

# CITY OF SHORELINE

## SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

March 21, 2013  
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall  
Council Chamber

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### **Commissioners Present**

Chair Moss  
Vice Chair Esselman  
Commissioner Maul  
Commissioner Montero  
Commissioner Scully  
Commissioner Wagner (arrived at 7:04 p.m.)

### **Staff Present**

Rachael Markle, Director, Planning and Community Development  
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development  
Jeff Forry, Permit Services Manager  
Dan Eernisse, Economic Development Manager  
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

### **Commissioners Absent**

Commissioner Craft

### **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 Maul, Montero and Scully. Commissioner Wagner arrived at 7:04 p.m. and Commissioner Craft was absent.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of February 21, 2013 were approved as submitted.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

## **PUBLIC HEARING: STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA) DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS**

Chair Moss reviewed the rules and procedures for the public hearing and then opened the public hearing.

### **Staff Presentation**

Mr. Forry advised that the purpose of the hearing is to consider amendments to the City's environmental review procedures contained in Title 20 of the Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC). He explained that an amendment to the development code is a mechanism by which the City may bring its land use and development regulations into conformity with the Comprehensive Plan and/or respond to changing conditions or needs of the City. He reminded the Commission that in order for the City Council to approve an amendment to the SMC, they must find the proposed amendment meets the following criteria:

- It is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- It will not adversely affect the public health, safety or general welfare,
- It is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Shoreline.

Mr. Forry explained that staff is proposing an amendment to SMC 20.30.560, which would exempt minor new construction projects that are below the exempt thresholds established by the Department of Ecology (DOE) from environmental review. It would also eliminate the requirement for automatic review of proposals in critical areas. He briefly reviewed the reasons for the proposed changes:

- New legislation (SB6406) presented the opportunity for the City to evaluate its existing environmental procedures, which have not been reviewed since the City's incorporation in 1995. The bill required that the DOE establish new thresholds for minor new construction, and they elected to provide agencies the flexibility to substantially amend their local procedures. The legislation also directed the DOE to modernize its rules that guide state and local agencies in conducting SEPA reviews in light of increased environmental protections in local, state and federal regulations.
- The amendments are necessary to recognize existing planning efforts and protections. Given the extensive investment the City has made and will continue to make in comprehensive planning and development regulations for the community, it is essential that project review start from the fundamental land-use planning choices made in the plans and regulations rather than reevaluating the regulations and plans through environmental review. With the adoption of substantive environmental regulations, SEPA has become redundant for minor new construction. The DOE has determined that, with appropriate local regulations, minor new construction below the thresholds does not pose a probable significant impact. SEPA was enacted in 1971 when the nation's awareness of environmental problems was just emerging, and many laws and procedures for environmental protection have been implemented since that time. Since the City incorporation in 1995 there has been a concerted effort to adopt and implement environmental protections.

Exhibit 3 provides a summary of the state, federal and local environmental protections that are implemented using the City's development review procedures. Exhibit 6 provides a historical

summary of actions taken by the City; the most recent being the 2012 Comprehensive Plan and the adoption of the Commercial Design Standards. The focus of the environmental review and analysis for both the Comprehensive Plan and the Commercial Design Standards was system wide at the plan level and forms the basis for on-the-ground project decisions.

- The amendments recognize City Council Goal 1, in which the City Council directs that the City continue to implement efforts to make the permit process predictable, timely, and competitive. Review under the current environmental procedures builds a bureaucratic redundancy that focuses on procedures and policies rather than the proposal and the regulations intended to mitigate impacts.

Mr. Florry recalled that during their February 21<sup>st</sup> study session, the Commission raised several questions. He provided a staff response for each one as follows:

- *How have appeals affected environmental determinations?* Of the estimated 200 development proposals that have been subject to environmental review, only 15 have been appealed. None of the threshold determinations were reversed and no mitigations were imposed that were above and beyond those mandated by the code. The primary substance of appeal was procedural and not substantive.
- *What is lost by raising thresholds?* The City's land-use plans and regulations direct growth to areas that are likely to support it, and impacts were evaluated during the creation of plans and adopted regulations. The regulations provide mitigations and a procedural framework for staff to evaluate a proposal's affect on elements of the environment. The studies required for traffic, water, sewer and stormwater concurrency, as well as evaluation of cultural and historic resources, provide an appropriate level of evaluation for minor new construction. For these reasons, staff sees no loss of environmental evaluation, but rather a gain in substantive review of proposals in lieu of procedural compliance.
- *How are critical areas protected?* Critical areas are protected primarily through avoidance, minimization, restoration and replacement. The code strictly regulates development in critical areas and buffers. By restricting activities, impacts are avoided. When activities are permitted in critical areas, a proposal must demonstrate, through professional evaluation, how the criteria for avoidance, minimization, restoration and replacement would be satisfied. This technical analysis forms the basis for mitigation and would be performed with or without SEPA.
- *What protections are there for habitat?* During the submittal process, applicants are required to disclose the conditions on site that may trigger evaluation for critical areas, etc. They must also identify the types of plantings and habitat. The project review uses state resources to identify point source protection or protection for endangered or candidate species. The code provides for protection of tree canopy and understory vegetation, limits the amount of hardscape and building lot coverage, maintains open space, requires low-impact development, and protects native plantings. This methodology is used for all projects, including the vast majority that are SEPA exempt.
- *How long are environmental documents valid?* There is no shelf life for environmental documents. They are quite often adopted to supplement project and non-project environmental review as history

goes on. This approach was used for the Comprehensive Plan. While the Commission did not review the plan at the project level, the supporting environmental documents did; and the policies and subsequent regulations provide mitigation at the project level.

Mr. Forry summarized that due to the extensive planning efforts the City has undertaken to meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act and institute environmental protections that are implemented through the permit process, staff recommends that the environmental review thresholds for minor new construction be amended as proposed and that the automatic environmental review requirement for activities in critical areas and their buffers be eliminated.

### **Questions by the Commission**

Chair Moss asked if there are existing City regulations that require developers to address wildlife habitat even for properties that are not located in critical areas. Mr. Forry answered that the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) requires wildlife habitat protection both within and outside of critical areas. He explained that the normal process for evaluating proposals includes a review of state records to identify habitats for point source, protected species and candidate species. If wildlife habitat is identified, the area is automatically classified as a critical area, and the regulations found in the CAO would apply. He reminded the Commission that the City recently adopted new regulations related tree protection, vegetation and understory, which would also be applicable.

Chair Moss asked if a thorough environmental analysis was done as part of the SEPA review for the Comprehensive Plan Update or other policy changes. Mr. Forry answered that an exhaustive environmental review was done for both the Comprehensive Plan and the new Commercial Design Standards and included a review of no less than 15 environmental documents that evaluated proposals at the project level (i.e. Transportation Master Plan, Surface Water Master Plan, Shoreline Water District Plans, Ronald Wastewater's Plan). It also included a review of existing documents prepared by the City, such as the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was done for the original Comprehensive Plan adoption and the Supplemental EIS that was done for both the Town Center and North Center Business Districts. Just because the City issued a Declaration of Non-Significance on the Comprehensive Plan adoption does not mean there was any less significance to the evaluation. Based on the existing environmental documents, including some special reports done by consultants, it was determined the impacts associated with adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update would not be significant. This same exercise will be used to identify and adopt Development Code regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan policies. He summarized that although environmental analysis is done at the plan level, the mitigations will be done at the project level.

Ms. Simulcik Smith clarified that the proposed amendment to SMC 20.30.560 is found in Exhibit 7, which replaces Exhibit 5 Attachment C that was included in the Staff Report.

### **Public Testimony**

No one in the audience indicated a desire to participate in the public hearing.

## **Final Questions and Deliberations**

**COMMISSIONER WAGNER MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED SEPA DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF AND OUTLINED IN EXHIBIT 7. COMMISSIONER MAUL SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Commissioner Wagner reviewed that the Commission raised numerous questions and concerns regarding the potential impacts of the proposed amendment at their study session, and staff responded to each one. She particularly referred to her question of how many times the SEPA determination has been challenged and what the result of each challenge was. As staff advised, no substantive changes have been required to projects because of additional impacts identified in a SEPA evaluation. Therefore, she supports the proposed amendment, which would reduce the administrative burden placed on both the staff and developer. Commissioner Maul concurred.

