

AURORA-LICTON
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN

March 1999

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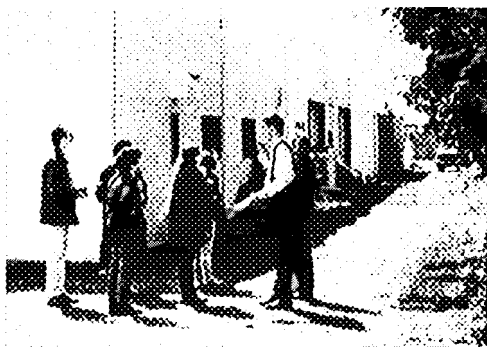
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan is the product of a citizen-based planning process spanning almost two years and involving neighborhood residents, business people, and property owners. This neighborhood plan focuses on a core area that includes Licton Springs Park, the Wilson-Pacific school site, the Oak Tree Village shopping center and other Aurora Avenue businesses from NE 85th Street to NE 110th Street, and areas east and west of Aurora Avenue North. This area was identified as a proposed "Residential Urban Village" in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan of 1994.

The Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan was prepared by the Aurora-Licton Planning Group (ALPG), a neighborhood group formed in 1997 specifically to



Members of the Planning Group studying the potential of future land uses in the urban village core, focusing here on the possibility of turning unimproved alleys into pedestrian spaces.

take up the task of neighborhood planning in this area. The Plan identifies goals and objectives intended to guide growth and development in this area over the next 20 years. This plan also identifies specific actions the City, other public agencies, and the community can take to implement these goals and objectives.

The Aurora-Licton community's overall objective for this neighborhood plan is to build upon existing neighborhood resources, including Licton Springs Park and the Wilson-Pacific site, to create a center or focus for the City's proposed residential urban village. This choice reflects the community's love of the park and the neighborhood history it embodies, as well as the community's recognition of the unique opportunities provided by underutilized Wilson-Pacific buildings and grounds. The plan also seeks to make it easier, safer and more pleasant for neighborhood residents to cross, walk along and shop on Aurora Avenue North, while recognizing the importance of maintaining the health of the Aurora Avenue business community, and respecting Aurora Avenue's regional and retail transportation role.

KEY INTEGRATED STRATEGIES:

A. Designation of the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village

C. Community Center - Wilson Pacific Site

B. Neighborhood Commercial Centers

D. Aurora Avenue North

E. Neighborhood Connections

Another overall objective of this and other neighborhood plans is to identify improvements needed to help the area accommodate the growth anticipated during the next sixteen years.

The Plan is organized into five “Key Integrated Strategies” or main topics, each of which includes goals and policies addressing land use, transportation, and a wide range of other issues. These Key Integrated Strategies are:

A. Designation of the core area including Licton Springs Park, the Wilson-Pacific site, Oak Tree Village and other nearby Aurora Avenue businesses, and areas east and west of Aurora, as the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village.

- B. Establishment of a community center in conjunction with an excellent educational center at the Wilson-Pacific site.
- C. Creation of one or more neighborhood commercial centers.
- D. Enhancements to the business area and streetscape along Aurora Avenue North.
- E. Establish a comprehensive network of safe and attractive pedestrian connections.

The Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan is being forwarded to the Seattle City Council for its consideration. The City Council may adopt some or all of the goals and policies of this plan into the Seattle Comprehensive Plan, and may also implement some or all of the specific recommendations in the plan.

The Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan was partially funded by the City of Seattle, through the City’s Neighborhood Planning Office.

INTRODUCTION

Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Planning Process

In the Spring of 1997, members of the Licton Springs Community Council, with residents from the west side of Aurora Avenue, organized the Aurora-Licton Planning Group (ALPG) to take responsibility for drafting a neighborhood plan. In cooperation with the City of Seattle's Neighborhood Planning Office (NPO), the ALPG engaged the Aurora-Licton community with a comprehensive outreach program. The ALPG's first activity was to walk throughout the neighborhood and recognize some of the most pressing issues. The near impossibility of crossing Aurora Avenue was an obvious notation.



Citizens actively discuss the issues during the validation meeting.

