

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

November 15, 2012
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall
Council Chamber

Commissioners Present

Chair Moss
Vice Chair Esselman
Commissioner Craft
Commissioner Maul
Commissioner Montero

Staff Present

Rachael Markle, Director, Planning and Community Development
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development
Paul Cohen, Planning Manager, Planning and Community Development

Others Present

Councilmember Salomon

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Scully
Commissioner Wagner

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Moss called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were present: Chair Moss, Vice Chair Esselman and Commissioners Craft, Maul and Montero. Commissioners Wagner and Scully were absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Markle did not provide any comments during this portion of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes to approve.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one in the audience who expressed a desire to address the Commission during this portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING ON POINT WELLS SUBAREA PLAN AMENDMENTS AND MAP CHANGES

Chair Moss reviewed the rules and procedures for the public hearing. She opened the public hearing and invited staff to present their report.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Szafran recalled that staff presented the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket to the Planning Commission on January 5th. The docket included six amendments, four of which were proposed by the group, Save Richmond Beach, and were directly related to the Point Wells Subarea Plan. The City Council approved two of the requests for inclusion on the docket, and the Planning Commission conducted a study session on the two amendments on July 19th. He reviewed the proposed amendments as follows:

- The first amendment (Attachment B) adds language to the Point Wells Subarea Plan Corridor Study and Implementation Plan concerning alternative access through Woodway, impacts to other roadways throughout Richmond Beach if secondary access is provided, and coordinating with Edmonds and Woodway to improve north-south mobility.
- The second amendment (Attachment C) adds Point Wells to the seismic hazards section of the Natural Environment Supporting Analysis of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Szafran advised that in addition to the two changes listed above, the Planning Commission noted at their October 18th meeting that the Point Wells Future Service Annexation Area on the maps in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan had not been updated to match the geographic location of the Point Wells Subarea Plan. Changes were made (Attachment D) to correct this inconsistency. Also, Mr. Szafran explained that the Point Wells area is referred to as a “Potential Annexation Area” throughout the Comprehensive Plan, but the Subarea Plan that was adopted in 2010 actually changed the designation to Future Service Annexation Area. The text has been updated to be consistent (Attachment G).

Mr. Szafran referred to the criteria for amending the Comprehensive Plan, which is delineated in Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) 20.30.340. He reviewed each of the criteria as follows:

1. *The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and not inconsistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, and the other provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and City policies.* Mr. Szafran advised that staff reviewed the subject amendments for consistency with the GMA and Countywide Planning Policies and determined that the proposed amendments would meet this requirement.

2. *The amendment addresses changing circumstances, changing community values, incorporates a subarea plan consistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision or corrects information contained in the Comprehensive Plan.* Mr. Szafran said staff believes that adding Point Wells to the geographical and landslide hazard maps and mentioning Point Wells in the Natural Environment Supporting Analysis meets this requirement.
3. *The amendment will benefit the community as a whole, will not adversely affect community facilities, the public health, safety or general welfare.* Mr. Szafran explained that because the proposed amendments would benefit the community and promote public health, safety and general welfare, staff believes this requirement would be met.

Mr. Szafran referred to the change proposed by Save Richmond Beach in Attachment B (Page 21 of the Staff Report), which states that, “the study should also look at potential alternative access scenarios through Woodway in the event a secondary access road is opened.” He said staff was just informed that the City Attorney is in negotiations with Save Richmond Beach and the developer of the Point Wells site regarding the scope of the Transportation Corridor Study, and a north road is not part of that proposal. Ms. Markle clarified that the parties have been negotiating for approximately 9 months, and an agreement is expected soon. Adopting this proposed amendment may be more appropriate after the scope has been determined. Mr. Szafran advised that members of Save Richmond Beach were present to speak to this issue. Staff may recommend that this amendment not be added, but they are recommending approval of the other amendments as proposed.

Questions by the Commission

Vice Chair Esselman suggested that perhaps it might be appropriate to approve the proposed amendment related to the Transportation Corridor Study regardless of the result of the final negotiations. This would cover future changes that might result in the possibility of another road. Ms. Markle said the current language is specific to the Transportation Corridor Study, the scope of which is nearly completed. She suggested that perhaps the language could be reworded to be more general and require that opportunities for a secondary access road should always be included in any studies to address how development at Point Wells would impact transportation. Chair Moss agreed that there would be value in including the amendment, and rewording it is certainly a possibility. Even if an agreement is reached on the scope of the Transportation Corridor Study now, significant change could occur in the future that would necessitate an additional study. She specifically suggested the words “through Woodway” could be deleted.

