



WEST KELSO SUBAREA PLAN

Workshop #1 Summary

OVERVIEW

The first public workshop for the West Kelso Subarea Plan was held on September 20, 2015 from 6-7:30pm at Catlin Hall in the West Kelso Neighborhood. Approximately 25 people attended. The workshop included the following activities:

- A. Existing Conditions Presentation
- B. Open House Display of Existing Conditions and Opportunities for Public Input
- C. Mapping Exercise



Figure 1: Workshop Exercise on Plan Priorities

The following summary provides an overview of the input received at the workshop, as well as individual participation exercise descriptions. Attached is a list of attendees and the existing conditions boards that were available to workshop attendees.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The following themes were identified based on public input:

- A. **Public Safety and Drug Use:** Those that attended the workshop identified public safety and high drug use in the neighborhood as the biggest challenge. People feel that drug use has led to perceptions of crime and that the neighborhood is not safe. Many people feel that until this issue is resolved the neighborhood will not be able to improve. Although the area around NW 3rd Avenue has been identified as a hot spot for public safety issues and drug use, those in attendance also identified the residential areas south of Catlin Street and north of Cowlitz Way and west of Long Avenue as having many of the same issues.
- B. **Property and Building Maintenance:** The lack of property and building maintenance was also identified as a major challenge in the neighborhood. Some suggested that rezoning certain areas, like around NW 3rd Avenue that has been identified as an area with very high perceived drug use and crime, would lead to redevelopment of the area.

- C. **West Main Street Realignment Project:** Those in attendance at the workshop expressed concern about Phase I and II of the West Main Realignment Project. The majority of those in attendance perceive Phase I as making traffic more congested in the area and others expressed concern about the uncertainty regarding the status of Phase II. One local business owner stated their business has been successful since Phase I has been completed.
- D. **Single Family Neighborhoods:** Public input on the potential to rezone single-family neighborhoods was both supported and opposed by those in attendance. Residents of the residential area south of Catlin Street expressed concern about the proposal to locate a hotel in the neighborhood, which is not permitted under current zoning. Another resident in the area of NW 3rd Avenue expressed support to rezone the area for commercial development.
- E. **Additional Input:** Other input received includes support for more youth activities, a stronger connection to the waterfront, strengthening local businesses, and improved sidewalks and parks.

PLAN PRIORITIES EXERCISE

Workshop attendees were given three colored dots, a green dot for their first priority, a yellow dot for their second priority, and a red dot for their third priority. First priorities score 3 points, second priorities score 2 points, and third priorities score 1 point. See Exhibit 1 and Figure 1 for the results.

Exhibit 1. Plan Priorities Exercise Results

Category	Points
Drug Use	24
Crime	21
New Housing Development	11
Street Improvements	11
Traffic	11
Building Maintenance & Appearance	8
New Recreation Facilities	6
Economic Development and Jobs	6
Other	2

