

# CITY OF SHORELINE

## SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

December 6, 2012  
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall  
Council Chamber

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### **Commissioners Present**

Chair Moss  
Vice Chair Esselman  
Commissioner Craft  
Commissioner Montero  
Commissioner Scully  
Commissioner Wagner

### **Staff Present**

Paul Cohen, Planning Manager, Planning and Community Development  
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development  
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

### **Commissioners Absent**

Commissioner Maul

### **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 by the Commission Clerk the following Commissioners were present: Chair Moss, Vice Chair Esselman and Commissioners Craft, Montero, Scully and Wagner. Commissioner Maul was absent.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

### **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Cohen did not provide any comments during this portion of the meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of November 1, 2012 were approved as amended. The minutes of November 15, 2012 were also approved as amended.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Commission during this portion of the meeting.

## STUDY SESSION–COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS AND ZONING CONSOLIDATION

### Staff Presentation

Mr. Cohen recalled that he introduced the code amendment project to consolidate commercial design standards and zoning to the Commission on November 15<sup>th</sup>. At that time, he identified the primary and secondary changes staff is proposing. The changes made to the staff report since the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting are identified in **Bold** letters. He noted that the draft code amendment language has been presented in two formats, a reduced draft (Attachment D) and a legislative draft (Attachment E). He also provided an outline to clearly identify the major amendments the Commission should focus their discussion on. He reviewed each of the recent changes as follows:

- After significant discussion by the Public Works and Planning Departments, staff decided to propose two thresholds with parallel, consistent and more specific language – one for site improvements for all development based on property and structure values and another for frontage improvements based on structure values. He explained that, as proposed, full site improvements (parking, lighting, signage, landscaping) would be required if the construction value of a development proposal exceeds 50% of the assessed value of the property (land and structure). The threshold for frontage improvements (curb, gutter, sidewalks) would be based only on the assessed value of the structure.
- The language was changed to allow departures from the design standards through the Administrative Design Review (ADR) process for sign permits that are submitted as part of complete and comprehensive sign packages.
- At the last meeting, staff proposed an exemption so that smaller lots can have more flexible parking standards and not be required to add plaza space. Staff has considered the issue further and is now proposing that the exemptions be taken out. Instead, the City would use the ADR departure process to look at these situations individually.
- At their last meeting, the Commission discussed the staff's proposal that parking be allowed in the front area between the buildings and sidewalks in the Arterial Business (AB) zone. They also discussed decreasing the amount of design standards on the portion of the buildings above the first floor. The Commission indicated some hesitation regarding this proposed change. After further consideration, staff is now recommending that the ADR departure process should address the design issue of parking and building articulation and a different standard for the AB zones unnecessary.

Mr. Cohen recommended the Commission focus tonight's discussion on the core code amendments found in SMC 20.50 (General Development Standards), which start on Page 98 of the Staff Report (Attachment E). He explained that the table on Page 99 of the Staff Report, which identifies densities and dimensions for residential development in non-residential zones has been removed. The standards contained in this table were melded with the dimensional standards for commercial development in

commercial zones because residential development would be allowed in commercial zones. He referred to proposed Table 20.50.020(1), which identifies density and dimensional standards for development in residential zones, and noted that an additional column was added for the Town Center 4 (TC-4) zone.

Mr. Cohen referred to proposed Table 20.50.020(2), which identifies dimensional standards for development in all commercial zones. He noted that there is a separate column for each of the proposed new zoning designations. He explained that the dimensional standards from the North City and Ridgecrest areas were combined into the Community Business (CB) column. He said that although the current code language for commercial zones identifies various front, side and rear yard setbacks, staff is proposing a minimum front yard setback of zero for all commercial properties and a minimum side and rear yard setback of zero where commercial zones abut streets or other commercial zones. The setback requirement would be greater for commercial properties that abut residential zones. In these situations, staff incorporated the highest setback requirement to give residential property owners a larger setback.