Commissioner Scully said he would vote against the motion. He recalled that when the bill was proposed by the legislature, much of the environmental community supported it. Those that opposed it did so with the understanding that is the way the world is moving. He agreed that the City currently has much stronger environmental protections in other sections of the code than SEPA ever provided. However, the amendment would eliminate the public comment and information gathering elements. That means that review of a multi-family development would take place entirely behind closed doors. While citizens would have the ability to submit written comments, there would be no notice and no public hearing. He observed that citizens already feel like they do not have a voice in decisions that impact them. The extensive regional environmental reviews do not look at parcel specific issues. Sometimes citizens know things about a particular parcel (i.e. wetlands, nesting areas, etc.) that staff may not.

Commissioner Wagner agreed that the SEPA review offers a mechanism for gathering information. However, she recalled the Commission's previous discussion that providing a forum for public input can potentially give the community a false impression of their ability to change the outcome of the decision. Mr. Forry said staff anticipates that the proposed amendment will reduce the number of SEPA reviews to approximately seven per year. These projects are mainly within the urban corridor where infrastructure is already in place. The vast majority of projects outside of the urban corridor will be relatively small residential projects on properties that are already developed. Staff does not anticipate large tracts of land being redeveloped where there are a lot of resources to protect. Mr. Szafran emphasized that large projects (i.e. CRISTA Mater Plan, Ridgecrest, etc) will still be subject to SEPA review.

## **Vote to Recommend Approval or Denial or Modification**

Chair Moss read the proposed amendment language found in Exhibit 7.

**THE MOTION CARRIED 4-1-1, with Chair Moss abstaining and Commissioner Scully voting in opposition.**

## **Closure of Public Hearing**

Chair Moss closed the public hearing.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Markle announced that the City Council adopted the Commercial Design Standards with some minor amendments. They changed "Arterial Business" to "Mixed Business" and decreased the number of parking spaces required for 3-bedroom apartments from 2 spaces per unit to 1.5 spaces per unit to encourage more housing for families. In addition, the setback ratio for properties in the Mixed Business zone that abut single-family residential zones was changed to make it easier to calculate. The setback in the Transition zone for properties located across the right-of-way from single-family residential zones was reduced to zero, which is consistent with the original setback. They also changed how step backs are calculated.

Director Markle reported that the Growing Transit Community Task Force will have their last meeting next week. Chair Moss clarified that a special meeting is scheduled for next week, but there will also be a meeting for the North Quarter Task Force on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The Task Force's recommendation will then be presented to the Steering Committee. She noted that the next two meetings will focus holistically on all three alignments and not just the north corridor. Director Markle announced that representatives from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) will make a presentation to the Shoreline City Council on May 6<sup>th</sup> regarding the Corridor Action Strategies, which can be employed in station areas or other transit areas such as the bus rapid transit line. They will prepare the City Council for potentially signing a regional compact, which would commit the City of Shoreline to employing strategies that are appropriate for the City.

Director Markle advised that LMN Architects have been selected as the lead consultant for the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Plan. The City Council is scheduled to review and potentially approve the contract on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If approved, the project manager would be Mark Hinshaw. He recently wrote an article, in conjunction with Brianna Holden, which was published in the March Planning Magazine. Ms. Holden would also be part of the consulting team. As proposed, LMN Architects would team up with Enviro Issues to conduct the public outreach, KPFF to do infrastructure planning, Fehr and Peers for traffic and transportation analysis, and Berk Associates for environmental work.

Director Markle announced that the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Citizens Committee (SSCC) is sponsoring a forum on April 16<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. Commissioners are invited to attend. Representatives from the Rainier Valley, Capital Hill and Northgate communities have been invited to share their experiences with light rail. There will be an opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions, as well. She noted that Senior Services has teamed up with the 185<sup>th</sup> SSCC and Futurewise to do outreach in advance of light rail coming to the City.

Director Markle announced that a joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Light rail will be the focus of the meeting. The discussion will provide an opportunity for the two bodies to ask questions, identify expectations, meet the consultants, etc.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Community Renewal Area (CRA) Plan for Aurora Square

Mr. Eernisse said the purpose of this discussion is to present the draft Aurora Square Community Renewal (CRA) Plan. He reviewed that the CRA was established in September. Since that time, staff has been working to prepare a plan, as required by State law, to show how renewal will happen. He advised that the initial draft plan has already been presented to the City Council, and he hopes to provide them with an updated plan for review and approval in May or June. He said the purpose of tonight's discussion is to review the draft plan and obtain feedback from the Commission.

