

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Community Conversations – Visioning Process for Shoreline 2028
DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services
PRESENTED BY: Joseph W. Tovar, FAICP, Director

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

Council recently approved the City's Long Range Planning Work Program, which calls for a "Visioning" process as the preliminary stage of updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. The work program shows active public input occurring this fall, with Planning Commission review and City Council adoption of an amended Comprehensive Plan Vision and Framework Goals in the first quarter of 2009. The new City Council Goals for 2008-2009 include Goal "A" which specifically directs:

Develop a shared community vision that integrates the Environmental Sustainability, Housing and Economic Development Strategies into the Comprehensive Plan and community development initiatives.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The method that the staff recommends can be accomplished within the PADS existing budget

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review and give approval to proceed with the "Shoreline Community Conversations" Visioning Process in two phases. Phase I would focus this October on an intensive and inclusive grassroots conversation among Shoreline's citizens about a preferred Vision for the City's future. After the staff, Planning Commission and Council review the results, the staff would draft amendatory Plan language that is responsive to the Phase I input and subsequent Commission/Council input. Phase II, starting in January of 2009, would focus on the proposed amended Vision and Framework Goals. After public input, the Planning Commission would forward recommendations to the City Council. Ideally, the Council would adopt updated Vision and Framework Goals for the Plan no later than March of 2009.

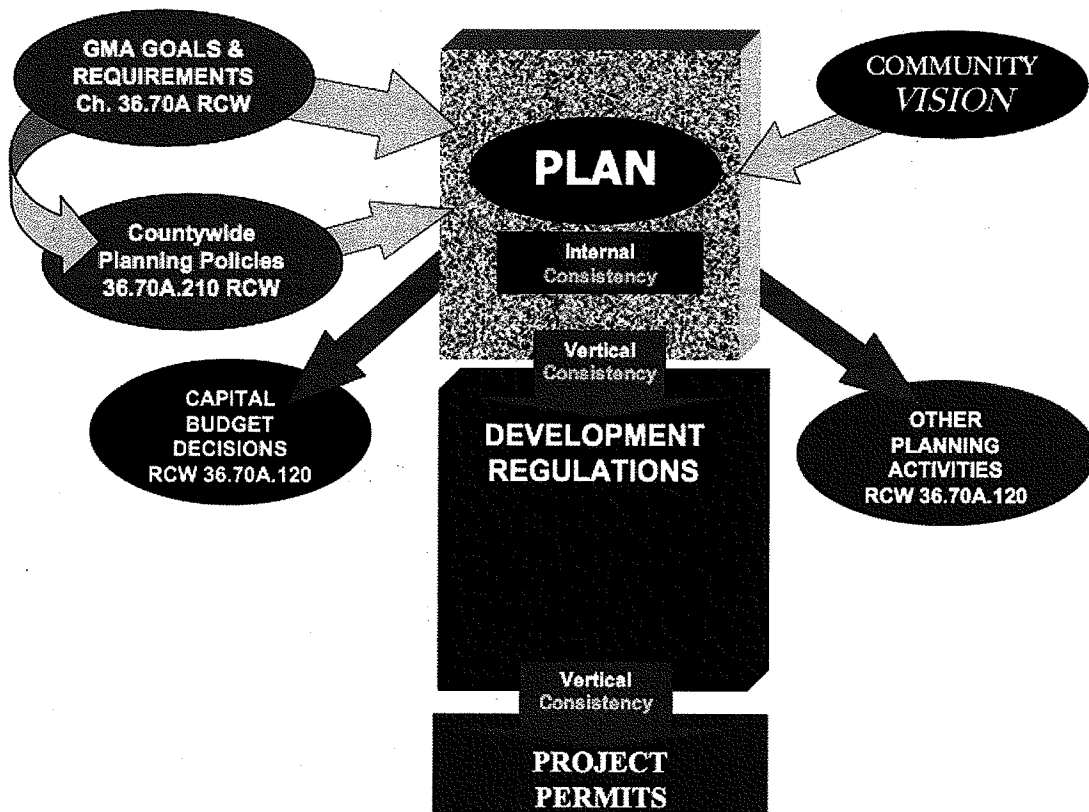
Approved By: City Manager Ja City Attorney _____

BACKGROUND

A. What is a Vision? What are Framework Goals? How are they to be used?

Many comprehensive plans begin with a Vision statement, followed by Framework Goals (sometimes called Policies). A "Vision" is a community's articulation of a preferred future, typically 20 years away. A Vision conveys a community's values and priorities, providing direction and "side-boards" for the path to a preferred future. "Framework Goals" are brief policy statements that identify some of the "hows" for achieving the Vision. Shoreline's existing Vision and Framework Goals are contained in the introduction section of the Comprehensive Plan, and excerpted in Attachment A.

