green space lost to the building foot prints the quality of life in Fauntleroy and other West Seattle neighborhoods will be reduced. The National Recreation and Park Association has discussed the importance of greenspace on mental and physical wellbeing. (https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/health-wellness/ParksandHealth/fact-sheets/parks-improved-mental-health-quality-life/). The current regulations on cutting down trees is inadequate. Further it is not being enforced. No one can with a straight face say that cutting down an 80 year old tree can be remediated by planting 4 saplings. The Yale School of the Environment recently reported significant health related outcomes related to the available tree canopy. (https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2023/02/the-little-known-physical-and-mental-health-benefits-of-urban-). Further, from an environmental carbon capturing and/or urban cooling perspective that notion is ludicrous. At a time when people are being encouraged to get out of their cars, convert to hybrid/electric automobiles, reduce their carbon emissions, convert to solar etc, the reduction in green space is inconsistent if not duplicitous. It is as though one hand of the City is not talking to the other. There must be a comprehensive plan that deals with these issues and the One Seattle Plan fails to do that. It focuses only on housing. The basic premise that the plan will actually reduce the cost of housing and make housing more "affordable" is at this point speculation at best.

One of OPCD's selling points to the increased density is the new homes are smaller and thus will cost less. To date that has not happened. There has been no showing of a lower cost of these new homes. All the new homes being developed are more expensive than the existing homes being torn down. OPCD must provide examples of other cities similar to Seattle where plans, such as they are proposing, have actually lowered the costs of housing.

An additional area that should be addressed before such a plan is approved is the loss of views from existing homes with the increase in height that is proposed. Much of what makes Seattle and West Seattle an attractive place to live are the views of the sound, and mountains. In fact, it was one of the major arguments for tearing down the Alaskan Way viaduct. Such passion for the views should be included in dealing with the loss of those same views for existing residences when new construction, much taller than the current structures, is introduced into neighborhoods. When the most significant investment that most people have is in their homes it is unfair for a builder to profit from their new construction at the expense of someone whose retirement savings are imbedded in their homes. Clearly a home with a view before but lost to an obstructing building is worth less than it was before.

The same issue applies to obstructing the solar capturing of energy should it be reduced by a new 4 or 6 story building. After a push by the State, City and our power industry to put in solar panels at significant cost and to then come up with a plan that reduces their efficiency, denying the investor of their calculated returns not to mention the loss of environmental benefit, is at a minimum, unfair.

Current infrastructure capacity is not adequate to handle the increased demand put on them by increasing population density. The costs of those repairs and increases in capacity should not be borne by existing home and apartment owners. Those costs and expenses must be paid for solely by the developers. To add to the taxes of existing home owners to the benefit of for-profit developers is contrary to the city's stated position of not wanting to displace current home owners/residents. "Affordability" does not apply only to new or first-time home owners and renters but to current residents as well. The cost of living in Seattle is increasing in significant part because of the taxes and fees charged by the city. As with the loss of carbon capturing capacity and the effort to reduce green house gases, the increase in taxes to create more affordable housing is ill conceived.

The Fauntleroy area is the dubious recipient of the Washington State Ferries (WSF) ferry dock. The ferry pre-pandemic delivered 1.7 million vehicles per year into this community. Most (80%) of those vehicles were single occupancy vehicles traveling to other parts of the county so Fauntleroy and greater West Seattle including Morgan, the Alaska Junction, Admiral, Delridge and Highland Park were the recipients of that additional traffic. In 1979 the State of Washington conducted a transportation study that concluded that the maximum capacity of Fauntleroy Way was 1.2 million cars per year. In fact, the study recommended that the ferry dock be relocated. Thus, the current traffic through Fauntleroy vastly exceeds that recommended by the State study. Further aggravating the existing traffic problems, WSF hopes to expand the current dock by more than twice its current footprint while at the same time maintaining control of the parking lane along Fauntleroy as a ferry loading lane. WSF is planning to expand the number of cars coming into and out of Fauntleroy to at least 1.9 million cars by 2040. That increase alone will further jam up the streets going north and south from the ferry dock leaving residents and merchants at the mercy of the ferry system. Already the West Seattle bridge is a mess at morning and afternoon rush hour traffic as is Fauntleroy Way. That traffic along Fauntleroy creates problems for park goers that try to get into and out of Lincoln Park. It creates problems for residents that try to come and go from their homes and hinders their ability to travel during rush hours.

Before any more traffic is added to Fauntleroy or West Seattle there needs to be a comprehensive transportation study that examines the capacity of our streets and bridges to handle the everyday volume of vehicles that currently travel the West Seattle streets. Such a study should include evaluation of an emergency plan should the area experience an earthquake similar to what happened in 1965. There needs to be an evaluation of the lives that would be lost because the injured could not get to necessary medical care if one or more of the bridges were impassable.

In summary, the Fauntleroy Community does not support the proposed designation of the area around 45th Ave SW and SW Wildwood (Endolyne Business area) or any other area in Fauntleroy as a Neighborhood Center. There needs to be a transportation study conducted for West Seattle to determine what is a reasonable traffic volume that can be handled by the current streets and bridges and how traffic volumes greater than that can be addressed. There is already a traffic problem that will be aggravated by a WSF plan to increase the Fauntleroy Ferry dock. The

current traffic is already in excess of that identified as the maximum volume in a Washington State Traffic study. Further, issues related to loss of greenspace with no plan for remediating that loss need to be addressed. A comprehensive zoning plan must simultaneously tackle the environmental issues that it creates such as loss of greenspace, carbon capture, automobile emissions and infrastructure before a change in zoning is approved with the promise of "we'll get to it as needed". Too often these items get kicked down the road and never get addressed.

Respectfully,

Mike Dey, President
Fauntleroy Community Association