Mr. Eernisse emphasized that while the plan is not intended to be a specific master plan for Aurora Square, it is a master planning effort that allows the City to identify projects in which the City can participate through public/private partnerships. The projects proposed in the plan are intended to make the current businesses function better, add new businesses, and make Aurora Square a better place for the entire community. He explained that the plan is broken up into two documents. The brochure would be an 11" x 17" document, and the inserts would outline the eight public/private partnership (PPP) projects. When the brochure is given to property owners or outside investors, staff would insert information on the individual projects that are applicable.

Chair Moss asked who the primary audience of the brochure would be. Mr. Eernisse said the brochure would be useful to developers, property owners and investors. He said he envisions the process will include some type of developer agreement between the property owner/investor and the City to identify how the City can participate in redevelopment and what it would get in return.

Mr. Eernisse referred to the proposed plan and suggested that the title be changed from "The Master Plan" to "Master Planning." He also expressed his belief that through the multiple phases of implementation, land efficiency can be increased by much more than 100%. He reviewed each of the individual projects contained in the document as follows:

- **Create an Eco-District.** The draft plan does not identify exactly where the eco-district would happen; but there are numerous opportunities at Aurora Square, which was built in the 1960's before there were better stormwater options. The eco-district could also include more cutting-edge technology such as power generation and waste-water management. The goal is to look at the carbon footprint of the entire center and identify how each building could contribute in some way.

Commissioner Scully recalled that the Planning Commission recently learned that "eco-district" has become a term of art to mean a community organization with binding regulations. He asked if that is what staff has in mind in this case. Mr. Eernisse said he has not specifically defined the term "eco-district." However, the intent is to take the obvious economies of scale and try to do things with a regional mindset rather than a building-by-building mindset. It would be fantastic if all ten property owners would agree to participate, but there are other options. For example, a few property owners could lead the way by establishing a facility that is large enough to handle future development and then be repaid at some point in the future. Commissioner Scully suggested the plan use a different term than "eco-district."

- **Transform Westminster Way North.** Westminster Way North is a 100-foot right-of-way located between North 155<sup>th</sup> and North 160<sup>th</sup> Streets. It basically functions as a one-way off ramp from Aurora Avenue and has become a dividing highway between the old Denny's property and the rest of Aurora Square. Changing Westminster Way North into a low speed and walkable road, with parking and buildings at the street front, would transform how the entire center functions. For example, the City could deed 35 feet of the right-of-way on the Denny's side to the property owner in exchange for them building the road out in a different way, including improvements to Aurora Avenue at the corner of North 155<sup>th</sup> Street. The Aurora Avenue improvements were done assuming that Westminster Way North would need to function as a truck route, but improvements to this corner are still necessary.
- **Build a New Center Point.** The goal is to highlight and provide better access to the logical center point of Aurora Square (somewhere in front of Sears) by creating two strong connections between the separate areas of the site. This would allow the site to function as a cohesive whole.
- **Re-Imagine the Sears Property.** Most of the initial master planning effort was focused on the Sears property.
- **Build a New Home.** There has been discussion about incorporating up to 1,000 residential units into Aurora Square to take advantage of the nearby amenities, which is a reasonable goal given the size of the property and its close proximity to Shoreline Community College (SCC). The impact for residential housing would not be limited to Aurora Square. Successfully redeveloping Aurora Square would enhance the desirability of living anywhere along Aurora Avenue North. While they are not looking to duplicate University Village, it is a great example of how a shopping center can affect the surrounding areas and particularly the desirability for housing.
- **Trade Surface Parking for Jobs.** The CRA designation gives the City significant power to encourage job growth. It allows the City to actually provide direct funding for projects that bring more jobs to Shoreline. For example, providing adequate structured parking for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) would free up land that could be redeveloped for industry and office uses. A film production industry cluster with a sound stage in this location would be one option. The SCC already has a film production program and both the WSDOT and SCC properties are owned by the State. In addition, Washington State already allocates over \$3 million each year to support an incentive program for the film industry, and Governor Insley has indicated support for the program. The City does not have a lot of land for traditional light and heavy industrial uses, and locating a few sound stages on this site would bring in significant revenue and provide jobs. The goal is to bring in development that will help the entire region's economy.
- **Incorporate the College.** The goal of this project is to engage the SCC's 10,000 students. For example, programs can be provided at Aurora Square to draw at least some of the student body. Not only would this bring students to the retail areas, but it would provide SCC a presence on Aurora Avenue North where all the car traffic is. The SCC has numerous performing arts programs, and incorporating performance and/or classroom space at Aurora Square would bring additional life to the center.