The planning process was divided into two phases. The first phase involved outreach and issue identification. The second phase sought solutions to the issues identified in Phase I and to draft the neighborhood plan. Throughout the development of the plan, the ALPG continually engaged the residents and businesses of the Aurora-Licton area. Activities included a housing density study, a land use walk, a safety audit, a crime risk assessment, a planning survey and four planning workshops. Members of the planning group walked door to door to speak with people and deliver surveys and meeting notices to many of the businesses and residents in the community.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE AURORA-LICTON NEIGHBORHOOD:

East and west portions of the neighborhood are divided by Aurora Avenue North

Poor pedestrian access, few sidewalks

High traffic volumes and vehicle speeds on minor arterial and residential streets

Limited open space and recreation opportunities

Stagnant commercial areas

Drug activity, vehicle crimes and prostitution near Aurora Avenue North

Excessive parking in residential areas by users of North Seattle Community College, the police precinct and Seattle City Light

PHASE I

During Phase I of the planning process, the ALPG identified issues of concern to the community and conducted a variety of outreach activities to encourage citizen involvement in the planning process. In November 1997, the ALPG retained Inghram Design Consultants to assist with these activities. Phase I included distribution of a survey throughout the planning area. Based on the results of the survey and the other Phase I outreach activities, the ALPG identified the following issues of special concern to the Aurora-Licton community: east and west portions of the neighborhood are divided by Aurora Avenue North; poor pedestrian access, few sidewalks; high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds on minor arterial and residential streets; limited open space and recreation opportunities; stagnant commercial areas; drug activity, vehicle crimes and prostitution near Aurora Avenue North; excessive parking in residential areas by users of North Seattle Community

College, the police precinct and Seattle City Light. A more complete summary of the Phase I planning findings are included in the Phase I Report, which appears as Appendix C to the Plan.

PHASE II

In March 1998, ALPG hired the consultant team of Action Assessment Group, David Nemens Associates and Inghram Design Consultants to work on Phase II neighborhood planning. The goal of Phase II was to examine potential solutions to the issues identified in Phase I, and to draft a neighborhood plan that

incorporated these solutions. With the consultants' assistance,ALPG conducted a series of four topical workshops on the following subjects:

- Public and Open Spaces
- Aurora Avenue North
- Linkages (transportation)
- Zoning, Boundaries and Design Review



Aurora-Licton residents conduct a safety audit of the urban village with the help of a crime prevention specialist.

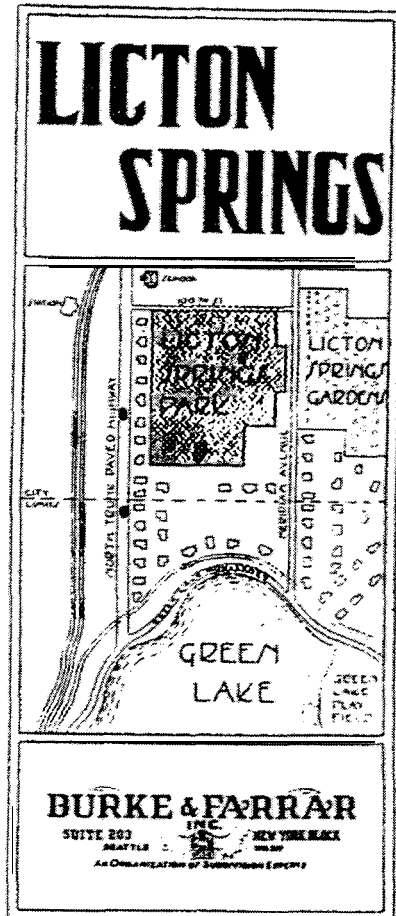
The workshops were held at the City Light facility on North 97th Street on Saturday mornings during the Spring and Summer of 1998.

The consultant team also conducted a safety walk, crime risk assessment and a land use walk to involve the community in this planning process. The land use walk introduced citizens to existing development patterns, zoning and areas with probable future development. The safety audit and crime risk assessment were used to record areas of perceived and real threats of criminal activity. The results of the safety audit and crime risk assessment are summarized in Appendix B.

Based on the information gathered from all of the above activities, during the fall of 1998 the consultant team, working closely with ALPG, prepared a draft neighborhood plan. The draft plan was distributed to several pick-up locations within the planning area. In addition, a summary of the draft plan, the "validation mailer," was mailed to residents and businesses in the planning area. This mailer also served as a meeting notice for a "validation meeting" to gather community comments on the draft plan. This meeting was held on December 5, 1998, at the Seattle City Light North Service Center; a total of thirty-four people participated in the meeting. In addition, a meeting with members of the Aurora-Licton business community was held on ___ at the _____. During this period the draft plan recommendations were also being reviewed by staff of various City departments.

This final neighborhood plan is the result of this community review. It represents the participation of residents, business owners and institution representatives in a two year, citizen-based planning process.

History of the Aurora-Licton Neighborhood



A historic real estate advertisement for Licton Springs. The North Trunk Paved Highway is now Aurora Avenue. The Interurban is shown to the left.

The name Licton, meaning red painted water, was given by the area's Native Americans to the iron and sulfur springs originating in what is now Licton Springs Park; the name describes the rust colors that swirl in the spring water. "Licton" is one of the few original native place names still in use in Seattle.