Mr. Cohen noted that a minimum side and rear yard setback of 20 feet would be required for commercial development adjacent to R-4, R-6, and R-8 zones, which is consistent with the transition area standards. The minimum side and rear yard setback from the TC-4 and R-12 through R-48 zones would be 15 feet, which is the largest setback requirement of all the existing commercial zones. He reminded the Commission that the goal is to protect the single-family neighborhoods. They don't want to diminish their buffer, but they want to allow more development potential by decreasing setbacks between commercial developments and against the sidewalk. The zero minimum setback standard would encourage pedestrian-oriented development with amenities that go along with street frontage for pedestrians. Having a zero setback requirement would create an incentive for commercial development to connect to provide a continuous façade along the street front. The goal of the proposed setback is to create a more urban edge on the street and next to commercial zones, while being more generous with the buffer requirements on the back side towards residential zones.

Mr. Cohen said staff is proposing to eliminate the maximum density standard that is based on units per acre. Instead, they are proposing to rely on the building bulk standards to determine density. With the exception of the Neighborhood Business (NB) zone, the proposed building height limits found in Table 20.50.020(2) are consistent with the underlying zones. The building height limit for commercial development in the current NB and Office (O) is 35 feet, with an additional 15 feet for residential uses on the top floor. The proposed new NB zone would allow a maximum height of 50 feet, without a residential requirement. He explained that the impacts of the additional story would be negligible whether developed as residential, commercial or office.

Commissioner Wagner said it is unclear in the table whether "adjacent to residential zones" means directly abutting or across the street. She noted that, in some situations, it may be preferable to allow a zero rear yard setback. For example, even though the Interurban Trail is located directly across from a residential zone, it would be appropriate to allow development right up to the trail to incorporate the access to and from the walkability the trail offers. Mr. Cohen pointed out that this is addressed more explicitly in the transition area requirements that follow Table 20.50.020(2). In addition, Table 20.50.020(2) provides a reference to the transition area standards, which identifies additional requirements for the side and rear setbacks when commercial development is located adjacent to R-4, R-6 and R-8 zones.

Mr. Cohen explained that transition area requirements are currently found in four separate areas of the code, and they are all slightly different. Staff melded the transition area requirements found elsewhere in the code with those found in the Town Center Subarea Plan to create a single set of standards (SMC 20.50.021) that favor the more restrictive requirements. He noted that the proposed new transition area standards would apply to all commercial zones (NB, Community Business (CB), Arterial Business (AB) and Town Center (TC) 1, 2, and 3) that transition into residential zones (R-4, R-6 and R-8). As proposed in SMC 20.50.021(a), a greater step back would be required for commercial development that abuts a single-family zone than for commercial development that is directly across the street from a single-family zone.

Mr. Cohen advised that SMC 20.50.021(b) outlines the landscaping requirements for transition areas. He summarized that staff believes the 20-foot setback, Type I Landscaping, trees that grow a minimum of 50 feet, and building step backs are sufficient to provide a workable transition. He said the current language talks about providing notice to neighborhoods of a landscape plan. He explained that development review for commercial projects requires notice and a neighborhood meeting, and the landscape plans would be available to the public. Therefore, the additional notice requirement would be redundant.

Commissioner Scully said he is concerned about the second sentence in SMC 20.50.021(b), particularly the phrase “undamaged by construction.” He expressed concern that a developer could decide to place an access road amongst a stand of significant, healthy trees and then remove the trees after determining they would be damaged by construction. He pointed out that the existing tree code already addresses when a tree can be removed. He questioned if the sentence in SMC 20.50.021(b) would unnecessarily weaken the City’s existing tree code for development in transition areas. Mr. Cohen reminded the Commission that all commercial zones are exempt from the tree code. The intent of the proposed language is to preserve significant trees in the transition areas whenever possible. He suggested that perhaps the language could be worded better to address the issue. Commissioner Scully said it is important to prevent property owners from arbitrarily removing significant trees as part of construction that could otherwise have been saved. Mr. Cohen agreed to research the issue further and report back. Chair Moss agreed with Commissioner Scully’s concern and recalled that the Aldercrest Subarea Plan contains language about protecting trees.

Chair Moss asked if there is a specific reason why the trees must be of a species that grows to a minimum of 50 feet. Mr. Cohen recalled that at previous public meetings regarding transition areas, citizens expressed concern that some species called out as Type I Landscaping would do little to screen a building that could potentially be 65 feet in height (with a step back). Citizens requested greater screening requirements in consideration of the scale of potential structures. He noted that the proposed language would also require a maintenance agreement so that trees would be replaced if they are damaged or die. Chair Moss pointed out that, oftentimes, very tall trees have no branches for the first 20 to 30 feet. She cautioned against propagating trees that are tall and top heavy that do not provide adequate screening below. Mr. Cohen agreed to research this issue further.