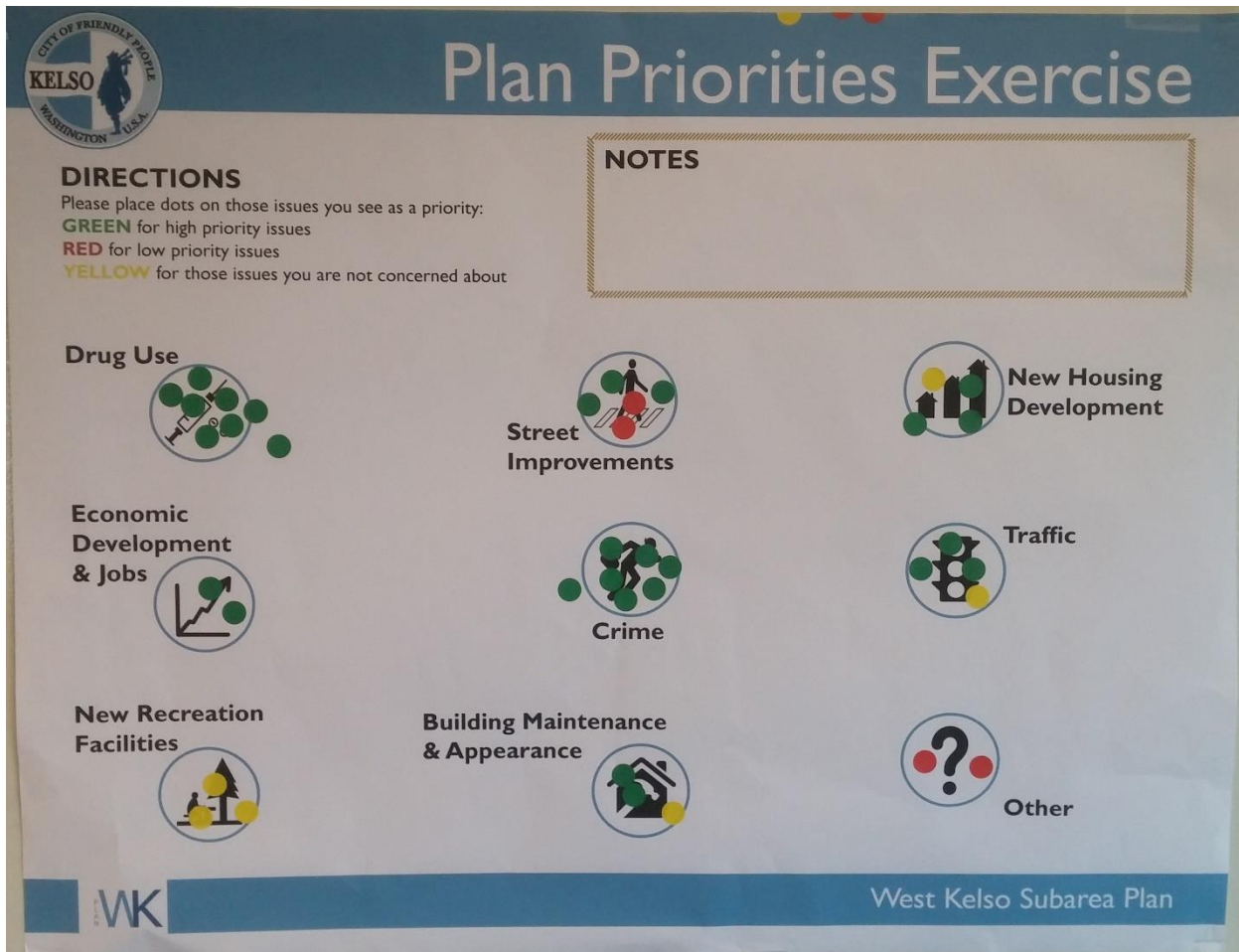


Figure 2: Plan Priorities Board

VISIONING EXERCISE

Workshop attendees were asked for the three words that best describe their vision for West Kelso. See Exhibit 2 and Figure 3 for the results.

Exhibit 2. Visioning Exercise Results

Vision Words
Safe (2)
Pretty (More Attractive) (2)
Clean (2)
Welcoming
Functional
Drug Free