The Seattle to Everett Interurban trolley line was built between 1900 and 1920, connecting Seattle with communities to the north, including Aurora-Licton. At that time Aurora-Licton was well beyond the Seattle city limits. During the 1930's the Interurban was replaced in importance by the North Trunk Highway, later to become Highway 99 (the stretch passing through North Seattle also being known as Aurora Avenue North). The Interurban and Highway 99 allowed development to spread north from downtown Seattle. At first, the area was promoted as a retreat area around the springs -a mineral bath was constructed at the site of the springs. The Dennys, a Seattle pioneer family, built a vacation home near the springs. Later, real estate developers sold "farmettes" – five-acre plots – to suburban Seattle residents

with the idea that they would be able to grow their own food on these mini-farms.

The Aurora-Licton area eventually filled with development. Aurora Avenue North, the main north-south transportation route in the city up until the 1960's, developed into a continuous commercial corridor. The I-5 freeway, built during the 1950's and 1960's, diverted traffic and new commercial activity away from Aurora. The Aurora Avenue North commercial corridor has

remained relatively stagnant since; many of the existing commercial buildings date from the 1940's with few improvements. Seattle annexed the neighborhood (along with most lands north of North 85th Street up to North 125th Street) in the 1950's.

The history of the neighborhood — in particular, the central role of the red painted water originating in what is now Licton Springs Park — is of special importance to today's community residents, and is reflected in the recommendations of this plan.

The Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Planning

In 1994, Seattle adopted a Comprehensive Plan that set forth the City's strategy for dealing with Seattle's projected population growth over the next twenty years (adoption of such a plan is required by the State's Growth Management Act). To deal with this growth, the Comprehensive Plan proposed more than thirty "urban villages" around the City, at locations where existing zoning and development patterns could accommodate additional growth. The Comprehensive Plan proposed a Residential Urban Village designation, the smallest of three village categories, for a village identified as "97th and Aurora:" and estimated likely growth for the village between 1994 and 2014 at an additional 900 households.

After adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the City set up the Neighborhood Planning Office to oversee the creation of citizen-based, City-funded neighborhood plans for each of these proposed urban villages. Through these plans, the residents, business people, property owners, and other stakeholders of each proposed urban village could accept or reject the City's proposed urban village designation, accept or modify the proposed village, and make additional recommendations for actions the City, Metro, the State, or the community itself could take to help accommodate the anticipated growth. The City Council will review each neighborhood plan and take appropriate actions to implement those neighborhood plan recommendations with which it agrees.

The Comprehensive Plan also stated that, if a neighborhood with a proposed urban village did not prepare a neighborhood plan within a specified time, that urban village designation and boundary would be considered final by the City. A few urban village designations, such as those in the downtown, the University District, and Northgate, were considered final upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

This neighborhood plan is the result of the Aurora-Licton neighborhood's efforts to plan for the "97th and Aurora" residential urban village proposed by the Comprehensive Plan. The Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan recommends ratifying the designation as a residential urban village but recommends that

the City change the name to “Aurora-Licton” and make minor boundary adjustments to better facilitate desired land use patterns.

The community considered using the name “Licton Springs” for the urban village. Many people respond to the historic and environmental associations of the name “Licton Springs.” Others were concerned that Licton Springs is generally perceived as the neighborhood east of Aurora Avenue North and south of North 105th Street. Public education could help extend the Licton Springs name to the larger Aurora-Licton community. Other names, such as Licton Village, also could maintain a historical reference. Recommendations in the plan call for determining a proper name for the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village.

