

THE YORKER



YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2004
CIRCULATION: 1200

SOUNDWALL

“SOUNDS OF SILENCE” MY OLD FRIEND

Construction of the long anticipated I-5 sound wall is scheduled to begin in May 2004. Representatives from the Washington State Dept. of Transportation (DOT) wall design team will attend the February 4th York Neighborhood Association meeting to answer questions and share project plans.

“...a vision softly creeping...”

The sound wall will help to decrease the noise from I-5 and will have an added benefit of cleaning up the border between the neighborhood and the freeway. The wall will have varying patterns of trees incorporated into the cement, and most of the area along the York-side of the wall will receive landscaping to help blend the wall into the surroundings.

“Left its seeds while I was sleeping...”

A project like this can be messy, temporarily inconvenient, and gobble up pieces of adjacent lots. The DOT has purchased the brown house at 615 Lakeway, which will be removed to accommodate the wall. Robyn Boyd, DOT design team leader, said, “Once the wall is built and the surrounding landscaping completed, the remainder of the house’s lot – although state property – could be maintained as part of the Rock Hill Park, like the existing state right-of-way areas.”

“And the vision that was planted in my brain, still remains...”

(CONT ON P.3)

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 4TH, 7PM
LOCATION: NELSON'S MARKET
(HUMBOLDT AND POTTER ST)

AGENDA

- *I-5 Sound Wall Construction Project, with Dept. of Transportation speakers Robyn Boyd (Design Team Leader) and Jack Bartman (Asst. Project Engineer). Bring your questions.*
- *New City Ordinance for Problem Party Houses*
 - *Elections of YNA officers and board*
 - *Proposed “spot” Rezone of the 1200 blocks of Grant & Humboldt Streets, to accommodate a 35-unit apartment complex -- speaker Pat Carman, City Planner*

CITY COUNCIL LOOKS AT NEW ORDINANCE TO HOLD LANDLORDS ACCOUNTABLE FOR PROBLEM PARTY HOUSES

The City Council held a work session January 22 to discuss a possible new City ordinance that will hold landlords accountable for repeat offenders who disrupt the neighborhood with loud parties and disturbances.

Supporters are modeling the ordinance after a Seattle ordinance that makes it “unlawful for any person to knowingly allow real property under one’s possession or control to be used for a Resi-

(CONT ON P.4)

“SPOT” REZONE PROPOSED FOR GRANT & HUMBOLDT STREETS TO ALLOW 35-UNIT APARTMENT COMPLEX

Three real estate investors who own properties in the York Neighborhood, south of Lakeway Drive, have proposed a “spot” rezone that would reduce the current density from 3,000 square feet per unit to 1,000 square feet for 8-lots. The lots back up to one another in the 1200 blocks of Grant and Humboldt Streets behind Mulyat real estate’s offices on the south side of Lakeway Drive.

Yorkonopoly

Property owners Frank Muljat, Jr., Doug Gray, and Carl Grant are the applicants for the rezone presented to the City Council in a work session January 26. The council approved a motion to forward the rezone request to the City Planning Commission.

Pat Carman, City Planner, will attend the York Neighborhood Association meeting Wed., Feb. 4, at Nelson’s Market to answer questions about the rezone proposal. The City Planning Commission will review the proposal some time in February or March.

York neighborhood would be negatively impacted by the construction of a 35-unit apartment complex in an already over-crowded, heavy traffic part of the neighborhood. Cars

exiting from the apartment complex would not be able to easily enter Lakeway Dr. during peak hours, so they would funnel south down Humboldt, Grant, and Whatcom streets. Cul-de-sacs were added to these streets years ago because of the problem with cut-through traffic. With this rezone and the introduction of a large residential complex, the situation will be intolerable.

The real tragedy about this rezone proposal is that it will demolish seven homes that could have been affordable single-family residences. Some of these properties have deteriorated due to landlord neglect. Now, they are destined for the wrecking ball. These homes date back to the 1900s and 1920s. The rezone proposal is not in keeping with the character of the historic neighborhood, and it will devalue the properties near it, helping to turn the neighborhood into even more transient student residences.

And, ultimately, if this “spot” rezone is allowed to go through, we can expect more of the same throughout York and other older neighborhoods throughout the city. As real estate investors purchase homes in a row (contiguous properties), they are

then able to pull a rezone proposal together, knock the houses down and put in an apartment complex – all under the guise of creating more affordable housing.