- **Add Nightlife to the Mix.** Annual residential surveys reveal a strong desire for more entertainment and dining options in the City, and an entertainment district at Aurora Square could be very successful.

Mr. Eernisse emphasized that the eight projects are not meant to be exhaustive but are intended to spur thought and make it clear that the City's goal is to help property owners redevelop and improve the center. He said he does not know the exact approach the City will use to accomplish the projects, but it will likely include several different options.

Vice Chair Esselman asked if Sears has indicated a desire to vacate their site. Mr. Eernisse answered that Sears has not given any indication that they plan to vacate the site. On a national level, Sears appears to be grouping their stores that are not mall-based in a separate category, but he does not know what their exact plans are. He said the CRA activity prepares the City to respond if Sears submits a redevelopment proposal or sells the property to a developer at some point in the future.

Vice Chair Esselman requested more information about proposed plans for connections throughout the site. Mr. Eernisse emphasized there are several different options for creating the connections. The intent of the master planning process is to identify the things the site needs and what the City is willing to invest in. The City's goal is to act as a catalyst, particularly in the area of infrastructure. He reviewed an updated map of the current proposal and provided pictures to illustrate potential options for redevelopment. He particularly noted the following:

- WSDOT has proposed a new building and parking area. The plan identifies a parking structure that would free up significant land for other uses. The parking garage could be filled from the top down to accommodate weekday parking needs, and from the bottom up to accommodate weekend parking needs.
- A vehicle ramp would be provided near Marshalls.
- The plan proposes an adaptive reuse of the Sears Building, using the existing shell and developing student housing on the upper stories.
- The Sears underground parking area could continue as a parking use or it could be used as auto bays for the SCC automotive program.
- Restaurants and retail uses would be located on top of the underground parking.
- Development on Westminster Way North could be five stories, located right up to the sidewalk. Retail space could be located on the ground floor, with office uses on the upper floors. Reconfiguring Westminster Way North would provide better connection throughout the site.
- One or two sound stages could be developed in the space behind the WSDOT building. A black box theater could be located on the site. While the theater would likely be run by the SCC, it could also be used as a second location for smaller professional theater companies. There is significant overhead associated with producing a show, and theater companies may be interested in having an alternative location that serves a different market but is still close by.
- The central entrance to Aurora Square could include a roundabout, a fountain and an outdoor covered stage. Because Westminster Way North would be reconfigured to serve the property better, this area could be closed to vehicular traffic for an afternoon to accommodate a festival and/or concert.

Once again, Mr. Eernisse emphasized that the proposal is not intended to be a master plan; it is a master planning effort. With the exception of the Sears site, the plan would not displace any retailers and there would be alternative space for retailers to relocate. There would even be space in another location for Sears to locate on a smaller scale. He said one of the key elements of the plan is to provide smaller blocks throughout the site to make it easier for people to get around.

Vice Chair Esselman asked if the land necessary to connect Westminster Way North through the site to North 160<sup>th</sup> Street is currently right-of-way or private property. Mr. Eernisse answered that this land is privately owned. He emphasized that areas along this roadway could become the spine of all the required infrastructure upgrades such as stormwater (rain gardens), water, sewer and fiber optics.

Mr. Eernisse said one common response he has received regarding the plan is that it is not aspirational enough. For example, there is still a lot of surface parking. He explained that he considers the current proposal Phase 1. If Phase 1 gets built out in the next 15 years, other properties would start to change, as well. He stressed the importance of doing incremental, small changes that serve the greater good.

Commissioner Wagner agreed that the plan still shows too much surface parking. She pointed out that there is currently no safe access from the Interurban Trail to the Central Market without having to ride through a parking lot. She suggested that more emphasis should be placed on pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the site. For example, perhaps parking should be eliminated from the area between the proposed outdoor theater and the storefronts. She also said she does not like the idea of providing parking spaces around the “coffee mecca.” She suggested staff consider options for providing a complete connection at some point in the future. In addition, she suggested that infrastructure and new structures should be built to a standard that supports additional multi-family residential uses on upper stories if/when the use becomes economically viable at some point in the future.

Mr. Eernisse said he provided direction to the architect that the plan should protect the existing surface parking in front of the Central Market at this point. He said he does not see this need changing in the near future. Commissioner Wagner said she is okay with surface parking, but there must also be protected bicycle and pedestrian access. Mr. Eernisse agreed. He pointed out that it is difficult to accommodate good crosswalks within a roundabout intersection. However, because there is sufficient right-of-way, a bicycle/pedestrian access might be possible. While a roundabout is an option worth investigating, they may end up with something more traditional in the end.