THE URBAN VILLAGE AND THE PLANNING AREA

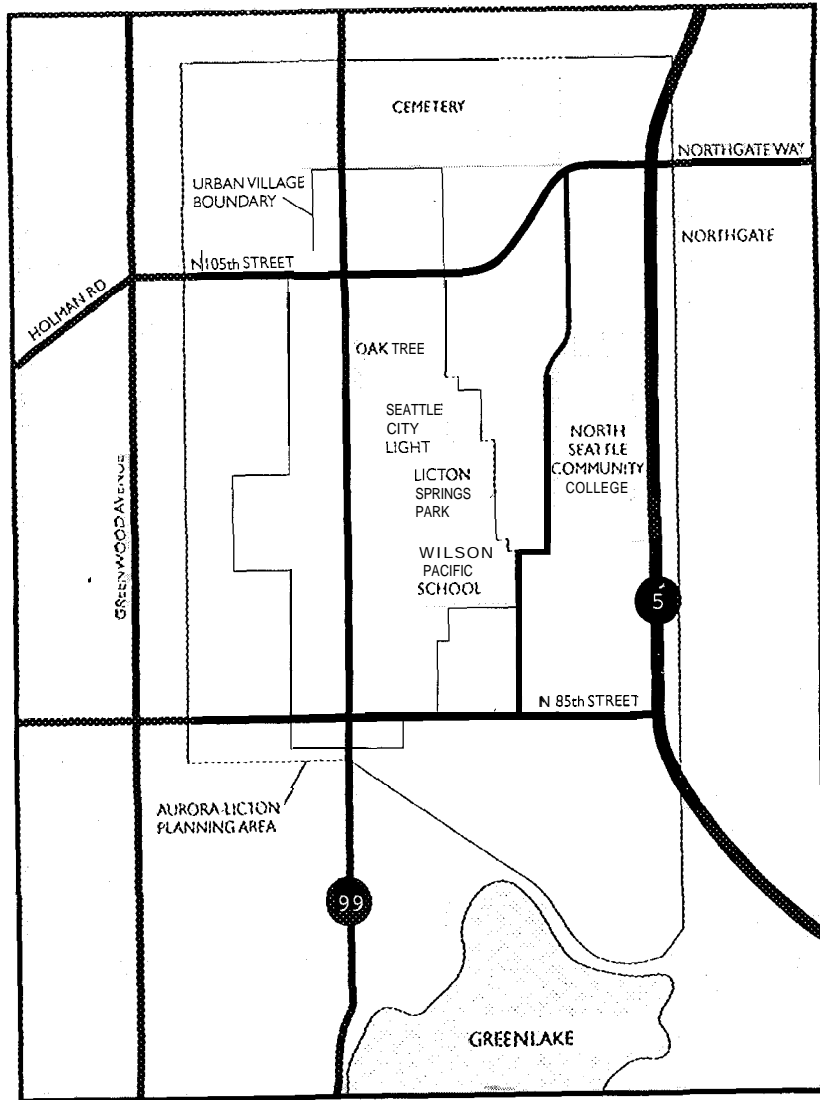
As an evolving neighborhood, Aurora-Licton needs a central focus around which the community can grow and thrive. This neighborhood plan proposes the creation of such a focus with the proposed urban village boundaries, as well as the provision of “missing” or deficient infrastructure (sidewalks, traffic controls, etc.) throughout the neighborhood.

The proposed Aurora-Licton urban village stretches north and south along both sides of Aurora Avenue North, from approximately North 110th Street on the north to North 84th Street on the south. At its greatest width, it extends from Wallingford Avenue North on the east to Fremont Avenue North on the west. See page 12 for a map of the urban village boundaries proposed by the community. The proposed urban village includes the Seattle City Light North Service Center, the Seattle School District Wilson Administrative Center (site of the American Indian Heritage School and Coho School), and Licton Springs Park. It also includes the Oak Tree Village shopping center and a number of other retail and commercial uses along Aurora Avenue North. Approximately 2,460 units of housing on the east and west sides of Aurora Avenue North are located within the proposed Aurora-Licton residential urban village.

