

Mountain View Neighborhood Plan

NOTES

Location: **ACLT Offices**

Date: **6:30-8:30pm, March 5, 2008**

Attending:

- Teri Desy-Peters (MOA Parks & Recreation Dept)
- Marjorie Chord (Mountain View Recreation Commission)
- Katch Bacheller (Alaska Museum of Natural History)
- Chris Conlon (MOA Parks & Recreation Dept)
- Tyler Robinson (MOA Planning Dept)
- Olympia Lewis (Credit Union 1)
- Leslie Ellis (Credit Union 1)
- Jewel Jones (Anchorage Community Land Trust)
- Michael Howard (Fairview resident)
- Gary Sanchez (Cook Inlet Housing Authority)
- Don Crandall (Mountain View Community Council)
- Niki Burrows (Mountain View Community Council)
- Loren Becia (Lounsbury Associates)
- Eric Gurley (MV Rec Ctr/Boys & Girls Club Advisory Commission)
- Heather Stewart (Agnew::Beck)
- Chris Beck (Agnew::Beck)

Update on progress to date:

Recap of March 5 meeting

- Notes were distributed and are now available on the project website: www.mountainviewplan.com

Upcoming meeting with business and resident groups to address neighborhood image

- Tentatively, this meeting will be scheduled in early April. Would a lunch meeting or an evening meeting be better? Heather will send out an email to inquire. Stay tuned for more details.
- There will be a focus on putting together some sort of presentation/marketing materials for the military. The neighborhood would like to try to get some military volunteers working with the community. While the military says it has no official policy redlining Mountain View, at the last meeting, the group learned that they will have to talk to Commanding Officers and First Sergeants, who have the power to informally steer their enlisted toward or away from the neighborhood. Suggestion from a participant to talk to Rick Henderson, who has had some experience with this issue in the past.

Subcommittee to organize Summer Celebration

- One of the big next steps is to organize a summer celebration event for the neighborhood. A subcommittee will be called to work on this event separately from other MV planning efforts.
 - To keep the celebration event coordinated, Jewel will meet with Principal Williams to coordinate schedules related to Clark's opening events that will incorporate as many opportunities to sponsor and promote the celebration as one event.
 - This smaller group will hold an initial meeting to start the discussion and come up with a general "plan" that will be presented to the larger group at the April "Neighborhood Image" meeting.

Neighborhood Plan

Tyler Robinson, from MOA Planning, talked about how the community can get an MOA-adopted neighborhood plan in place.

- What is the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan? Includes:
 - Anchorage 2020: Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan
 - Area/District plans (e.g., Hillside District Plan, U Med District Plan)
 - Functional plans (e.g., Long Range Transportation Plan, Areawide Trails Plan)
- Municipal Ordinance includes a procedure for neighborhoods to do a neighborhood or district plan on their own. (Chapter 21.05.155)
- The community will have to choose a sponsor for the plan:
 - Could be Mountain View Community Council, but then the Neighborhood Plan would probably have to include all land within the community council boundaries
 - Could be ACLT, in which case the boundary of the area to be addressed by the plan could be different (e.g., might exclude the industrial area to the west)
 - Will want to talk to Patrick Flynn (Assembly representative for the area) and get him on board to do the plan.
- Plan will generally need to contain sections on:
 - Existing Conditions
 - Community Vision
 - Policy + Strategies to achieve the vision
 - Land Use Plan Map
- The Mountain View Neighborhood Plan will have to fit with other parts of the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan (must be generally consistent with Anchorage 2020, Long Range Transportation Plan, etc.); it can be used to update other plans (e.g., trails in the Neighborhood Plan can update the Areawide Trails Plan)
 - One thing that might come up: The MOA is currently doing a study of industrial land in Anchorage and finding that there is not enough of it, so if the Mountain View Neighborhood Plan recommends changing some existing industrial land to some other use, the Municipality might ask that the plan examine other alternatives.
- Process: Plan gets written with broad community participation, is then reviewed and adopted, adopted with conditions, or denied by first the Mountain View Community Council, then the Anchorage Planning and Zoning Commission, then the Anchorage Assembly.
 - Need to show that the plan is representative of the community at large