What the neighborhood ends up

with is the destruction of homes that could have served families, increased parking and traffic problems, and a changed neighborhood character that is no longer historic. What the developers get is richer.

By Anne Mackie

FAREWELL FROM THE PRES

As my term of office draws to a close I reflect on the wonderful opportunity I have had to meet my neighbors, form new friendships and contribute something positive to the York neighborhood.

The office of President is not as scary or time consuming as you may think. If you can delegate, work with people, and be a good listener then this is the job for you. A good sense of humor is a “must”.

The office of President can be an expression of personal style and interest. My main concern has been the impact of problem rentals on the quality of life in York. This issue has led me to many avenues such as Campus Community Coalition, Police Department, President of WWU, and City Hall. Definite improvements in our neighborhood have been observed but it is an on-going project.

I plan to continue helping York while serving on the Board of Directors, Campus Community Coalition and assisting our new President when needed. Thanks again for this great opportunity.

Mary Fraser

Mary Fraser
P I A N I S T

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MANY THANKS

GREG HEFFRON for putting together this newsletter. If you need graphics, photography or website work, see his portfolio at www.midline.net or call 734-1950.

JON OSTBY, owner of Nelson’s Market, for hosting our meetings and being the neighborhood hub.

SOUNDS OF SILENCE... (CONT FROM P.1)

The wall will be installed almost in the same place the fence line is now, Boyd said, so the wall may not impact Rock Hill Park space too much. Currently, the state owns the right-of-way border along the freeway inside the park, and the City is allowed "use" of this right-of-way for the park. A few houses bordering the freeway have sold slivers of their back property to the state to allow for the wall.

"Narrow streets of cobblestone..."

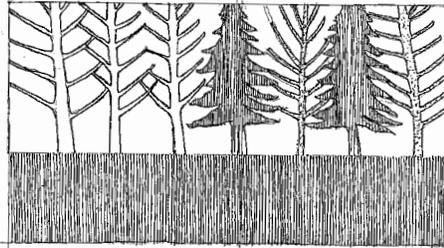
Street work will be necessary at the corner of James and Potter streets to re-round the curbs and install a new water line. Other improvements to this section of I-5 include:

- Installation of a "weave lane," or continuous third lane between the Ohio St. "on" ramp and the Lakeway southbound "off" ramp, so vehicles will have more room to speed up as they get on the freeway from Ohio (especially good for trucks), and more room to comfortably slow down as they get off on Lakeway.
- Expansion of the Lakeway Dr. southbound "off" ramp, creating two lanes. Currently it is a one-lane exit that is used as two.
- Construction of a storm water detention facility on

King Street, near the King and Meador streets intersection.

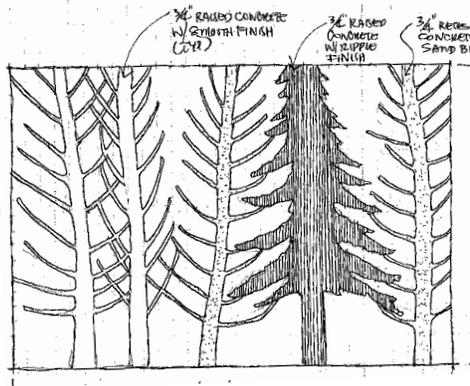
Questions remaining...

- *Will the Lakeway Dr. Exit improvements help to reduce the problem of panhandling that exists at this location? The York Neighborhood has been negatively*



impacted by this for a long time.

Answer: The widening of Lakeway ramp is going to eliminate the flat spot between the Lakeway off ramp and the freeway, and



take out some of the ground level brush. This should make it a lot less desirable for people to hang out in this area.

project, all construction debris should be removed, then everything should be graded and landscaped. DOT also requires the contractor to maintain the plantings for a period of three years to ensure that the plantings survive.

- *Will the City and State cooperate with one another to make the strip of land on James St. a grassy open area for the neighborhood to enjoy? Currently, this area has become a dumping ground for broken furniture, appliances, and trash.*

Answer: Most of this area belongs to the City. The question of maintenance will be passed on to the maintenance department for more clarification. The neighborhood may have to look at how it can help with the upkeep of this area.