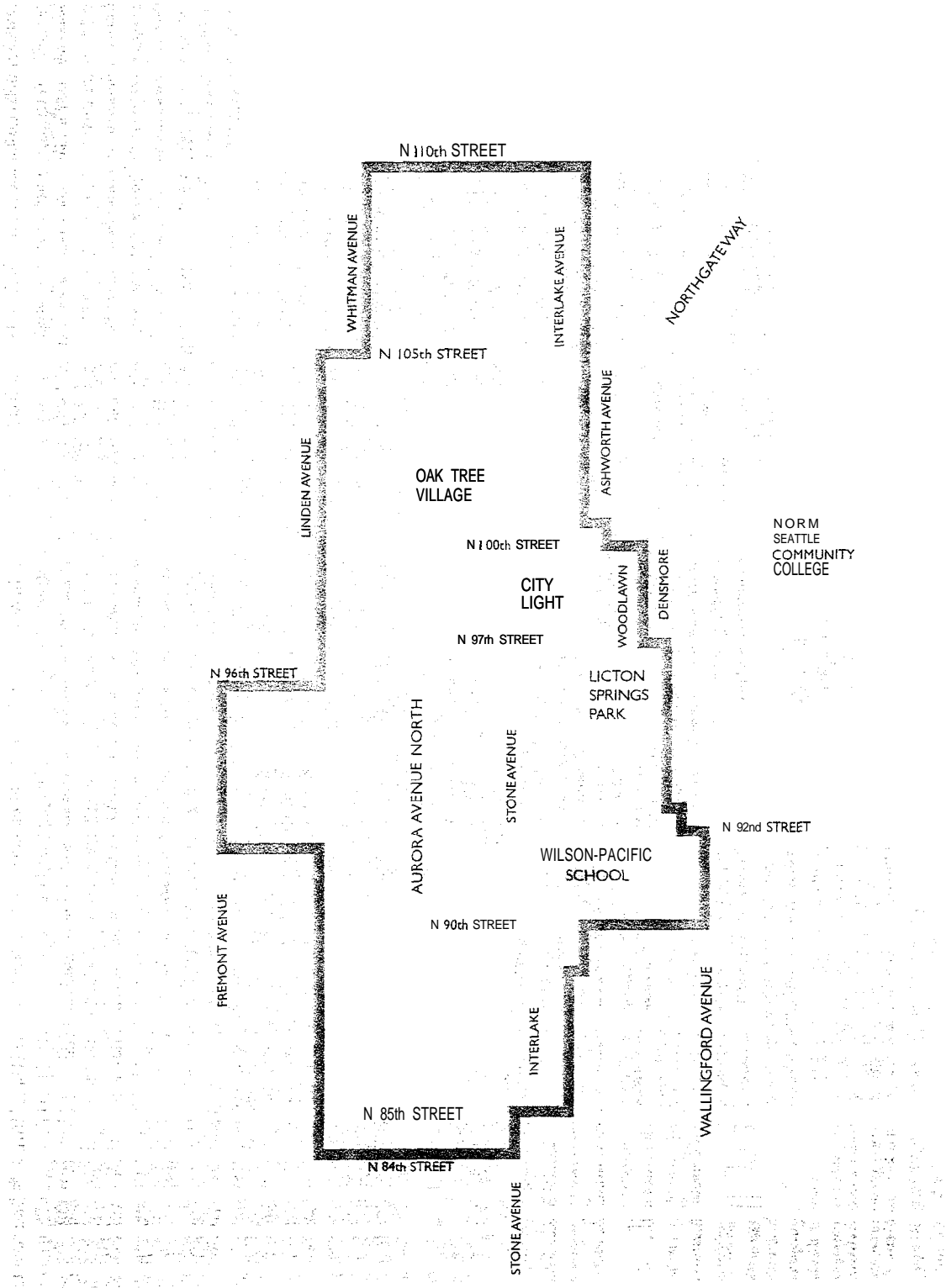
The larger Aurora-Licton planning area extends from North 115th Street to Green Lake Drive North, and from Dayton Avenue North (overlapping the

Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Planning Area) to First Avenue NE (overlapping the Northgate Comprehensive Plan planning area). It includes segments of the I-5 and Aurora Avenue North corridors. Several institutions make their home in this area including the Seattle Police Department North Precinct, North Seattle Community College, Department of Parks and Recreation North District Building and Blanchet High School.

Aurora-Licton Planning Area



Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village Boundaries



Aurora-Licton Residential Growth Capacity

Summary of residential growth statistics for the area within the proposed Aurora-Licton residential urban village boundaries.

Existing (2/1/99 estimate)	2,460 housing units 2,340 households
Capacity	1,910 new housing units 1,810 new households
Projected Growth	900 new households
Area	327 acres
Existing Density	7.2 households/acre
2010 Projected Density	9.9 households/acre

source: Seattle Strategic Planning Office

Next Steps

This neighborhood plan has been submitted to the City of Seattle for review by City staff and action by the City Council. City Council action may take two forms. First, the Council will review the goals and policies contained in this plan, and may adopt some or all of these policies into the City's Comprehensive Plan. These goals and policies would then be considered by all City departments when taking actions that affect the Aurora-Licton community.

Second, the City Council may choose to implement some of the actions recommended in the plan, such as daylighting Licton Springs Creek as part of the Wilson-Pacific site redevelopment, or studying the redevelopment potential of the City Light property. The Council would do this by funding the improvements or study in question, and instructing the relevant City department or departments to take appropriate actions to implement the plan recommendation.

Some of the plan's recommendations call for actions by other public agencies, such as the State Department of Transportation, Seattle School District and King County/METRO; these may also be coordinated or spearheaded by the City. Finally, many of the recommended actions in this plan are actions to be taken by the community itself. Ultimately, it is the community's responsibility to be the stewards of this plan, to see that its recommendations are implemented over time, and to keep alive an emerging sense of community in the Aurora-Licton neighborhood.

The ALPG was established with the help of and is supported by the Licton Springs Community Council. Members of both groups wish to join forces to recreate a community council capable of representing and stewarding the urban village. This may result in expanding the boundaries of the Licton Springs Community Council to include the Aurora-Licton planning area. It may even result in changing the name of the community council to match that of the urban village, which itself needs to be reconsidered. A unified community council and urban village area will best be able to support and care for the Aurora-Licton community.

PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Through a series of community meetings and workshops the ALPG crafted a long-range vision for the Aurora-Licton neighborhood. This vision is captured here in the Plan's formal Planning Objective:

Build upon existing neighborhood resources, including *Licton* Springs Park and the Wilson-Pacific *site*, to create a center or "heart" for the *Aurora-Licton* community, a focus around which the City's proposed residential urban village can grow and thrive. Make it easier, safer, and more pleasant for neighborhood residents to cross, walk along, and shop on Aurora Avenue, while respecting Aurora Avenue's regional transportation and commercial *role*.