Mr. Cohen advised that staff is also proposing a provision in SMC 20.50.021 that when a parking garage is located on the buffer side of the building, no openings can face the single-family neighborhood. The intent is that a solid wall would face the single-family neighborhood. Chair Moss asked if doors could

be allowed to provide opportunities for through connections from the commercial to the residential development. She said this could be particularly important in the Aurora Square and Community Renewal areas. Mr. Szafran said the idea of through connections is to connect through a property from one right-of-way to another. When buildings are located against the property lines of single-family zones, there is no right-of-way to connect to. He also explained that through connections require a public access easement and are typically located outside rather than through buildings. Chair Moss asked staff to consider other situations in which the through-connection concept could be applied.

Mr. Cohen reviewed that in written public comment letters, community groups have expressed concern about providing incentives for affordable housing through flexibility in the transition area requirements for building bulk and parking standards. He acknowledged that removing the density limits in the commercial zones, as proposed, would take the incentive out of the current code that allows a density bonus for affordable housing. While the incentive would still be applicable in single and multi-family residential zones, it has not been very useable in low-density residential zones. Removing the density limit in commercial zones would allow for developments of greater density and bulk, including affordable housing. Mr. Cohen advised that in addition to the reduced parking standards contained in the Town Center Plan, staff is proposing a potential 50% parking reduction for housing that meets the definition of low income. The public letters have noted that parking demand associated with low-income housing is less than for market-rate housing.

Mr. Cohen said comment letters also requested flexibility in the building bulk standards for step backs to accommodate affordable-housing development. He explained that the Ronald United Methodist Church is considering opportunities for developing affordable housing on the back side of their property. Because the property is located in a commercial zone that is directly across the street from a residential zone, it is considered a transition area and the upper portion of the building must be stepped back at a 1:1 ratio. Examples were provided to illustrate the impact of eliminating the step back requirement for the upper stories.

Mr. Cohen pointed out that all of the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) design standards were deleted (Pages 104 through 105 of the Staff Report) and melded with the design and dimensional standards for the proposed new AB zone. He explained that the multi-family and single-family zones have their own residential design standards, which will not be changed at this point. Because this will be a separate section, the code must identify new thresholds (SMC 20.50.125) for when site improvements would be required specifically for the TC-4, Planned Area (PA) 3, and R-8 through R-48 zones. He noted that the thresholds are the same as those proposed for commercial zones.

Mr. Cohen said that as per the proposed language in SMC 20.50.220, ADR would be required for development in all commercial zones that propose to depart from the design and/or sign standards.

Next, Mr. Cohen referred to SMC 20.50.230, which outlines the thresholds for required site improvements. He noted that the existing code is vague. Staff believes the proposed 50% threshold is less redundant and confusing and would cover all new development. As proposed, full site improvements would be required in all commercial zones if:

1. *Building construction valuation for a permit exceeds 50% of the current County assessment or an appraised valuation for all existing land and structures on the parcel. This shall include all structures on other parcels if the building under permit review extends into other parcels.* Mr. Cohen explained that the construction valuation submitted with each development application would be compared to the assessed or appraised value. If it reaches the full 50% threshold, full site improvements would be required. The second sentence applies to situations where buildings overlap property lines, even if the remodel would only occur on one property.
2. *Building construction valuations of permits issued within a five-year period since (date when code is adopted) accumulate to exceed 50% of the County assessed or an appraised value of the existing land and structures. The valuation is determined by the first permit issued within the 5-year period.* Mr. Cohen explained that sometimes, developers are able to avoid the requirement of full site improvements by submitting several applications for permits that are just under the threshold. The intent of this section is to reasonably capture accumulated small projects that occur on a property within a window of five years. If the combined construction value of all the projects add up to be more than 50% of the assessed value of the first building permit in the five-year window, the threshold would kick in.