Mr. Szafran said that his interpretation of the amendment is that if a secondary road is built, the City should study the roads throughout Richmond Beach to identify traffic impacts. The City Attorney took the language to mean that the corridor study should look at multiple accesses in and out of the site, regardless of whether or not a road is built. He suggested that, at the very least, the language should be amended for clarity. Commissioner Montero suggested the language be amended to read, “In the event a secondary access scenario is discovered, it should be added to the corridor study.”

Chair Moss said it appears the City Attorney is concerned that the proposed language could be interpreted to mean that the Transportation Corridor Study must evaluate all potential access to Point

Wells. She suggested that could be somewhat beyond the ability of the City to determine because the secondary accesses could be through Edmonds or Woodway.

Commissioner Moss referred to Policy PW-12 (Page 22 of the Staff Report), and asked if the maximum 4,000 vehicle trips per day is an accurate number for Richmond Beach Drive, which is a local road. Mr. Szafran answered that the initial number was incorrect, but staff made the appropriate adjustment.

Public Testimony

Tom Mailhot, Shoreline, said he was present to speak on behalf of Save Richmond Beach. He advised that Save Richmond Beach proposed other amendments that were not approved for further consideration. Of the two that did get approved, one involved making sure that Point Wells was recognized as an area of seismic hazard. It is important to take this into consideration if and when development proceeds.

Mr. Mailhot thanked the Commission and staff for the flexibility they have shown thus far in their discussion on the proposed amendment related to the Transportation Corridor Study. He said that because he was not aware how close they were to completing negotiations for the scope of the study until just prior to the meeting, he does not have alternative wording to suggest at this time. However, he said he believes it is important to have something in the Point Wells Subarea Plan that addresses the potential for a secondary access road coming either through Woodway or Edmonds, which could significantly change the traffic patterns through Shoreline. For example, a road through Woodway or Edmonds could result in significant traffic south on 20th Avenue, and the current traffic plan only envisions traffic going north on 20th Avenue. He offered to submit revised wording within the next few days. If the Commission cannot wait that long, he asked that he at least be allowed to review and comment on whatever wording the Commission ultimately comes up with.

Chair Moss explained that the Commission's goal is to act on the proposed amendments tonight, and the Commission would not be allowed to accept additional comments and/or revised language from the public after the hearing has been closed.

Final Questions and Deliberations

Chair Moss referred to the proposed amendment to the Natural Environment Supporting Analysis (Attachment C) on Pages 26 and 27 of the Staff Report. She expressed concern that the second sentence is quite long. She suggested they consider a way to make it more concise and clear.

Chair Moss welcomed Councilmember Salomon to the meeting.

COMMISSIONER CRAFT MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE POINT WELLS SUBAREA PLAN TEXT AND MAP AMENDMENTS PRESENTED BY STAFF AND CONTAINED WITHIN THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (ATTACHMENTS B, C, D, E, F, AND G). COMMISSIONER MAUL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner Craft said the points that were brought up by staff and that are contained in the document address citizen concerns and the Commission would do well to take them into consideration. The amendments create a more complete document and address areas that may have been either left out or a bit vague. While he recognized that some wording changes may be appropriate, he appreciates the time that Save Richmond Beach has put into their proposed amendments. He said he supports the amendments. Commissioner Maul concurred.

COMMISSIONER MONTERO MOVED THAT THE MAIN MOTION BE AMENDED TO CHANGE THE SECOND SENTENCE OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH UNDER “CORRIDOR STUDY” IN THE POINT WELLS SUBAREA PLAN (ATTACHMENT B AND PAGE 21 OF THE STAFF REPORT) TO READ, “IF A POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE ACCESS SCENARIO THROUGH WOODWAY IS DISCOVERED, IT SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE CORRIDOR STUDY.” COMMISSIONER MAUL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Commissioner Montero commented that if there is another available route to the Point Wells site, the City of Shoreline should have an opportunity to review the impacts it would create. Commissioner Maul agreed that if there is a viable additional access point, it should be considered.