"... Touch the sound of silence..."

York neighbors – especially people whose property borders I-5 – should bring your questions to the meeting February 4.

Anne Mackie

THANK YOU

A special thanks to Walter and Loma Turpin for allowing the York Neighborhood to install its "Welcome" sign in their yard, located at 607 E. Magnolia St. The sign was funded by a grant from Mayor Asmundsen's Small and Simple Projects Fund.

A Thank-You to Signs By Tomorrow (David Wiggs & Theresa Schmidt) for donating the meeting banner that will hang in front of Nelson's market each week that we have a neighborhood meeting.



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- *Will private property owners along the new wall get the needed support from the state to clean up the mess, once the project is completed?*

Answer: At the end of the

TREASURER'S REPORT

Membership in the York Neighborhood Association (YNA) is free and open to any resident or business in the York Neighborhood. However, membership dues are donated to help with operating expenses such as publishing The Yorker newsletter. Also, this past year we paid for the City permit fees to install the new "Welcome to York" sign.

YNA Membership rates: \$5 students; \$10 singles; \$20 households; and \$100 business (includes a business-card size ad in each addition of the newsletter, upon request).

We need your financial support: Make checks out to YNA and mail them to Anne Mackie, YNA Secretary/Treasurer, 1351 Humboldt St., Bellingham 98225; or you can drop off your check at Nelson's Market (please put it in an envelope or attach a note).

Thank-you to the following York residents and businesses for membership donations this past year of over \$900:

Individuals & Households:

Neil, Kevin, & Erin Beck
Kirsti & Fred Charlton
Bess DeVere
Jan Driscoll & Richard Dietz
Carol Dixon
Joan Frazier
Tanja Hayes & Tom Ardavary
Vivian & Jerry Hruska
Amelia Lunde
Anne Mackie & Jon Ostby
Martha Miller
Carolyne Milling & John Wiley
Lane Morgan
Carolyn Mulder & Eric
Lance Romo
Theresa Schmidt & David Wiggs
Madeline Shepler & Charlie Jabbora
Laura Witt & Rick Green

Landlords & Businesses

Maureen Boncheff (Blossom Child-care)
Van Hudson
Nelson's Market
Signs By Tomorrow

WINE & ROSES GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Appetizers galore, followed by hot soup and bread -- What could be better on a cool, crisp, December evening? The Wine and Roses Garden Club made it better by topping off the evening with not one but two absolutely decadent desserts. We began at Jan Driscoll's home with a multitude of yummy food such as cheese, crackers, veggies, dips and some stuffed mushrooms I still think about.

To stay true to our name, we had a choice of several wines -- after all, we were walking! Then up to Vivian and Jerry Hruska's house for soup and bread...and more wine. Vivian and Jerry made not one but two big pots of hot soup! A short stroll to Lisa and Dan McShane's home to enjoy dessert and port.

Now what would a holiday celebration be without gifts! The popular "gifts in the middle grab and steal" game was proposed and adopted. Some went home with music, others with fruitcake, and still others with a painted pot.

The evening was wonderful, seeing all the homes decorated and connecting over food and adult beverage. Next year maybe we can see more of our neighbors for this event! Thanks Lisa, Dan, Vivian, Jerry, and Jan for opening their homes.

Upcoming Club Activities

In March the garden club will resume its weeding and maintenance schedule at the Rock Hill perennial berm. We're always interested in meeting more York gardeners, so please don't be shy; call 738-0542 to get on our phone list. Each work party is followed by

...NEW ORDINANCE... (FR. P.1)

dential Disturbance..." When violations occur, at which police were called and cited the residents for "nuisance" issues, the landlord will be notified by the City Attorney. If the landlord receives three such notices within a 12-month period, the landlord could be subject to monetary penalties and even jail time for failing to effectively manage their property in accordance with the law.

The York Neighborhood Association should support the proposed ordinance, which is one way to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood. The perpetrators of the disturbances should be cited by the police and fined. The landlords should be notified, and if they cannot bring pressure to bear on their tenants to uphold the law in regards to disorderly conduct and public disturbance and noise, then they too should be held accountable.

Anne Mackie

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BELLINGHAM'S FIRST YARDWASTE COLLECTION SERVICE PROVIDER

a potluck social event at someone's garden in the neighborhood.

Amelia Lunde