Mr. Eernisse said he invited graduate and undergraduate students from an architecture studio to review the proposed plan. Although eliminating Westminster Way North was an option they were asked to consider, they all felt the roadway was critical to providing connectivity. All of the students agreed that a connecting road through the site was also important.

Commissioner Maul expressed concern that the plan does not place enough emphasis on the connection between Westminster Way North and North 160<sup>th</sup> Street, which is critical to the plan’s success. He suggested that this connection should be enhanced.

Commissioner Montero asked regarding SCC’s response to the plan’s proposed expansion of their campus and the additional facilities. Mr. Eernisse answered that some representatives from SCC have

expressed concern that their campus is cloistered up in the woods. They believe a presence on Aurora Avenue North would be positive. Although they do not need significantly more classroom space, there are specialized vocational training programs that require unique facilities. For example, they cannot do used car mechanic training on campus because of agreements with new car dealers who built their existing facilities, but the programs can take place off site. They are also excited about the idea of providing student housing at Aurora Square.

Commissioner Montero pointed out that the proposed new sound stages would be located on the south end of the WSDOT building, which will be partially used by SCC. He suggested that providing space for SCC at the northwest corner would give them an opportunity for signage and provide a stronger connection towards the campus. Mr. Eernisse agreed that either location would work great. He suggested that student housing would be terrific in the northwest corner, but WSDOT has not indicated support for student housing as part of their new development. He expressed concern that while this type of use would result in more property tax revenue, it would not create jobs and long-term sales tax revenue. He expressed his opinion that any proposal for a land trade with WSDOT should be more robust. He noted there are plenty of places in Shoreline that will accommodate residential development above commercial ground floor uses. But they won't be developed unless there are commercial centers where people can shop, work and enjoy life.

Commissioner Wagner asked what the Commission's role in the master planning process would be going forward. Mr. Eernisse invited the Planning Commissioner to provide feedback to staff and the City Council, but he said they would not be required to conduct a public hearing and forward a recommendation to the City Council. He explained that the plan is intended to provide direction and would only become solidified as property owners/developers come forward with redevelopment proposals. The Planning Commission may play a greater role in future processes.

Commissioner Wagner suggested it would be appropriate to solicit more community input and develop more formalized framework goals. The next step could be to prioritize the goals and identify the elements of the plan that are not negotiable. Mr. Eernisse noted that this process would involve a more prescriptive zoning change or overlay for the property. Commissioner Wagner recommended that if the plan is going to be nebulous, there must be some guidelines to help staff implement the concepts.

Chair Moss asked staff to share some of the concerns and issues that came up at the public meetings. Mr. Eernisse said that, generally, people are ecstatic about any positive change for the center. Neighbors surrounding the center have also indicated a desire for improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Mr. Eernisse thanked the Commissioners for their input and invited them to contact him with additional comments and ideas.

## **Discuss Annual Report to Council**

Chair Moss referred to the draft report prepared by staff for the Commission's discussion. She noted that, once finalized, she would forward the report to the City Council on behalf of the Commission. She invited the Commissioners to share their thoughts.

Commissioner Wagner suggested that, in addition to highlighting the Commission's hard work, the report should acknowledge the extraordinary effort put forth by staff to help the Commission accomplish the tasks before them. She suggested the Commission should also review their list of "parking lot" issues and highlight specific tasks they would like to move forward in 2013.

The Commission agreed to review the report further at their next meeting, with a goal of finalizing the document at their regular meeting of April 18<sup>th</sup>. They also agreed to review and update their "parking lot" list and perhaps expand upon the items they would like to move forward. Ms. Simulcik Smith agreed to forward text from the 2012 Report, which expounds on the four items on the Commission's "parking lot" list. The Commission could then discuss whether or not they should be included in the 2013 Report.

Commissioner Scully recalled that comments related to minimum densities for residential development were presented more as questions than actual items that needed to be studied. The remainder of the Commission concurred. Chair Moss noted that this question and other questions could be included in the report to solicit the City Council's thoughts. She cautioned that when presenting a potential work plan to the City Council, the Commission should consider the amount of available staff time to bring the items forward.