The Commission discussed that the word “discovered” should be changed to “identified.” They also agreed that the words “through Woodway” should be removed to make the statement more general.

THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MAIN MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO CHANGE THE SECOND SENTENCE OF THE FIRST PARAGRAPH UNDER “CORRIDOR STUDY” IN THE POINT WELLS SUBAREA PLAN (ATTACHMENT B AND PAGE 21 OF THE STAFF REPORT) TO READ, “IF A POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE ACCESS SCENARIO IS IDENTIFIED, IT SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE CORRIDOR STUDY.”

Chair Moss pointed out that in the third sentence under Policy PW-9 (Page 21 of the Staff Report), “20” should be changed to “20th.” Commissioner Craft pointed out that this proposed amendment targets Woodway as a secondary access point, and identifies the corridors in Shoreline that would be impacted. However, the language in the Transportation Corridor Study section refers to alternative points of secondary access in general. The Commission agreed that the term “through Woodway” should be deleted to provide consistency.

COMMISSIONER CRAFT MOVED THAT THE MAIN MOTION BE AMENDED TO CHANGE THE THIRD SENTENCE IN POLICY PW-9 (ATTACHMENT B ON PAGE 21 OF THE STAF REPORT) BY DELETING THE WORDS “THROUGH WOODWAY” AND ADDING “OR OTHER STREETS IMPACTED” AT THE END. COMMISSIONER MAUL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Vice Chair Esselman pointed out that the last sentence in the “Corridor Study” section also contains the words “through Woodway.” Commissioner Montero pointed out that, with the exception of the tip that is adjacent to the City of Shoreline, the Point Wells site is encompassed by the Town of Woodway. Therefore, secondary access through any jurisdiction other than Woodway would be impossible.

Commissioner Craft said the intent of his motion was to keep the language as open as possible to accommodate potential future changes.

THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MAIN MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO CHANGE THE THIRD SENTENCE IN POLICY PW-9 (ATTACHMENT B ON PAGE 21 OF THE STAFF REPORT) BY DELETING THE WORDS “THROUGH WOODWAY” AND ADDING “OR OTHER STREETS IMPACTED” AT THE END.

The Commission briefly reviewed the maps in Attachments D, E and F, which were updated to identify the appropriate boundaries for the Point Wells Future Service Annexation Area. Chair Moss pointed out that because the Point Wells site has not yet been annexed into the City of Shoreline, it does not have a land use designation. Mr. Szafran said it is currently identified as a planned area with its own subarea plan.

Vote to Recommend Approval or Denial or Modification

THE MAIN MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE POINT WELLS SUBAREA PLAN TEXT AND MAP AMENDMENTS AS PRESENTED BY STAFF AND CONTAINED WITHIN THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (ATTACHMENTS B, C, D, E, F, AND G) WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AS AMENDED.

Closure of Public Hearing

Chair Moss closed the public hearing.

STUDY SESSION ON COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

Staff Presentation

Mr. Cohen reminded the Commission that in February, the City Council directed staff to move forward with a project to amend the Development Code to consolidate commercial zones and add design standards. The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to orient the Commission to the amendment proposal and its key issues before providing draft code language. He noted that the project is consistent with City Council Goals 1 and 6.

Mr. Cohen said the goal of the project is to consolidate redundant commercial zoning categories and redundant, similar or conflicting design standards for development in commercial zones. He reminded the Commission that they completed their recommendation for the Comprehensive Plan Update on October 18th. In the plan, policies were added and the map was updated relative to the Mixed Use 1 and Mixed Use 2 designations to support amendments to consolidate redundant zoning and commercial design standards.

Mr. Cohen provided photos to illustrate the various design standards the City is striving for. He said the amendments are intended to implement Vision 2029, which promotes complete neighborhood centers, streamlined development, sustainable neighborhoods that are safe and attractive, and a strong economic

base. The Town Center Plan, which was adopted in 2011 and involved a three-year public process, would be used as a basis for the project. In addition to more attractive neighborhoods, it is important that commercial centers function better, particularly by providing places for pedestrians to linger in different commercial settings.

