

## **North Creek Village – Project Description Fulfilling Vision of Comprehensive Plan**



North Creek Village is a timely, innovative, world-class example of sustainable community design and development. In particular, North Creek Village intends to be a model of sustainable development at village-scale. Key features include:

- Mixed-use Neighborhood Village
- Pedestrian-oriented Human-scale
  - Low Impact Development
  - Green Building/LEED Certified
- Social, Educational, and Cultural Amenities
- Preservation and Enhancement of Critical Habitat
- Model of Human Settlement Integrated into Nature

As a mixed-use, relatively self-contained, neighborhood Urban Village, employing many of the principles advocated in the influential New Urbanism, North Creek Village will set a standard for thoughtful sustainable development in the region. Residents will enjoy numerous amenities integrated right into the village, such as: a community education campus, a progressive retirement hamlet, an integrative health center, a whole foods market, commercial and office space, selected retail and dining, community gardens and edible landscaping – all set within a luxurious park-like setting. The residents may choose from a variety of housing types, allowing for a diversity of social groups to coexist and create a lively, multi-faceted community character. Social spaces such as plazas, courtyards, arcades, and a village square will be skillfully designed to encourage spontaneous, casual human interaction.

Owing to its enormously beneficial location, North Creek Village will be able to provide services for the corporate enclaves to the north and south – these services becoming the basis for a localized economy. Corporate employees will be attracted to the natural, peaceful, sociable atmosphere of the village, where they may come for lunch, dry-cleaning, day care, after hour classes, etc. – or maybe to just sit in the village square for awhile. Many employees will choose to live right in the village, where they may access their work environments quickly and easily either walking or on bicycle – thus increasing health and well-being and diminishing absenteeism. Many of the professional services that corporations currently contract out for (e.g. accounting, legal, catering, psychological and physical therapy, landscape maintenance, etc.) will become businesses conveniently located right within the North Creek Village.

Currently, as a product of the times, vision statements, planning policies and goals at various levels of government - city, county, and state, and within national NGOs - are directing and requesting the implementation of community and neighborhood models such as that proposed by North Creek Village. Here are but a few examples:

From the "Bothell Comprehensive Plan," ED-21: *"Provide for the development of a small-scale mixed-use neighborhood village as a means of promoting a sense of community, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and reducing the number and length of motorized convenience shopping trips."* That is exactly what is being proposed at North Creek Village. LU-G3 of the Plan states: *"Create a vibrant, sustainable, family-oriented community through the balanced allocation of land for housing, commerce, industry, recreation, transportation, open space, cultural resources and other uses."* North Creek Village will creatively arrange and concentrate this mix of uses on approximately 23 acres in such a way that the ecological health of the North Creek watershed is actually *enhanced*. This feature of North Creek Village makes the development truly sustainable, and worthy of emulation.

The "Countywide Planning Policies for Snohomish County" echoes the above evolution away from single-use zoning in its discussion about establishing Urban Growth Areas as a means of fulfilling the goals of the Growth Management Act. Section UG-9: *"...Develop planning and design processes implementing strategies to: 1) require all new residential and commercial development to achieve a high level of pedestrian and public transit compatibility, 2) encourage infill development, and 3) enhance the existing community character and mix of uses."* UG-10: *"As a means of encouraging efficient use of non-residential land areas, local jurisdictions should provide various incentives for multi-story commercial and mixed use development."* Then UG-11 concurs: *"Encourage mixed use, pedestrian friendly and transit compatible development in...areas within the urban growth area which are designated for multiple residential and non-residential development."* These directives demonstrate that the goals and character of North Creek Village are wholly compatible with Snohomish County planning policies; in fact, incentives are recommended to encourage just this type of development profile.

At the State level, in the Puget Sound Partnership's "Recommendations to Governor Gregoire" on Immediate Actions to Improve the Health of Puget Sound, we read the following unambiguous passage: *"Fund high profile low impact development projects and provide grants to local governments to help develop and promote low impact development."* North Creek Village is ideally situated to be a model of such development, and thus a recipient of grants. Because the project borders a sizable segment of North Creek, strategies, techniques, and technologies for improving water quality and mitigating the harmful effects of stormwater runoff can be demonstrated in systemic coordination: Permeable paved surfaces, revegetation of the riparian zone, constructed wetlands, collection of rainwater and channeling into water features such as ponds, swales, and cisterns, an occasional sod roof - when all

working together - will enable a relatively self-contained hydrological cycle within the village that will become an educational resource in this high profile demonstration project.

At the national level, we are referencing the 2007 publication of the pilot version for the "LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System," developed through a partnership of the Congress for New Urbanism, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the U.S. Green Building Council. From their website we learn: *"The LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into the first national standard for neighborhood design. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high standards for environmentally responsible, sustainable development."* North Creek Village may be the first development in this area to respond to LEED Neighborhood Development certification.

It's very encouraging to see that forward looking planners at the city, county, and state levels have understood the need to reverse the destructive trajectory of fifty years of sprawl development, and have begun instituting policy to help facilitate the evolution to more self-contained, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, village-scale, *sustainable* development practices. We are truly fortunate to be living in such a progressive, environmentally conscious corner of the continent. The Portland-Seattle-Vancouver corridor is leading the way in the implementation of sustainable community and sustainable city models. Here in the Bothell/southeast Snohomish County area, there is not a proposal to compare with the innovative, forward looking, solution based, responsive-to-the-needs-of-the-times quality and character of the North Creek Village project. North Creek Village is surely a world-class model of sustainable community design and development, worthy of emulation and commendation.