Vision Words
Crime Free
Green Space
Friendly

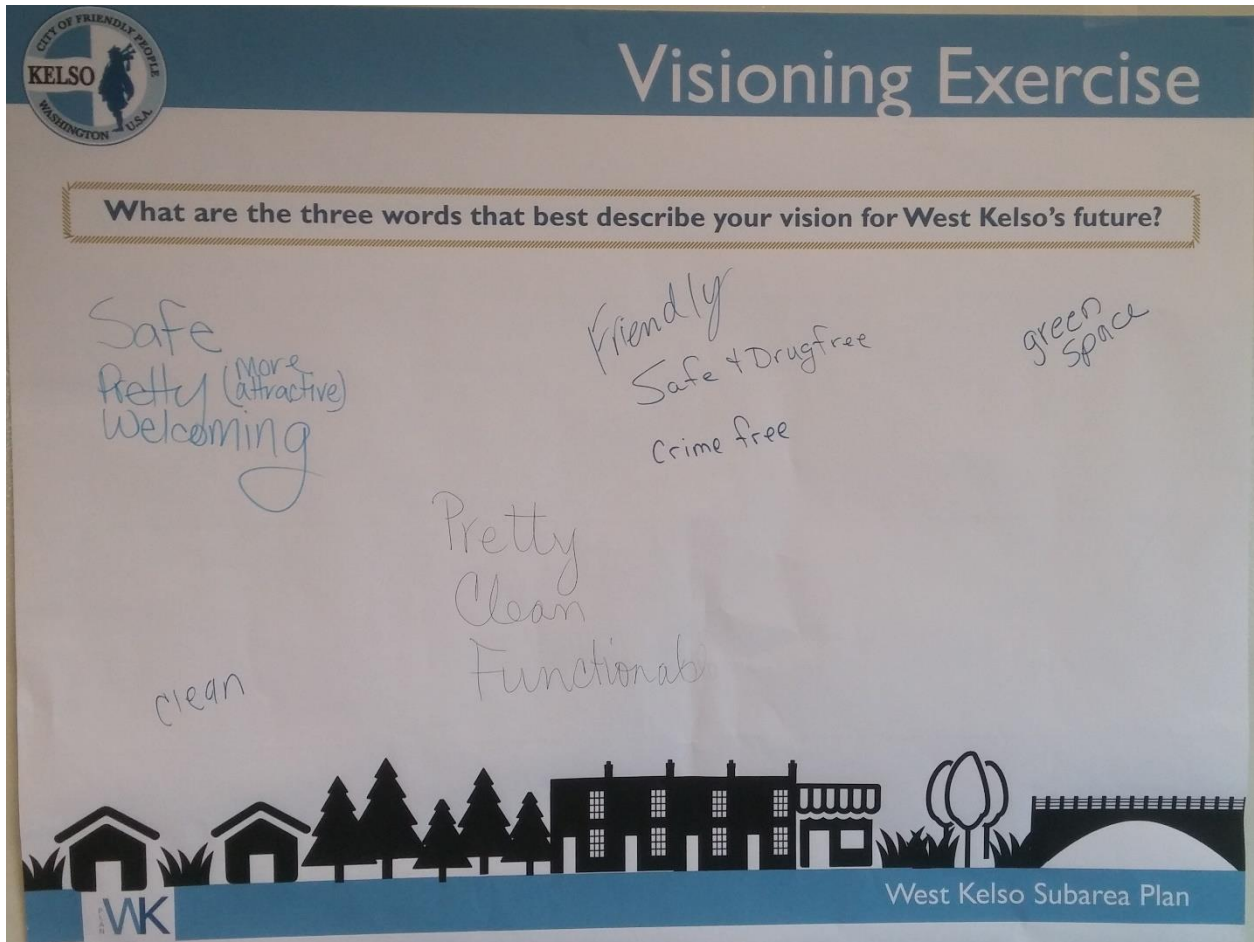


Figure 3: Visioning Exercise Board

MAPPING EXERCISE

There were four groups of around 4-6 people working on the mapping exercise, which asked attendees to consider the assets, challenges, connectivity, and future development opportunities in West Kelso. Each group worked with a consultant team member, who was available to assist and respond to questions. Figure 4 shows the exercise provided to attendees on 30 x 40 inch posters. Responses by topic are summarized below.