Mr. Cohen explained that the proposal integrates the zoning maps, land uses, dimensional standards, neighborhood protections, parking, landscaping and signs into respective code sections. He specifically pointed out that the descriptions provided for the TC zones (SMC 20.92.020) are now located at the beginning of the Chapter, and the land-use map and chart were incorporated into the larger zoning map. The frontage requirements for the TC zone (SMC 20.92.030) were also removed because they are covered by the Transportation Master Plan. The through connections identified on the map on Page 113 are suggestions and will be modified and added to the parking standards as criteria for getting a parking reduction. The neighborhood protection standards (SMC 20.92.040) have been incorporated into the transition area standards (SMC 20.50.021). Where there was conflict, the higher standard was used. In addition, SMC 20.92.050 has been eliminated because details related to street frontage design are now addressed in the Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Cohen explained that the Town Center site design standards found in SMC 20.92 were incorporated into proposed SMC 20.50.240 and would apply to all commercial zones. He specifically noted that SMC 20.50.240(B) site design standards allow for on-site landscaping, sidewalks, walkways, public access easements, public places and open space to overlap if their separate, minimum dimensions and functions are not diminished. He suggested that rather than requiring separate elements that somehow must fit together, allowing them to overlap may encourage the elements to function better together.

Mr. Cohen advised that the section related to commercially-zoned streets [SMC 20.50.240(C)(1)] was primarily taken from the Town Center Plan and talks about entries, covered walkways, amount of window coverage, where entries are placed, etc. He particularly noted SMC 20.50.240(C)(1)(b) which calls out a minimum space dimension of 12-feet high and 20-feet in depth for building interiors that are at ground level and fronting on streets. However, the spaces can be used for any permitted land use. He explained that it is currently difficult for developers to have commercial uses on the ground floor. The Commission discussed this issue and agreed that rather than requiring commercial uses on the ground floor at this time, the City should require that the space be constructed to commercial building standards

but allow all land uses permitted in the zone. If and when the market changes to support commercial uses on the ground floor, the spaces on the ground floor could be easily adapted. Staff believes this is a good approach to anticipate the future, but not demand commercial uses when the market will not support them.

Mr. Cohen said that the language in SMC 20.50.240(C)(1)(f) is new. As proposed, it requires streets with on-street parking to have either sidewalks to the back of the curb and street trees in pits or a 2-foot wide walkway between the back of the curb and an amenity street. This requirement will provide pedestrian space, as well as sufficient space for people to access their vehicles. If a street has no on-street parking, an amenity strip would be required as a separator to provide pedestrian safety.

Mr. Cohen referred to SMC 20.50.240(C)(1)(g), which is intended to ensure that surface parking does not occupy too much of the street frontage behind the sidewalk. He noted that 65 lineal feet is the width of a double loaded parking aisle. This provision would allow people with small lots who don't have access to the back of their buildings to have parking, as narrow as possible, up the side of the property. The provision would also prohibit parking lots on street corners.

Mr. Cohen said SMC 20.50.240(C)(2) requires pedestrian style lighting, which is consistent with the City's Engineering Design Manual for street fronts. The language incorporates the Aurora Avenue pedestrian lighting standards. The goal is to make the areas as attractive as possible by requiring covered awnings, pedestrian lighting, ample sidewalks, amenity streets as necessary, plazas that connect, window frontage and entries.

Mr. Cohen explained that, with just a few exceptions, the language in SMC 20.50.240(D) is identical to the language found in the Town Center Plan. Some of the references were changed. He specifically noted that the provision would apply to all street corners in commercial zones. He advised that all references to "through connections" were deleted from SMC 20.50.240(E) and made a criteria for reduced parking standards. He explained that because through connections would be public access, there was a lot of debate about whether or not they should have to be meet American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, who was to maintain them, whether they could go through building lobbies or parking garages, etc. Staff believes through connections are a good idea, but there is still a question about how often they should occur.

Mr. Cohen advised that SMC 20.50.240(E)(1)(c) clarifies language found in the Town Center Plan. SMC 20.50.240(E)(1)(f) required internal walkways along the front façade of buildings 100 feet or more in length to meet the street standard requirements. Because the walkway standards require an 8-foot walkway in front of buildings with trees and pits, this provision seems redundant. Staff is recommending it be deleted.

