

Subarea Plan 4 – Aldercrest

Planned Area 3

Planned Area 3 is a sixteen acre parcel in the Ballinger Neighborhood that is the former site of the Kellogg Middle School, also referred to as the Aldercrest Annex. It is bound on the west by 25th Ave NE and by properties that are developed with single family and multi-family homes, but which are designated on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for high density residential development. While these properties along 25th Ave NE are not within the Planned Area 3 designation, they may be aggregated with and incorporated into a future-development of lands in Planned Area 3.

Across 25th Avenue NE are a mix of multifamily uses, the King County Public Works Yard and Bruggers Bog City Park. Lands abutting Planned Area 3 to the south are developed primarily as multifamily uses and designated on the FLUM for high density residential. Lands along the east edge of Planned Area 3 are developed as single family homes and designated on the FLUM as low density residential. The northern edge of the property is NE 200th Street. Across 200th Street is land designated for low density residential but developed as a school facility owned by the Shoreline School District.

The topography of Planned Area 3 ranges from 215 feet above sea level at the southwest corner to elevation 260 at the northwest corner and elevation 290 at the northeast corner. Although no perennial streams are present on the site, seasonal flooding occurs at elevations generally below 220. For its historical use as a Junior High School, a series of topographic benches were graded to create several discrete open and built spaces on the site. One of these “benches”, located roughly below elevation 225, is a relatively level area that contains a baseball diamond, tennis courts, and a large grassy area. The next bench up and to the northeast, generally between elevations 230 and 240, is the site of an oval track and soccer field. These two lower benches, a total of approximately half of the site, are generally devoid of trees except along the southern and eastern edges.

The next three topographic benches of the property, proceeding uphill and to the northeast, are the previously developed portions of the site. These areas contain parking areas, a mothballed gymnasium, classrooms, and school office buildings. There are scattered mature trees in the planter strips of the former parking areas and heavy mature trees along the eastern edge of the property. These upper three benches total roughly half of the site.

Since the school use ended, the closed buildings have been a concern due to visual blight and potential hazard to public health and safety. The School District has worked with the City and emergency responders to secure the closed buildings, however, all parties agree that the abatement of these structures should be hastened by the redevelopment of the property.

The lower portion of the property constitutes the largest green and open area in the Ballinger neighborhood and the fields and open grassy areas have been informally used for decades for both passive and active recreation. Neighborhood residents and youth sports teams from the larger community have used the facilities for soccer, baseball and tennis.

Subarea Plan Element

Other community gathering and recreational activities on this grassy area include kite and frisbee flying, snow sledding on the slopes between benches, and even outdoor movies hosted by the neighborhood association. There are no City park facilities nearby that can provide such a broad range of opportunities for recreation and community gatherings.

Although the property has been historically designated for single family and institutional uses, the future redevelopment of the Aldercrest Annex site for different uses holds unique and important opportunities for the Ballinger neighborhood, the City and the School District. The School District has declared the property as surplus and would like to direct the proceeds to serve its educational mission. The neighborhood has been very interested in permanently securing the open space and recreational amenities of the lower portions of the site, ideally as a city-owned park. The City wishes to increase the supply of park land in the Ballinger area to better serve the needs of the growing area.

The site is uniquely suited to accommodate more intense development on the upper reaches due to the pattern of mixed housing densities and non-residential uses nearby, its ease of access to Ballinger Way and the regional road network, and the lack of serious environmental constraints on site. These unique circumstances and public policy objectives should be implemented through regulations that cluster more intense redevelopment of the property on the upper portions of the site in exchange for dedication of all or a significant part of the lower portion as a city park.