Q & A

- How are plans funded?
 - Variety of sources: State funds, Municipal funds, Federal Transportation funds, Municipal tax dollars
 - Areas with the most intense development pressures get priority for Municipal funds
 - For Government Hill, the neighborhood/community council got the MOA to agree to a matching grant (\$20,000), although the neighborhood/community council was unable to raise their portion of the money, so they never got the money from the city.
- What would the cost be for this type of plan?
 - The West Anchorage District Plan has a budget of \$150,000, which is mainly consultant services, not a lot of technical studies
 - For Mountain View, it might be less than that because: 1) the community has already done a lot of work, so not starting from scratch, and 2) it's a smaller area, so the kinds of issues to be addressed by the plan might be narrower
- What would compelling issues be if a collaborative group wanted to sponsor the plan?
 - You tell us (MOA) what those issues are. The primary things we'd like to see addressed are:
 - Land Use – Is new development changing the main commercial corridor (Mountain View Drive) for the long-term? Is it still appropriate for the land along that corridor to be industrial? The city does not want to create more commercial strips, but a neighborhood center (as defined in Anchorage 2020) might be appropriate.
 - Urban Design – there seems to be a focus on pedestrian orientation
 - Housing – zoning change forced on community, created a lot of not-so-great housing and changed the community. Now what?
 - Economic Development – does it make sense to focus on the length of Mountain View Drive or a more concentrated area?
 - Youth Initiatives might make sense for this area
 - One thing to keep in mind is that the Planning Department will rely on other departments like the Health Department for different areas of review and expertise.
- I recently saw a Highway2Highway document that said Mountain View was outside the area covered by Anchorage 2020; is that correct?
 - No; Mountain View is in the Anchorage Bowl and is covered by Anchorage 2020
- Other things the plan might address (need to select priorities):
 - Industrialization
 - Participation in tourist industry (Mountain View is not on the tourist maps, even though the Alaska Museum of Natural History is there)
 - Zoning issues – the problem is not just that you have 4-plexes built on 6,000 sf lots; it's also the way trash and parking was dealt with (dumpsters and parking in the front yard).
 - It could be changed so that you can no longer have 100% coverage of the front yard as parking.
 - Alleys – who upgrades these and when are they required to upgrade them?
 - Concern that some improvements are made and responsibility to maintain assigned and enforced.
 - Landscaping, for instance, often includes high-maintenance plantings and the Parks Dept is stretched too thin to be able to maintain them properly. Katch is an arborist and happy to lend her ideas on low- to no-maintenance landscaping.
 - Plea for crosswalks!
 - Also parking improvements and a change of parking requirements.
 - To do this, you might use a parking overlay district, which would require that a neighborhood plan be adopted first.

Mountain View Drive Improvements

Loren Becia, project designer from Lounsbury & Associates talked about improvements along Mountain View Drive that will happen this summer.

- Not really road improvements; rather sidewalk widening, landscaping, and hardscaping throughout the neighborhood (but this part of the project is focusing on areas along Mountain View Drive)
- This summer we're trying to finish up the work that was started some years ago:
 - Joint parking lot by Video City
 - Parking between Asian Market and the construction company
 - Credit Union 1 bus shelter, sculpture + planters
 - Better (separated) pathway in front of Clark Middle School
 - Lighting to the new overpass (trying to get a more uniform look through to the overpass)
 - Pedestals for art sculptures (RFP to go out)
 - Who decides what sculptures get put in? (they have a committee; talk to Bruce Farnsworth or Jocelyn Young)
 - Katch wants dinosaurs by the Museum of Natural History
- One problem we've encountered often in Mountain View is that sidewalks are narrow and right on the property line, so we have trouble with getting right-of-way (ROW) and easements

Q & A

- Can we get:
 - more hardscaping and less landscaping, or landscaping that is the least maintenance? We're concerned about who can take care of the plants and want the neighborhood to look good in the long term (next 20 years); want something that it's easy to rake the trash out from under.
 - Lots of trash cans (at corners, bus stops, etc.)?
 - Need to commit right-of-way (ROW) and easements
- Are you looking at putting in any crosswalks?
 - Only at Bragaw and Richmond in front of the Natural History Museum
- Some of these issues might come up in the Neighborhood Plan:
 - What is the role of businesses in the edge environment? What are their responsibilities?
 - Looking at pathways, the ways people get to your establishment
 - Bus stops are community bulletin boards; how do you plan to use that space as an information piece (communication tool)?
 - Benefits and responsibilities
 - The landscaping in front of the school is a great learning and training opportunity for kids in horticulture
- Regarding some of these street improvement ideas and urban design issues that will come up in the Neighborhood Plan, the community might be interested to know that the rate of pass-through traffic on Mountain View Drive is actually very low (about 10-15%), so it's mostly local traffic, which makes sense given the density of people living there.
 - Makes slowing traffic more defensible
 - Crosswalks connected to shared parking lots to encourage safer pedestrian travel?
 - Loren was asked to try to peddle more crosswalks to the city; the Mountain View group is happy to give him a statement of request/support for that
 - The money for these improvements has pretty much run out, so these plans are being retired. Loren's team is trying to get the most bang for the buck with what they have left.
 - Crosswalks don't just include striping, they might also have lighting and signalization to consider. Again the biggest problem is getting the easements for the ROW.

- What was originally bid in the more ambitious project some years ago went to landscaping, parking lots, some due to increased costs for materials and labor, but Tyler offered to get a more detailed and official response from the MOA.
- What would a crosswalk cost? It's a bigger priority than trees or the art sculptures (which cost about \$25,000 each)
 - [didn't get to an answer]
 - There is already a flashing school light, so traffic is slow in front of Clark
 - The Neighborhood Plan could be used to involve the school and consider other possibilities (e.g., crossing guard) to slow traffic, make children aware of how to cross the street.
 - Leslie + Jewel offered to go to the MOA to figure out what the exact landscaping/hardscaping improvements are supposed to be, as the drawings that Loren brought might not be the most up-to-date

Mountain View Park Improvements

Chris Conlon and Terry Peters from the MOA Parks and Recreation Department talked about improvements to be made to Duldida Park and William B Lyons Park.

- The Parks Department is looking for input on priorities to do improvements in neighborhoods (parks, trash cans, etc.)
 - They will be looking for volunteers to help with different projects
- Duldida Park will get an "extreme makeover" this year; William B Lyons next year
 - March 30 at Begich Middle School, the Parks Department is having a big community meeting for planning efforts, that will include a "light dinner" and youth activities (because the kids were a HUGE help in doing the scorecards that the Dept used to prioritize parks for improvements)
- Heather will put information on the Mountain View Plan website about all these things.