

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON**

AGENDA TITLE: Planning Commission Semi-Annual Joint Meeting with City Council
DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services
PRESENTED BY: Joseph W. Tovar, FAICP, Director
Steve Cohn, Senior Planner

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The City Council and Planning Commission meet jointly twice a year to adopt and review progress on the Planning Work Program, consider ways to improve the City's planning processes, clarify priorities and mutual expectations, and otherwise provide an avenue for communication.

Staff discussed the joint meeting with the Planning Commission and proposes the following topics for discussion:

1. The proposed Planning Work Program as recommended by the Planning Commission and set forth in Resolution No. 271 (reviewed but not yet adopted by the City Council). Resolution No. 271, with a graphic showing the Proposed Work Program, is Attachment A hereto.
2. Affirmation of the use of Subarea Plans as methods to clarify, apply and implement existing Comprehensive Plan policies, the recently adopted Comprehensive Housing Strategy, and the soon-to-be-adopted Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
3. The Planning Commission's recommendation that certain quasi-judicial items be re-assigned for the next 12 months to the Hearing Examiner.
4. Consider the possible merits of creating a design review process for commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use projects.
5. How can the City Council better utilize the information developed during the Planning Commission process? How can the Commission format its recommendation to assist the Council in its deliberations?

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council and Planning Commission discuss the above named topics at their joint meeting on April 7.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney _____

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2007, the City Council adopted the City's Planning Work Program by resolution, providing direction and clarification to the Planning Commission and city staff about priorities, methods and schedules. The Planning Commission and staff recommend that the City Council adopt the Planning Work Program for 2008 as shown in Attachment A. In addition, the Commission and staff recommend that the Council adopt an ordinance to temporarily re-assign the responsibility for certain quasi-judicial hearings items to the hearing examiner.

In its meetings, the Commission has observed that concerns about building and site design frequently arise in both quasi-judicial and legislative discussions. These range from questions about the massing, orientation, and architectural details of buildings to concerns about tree retention and low impact development. Commissioners have asked whether the City should consider a stronger emphasis on design, including both design standards and possibly design review process.

BACKGROUND

I. Planning Work Program Issues

Many of the items shown in Attachment A have been on the work program for some time. The "Comprehensive Housing Strategy" and "Environmentally Sustainable Community Strategy" are nearing the end of their time on the Work Program, with Council adoption of the Housing Strategy on March 24 and expected adoption of the Sustainability Strategy in June. It is likely that those two City Strategy documents will result in amendments to the City's comprehensive plan or development regulations. These amendments, occurring as stand-alone amendments or as part of Subarea or Planned area reviews, would be added to the work program later in 2008.

The Work Program also shows several large "Master Plans" in the pipeline for 2008. Later this spring, we expect the recently submitted Master Plan for the Crista site to reach the Planning Commission hearing process. The staff has been working on draft plan and code amendments to create specific procedures and standards to evaluate institutional master plans such as Crista, Shoreline Community College, and eventually the Fircrest Campus. Those Plan and Code amendments will reach the Commission and Council later this year.

Not shown on the graphic of the "Shoreline Planning Work Program" are many development code amendments that staff expects to develop. Staff intends to propose at least two "bundles" of relative small and uncomplicated development code amendments to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the code. One example would be amendments to the requirements for developer meetings now required with neighborhoods before a permit application can be made. We have had continuing problems with this process, and staff will be preparing amendments to address them.

II. Subarea Plans

The Comprehensive Plan includes many detailed policy statements that garner broad community agreement when considered in isolation and in the abstract. However, the Planning Commission and staff have found that when one tries to apply these many policies to a specific site or project, there is far less agreement about which policies take precedence. Advocates for one outcome or another frequently “cherry pick” policies that support their position and minimize or ignore others. The subarea planning process is one way to apply all these existing policy statements to a specific set of facts in a geographically defined area and to result in a locally appropriate synthesis that takes into account the area’s future land use, building form, infrastructure improvements, etc.