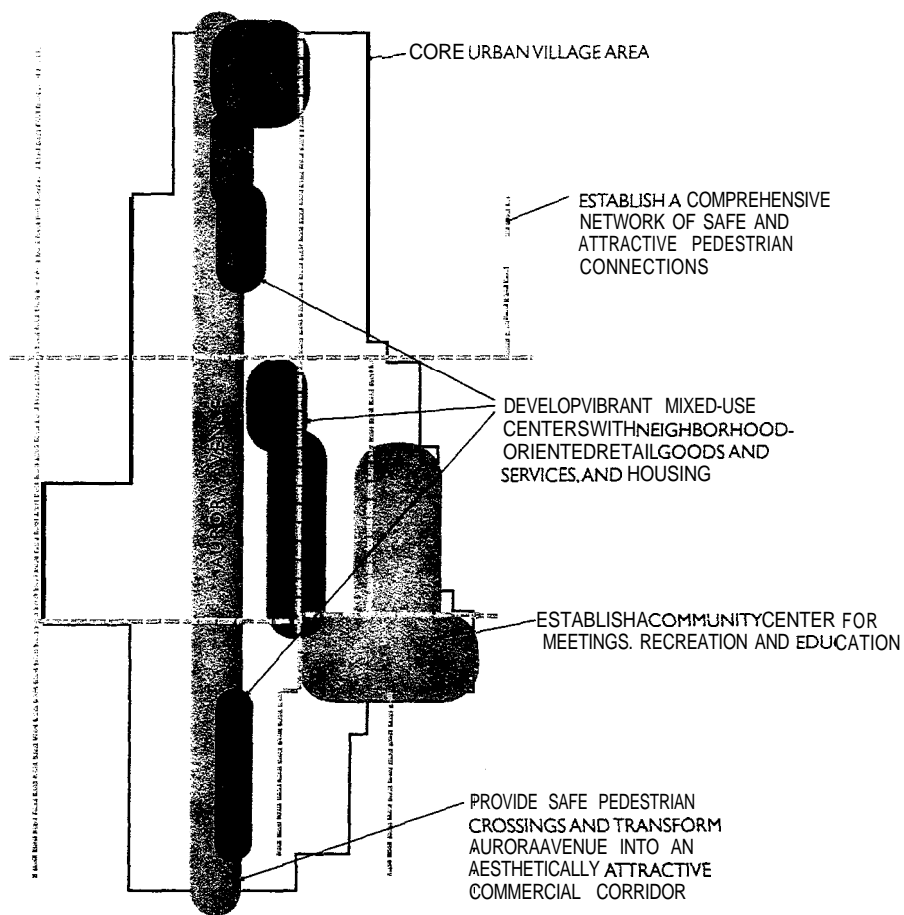
The Planning Objective represents the Aurora-Licton community's overall goal for this neighborhood plan. It combines the community's vision of what it wants to achieve, with a realistic assessment of what it can achieve, in the Plan's 20-year horizon. The Planning Objective serves as an "umbrella" planning goal uniting the five Key Planning Strategies.

As an evolving neighborhood, Aurora-Licton needs a central focus around which the community can grow and thrive. The Seattle Comprehensive Plan's proposed name for this community, the "97th and Aurora Residential Urban Village," implies that the central focus of the neighborhood is along Highway 99. This is not the case today, nor will it likely be the case within the next 20 years. While this neighborhood plan does not turn its back on Aurora Avenue, it does not propose to transform Aurora Avenue into the central focus of this evolving residential community.

Rather than reinvent Aurora Avenue as a central neighborhood focus, this plan seeks to build upon existing neighborhood resources, particularly Licton Springs Park and the Wilson-Pacific school and site. This choice of focus reflects the community's love of the park and the neighborhood history it embodies. It also reflects the community's recognition of the unique opportunities provided by underutilized Wilson-Pacific buildings and grounds.

KEY INTEGRATED STRATEGIES

An overall objective of this Plan is to identify improvements needed to help the area realize its neighborhood vision, address community concerns, and accommodate the increased growth anticipated for the area. The Plan is organized into five “Key Integrated Strategies” or main topics, each of which includes goals and policies addressing land use, transportation, and a wide range of other issues. Recommendations are integrated so as to encourage solutions that resolve multiple issues. For example, in the second strategy, improvements to the Wilson-Pacific site may provide community meeting space, while also enhancing recreation and education opportunities, and resolving drainage problems. Through this system of integration, planned investments are expected to have the greatest benefit to the community.