It is important to recognize the relationship of Vision/Framework Goals to the rest of the Comprehensive Plan and how the Plan fits into the context of the Growth Management Act (GMA) goals and requirements, as well as the growth targets assigned to cities via the Countywide Planning Policies. As the diagram below shows, the Comprehensive Plan provides important direction to development regulations, which in turn govern the specifics of development permits.



A viable Vision, when embodied in Comprehensive Plan language, must comply not only with legal requirements; it must also anticipate societal, economic and technological change, and recognize resource constraints of local government service providers.

It is also important to recognize what a Vision isn't. A Vision is not a mini-comprehensive plan, resolving all questions in detail in advance. Nor is it a regulation. Even Framework Goals, which generally are more detailed and prescriptive-looking than Vision statements, are not meant to definitively answer all questions in detail. Instead, once the Vision/Framework Goals are adopted, they provide overall direction when reviewing and revising as appropriate the rest of the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. All these chapters, by law, must be updated by 2011.

There may be an impulse by some, either in the Vision or Framework Goals, to place a cap or numeric limit on building heights or densities. While it may be useful in Framework Goals to talk about low-rise, mid-rise, or high-rise as possibilities in certain areas and not in others, we should avoid using numbers, like units per acre or number of feet of building height or setback. Because we won't know until well into 2009/2010 what new population target the City must accommodate, it would be a mistake as part of the Vision/Framework Goals to foreclose options about specific height and density in specific subareas of the City. Those detailed decisions can be made later as part of the Comp Plan update process due by 2011.

B. Proposed Process to Update Shoreline's Plan Vision and Framework Goals

Staff has researched the Vision and Framework Goals of a number of cities in the region, including Mountlake Terrace, Bothell, Kirkland, Redmond and Shelton. Likewise, we have reviewed the methodologies used by those cities to adopt their Visions/Framework Goals. We have also reviewed the "Shoreline 2035" Visioning process currently being proposed by Forward Shoreline, and spoken with them. This latter effort is described in detail on their website at <http://www.forwardshoreline.us/>.

1. Phase I of recommended Visioning Process

Phase I of the Visioning Process that staff recommends for Shoreline is based on the City of Kirkland's successful "Community Conversations" process. That Visioning process received awards from both the American Planning Association and the Puget Sound Regional Council because of its inclusive and effective, grassroots approach to engaging the community in a dialogue about its preferred future.

A critical tool of the community conversations process is a 15 minute city-produced DVD that would be made available to groups of interested citizens, and organizations such as the neighborhood associations, the Chamber of Commerce, Forward Shoreline, the School District, Shoreline Community College, local utility districts, PTA groups and High School civics classes. The DVD summarizes the nature and purpose of the Visioning Process, provides a summary of what has happened in the community over the past 20 years – then invites participants to imagine their preferred future for Shoreline in 2028.

After providing the background, objectives and ground rules for the conversations, the DVD then prompts the conversations by asking a series of questions. These questions, developed by expert Futurist Glen Heimstra, are crafted to stimulate people to think about many factors that can shape the future of a community. The questions appear in Attachment B.

After group viewing of the DVD, the facilitator hosting each conversation would prompt responses to the questions to engage a citizen dialogue. Ideas and opinions are expressed, but no "vote" is taken. The facilitator takes notes and, at the end of the discussion, invites participants to write out their own answers to the three key questions. The input then is collated by staff and reviewed with Council prior to the drafting of potential amendatory Plan language.