The “Town Center” and “Southeast Shoreline” subarea plans have been on the Work Program since late 2007. Phase I Framework Policies for Town Center were adopted by Council in October, and funds to support the Southeast Shoreline effort were authorized in the budget process. A new entry on the Work Program is the preparation of amendments to the “Regional Business” (RB), “Community Business” (CB), and “Industrial” (I) zones. This task is in response to the moratorium adopted by the Council late last year regarding certain types of uses in portions of these three zones. Because of the six-month term of the moratorium, Council must adopt the “permanent” amendments by the end of April, or consider a time extension.

Another significant proposal for the 2008 Work Program (and beyond) is to create a geographic framework and schedule for the City to consider and adopt comprehensive plan subarea plans and implementing zoning regulations for all of the commercially zoned lands along the Aurora corridor. The Council previously identified the northern and southern extent of the “Town Center” subarea as N. 170th Street and N. 195th Street, respectively.

III. Temporary re-assignment of certain quasi-judicial items to the Hearing Examiner

Due to the heavy load of high priority legislative items on the Planning Commission’s agenda, the Commission recommends that the City Council temporarily (e.g., for the next twelve months) re-assign the hearing responsibilities for certain quasi-judicial items from the Planning Commission to the Hearing Examiner. Due to the increase in quasi-judicial rezones in particular, the Commission has spent up to a quarter of its agenda time on relatively small (in scale) items. The trend line in 2008 suggests that such quasi-judicial items could wind up consuming a quarter, or even more, of the Planning Commission’s agenda time. Most of these items can easily, and more quickly, be heard by the City’s Hearing Examiner, thus freeing up Planning Commission agenda time for the tasks shown on the Planning Work Program.

The Commission recommends having the Examiner take on many of those quasi-judicial hearing responsibilities. The exceptions, which would continue to be heard by the Planning Commission, will include institutional Master Plans, such the Community College and Crista proposals, and quasi-judicial rezones in areas shown on the comprehensive plan as “special study areas” or as subarea plan updates on the Planning Work Program (e.g., in Town Center or Southeast Shoreline).

IV. Design Review

A number of times in recent years, both the City Council and Planning Commission have expressed their concerns that the City's development review processes do not pay enough attention to building and site design issues. The recent discussions about the Planned Area 2 zoning reflected this concern, and resulted in the creation of an "administrative design review process." With some of the recent comments about RB, CB, and I zoning regulations, it has become apparent that there may be merit in having the City code include more detailed design standards and perhaps a design review process, whether administrative or via a design review board.

In addition, the question of tree retention, specifically how to maintain the city's overall tree canopy and preserve a greater number of significant trees, has been an ongoing concern with projects large and small. One of the implementation tasks in the draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy is to create certain benchmarks (for example, total tree canopy in the City) and then look for mechanisms to "sustain" or even improve that indicator over time. A development code amendment could take many forms, but the staff believes it is appropriate for the City Council and Planning Commission first have a discussion about the concept and its apparent merits.

V. How can the City Council better utilize the information developed during the Planning Commission process? How can the Commission format its recommendation to assist the Council in its deliberations?

One way the Planning Commission can assist the Council in its deliberations providing a more detailed explanation of its thinking that fed into the recommendation. In this discussion, the Commission could discuss background, issues, and other items that had a bearing on its conclusions.

The recommendation of the Planning Commission about an item, whether it's quasi-judicial or legislative, is the product of many considerations and inputs, including extensive public comment in writing and verbally at public hearings. The Commission recommendation received by Council includes copies of letters and emails received, as well as minutes recounting what is said at the public hearings. This constitutes "the record" that is forwarded to the Council for its consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required. Unless directed otherwise, the staff will bring the resolution adopting the Work Program and an ordinance modifying the hearing process for certain quasi-judicial items to the Council for action at a future meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Resolution 271 to adopt proposed 2008 Planning Work Program

RESOLUTION NO. 271

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON, PROVIDING DIRECTION REGARDING THE CITY'S PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AND ADOPTING A SCHEDULE FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES IN 2008

WHEREAS, the Shoreline Planning Commission met on January 3, 2008, and January 17, 2008 to discuss progress on the Planning Work Program and to consider appropriate updates and amendments to the Work Program as it applies to Planning Commission activities in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission thereafter forwarded its recommendations regarding the Planning Work Program for consideration by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council agrees that the items shown on the recommended Planning Work Program includes legislative amendments to the City's comprehensive plan and development regulations that are of a hirank order of importance; and