Mr. Cohen recalled that the Town Center Plan utilizes a “protect and connect” concept. It is important to connect the adjoining neighborhoods to the commercial areas so the commercial areas are amenities. It is also important to protect the neighborhoods from the impacts associated with more intense commercial development. Similar to the North City Business District, the proposal is to limit housing density by the height and bulk of a building rather than a specific number. The Town Center Plan went one step further to identify straight height and bulk caps and then let the density work its way out. He explained that traditional codes have density caps; but because of other requirements such as parking and height, it is difficult or impossible for developers to realize the maximum density allowed. The amendments would eliminate and/or revise the zoning tools that conflict or give mixed messages. The goal is to create design standards the City feels comfortable with going forward without trying to layer them up with too many requirements.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that in the Town Center Plan, the parking standards were reduced in half for one and two bedroom units compared to other zones throughout the City. This is intended to produce more pedestrian activity, less space for cars, and development that is more transit oriented. Administrative design review (ADR) is only required for modifications to the design standards. He summarized that code does not always create the best-designed development. The design standard departure process would allow the City to consider ideas brought forward by developers for better design. Staff does not recommend that design departures be allowed for the transition area standards and the dimensional standards in commercial zones.

Mr. Cohen summarized that the design standards and zone consolidation project would:

- Raise all commercial design standards to those in the Town Center Plan.
- Clarify inconsistent, redundant and vague regulations.
- Preserve the existing dimensional and land use standards in the commercial zones.
- Not increase the commercial land area.
- Streamline the approval process for administrative design review.
- Consolidate redundant commercial zones.

Mr. Cohen referred to a map outlining the proposed consolidated commercial zones (Page 45 of the Staff Report) and explained that the goal is to consolidate the eight existing commercial zones into four as follows:

- Neighborhood Business (NB). The NB and Office (O) zones have identical dimensional and land-use standards. Rather than having two designations, staff is proposing that the NB and O zones be consolidated into a single NB zone.
- Community Business (CB). The CB, North City Business District (NCBD) and Ridgecrest (PA2) zones would be consolidated into a CB zone.

- Arterial Business (AB). The Mixed Use (MUZ) and Industrial (I) zones would be consolidated into an AB zone. These zones are primarily located along Aurora Avenue North outside of Town Center.
- Town Center (TC). The Town Center 1 through 4 zones would remain unchanged.

Mr. Cohen compared the proposed new zoning map to the existing zoning map. He noted that some of the existing commercial zones are quite small. He explained that whenever they do a major clean up of the zoning map, unanticipated anomalies come up. For example, in the upper right corner of the Ballinger Commons area, the zoning would be CB and some AB. However, there are also some very small areas of NB that may be left over from King County zoning. He pointed out that most NB zones are located in pockets that are surrounded by residential development. Staff is not currently recommending a zoning change for these areas.

Mr. Cohen explained that code reform involves a lot of moving parts. He provided a diagram to illustrate how the code amendment process would move forward. He also reviewed the primary changes associated with consolidating the commercial zones and commercial design standards as follows:

- **Housing Density.** Currently, density in commercial zones other than TC and NCBD is determined by units per acre. Staff is recommending that these numbers be eliminated. Instead, height and bulk standards would be used to determine density. This would allow density standards to line up better with the dimensional and design standards. He announced that the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process has been completed for the proposed amendments, which included an analysis of the potential increase of 2,000 housing units mostly in the Aurora Corridor. Many of the commercial areas are too small to notice much change.
- **Development Incentives.** Development incentives are typically used to promote features or improvements that may be beyond the development market such as affordable housing, green building, and other public amenities in exchange for greater development potential. The current code has incentives; but for the most part, they have not been used since the Development Code was adopted in 2000. Staff anticipates the City will adopt green building code standards within the next few years. The amendment will propose to remove the incentives and allow full development potential without incentives. Staff believes the strongest incentive at this point is the shedding of unnecessary requirements. In some cases, developers have used the planning tool of floor area ratio (FAR), which allows flexibility to reshape their development to get more height. This tool has not been used a lot, and it can conflict with the height standards in the commercial zones.
- **Parking.** In TC zones, the parking standard for residential development was significantly reduced, and the parking standard for commercial development was reduced to a lesser degree. The amendment will propose using the TC parking standards for all commercial zones.
- **Thresholds for Site Improvements and Frontage.** The Development Code has articulated thresholds for determining when full site improvements must be made. Typically, the threshold is based on the construction value of a project compared to the assessed value of the property. The thresholds are different for each zone, which creates confusion. The thresholds need to be cleaned up and consolidated. The amendment will propose one threshold for all development based on property and structure values.