A. Designation of the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan designates the Aurora-Licton neighborhood as a proposed “residential urban village,” one of eighteen proposed residential urban villages identified in that city-wide document. Comprehensive Plan Goal G26 provides the following description of residential urban villages:

“Promote urban villages that function primarily as compact residential neighborhoods for a wide range of housing types. While residential use is emphasized, a mix of other compatible activities, especially those that support residential uses, is appropriate. Employment activity is also appropriate to the extent that it does not conflict with the proposed residential function and character of the village.. .”

Through the neighborhood planning process, the Aurora-Licton neighborhood can recommend changes to the proposed urban village boundaries. The neighborhood also can use the neighborhood plan to recommend detailed goals, policies and actions to guide growth within its urban village.

In this Key Integrated Strategy, the Aurora-Licton neighborhood affirms the City’s proposed designation of our neighborhood as a residential urban village. The neighborhood also recommends minor changes to the proposed boundaries and zoning, and recommends that the urban village be renamed the “Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village” to better reflect the neighborhood’s overall planning objective.

GOAL

I. Establish the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village as a vibrant residential community, with a core area of multi-family housing, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood retail shops and services, and open space clustered immediately east of Aurora Avenue North. The core area should be fully accessible to residents east and west of Aurora Avenue.

POLICIES

A-1. Affirm the designation of Aurora-Licton as a Residential Urban Village as proposed in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.

A-2. **Affirm** the boundaries for the Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village proposed in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan with the modifications recommended by the Aurora-Licton Planning Group through the neighborhood planning process. (See map on page 12.)

A-3. Maintain the current balance of residential and commercial zoning within the urban village boundaries with the exception of specific potential changes recommended by the Aurora-Licton Neighborhood Plan. (See map on page 19.)

A-S. Protect the character and integrity of Aurora-Licton's single-family areas within the boundaries of **the Aurora-Licton** urban village.

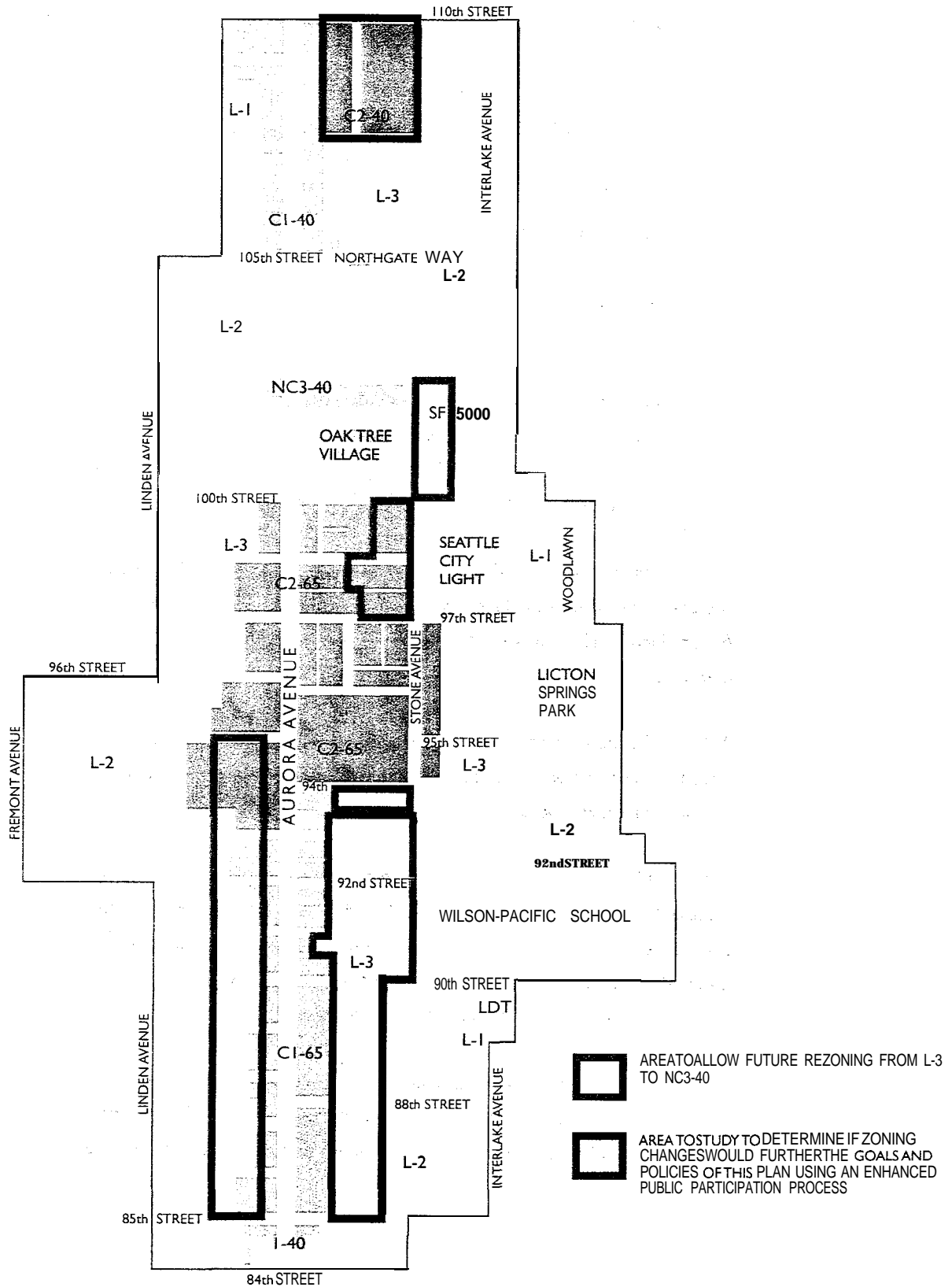
A-6. Encourage development to enhance the neighborhood's visual character through use of City-wide and Aurora-Licton neighborhood specific design guidelines.