WHEREAS, the processing of a number of quasi-judicial hearing items is problematic due to a lack of clear and current land use policies and regulations, and this situation cannot be rectified until the Planning Commission has sufficient agenda time to process and recommend for City Council adoption a series of legislative amendments; and

WHEREAS, the City Council concludes that in order for the Planning Commission to complete review in a timely fashion of the high priority legislative tasks shown on the attached 2008 Planning Work Program, certain quasi-judicial hearing items should be re-assigned from the Planning Commission to the city's Hearing Examiner; and

WHEREAS, the City Council expects that the adoption of a Comprehensive Housing Strategy and an Environmentally Sustainable Community Strategy in the first half of 2008 will provide further policy direction and priorities to be reflected in updated comprehensive plan and development regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council will meet twice in joint session with the Planning Commission, once in the spring and once in the fall, to hear progress on the Planning Work Program, promote a constructive exchange of ideas between the two bodies, and provide any necessary clarification or policy direction deemed appropriate.

Section 2. The City Council approves of the continuation of the Shoreline Speaker Series in 2008, and directs that these be televised on the City's cable access channel, and that the

community at large be alerted to this opportunity through *Currents*, the City website and other appropriate media.

Section 3. The City Council affirms its support first expressed in Resolution 254 for the concepts of subarea plan updates, legislative rezones, planned area zones and form-based codes as innovative techniques to refine and update and apply the City's land use policies, and

Section 4. The City Council requests that the Planning Commission and Park Board, having met in joint session to review the draft Environmentally Sustainable Community Strategy, provide their input and recommendations prior to the Council's deliberations on the matter in April and May.

Section 5. The City Council adopts the Planning Work Program for 2008 including the Comprehensive Plan docket, as shown in Attachment 1 hereto.

Section 6. Having reviewed the important legislative items on the Planning Work Program for 2008, and considered the heavy demand that these priorities place on scarce Planning Commission agenda time, the City Council declares its intent to adopt appropriate legislation to temporarily re-assign the hearing responsibility for certain quasi-judicial hearing items from the Planning Commission to the hearing examiner.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON _____, 2008.

Cindy Ryu, Mayor

ATTEST:

Scott Passey, City Clerk

Shoreline Planning Work Program

Legend		Planning Commission Role												Other Action		X Council Adoption											
		2008														2009											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul							
Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS)																											
Council considers implementation as part of budget																											
Plan and Code Amendments heard by Planning Commission (as component of Subarea Planning)																											
Development Code Amendments																											
Code Amendments to replace moratorium (interim regulations) in Community Business, Regional Business & Industrial Zones																											
Environmentally Sustainable Community (ESC) Strategy																											
Staff prepares final draft of ESC Strategy																											
Public meeting(s)																											
Council adopts ESC Strategy							X																				
Planning Commission review of implementation Strategies																											
Fircrest Master Planning																											
DSHS Phase I Public Outreach																											
DSHS Report to Legislature/Legislative Decision																											
Phase II Master Plan Permit Development																											
Staff/PC Master Plan Review (January 2009)																											
Ridgecrest Commercial Area Community Vision																											
Neighborhood Meetings/Planning Commission Hearings																											
Council adopts new zoning				X																							
Shoreline Community College																											
Staff prepares Comprehensive Plan and Code Amendments																											
Subarea Plan (Phase 1) & Code Amend heard by Planning Comm.																											
Council adopts Subarea Plan (Phase 1) and Code Amendments							X																				
South Bridge Subarea Plan																											
Staff prepares background information																											
Neighborhood Meeting																											
Subarea Plan development (through mid 2009)																											
Plan & Code amendments heard by Planning Commission																											
Council adoption of Plan & Code amendments																											
Southeast Shoreline Subarea Plan and Zoning																											
Staff prepares Subarea Plan																											
Open House																											
Planning Commission reviews Subarea Plan (early 2009)																											
Council adopts Subarea Plan																	X										
Town Center																											
Staff and consultants conduct community outreach																											
Staff prepares Plan & Code Amendments for Central Shoreline																											
Plan & Code amendments heard by Planning Commission																											
Council adopts Plan and Code Amendments																	X										

Other Work Program Items: Crista Master Plan

Revised 03/26/08

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