Commissioner Craft clarified that staff is not proposing to add or subtract code language. They are proposing to merely simplifying what is already on the zoning map. They are not adding, recreating or reducing zones. Mr. Cohen concurred. Commissioner Craft asked what process would be used to consider additions or subtractions based on the growth of the community and recent changes. Mr. Cohen said this would involve a separate process. The proposal to consolidate zoning and design standards is a big change on its own, and the SEPA review specifically states that the commercial areas would not be expanded.

Commissioner Montero noted that numerous stakeholders were involved in the public outreach meeting. He asked staff to share some of the response they received. Mr. Cohen said they received a written comment asking that the properties zoned NB near Ballinger Commons be rezoned consistent with the other commercial zones in the area. He summarized that three public outreach meetings were held with the Chamber Government Affairs Committee, the Council of Neighborhoods, and the Community Developer focus group. Some minor suggestions were provided, but those who attended the focus groups were generally in favor of the proposed changes. The City also conducted an open house at which all owners of commercially-zoned properties and surrounding residential properties were invited to attend.

Chair Moss summarized that staff is proposing the City adopt the same commercial standards for all commercial zones, using the Town Center Plan design standards as a base. She asked if staff is proposing to use a combination of the design standards from the four different TC zones. Mr. Cohen advised that the TC4 zone comprises a small stretch of residential properties along the back side of Stone Avenue and was moved to the residential section. The design standards for the TC1 through TC3 zones are the same. Chair Moss noted that frontage improvement standards were different for all three TC zones. Mr. Cohen reminded the Commission that the street standards for the TC zones were included in the code because the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) had not yet been adopted. These standards are now unnecessary because they are covered in the adopted TMP. The remaining site development standards are the same.

Chair Moss asked how the AB, CB and NB zones would differ from one another if the same commercial design standards would apply to all three. Mr. Cohen answered that they would not differ from each other in terms of design standards, but each of the commercial zones would maintain their current and different dimensional standards (i.e. setbacks, building height, hardscape, lot coverage). He specifically noted that whenever standards are melded together, he used the greater standard. He said that, although there will be some small tweaks, the allowed uses would remain the same for all zones. He said he would specifically point out the small changes that staff is proposing when the actual amendments are presented to the Commission for review.

Commissioner Maul asked if, in addition to consolidating the zones, the City would also implement the design standard changes to the specific zones. Mr. Cohen answered that the process would involve two steps: consolidating the commercial zones and then consolidating the design standards for commercial areas. Commissioner Maul asked if the Commission would receive actual code language to review. Mr. Cohen answered that staff is attempting to organize the actual code amendment language in such a way to identify the legislative changes. However, the sections recommended for wholesale removal will be

placed at the end. The code language should be available within the next week in preparation for the Commission's December 6th meeting.

Vice Chair Esselman said she is impressed at how cleanly and logically the zones have been consolidated on the proposed map. Even where there are some anomalies such as small pockets of NB zoning, they provide a transition between the more intense commercial development and the less intense residential development. She asked if rezoning the NB-zoned parcels located in the upper right corner in the Ballinger Commons area would require a separate process. Mr. Cohen said addressing any of the anomalies would require a rezone, which would be an entirely separate and different process. He pointed out that the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map would support zoning changes for many of these properties.

Vice Chair Esselman asked if the City could move forward with rezones to address the anomalies or if the property owners would be responsible for pursuing the changes in zoning. Mr. Cohen said staff would feel compelled to contact property owners of any proposed zoning changes, but rezones are currently outside the proposal. Director Markle cautioned that site-specific rezones should go through a quasi-judicial rezone process. The City Council can sponsor a citywide rezone, but staff has no direction to do that. The work they have done thus far does not lend itself to making zoning changes at this time. The Commission could recommend that this be added to their future work program.

Chair Moss reminded the Commission that the proposed amendments to consolidate commercial zoning and create commercial design standards are intended to line up with the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Chair Moss asked if the contract zones on the existing zoning map would be melded into one of the other zoning categories. Mr. Cohen said the Contract zones (CZ) would not be consolidated into the four commercial zones because the underlying zoning is not commercial. The Mixed Use Contract Zone (MUCZ) would be changed to AB.