Mr. Cohen said the parking standards from the Town Center Plan were incorporated into the parking chapter. He particularly noted that the parking lot landscape standards found in SMC 20.50.240(E)(2) were moved to the landscape section of the code because they are applicable to all commercial zones adjacent to sidewalks. The provision would require either 10-feet of Type II Landscaping, or five feet of landscaping with a continuous masonry wall.

Mr. Cohen referred to SMC 20.50.240(E)(3) and recalled that the Commission previously had extensive discussion about whether landscaping areas for vehicle displays for car sales should be different. Staff is proposing to maintain the existing language, which seemed to be an acceptable compromise to property owners. However, the language would be moved to the landscape section.

Mr. Cohen advised that a definition for “public places” was added to the definition section. He explained that the language in SMC 20.50.240(F) was changed to eliminate the minimum lot size. Departures from this standard would require ADR. In addition, the provision would allow a developer to divide the public place requirement into smaller areas. The language also ensures that the public places are reasonable enough in size to have value. Buildings would be required to border on one side of the public place so they are not isolated in parking lots, etc.

Mr. Cohen advised that the building façade standards in SMC 20.50.250 came directly from the Town Center Plan, with only a few minor changes. References to certain types of streets have been deleted. He referred to SMC 20.50.250(B)(9)(a), which deletes the requirement for mirrored glass when used for more than 10% of the façade area. Staff believes this is an arbitrary requirement.

Mr. Cohn noted that all of the sign standards found in the Town Center Plan (SMC 20.92.080) will be relocated to the sign code, which was recently updated. They will apply to all commercial and residential zones in the City.

Mr. Cohen noted that the parking standards contained in Tables 20.50.390A, 20.50.390C and 20.50.390D were updated to be consistent with the Town Center parking standards. He noted that the section was also changed to require one bicycle rack space for every 10,000 square feet of floor area. He explained that, previously, the parking standard allowed a 20% to 50% reduction with some vague criteria. Staff is proposing a reduction of 25% be allowed if a project can meet a combination of criteria. He reviewed the eight proposed criteria, which were taken from the Town Center Plan. He specifically noted that the Town Center Plan also allows a reduction in the parking requirement through the permit reduction program. However, this criteria was eliminated at the request of the person who manages the City’s commute trip reduction program. The program is based on the number of employees at a given business at the time of development, which can change and result in inadequate parking for future uses.

Chair Moss pointed out that some transit stops are peak only. When allowing a transit stop to be a criteria for a reduction in parking, they should consider walking distance rather than radius. She said they should recognize that some transit stops and routes may change as light rail is implemented through Shoreline. She suggested the criteria for transit stops should be more specific.

Mr. Cohen advised that Criteria vii calls for an 8-foot wide pedestrian public access easement, which is intended to address the through-connection concept that was discussed earlier. He also noted that the proposed language would allow a reduction in parking of up to 50%, at the discretion of the director, for the portion of the development that provides low-income housing as defined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



## **Public Comment**

**Kelly Rider, Housing Development Consortium (HDC) of King County**, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to comment on the proposed commercial design standards and zoning consolidation. She also thanked them for recommending approval of an updated Housing Element with strong policies to promote affordable housing options in Shoreline. She recalled that, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the Commission supported incentives to build homes affordable to low-income households and encouraged partnerships with non-profit organizations in order to provide those housing choices. However, additional regulations are necessary to implement the policies. They are fortunate that local organizations are currently working to develop a feasible plan for developing affordable housing at Town Center. These organizations have identified two specific incentives the City can include in its commercial design standards in order to ensure projects can be successful in Shoreline. The recommendations are:

1. Support a criteria-based policy that allows a 50% reduction in parking requirements for developments that include a significant number of homes affordable to low-income households. Consider additional parking reductions if the homes are near transit stops, specifically rapid ride.
2. Consider giving the Planning Director the discretion to provide design standard exemptions for housing developments that include a significant number of homes affordable to low-income households. This would help to implement Policy H-7, which states “create meaningful incentives to facilitate development of affordable housing in both residential and commercial zones, including consideration of exemptions from certain development standards in instances where strict application would make incentives infeasible.”