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

Chair Moss clarified that, as per the Commission Bylaws, the correct name for the Light Rail Station Area Planning and Point Wells groups is "committee" rather than "subcommittee." She recalled the Commission's previous discussion about whether or not public comments would be solicited at the committee meetings. The Commission agreed that while the committee meetings would be open to the public, the meetings should not be considered public hearings. The committee meetings are intended to allow for open discussion amongst the committee members, and public comments on whatever decision item is created by the committee should take place at a regular Commission meeting for which notice would be given.

### **Light Rail Station Area Planning Committee Report**

Commissioner Scully reported that, although the Light Rail Station Area Planning Committee meeting was advertised as an open public meeting, there was no public participation. The committee's intent is to have a fairly full report with a map of the potential study area at the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. They will have one more committee meeting before that time, at which the public will be invited to attend. At the last meeting, the committee established some very broad criteria and decided to introduce two proposed study areas for the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station. A broader study area would consider the impact on traffic and another would study the potential for zoning changes related to the light rail station. He emphasized that

the intent was to be over inclusive where possible. The committee's goal is to focus on the study area but not include or exclude any parcel based upon the study area boundaries.

Commissioner Montero requested more information about the map the committee would present to the Commission on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Scully explained that the larger boundary identifies the area where the committee believes there might be impacts on traffic associated with the light rail station. The tighter boundary encompasses a half-mile radius around the station but also takes into account geographic boundaries.

Director Markle advised that the City Council's expectation is to have study area maps for both the 145<sup>th</sup> and 185<sup>th</sup> Street Stations drawn and available for approval by July. This will be a topic of discussion at the joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. That means the committee will need to identify study area boundaries for the potential 145<sup>th</sup> Street Station, as well.

Commissioner Montero asked if the City of Seattle would do a similar study, given that the 145<sup>th</sup> Street Station would be located at the border of Seattle and Shoreline. Ms. Markle said the City of Seattle does not currently have plans for a study. Chair Moss reported that, at a recent meeting of the Growing Transit Community Task Force, a citizen from Shoreline expressed his thoughts and concerns about potential impacts to Shoreline. She said there appears to be some misperceptions about what is happening with station area planning and what the City's role will be. She directed the gentleman to the appropriate website for additional information and informed him that there will be opportunities for public comment when the Light Rail Station Area Report is presented to the full Commission. She suggested that the next edition of *CURRENTS* should include a public notice of when the Light Rail Station Area Planning Committee will report to the Commission as a whole. The notice should specifically invite members of the public to comment. Commissioner Scully commented that the committee meetings are informal, and members of the public in attendance would most likely be allowed to participate. However, the comments would not become part of the public record.

### **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

Chair Moss reviewed that a public hearing on the Regional Green Building Development Code Amendments is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Szafran noted that election of 2013 Planning Commission Officers is scheduled on the April 4<sup>th</sup> agenda. Chair Moss said the Commission would also continue their discussion of the Planning Commission Report to the City Council.

Director Markle announced that Commissioners have been invited to attend a volunteer appreciation event on April 11<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 p.m. They should receive formal invitations soon.

Chair Moss reviewed that the Commission's April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda will be full. She noted that new officers will be in place at that meeting, and a new photograph of the Commissioners will be taken. She encouraged the Commissioners to notify the staff of anticipated absences as soon as possible.

The Commission discussed that a joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Ms. Simulcik Smith advised that the room would be reconfigured to accommodate a roundtable discussion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

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Donna Moss  
Chair, Planning Commission

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Kate Skone  
Clerk, Planning Commission

**TIME STAMP**  
**March 21, 2013**

**CALL TO ORDER: 0:20**

**ROLL CALL: 0:29**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA: 0:44**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 0:52**

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: 1:04**

**PUBLIC HEARING: STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA) DEVELOPMENT  
CODE AMENDMENTS: 1:40**

**Staff Presentation: 3:30**

**Questions by the Commission: 11:33**

**Public Testimony: 17:38**

**Final Questions and Deliberations: 17:50**

**Vote to Recommend Approval or Denial or Modification: 26:32**

**Closure of Public Hearing: 27:08**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT: 27:20**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Community Renewal Plan for Aurora Square: 35:02**

**Discuss Annual Report to Council: 1:35:40**

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1:43:55**

**Light Rail Station Area Planning Committee Report: 1:45:55**

**AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING: 1:54:29**

**ADJOURNMENT:**