Mr. Cohen continued to review the primary changes being proposed as follows:

- **Administrative Design Review (ADR).** Currently, the ADR process applies to the MUZ, TC and PA2 zones. There is a similar Planning Action Approval process in the NCBD zone. The amendment proposes that all commercial zones require an ADR. However, rather than requiring ADR for each proposal in a commercial zone, a review would only be required if the applicant requests a departure from the design standards.
- **Exemptions for Plazas and Front Parking.** Currently, there are requirements for where parking can locate on a site and when plazas are required. The current requirement is proportional to the size of the development. Staff is recommending an exemption so that smaller lots can have more flexibility on parking location and not be required to add a plaza space. The Commission discussed how this exemption would be applied when small lots are aggregated for development. It was agreed that the exemption would apply if the small lots were each developed with separate buildings. However, it should not be used as a way to avoid the parking standards associated with larger lots. Mr. Cohen agreed to draft code language to clearly address this issue. The Commission agreed that

parking on the street side of lots should be discouraged unless there are no other options. Mr. Cohen said the proposed amendment would allow the City to consider code departures from the parking standards, but ADR would be required.

- **Transition Areas to Single Family.** Transition areas are added requirements to address situations where high-intensity development abuts low-intensity residential development. The current code includes four different standards in four different sections, but there are many similarities. Staff is recommending that the transition standards for all commercial zones be melded together, using the higher TC standards for commercial properties that abut or are located across the street from R-4, R-6, and R-8 zones. Chair Moss recalled that the TC4 zone became its own zone because it abuts a single-family residential zone. The proposal is to adopt the TC transition standards, which were developed particularly for the TC4 zone. Mr. Cohen said that whenever there is a conflict between one standard being higher than the other, he favored the higher standard. The idea is to avoid community concern that they are losing ground.

At the request of Commissioner Montero, Mr. Cohen identified the current I zones. Commissioner Montero noted that, as per the proposed amendment, industrial uses would be allowed in all of the AB Zone. Mr. Cohen noted that the land uses currently allowed in the MUZ and I zones are identical.

- **Arterial Business.** The AB zone will apply to properties on the Aurora Corridor, north and south of Town Center. Staff is considering the idea of treating the AB zone different than all the other commercial zones in terms of flexibility. This would allow enough design flexibility to accommodate “big box” development if that is what the market will support. The design standards are intended to emphasize what is happening at the street and second floor levels of a development. He cautioned against overdesigning the floors above the first two levels. There is quite a lot of commercial property in the proposed AB zone that is undeveloped or underdeveloped. This zone is less pedestrian oriented, and there may be room for “big box” development to occur if desired.

Chair Moss recalled that one goal of the Aurora Corridor improvements was to make it more walkable and pedestrian friendly. The Community Renewal Area is encircled primarily by low-density residential development. She cautioned the staff to think carefully about the area north on Aurora Avenue North (Costco) which has centralized parking. Since most of the AB zone would be located along Aurora Avenue, they should keep in mind the City’s long-term vision for the corridor.

Mr. Cohen clarified that with the exception of the proposed changes for upper story development, the AB Zone would have the same design standards for frontage, entry requirements, window space requirements, etc. for the first floor of development. If the design standards are too stringent, they might discourage “big box” development. The Commission concluded that there are only a few areas in the AB zone that are large enough to accommodate “big box” stores. Commissioner Craft suggested that rather than creating a blanket exception to the design standards for the entire AB zone, it might be appropriate to create an exception that applies to just the larger commercial parcels. Chair Moss reminded the Commission that residential property owners near Aurora Avenue North have expressed concern about how more intense development along the corridor can impact their home values. Design standards will be an important tool for minimizing these impacts. Mr. Cohen

reminded the Commission that the transition standards would be applied equally in all commercial zones. In light of the Commission's concerns, Mr. Cohen agreed to leave changes to the AB zone out of the draft amendments. He said he would provide additional ideas and information at the December 6th meeting. Vice Chair Esselman commented that there are various design tools that can be used to enhance development on the street side.

