

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Central Shoreline Plan Update
DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services
PRESENTED BY: Tim Stewart, Director
Sarah Bohlen, Transportation Planner

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

In April, the Planning Commission joined you for a workshop to discuss the Preliminary Draft of the Central Shoreline Subarea Plan. Since then, staff has solicited comments on the plan and developed options for proceeding with adoption. The purpose of this agenda item is to review those options and establish the process for adoption of the plan.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED:

Environmental review of the Central Shoreline Subarea Plan (CSP) is required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The Aurora Corridor and Interurban Trail proposals travel through the Central Subarea study area, and will also be subject to SEPA review. Staff has investigated various SEPA alternatives regarding these three proposals. Those alternatives include:

- ◆ Combine the Central Subarea Plan environmental assessment with the environmental assessments of the Aurora Corridor between 165th and 205th and/or the Interurban Trail;
- ◆ Follow a Planned Action environmental review process for the Central Subarea Plan (similar to North City);
- ◆ Follow a Non-Project environmental review process for the Central Subarea Plan;

Staff will also discuss whether the Central Overlay Zone development regulations should be adopted concurrently with the Central Subarea Plan or delayed to a future date.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The 2002 budget includes \$75,000 for the environmental work associated with the CSP. If the staff recommended option is chosen, additional funding is not anticipated.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends using a limited scope Non-Project environmental review process for the Central Shoreline Plan, without including the development standards, and seeks Council concurrence.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney NJA

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INTRODUCTION

The Central Subarea planning process was initiated in the fall of 2001. The 2001 work effort included several coordination and outreach meetings, followed by a four-day design charrette in early October. The consultant, Lennertz, Coyle and Associates, then refined the concepts and on March 5th and 6th of this year, a post-charrette check-in with the community and demonstration site owners was held. The consultant then developed the Preliminary Draft Central Shoreline Subarea Plan.

BACKGROUND

On April 15, 2002 the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint workshop to discuss the Preliminary Draft Central Shoreline Subarea Plan. At that time, staff discussed an adoption process similar to the North City Subarea Plan to include an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, an overlay district in the Development Code, and the adoption of an environmental ordinance. The Council and Commission showed general support for the direction of the plan, but thought the five-year vision may be too ambitious, and asked for more input from the development community regarding the draft development standards. The Council and Commission also discussed the complexities of the Aurora Corridor and Interurban Trail projects.

Since April, staff has reviewed the comments of the Council and Commission, as well as comments received from the general public, reviewed the draft development standards and considered the various alternatives for the environmental process.

DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

Staff has reviewed the Development Standards proposed in the Preliminary Draft CSP and considered the comments and concerns from the development community. These standards (pp 32-42 of the CSP) are ***more restrictive*** than the current development standards contained in the Shoreline Development Code. While these standards may be appropriate for adoption at some point in the future, staff believes that they could be a disincentive to redevelopment in the near future. The staff suggests that the adoption of development standards for the Central Shoreline Area be deferred until after the subarea plan has been reviewed and adopted. It is very important to note that all of the development proposals shown in the draft plan could be constructed under the current code, but those standards are not required.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS ALTERNATIVES

There are four alternatives described in this section. Each of these alternatives could move forward with or without the inclusion of the proposed Development Standards.

Combine the environmental review process for the Central Subarea Plan with the environmental assessments of the Aurora Corridor between 165th and 205th and/or the Interurban Trail.

This method would combine the environmental processes for three activities into a single process. Each of the three activities, however, is a "single course of action" and

not dependent on the others. As a subarea plan, the CSP is considered a Comprehensive Plan amendment, which is defined by SEPA as a “non-project” action. A non-project action involves a decision on policies, plans, or programs, while a “project action” involves an agency decision on a specific project, such as a construction project. The only reason to combine the three environmental processes would be to reduce the number of assessments undertaken by the City. There would be significant drawbacks to utilizing this method as well. For example, all proposals would be tied to a single schedule. Staff currently estimates that the Aurora Corridor environmental assessment for the segment between 165th and 205th will occur in the years 2004 – 2006, long after the CSP will be ready for adoption. Additionally, Aurora and the Interurban Trail each have extra federal environmental review requirements, while the CSP is not subject to any federal environmental review. By combining the processes, the CSP could become subject to additional federal requirements and delays that wouldn’t otherwise apply.

Follow a Planned Action environmental review process for the Central Subarea Plan (similar to North City).

A Planned Action environmental review process is used to evaluate specific impacts of development projects in order to streamline the environmental review process for future project applicants. This type of review evaluates both “Project” and “Non-Project” actions. According to the State Department of Ecology’s SEPA Handbook, these types of reviews are most appropriate for:

- ◆ Smaller geographic areas;
- ◆ Relatively homogenous geographic areas where future development types, site specific conditions, and impacts can be more easily forecast;
- ◆ Development sites with significant overlapping regulatory requirements; or
- ◆ Routine types of development with few impacts.

After careful consideration, staff has concluded that the Central Subarea Plan is too large in geographic area and its land use pattern too complex to use this process. The Preliminary Draft CSP proposes six new overlay zones which would each need to be evaluated for environmental impacts. Staff estimates this would add approximately 12 months to the CSP environmental review process.

Follow a Non-Project environmental review process for the Central Subarea Plan.

Non-project actions are governmental actions involving decisions on policies, plans, or programs that contain standards controlling use or modification of the environment, or that will govern a series of connected actions. Non-project environmental review processes allow agencies to consider the “big picture” by conducting comprehensive analysis, addressing cumulative impacts, possible alternatives, and mitigation measures. The scope of the environmental review could also be limited to key issues associated with the plan. For the Central Subarea Plan, this course of action will allow the City to determine the specific Right-of-Way needs in the Central Shoreline Area. The anticipated schedule for this process, if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required, would be:

Finalize the Draft Central Shoreline Subarea Plan
Prepare and Issue Scoping Notice
Prepare and Publish Draft EIS
Comment Period and Public Hearings
Prepare and Publish Final EIS
Central Shoreline Subarea Plan Adoption

Fall 2002
December 2002
March 2003
March/April 2003
May 2003
June 2003

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends using a limited scope Non-Project environmental review process for the Central Shoreline Plan, without including the development standards and seeks Council concurrence.