Staff have met with Nora Smith and Rob Beem to reserve agenda time at the Council of Neighborhoods meeting in September. Having community conversations hosted by the neighborhood associations would be a way to link citizens to the City's Visioning Process at the grassroots level. Those people reluctant to attend a large gathering, such as the scheduled Town Hall meeting, could be engaged in the conversations in a more comfortable and conducive setting. The Planning Commission has expressed strong interest in helping to engage the neighborhoods in the City's planning activities, and has volunteered to visit neighborhood association meetings to assist that process.

In addition, staff proposes to contact important organizations in the City to solicit their support for and participation in the Community Conversations. We would propose getting on the agendas for October meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, Forward Shoreline, the School Board and PTAs, just to name a few. Also, because many of today's young people will hopefully be living here in 2028, it would be appropriate to engage high school students in conversations about their future.

2. Phase II of the Visioning Process

Once all the Phase I input has been collected and analyzed, staff would present to Council the raw data and identified overall themes. The staff would then compose specific amendatory language to the existing Plan Vision and Framework Goals, responsive both to Phase I input and any direction from Council. For example, we know that Council wishes the Vision to "integrate" the adopted strategies for Environmental Sustainability, Housing, and Economic Development. This will involve some staff work to distill the essence of those three strategies to include as new text for the Vision/Framework Goals.

Draft amended Vision/Framework Goals language would be presented for review and public comment at a joint City Council/Planning Commission hearing in January. The Planning Commission would then deliberate and forward its recommendation to the City Council. Attached to the Planning Commission report would be the minutes and public testimony submitted on the proposed Vision/Framework Goals language. The City Council would then deliberate in February and March. It would be helpful to adopt the amended Vision and Framework Goals in March of 2009, a month prior to Council's annual retreat.

3. Overall Schedule for Phases I and II

2008	
July	City Council reviews and approves approach and schedule outlined herein
Aug.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach to organizations to solicit their support/participation in Vision Process City staff and consultant produce DVD for "Shoreline Vision 2028" Staff and consultant design questions for telephone survey
Sep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sep. 3 Vision process explained at Council of Neighborhoods Sep. 8 City Council/Planning Commission Joint Meeting- briefing on details of Vision process, including Council and Commission roles at various stages September issue of <i>Currents</i> describes purpose, timing, and opportunities for public input coming in the Community Conversations in October.
Oct.	Phase I - SHORELINE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS VISIONING MONTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> October <i>Currents</i> includes schedule of places/opportunities to engage in the "Community Conversations". DVD is distributed broadly to interested parties. DVD provides background information, frames the Vision Issue, explains purposes and method, and poses 3 Key Questions to stimulate the Community Conversations. Streaming video of DVD plays on City Channel throughout month (and points people to website, town hall meeting, high school and neighborhood association meetings to take part in the Community Conversations) 3 Key questions posted on website/ people may input comments via website tool. DVD presented at a Town Hall Forum, hosted by Council and moderated by city staff; during conversations notes are taken and input sheets collected. DVD is made available to neighborhood associations for meetings. Conversations are moderated by Planning Commissioners and city staff; notes are taken and input sheets collected. DVD presented at Chamber of Commerce/Forward Shoreline. Conversations are moderated by city staff; notes are taken and input sheets collected. DVD presented to civics classes at Shorecrest and Shorewood. Conversations are moderated by city staff; notes are taken and input sheets collected DVD presented at Parks Board and Conversation is moderated by city staff. Notes are taken and input sheets collected. Telephone Survey conducted by consultant
Nov.	City staff sorts, batches and tabulates the input from the various Conversations
Dec.	Staff reviews raw input and summary conclusions with Planning Commission and City Council Staff drafts amendments to the text of the Comprehensive Plan Vision and Framework Goals responsive to the public input and Commission/Council input.
2009	
Jan.	Phase II – PUBLIC INPUT ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDEDMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January edition of <i>Currents</i> alerts the public to the draft amended Comp Plan Vision and Framework Goals posted on City website and the hearing dates. Jan. 12 City Council and Planning Commission conduct a joint public hearing on the draft amended Plan Vision and Framework Goals Jan. 22/29 Planning Commission deliberates and forwards recommendation.
Feb.	City Council deliberates on Planning Commission recommended amendments to Comprehensive Plan Vision and Framework Goals
Mar.	City Council adopts amendments