A-7. Encourage the development of enhanced transit connections to the village core, the Northgate transit center and the Northgate light rail station.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A-1. Change the name of the residential urban village proposed for Aurora at North 97th Street to the "Aurora-Licton Residential Urban Village." Conduct a re-evaluation of the name of the urban village. Consider names such as **Licton** Springs and **Licton** Village that draw on the area's history and relate to the neighborhood's community council.

Zoning Study Areas



A-2. Amend the urban village boundaries proposed in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan with the following modifications:

a. Between North 110th Street and the alley immediately north of North 100th Street, move the boundary to the alley between **Ashworth** and Inter-lake Avenues North.

b. Between North 97th Street and North 100th Street, move the boundary to the alley between **Densmore** and Woodlawn Avenues North.

c. South of North 92nd Street, the boundary should extend down the centerline of Linden Avenue North to North 84th Street. The boundary should follow the centerline of North 84th Street east from Linden Avenue North to Stone Avenue North, and then follow the centerline of Stone Avenue North to North 85th Street.

A-3. Evaluate and modify the **Licton** Springs neighborhood boundaries and the boundaries of the **Licton** Springs Community Council to include the Aurora-Licton urban village and, as much as possible, the Aurora-Licton planning area.

A-4. Develop Aurora-Licton neighborhood design guidelines to be applied to new commercial and multi-family development through the existing city design review process.

A-5. Allow the future rezoning of the northeast quarter of the block west of Stone Avenue North south of North 94th Street and north of the alley to be rezoned from L-3 to **NC3-40** consistent with the goals and policies of this plan and the Seattle Comprehensive Plan and to eliminate land use conflicts with commercial zoning on the north side North 94th Street.

A-6. Study the following areas to determine whether zoning changes would further the goals and policies of this plan and the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. Any rezone study should incorporate procedures for enhanced public notice

and participation by study area residents, property owners, and the Community Council.

a. To provide an opportunity to create a core area of pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial and residential development, study the potential to rezone the Seattle City Light property between North 97th Street and North 100th Street, and west of Stone Avenue North, from C2-65 to NC3-40 in conjunction with redevelopment of the property.

b. To encourage redevelopment of commercial areas along Aurora Avenue North, study the potential of rezoning the residential properties west of Aurora Avenue North between North 85th Street and North 95th Street westward to the midpoint between Aurora Avenue North and Linden Avenue North. This rezoning should occur upon property-owner application, in conjunction with specific development proposal(s), and should be conditioned upon the dedication of right-of-way for a north-south alley between (and running parallel to) Aurora and Linden to buffer the impacts of the commercial area from the residential area. Neighborhood Commercial zoning might be the most appropriate.

c. Study the half-block east of Stone Avenue North to the alley, between North 100th Street and North 103rd Street for potential rezoning to provide a better transition between the commercial area to the west and single-family residential area to the east.

d. To encourage attractive residential development and a better transition between commercial and residential areas, study the area zoned L-3 that lies south of North 94th Street and north of North 85th Street along Stone Avenue North for potential rezoning or modifications to existing zoning standards. Changes should be made to encourage residential units that are well designed and “connected” to the neighborhood. Allowing any commercial activity within this residential area should only be considered if such an allowance will not detract from the residential area with increased parking, traffic or crime, and only if it will not weaken the proposed core

neighborhood commercial area near North 100th Street and Stone Avenue North.

e. Study the area zoned C2-40 that lies East of Aurora Avenue North and west of Stone Avenue North, between North Northgate Way and North 110th Street, for the potential of rezoning to encourage development that is more compatible with the residential area immediately to the south and east.