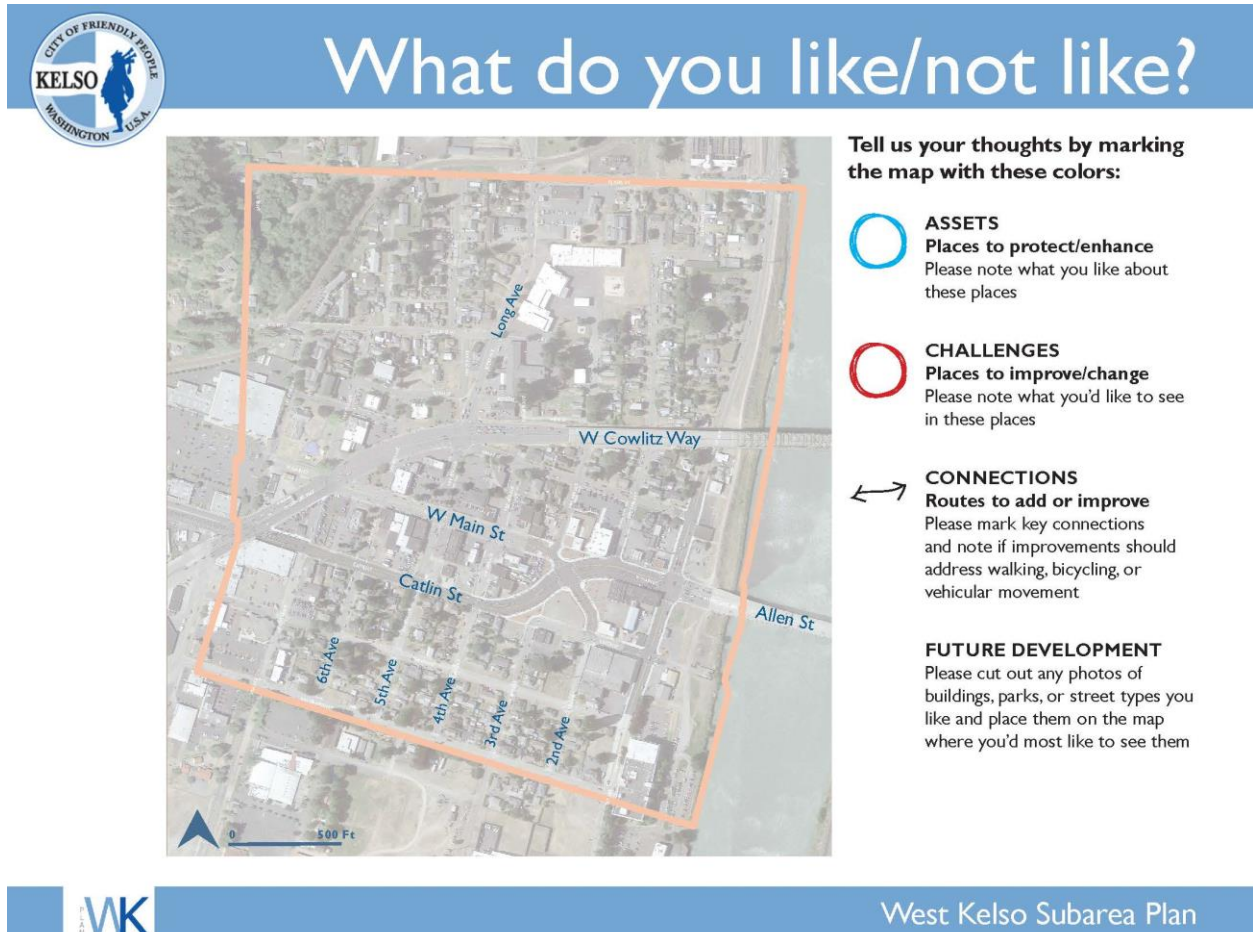


Figure 4: Mapping Exercise Board

Assets

The following were identified as assets during the mapping exercise:

- Red Leaf/Red Leaf Building
- Hall of Justice
- Walkability
- Conference Center
- West Main (once improvements are complete will be nice)
- Older buildings at Allen St Bridge gateway are an asset
- Centrally located
- Flat – easy to walk/bike

- Close to businesses
- Farmer’s market at fairgrounds (but not well attended)
- Riverfront is an asset
- Nice school, updated
- Spray park needs help, but it could be a good thing
- Some of the commercial/small businesses along W. Main and Catlin are good.

Challenges

The following were identified as challenges during the mapping exercise:

- Residential rental rates stagnant – if you have a good renter, keep them!
- Buildings at Allen St. gateway vacant for 20+ years
- Crime and disinvestment north of Cowlitz Way
- River – can’t see it, can’t use it, not very attractive
- Spray park would be better if cleaned up – worse since needle event – not good for kids
- Residential developers concerned about retaining their property investment
- Homeless sleeping in doorways
- Gateway at Office Max looks horrible
- Fears about hotel/buying up residential property
- Why is there a curve off SW 4th and Catlin
- Half of businesses closed because of realignment
- Slow traffic coming off of Cowlitz onto Catlin – backups, accidents, and noise
- Need parking downtown if the businesses are going to do well
- Need restaurants – would be nice to have some places to eat



Figure 5: Groups participating in the Mapping Exercise

Connections

The following were identified as connectivity issues during the mapping exercise:

- Cowlitz Way is a barrier – office buildings cut off from core of West Kelso
- At the intersection coming off of the Allen St. Bridge – include improvements for pedestrians
- Too many people making U-turns from Catlin onto SW 1st to get back onto Catlin
- Pedestrian crossing on Washington is a challenge
- Sidewalks on neighborhood streets need improvements – gravel ditch between street and sidewalk is not good

- Jails are full
- Not enough employment opportunities
- Traffic worse than before street improvements – City spent money on project and got grant but would have had to pay back if didn't complete project
- Widen Catlin so you can turn off of Cowlitz onto Catlin – trucks can't turn
- Stop messing with the traffic lights on Cowlitz and Main and Cowlitz and Catlin – fix to be what it used to be.

Future Development

The following were identified as future development opportunities during the mapping exercise:

- Development opportunity on Royal and NW 5th
- Lot in Longview that gets used as parking for fairgrounds would be nice to develop
- Area near Hall of Justice would be good for attorney offices
- Improving West Main – uses and character – would strengthen residential S. of Catlin
- Townhouses/Duplexes (Picture 1) are desirable
- Woonerf (S11) and Retail/Office (7) in lots near new West Main and Catlin Intersection
- Need eating spots nearby Hall of Justice
- Buy up homes in area near fairgrounds – improve to attract homeowners
- Invest in area around 6th Ave and Washington – give home improvement help
- Shopping/businesses – add office – in area around Red Leaf
- Development of townhomes, retail and office along W. Main and Catlin (pics 6, 7, 4)
- Redevelop hotel outside of W. Kelso
- Storefront retail (pics 5 and 6) downtown near realignment intersection
- Townhouses and apartments (pics 1, 2, 3, 4) in residential areas along Cowlitz River – NW 1st Ave



Other Improvements

The following were identified as improvement opportunities during the mapping exercise:

- Lighting on W. Main and Catlin
- Plaza with garden-like plantings in publicly-owned parcels by new road configuration
- Plant trees, make nice trail, and add lighting along the Cowlitz River

- Pedestrian lighting (S2 pic) along Catlin
- Improve alleyways
- Community street art (pic S16) along W. Main