Vision Statements

While the GMA, Vision 2020, and the King County Planning Policies provide an overall framework for the City's Plan, the foundation of the Plan exists in the hopes and visions of the people whom it will directly affect. In 1996, the Shoreline City Council established the following set of "Vision statements" as a set of overall preliminary principles to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

- The City of Shoreline will capitalize on its unique physical strengths as well as its human assets.
- The City's numerous parks and key buildings or other features (e.g., civic center, community college, waterways) shall be interconnected from Puget Sound to all points in Shoreline through natural and built trails, "Green Streets" and special pedestrian walkways. Significant stands of trees will be identified as parts of greenbelts and preserved where possible, to protect and enhance Shoreline's natural environment.
- The Puget Sound shoreline is a unique aspect of the City and should be made more available to all citizens. Other water bodies within the City of Shoreline (e.g., Ronald Bog, Twin Ponds, Echo Lake) will be publicly owned and will be centers of public recreation.
- Each road and waterway into the City will have special treatment signalling entry into Shoreline. Gateways are defined by plantings, signage, three-dimensional art, etc.
- Preservation of existing residential neighborhoods provides safe, affordable housing of all types (e.g., single-family, accessory, townhomes, multi-family) for all segments of the community.
- The City's several commercial areas are vital and active, including a variety of shops and services that are pedestrian oriented. Mixed uses, commercial, and light industrial establishments are permitted in selected areas. Centers exist along major arterials. For example, Aurora would have three major centers, each with a theme:
 - Aurora at N 145th Street to N 160th Street would be a retail area.
 - Aurora at N 175th Street to N 185th Street would serve as a civic hub.
 - Aurora at N 185th Street to N 205th Street would serve as an entertainment center.
- Sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian crossings and other pedestrian amenities are provided. Neighborhood business centers would serve surrounding residential areas.
- Regional and local linkages are made between homes, commercial areas, entertainment centers and employment areas.
- Community policing and community pride will serve and protect all segments of the community.

City of Shoreline Comprehensive Plan, at pages 3-4.

Framework Goals

Through a series of more than 300 activities held in 1996-1998 (meetings, open houses, surveys and discussions), Shoreline's citizens, the Planning Commission, and the City Council refined the City Council's Vision Statements into the Comprehensive Plan's Framework goals. These Framework Goals provide the overall policy foundation for the Comprehensive Plan and support the City Council's vision. When implemented, the Framework Goals are intended to preserve the best qualities of Shoreline's neighborhoods today and protect the City's future. To achieve balance in the City's development, the Framework goals must be reviewed as a whole and not one pursued to the exclusion of others.

FG 1: Accommodate anticipated levels of growth and enhance the quality of life within the City of Shoreline.

FG 2: Promote quality building and development that is compatible with the surrounding environment.

FG 3: Support diverse and affordable housing opportunities which provide for Shoreline's population growth.

FG 4: Pursue a strong and diverse economy and assure economic development that complements neighborhood character.

FG 5: Protect the natural environment and preserve environmentally critical areas.

FG 6: Promote improvements to human services.

FG 7: Assure effective and efficient public investment for quality public services, facilities and utilities..

FG 8: Improve multi-modal transportation systems which provide for Shoreline's present and future population.

FG 9: Provide for wide involvement in community planning decisions.

City of Shoreline Comprehensive Plan, at page 6.

The three Key Questions to address in the Conversations are as follows:

#1. How do you think our lives will change over the next 20 years?

For example what are some new inventions, social changes or changes in the way we live, work and shop that you see coming?

#2. What do you like best about Shoreline that you would like to see continued?

#3. What do you like least that you would not like to see continued in the future?

In order to “prime the pump” for conversations addressing the three Key Questions, the DVD poses a series of other questions including:

- If you could create your preferred future, what would it be like?
For example, how do we accommodate our growing population?
- What will our housing and neighborhoods look like?
- What do want our business districts to be like and where should they be located?
- What kinds of workplaces will we have? What kinds of shops and services?
- How do we want our growing population to get around (by car, transit, bike, on foot, others?)
- What types of transportation improvements will we need?
- What changes in services and facilities do we want (parks, police, and fire protection, recreational programs, roads and pathways) and how do we pay for them?
- How do want our educational systems and schools to change?
- What degree of protection should we have for our streams , wetlands and trees?
- How will these be affected by our need to accommodate our growing population and transportation needs.