Ms. Rider summarized that these policies would create flexibility in the code to ensure that affordable housing developers are able to provide the most homes at the deepest level of affordability possible while also protecting neighborhood compatibility. The organizations developing affordable homes are good stewards of the public dollars that support their programs. They work hard to build good, quality, affordable homes as cost efficiently as possible. Together, the two policies would ensure that affordable housing developers such as Compass Housing Alliance, Hopelink and others can cost effectively build homes for low-income households. The policies will also help to increase the number of affordable homes that can be built in Shoreline with limited public dollars. All families in Shoreline should be able to afford their housing and still have enough money to pay for gas, groceries, and childcare. She asked that the Commission accept the recommendations and support more affordable housing opportunities for Shoreline residents.

**Paula McCutcheon, Pastor, Ronald United Methodist Church**, said they appreciated the support they received from the Commission last May and the additions in the Comprehensive Plan that speak about affordable housing and individuals and families that are homeless. She asked those who were present from the church to raise their hand, noting that some had to leave for choir practice. She said the church is asking that the Commission give consideration to the request submitted by the Compass Housing Alliance and SMR Architects with regards to the changes in the commercial design standards. The changes would pave the way, not only for the project planned at Ronald United Methodist Church, but others that will develop in the future. She recalled that the City hosted an event in 2010, asking faith communities to consider stewarding some of their land for affordable housing in the Shoreline area. She

was delighted to discover when she began her pastoral term in July 2010 that the City of Shoreline had this vision. As she worked with the congregation on their vision, it was amazing how the synergy of the two came together.

Ms. McCutcheon advised that church representatives have been working with staff from the Planning Department, Human Services, and Public Works. This effort has empowered them to take the steps to get closer to their goal of being advocates for individuals and families who are homeless. She commented that, at this time, several people sleep under the eaves of the church. There was a father and teenager on the doorstep the other night. The church provides bus tickets and gives emergency food bags from Hopelink, but it is not enough. They need to go further. They would like the Commission to support the two policy changes as described by Ms. Rider. They are very excited to see the provision for a 50% reduction in the parking standard. She reminded the Commission that the church is grateful to be in a relationship with the City, and she respectfully asked that they take the critical next step to make the minor code adjustments so the project at Ronald United Methodist Church, and other projects done by faith communities, can be brought to life. This will enable the church to live out its vision of being a diverse, faithful, active community of service, hospitality and hope.

**Beth Boram, Property Development Director, Compass Housing Alliance,** explained that the alliance provides housing and services to low-income and homeless people throughout King County. She reported that the alliance has worked over the last year with Ronald United Methodist Church, Hopelink and SMR Architects to develop a vision for the church property. They envision a 60 to 70-unit building that will provide housing and services to families and individuals at 30 to 50% of area median income. The building will provide affordable rents that will give people the opportunity to gain long-term stability. The alliance operates buildings that are similar to the proposed new building; one in Shoreline and another in Renton. The Renton building has 58 units for formerly homeless families and individuals. She said many of the residents in the buildings do not own vehicles due to the high cost. The Renton project is very close to region-wide transportation. She said they have 49 parking spaces at the Renton Veteran's Center, 29 of which are reserved for residents. About half (22) of the residents have cars and utilize the spaces.

Ms. Boram summarized that the current parking standards create a significant financial challenge to affordable housing because of the limited funding sources available. Their residents often do not need that level of parking. She urged the Commission to take the recommendations in the design standards and support the 50% reduction in the parking standard. Regarding setbacks, she said the Alliance does everything they can to be good stewards of the public dollars. Changes that make construction efficient and effective is something they hope the Commission will consider.

**Poppi Handy, SMR Architects,** said she is present on behalf of Ronald United Methodist Church, Compass Housing Alliance and Hopelink to talk about the specifics of the proposed project for the church property and how it relates to the Town Center code. She requested modifications to the Town Center and commercial design standards. She said she is currently collaborating on the Housing and Services Project at Ronald United Methodist Church. There is an opportunity for the City to incentivize affordable housing and to align the land-use code with the goals set forth in the recent Comprehensive Plan Update. She specifically referenced Policies H-3, H-7, H-8, H-11, H-18, H-25, and H-28 and TC-

3. As a preference to the code discussion, she drew the Commission's attention to a number of considerations for affordable housing compared to market-rate housing:

- There is a significant difference between affordable housing and market rate housing related to density. In market rate, it is often necessary to fully maximize the unit count and full zoning density of a site. In affordable housing, the density is dependent on the amount of funding available for a specific project.
- Long-term maintenance and durability are of the utmost importance in preserving the affordable housing stock. Therefore, a substantial effort is made during the design and construction phase to minimize that risk. Long-term operating revenues are scarce for affordable housing providers, so it is incumbent upon them to help minimize the care of maintenance of their built environment. This comment relates specifically to the step back requirement.
- Low-income households are far less likely to own cars, especially when they have access to public transportation and services such as in the Town Center in Shoreline.

Ms. Handy referred to two land-use requirements that would help facilitate building efficient, affordable housing: dimensional setback requirements in transition overlays 1 and 2 and the parking requirements for apartments and residential housing. She noted that affordable housing is not specifically mentioned in the land-use code as a defined use. She referred to SMC 20.92.040(C), which governs the building height adjacent to single-family residential zones. The graphic image shows the height and depth of the building being set back proportionally to create a "layer cake affect." She commented that the intent of this code provision is to transition from single-family detached dwellings to the denser building that may occur in a commercial zone and to liven the pedestrian experience. She advocated that strict adherence to the stepping effect may not garner an aesthetically pleasing architectural effect and could potentially have an adverse effect on the pedestrian experience. She agreed to submit a letter with some massing examples of their specific projects that show options relating to how the setbacks might occur.

Ms. Handy said she also believes that the intent of the code is to respond to the residential zones while still providing dense building types and to provide a pedestrian thoroughfare that is engaging and lively. This can be accomplished in a number of ways without requiring strict adherence to dimensional standards, one of which would be to base the land-use code on forms (modulation, window fenestration, patterning, roof forms, etc.) rather than dimensions. This approach could be incentivized specifically for types of buildings and uses that meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan such as affordable housing meeting certain levels of area median income. Ms. Handy said she believes each of the requested changes support the City's Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and would make a more vibrant, livable community.

**Christy Becker, Senior Manager of Case Management and Housing, Hopelink,** said Hopelink is very grateful for the support and strong relationship with the City. Their success in serving households in Shoreline has been largely due to the financial support and the partnership in the community. She emphasized that there is currently a lack of affordable housing all over King County, including the City of Shoreline. Hopelink is asking for the Commission's support in the two policy changes to encourage the development of affordable housing in Shoreline. She asked that they support the policy of a parking reduction up to 50% for developments near transit stations that include a significant number of units affordable to low-income households since the residents are less likely to own cars. She also asked that

they support the policy to allow for director discretion for design standard variance for housing development that includes a significant number of houses affordable to low income. She summarized that, by supporting the policies, the Commission will be supporting the partnership between the Compass Housing Alliance and Hopelink and reducing the barriers for future low-income housing developers. The partnership will provide affordable housing and a permanent Hopelink service center in the Shoreline community. She said Hopelink has outgrown their current facility, and they are not able to offer their full array of services. A new facility would allow them to expand their food bank services, mobility services, employment services, adult education, financial literacy, and case management. Changes to the policies will not require any additional City funding, but they will make a significant difference in ensuring the partnership between Hopelink and the Compass Housing Alliance is able to better serve the low-income households in Shoreline and can move forward quickly and cost effectively.

### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Wagner noted that public comments focused on development that would have a significant number of homes that are affordable to low-income households. She questioned how the reduction allowance could be applied to a building that is a mixture of market value and low-income housing. She also questioned how the parking reduction allowance would be applied to a project that contains both low-income housing and office space for a housing organization such as Hopelink. Mr. Cohen said that, as currently proposed, only the units that meet the criteria for low-income housing would be eligible for the reduced parking. Other types of housing would have to meet the regular parking standards. Mixed-use developments are broken down by use to identify the parking requirement. Commissioner Wagner asked staff to provide examples of how other cities in the area have addressed this issue. The Commission invited Ms. Handy to submit specific code amendment language for staff's consideration. Staff would analyze the proposed language and present it to the Commission for consideration on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Commissioner Craft asked if the code would provide a set of criteria for the director to use when reviewing code departures. He said believes allowing director's discretion would be a good tool for the City to have, particularly in specific situations that come up sporadically such as affordable housing. However, he reminded the Commission that the code departure and Administrative Design Review (ADR) provisions would apply to all commercial zones, and not just the Ronald United Methodist Church site. He said he would like more information on how the concept would be implemented. Commissioner Scully concurred. He summarized that they are really looking at two different categories of development: one is purpose built to be affordable and the other is a market-rate development with some affordable units. He expressed concern about allowing code departures for any proposal that includes some affordable housing. He asked staff to work with the interested parties to identify sections of the design code that would be subject to waiver at the director's discretion versus other sections where waivers might not be appropriate. Mr. Cohen agreed to provide additional information. Chair Moss asked staff to explain the guidelines the director must follow when making decisions about code departures.