The Commission discussed that there is a lot of redevelopment potential on both the east and west sides of Aurora Avenue North. Implementation of amendments to consolidate commercial zones and commercial design standards will create more opportunity for investment in the community. They agreed that clear design standards will make it easier for developers and businesses to commit to projects. Mr. Cohen advised that at their December 6th meeting, the Commission could review the design standards to determine if they are adequate enough for the AB zone.

- **Dimensional Charts.** There are a number of dimensional charts in the code. The amendment will propose that only two charts are needed; one for residential zones and another for commercial zones.
- **Neighborhood Business Height Increase.** The Development Code currently contains a provision for a height increase from 35 feet to 50 feet in the NB and O zones if 25% of the building floor area has residential units. Staff is recommending a 50-foot height limit without incentive for all development in the NB zone. Commercial areas can have residential development anyway, and the impact of upper floors in residential or commercial development would be negligible. The height limit for the CB zone would be 60 feet, and the height limit for the AB zone would be 65 feet. The TC zone allows a height of 70 feet.

Commissioner Craft expressed concern that changing the height limit in the NB zone from 35 to 50 feet would only accommodate one additional story of residential development. He pointed out that multiple levels of residential are needed to make a project economically viable. He expressed concern that, like incentives, the additional height may not encourage the type of development the City envisions for the area. Mr. Cohen clarified that, currently, the NB zone requires residential development in order to achieve the greater height limit. Staff is proposing that this requirement be eliminated.

Mr. Cohen said he would prepare a clean copy of the proposed code amendments for the Commission's review prior to the December 6th meeting. He would also provide a legislative version. He encouraged the Commissioners to read the clean copy first to get a better idea of what is being proposed. They can use the legislative version to clarify the changes that are being proposed.

The Commission discussed their agenda for the remainder of the year. It was noted that a special meeting would be required to approve the minutes from this meeting so they could be forwarded to the City Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Commission would hold a workshop discussion regarding the proposed amendments to consolidate the commercial zones and commercial design standards on December 6th. Due to the holidays, they agreed to cancel the December 20th meeting, which was tentatively scheduled as a public hearing on the commercial zones and design standards. The public hearing could be rescheduled to January 3rd. If necessary and there are enough Commissioners for a quorum, an additional study session could be scheduled for December 20th.

Public Comment

There was no one in the audience.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Markle announced that the City Council's review of the Comprehensive Plan Update is going well, and they have complimented the Planning Commission on a number of occasions. They anticipated final review and adoption as early as November 26th. It was noted that draft minutes of this meeting would be forwarded to the City Council for the November 26th meeting. The Commission scheduled a special meeting on November 27th at 6:00 p.m. to formally approve the November 15, 2012 minutes. The location of the special meeting will be determined by staff.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Maul reported that the Station Area Planning Subcommittee (Commissioners Craft, Scully and Maul) met with Ms. Redinger on November 9th to further discuss their approach. The City staff is working on a timeline and has requested money in the 2013 budget to hire consultants to do public outreach. The subcommittee concluded that the best use of their time was research to learn and further understand what successful station area planning has been done in other locations. This information can be used to evaluate the product produced by the consultants. Their biggest function will be public outreach and communication with the citizens. The best way to do this is attend neighborhood meetings. Commissioner Scully attended the recent meeting of the 185th Street Citizens Group, which was very positive. They appreciated his attendance and were pleased that the Commission is taking an interest in what they are doing. Their biggest concern was about communicating with citizens who are unable to attend meetings. The subcommittee discussed having a neighborhood walk with neighborhood citizens, possibly on December 1st. The subcommittee also discussed that it would be appropriate to schedule a subcommittee report as a standard agenda item at each Commission meeting to keep the public informed and invite them to provide comments.

Commissioner Craft said the subcommittee discussed the importance of communicating to the citizens that this will be a long process and no decision would be made in the near future. He said he believes the subcommittee can be a conduit for the community to hear their concerns and thoughts and reciprocate by telling them where the City is in their process.

Mr. Cohen said staff provided the subcommittee members with an existing conditions report that the City received from the Puget Sound Regional Council's Growing Communities Group. Chair Moss said she also provided information to the subcommittee that she collected at an open house she attended. She also advised that additional information may also be available through the Municipal Research Service Center.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

There was no further discussion about the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Donna Moss
Chair, Planning Commission

Steve Szafran
Clerk Pro Tem, Planning Commission