The Commission acknowledged that there is a lot of information to absorb. Rather than moving forward with even more information, they agreed to continue their discussion at the January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. In the

meantime, Chair Moss recommended that Commissioners forward their additional comments and suggestions to staff in writing. This would help staff prepare for the next discussion.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Cohen did not provide a report during this portion of the meeting.

### **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Craft reported that the Light Rail Station Area Planning Subcommittee toured the proposed light rail site with the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Citizens Committee. They were able to discuss their mutual concerns and view what each of the spaces looked like. The tour was led by Miranda Redinger, and City Councilmember Salomon was in attendance. While no conclusions were reached, they all have a better idea of the challenge the site will pose.

Commissioner Scully said it was very important for members of the Commission and Councilmember Salomon to hear the differences of opinion from the citizens committee. He said Ms. Redinger prepared a good synopsis of the question and answer session that followed the tour. Chair Moss commented that it is important to acknowledge, explore and address the concerns and ideas put forth by citizens. The Commission agreed it would be appropriate to schedule a once-a-month report by the Light Rail Station Area Planning Subcommittee as a separate item on the agenda. They further agreed that if there is significant information to report to the Commission, the item should be scheduled after "general public comments," rather than waiting until the end of the meeting as part of "committee and commissioner announcements." It was suggested that topics of the report should be published as part of the agenda so the public can stay well informed of the process. Chair Moss asked the subcommittee to provide some highlights of their work and additional information at a meeting in early 2013.

Commissioner Montero asked for an update regarding Point Wells. Mr. Cohen said staff provided an update to the Richmond Beach Neighborhood Association a few weeks ago. There is not a lot to report at this point, other than the Snohomish County Council adopted new comprehensive plan and zoning language. There was a hearing before the Growth Management Hearings Board, which was attended by Director Markle. He does not know the outcome of that meeting. There was also a hearing before the appeals court regarding the vesting of the application, but a decision will not be issued until February 2013. He advised that Director Markle has been meeting with community groups to identify the type of corridor study the City needs to start on for Richmond Beach Road. The corridor study will become the basis for the improvements the City will require from the developer.

### **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

Chair Moss announced that the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting was cancelled, and the Commission's next meeting is scheduled for January 3<sup>rd</sup>. At that time, the Commission will continue their review of the commercial design standards and zoning consolidation proposal. She asked the Commissioners to submit specific comments and suggestions to Mr. Cohen by the start of business on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cohen agreed to provide a packet for the January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting by December 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Szafran reminded the Commission that Comprehensive Plan amendments must be submitted by December 31<sup>st</sup> to be included in the 2013 amendment docket. The Commission would review the docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments in January, but the City Council would make the final decision about which amendments would be included on the docket for further discussion.

Chair Moss advised that an update from the Light Rail Station Area Planning Subcommittee would be scheduled as a business item on the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

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Donna Moss  
Chair, Planning Commission

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Jessica Simulcik Smith  
Clerk, Planning Commission

**TIME STAMP  
December 6, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**ROLL CALL:**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA: 0:46**

**DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS: 0:59**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 1:15**

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: 3:21**

**STUDY SESSION–COMMERCIAL DESIGN STANDARDS AND ZONING CONSOLIDATION**

**Staff Report: 3:40**

**Public Comments: 130:50**

**Commission Discussion: 1:48:00**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT: 1:59:50**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: 2:00:00**

**AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING: 2:09:15**

**ADJOURNMENT**