



## **Memorandum**

**Date:** August 27, 2007

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Steven Cohn, Senior Planner

**Subject:** Planning Commission Retreat Follow-Up

At your August meeting, staff requested the Commission review the Retreat Report and asked for your comments or follow-up ideas. Commissioner Pyle was the only Commissioner who responded and we are attaching his comments for your perusal.

Mr. Pyle makes a number of interesting points, and we can discuss them at your September 6 meeting. One of his suggestions is to establish a "calendar of attendance" to the Council of Neighborhoods meetings. If we do not have time to do this at the meeting, Jessica will follow up by email to set up dates.



## **2007 Planning Commission Retreat Report**

Thursday, July 12 ♦ 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. ♦ Shoreline Fire Station Headquarters

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### ***Retreat Objectives:***

- Have an in-depth discussion of one issue
- Prioritize other issues for work next year, with the intent of choosing some of them to add to the work plan
- Have discussion in a more informal atmosphere than that of a regular meeting

### ***Welcome***

**6:00 - 6:30 p.m.**

- Dinner
- Review retreat objectives and agenda
- Icebreaker: be prepared to share with the group two true statements about yourself and one false!

### ***Celebrate Accomplishments***

**6:30 - 6:45 p.m.**

- Identify and celebrate 2006-07 accomplishments

### ***What's Coming Up in 2008 (Joe)***

**6:45 - 7:05 p.m.**

### ***Break***

**7:05 - 7:15 p.m.**

### ***Discussion of Selected Topic***

**7:15 - 8:15 p.m.**

#### **Public Involvement**

- Identify & define issues
- Describe desired outcome
- Develop strategies for getting there
- Discuss measures of success

### ***Break***

**8:15 - 8:25 p.m.**

### ***Topic Prioritization Exercise***

**8:25 - 9:40 p.m.**

- Explain your proposed topic, what is your specific issue
- Prioritize topics and add to 2007-08 work plan

### ***Wrap-up (Joe)***

**9:40 - 10:00 p.m.**

- Identify next steps and follow up items

## **Attendance**

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### **Commission Present**

Chair Rocky Piro  
Vice Chair Sid Kuboi  
Commissioner Michael Broili  
Commissioner David Harris  
Commissioner Robin McClelland  
Commissioner Chakorn Phisuthikul  
Commissioner David Pyle  
Commissioner Michelle Linders Wagner

### **Staff Present**

Joe Tovar, Director  
Steve Cohn, Senior Planner  
Miranda Redinger, Associate Planner  
Jessica Simulcik Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

## **2006-07 Accomplishments**

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One of the objectives of the 2007 Planning Commission Retreat was to celebrate the accomplishments of the Commission since its last retreat back in July of 2006. The following were the accomplishments identified by staff.

- 6 Site-Specific Rezones & 1 Comprehensive Plan Amendment
- Discussions
- Development Code Amendments
- Speaker Series Events
- Joint-meetings
- Community Workshop on Strategic Points

## **What's Coming Up in 2008**

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Joe Tovar updated the Commission on City Council action on recent recommendations of the Planning Commission. He also reviewed the work program timeline for projects currently underway and informed them of when the projects might come before the Commission.

### Discussion on Public Involvement

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The Planning Commission selected the topic of public involvement and communication strategies to discuss in-depth at the retreat. The discussion covered defining the issues, sharing ideas for the preferred outcomes and identifying strategies for achieving the desired goals.

#### Issues

##### Planning Commission

**Pyle Comment: I think we need to answer all these questions directly. Stating the question in itself does not help.**

- Are we aware of the hot buttons and in tune with what's going on out there?
- When an issue percolates out in the public, how do we become aware of it and then how do we decide whether or not we should take it on?
- What kinds of issues *do we want to / should we* take on?
- Should Commission's role be as advocate?
- Can't sufficiently inform public
- Commission doesn't interact with Council of Neighborhoods enough

**Pyle Comment: can we set up a calendar of attendance to the Council of Neighborhoods? I am volunteering to go to the meeting on September 5.**

- PC does not communicate to the public what it does
- What is a Commissioner's role?
- Do we want the Council to be our main audience or do we want to have the public know about and participate in all issues? Or can the Commission do both?
- No easy solution for changing the PC's image (as meddlesome), given that human nature is to instinctively protect property and home
- Does Commission have an obligation to \_\_\_\_\_?
- How do we engage/foster activism?

##### Public

**Pyle Comment: It seems to me that many of these issues related to the Public's understanding or lack thereof can be overcome through education. However, first we need to somehow solicit their involvement and open a channel of communication.**

- Public perception of the problem
- Importance of issue to average person (or lack thereof)
- Perception/Reality that Commission is operating in a vacuum
- People don't understand that status quo does not equal no change – change will happen even if city doesn't rezone or change the comprehensive plan
- People disregard mailed notices and ignore signs
- The public needs better information on what's going on at meetings (what's on the agenda) and the significance of the proposals on the table
- Public doesn't have benefit of staff briefing & background info (if they enter in the middle of a process that takes several months or several meetings) so sometimes they are ill-informed
- Some in the public believe their opinions don't matter or aren't being heard

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- Sometimes people from the public do not exercise their opportunity to provide comment – therefore the Commission cannot use their testimony when making a decision
- Public perceives the PC as meddling and not problem solvers

**Pyle Comment: Are these really problems, or are they more evidence that the Public really does not want to be involved until something affects them. It could also be said then, that generally, the public has a lot of trust in the City, since very few Citizens actually are involved. If there was widespread mistrust, there would be more activism.**

### Communication Channels

- Can't count on Enterprise newspaper to get information out (it doesn't always pick up on important stories)
- Shoreline lacks a good newspaper for coverage and to disseminate information
- Poorly informed community
- No mechanism for communication
- The City doesn't use their website to its fullest potential to communicate to public
- Cable channel underused
- Website underdeveloped

### Other

- Three aspects to public involvement: 1.) how does the Commission receive information 2.) how will the Commission get it back out to the public, and 3.) timing and content of communication.

- One aspect is process, another is substance/content, and another is education

**Pyle Comment: Has the City ever thought of dedicating a portion of a Planner's duty as "Outreach and Education" where as part of their job they would attend public meeting regularly (Council of Neighborhoods, Other community meetings) to correct inaccurate perceptions in advance?**

- Neighborhood Council not given enough recognition or weight
- It takes time to establish an independent culture
- Increasing public outreach has cost implications

**Pyle Comment: The Council seems to be in support of this, so it seems the cost issues could be overcome.**

### Desired outcome

**Pyle Comment: It seems that somehow changing the pre-application community meeting requirements could somehow benefit the neighborhood if the City took a more active role in providing accurate information at the meeting.**

- Communicate to citizens what's in it for them/ how does it affect them personally
- Paint scenarios/ holistic pictures of "no involvement" vs. "managing change" so people can conclude for themselves that change will continue to occur even if the things remain "status quo".
- Establish a better presence for the Planning Commission
- Utilize more available resources
- Foster sense of civic duty amongst the community
- Engage community leaders and volunteers
- City representatives attend all events, from school sponsored events to the local arts

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- Defer problems through early engagement
- Build informed consent
- A better educated citizen on available services, choices and budget issues
- Invite potentially controversial groups directly to diffuse
- City Council should ensure that citizens take proper steps in airing grievances
- Use Speakers Series as education & outreach
- Develop housing policies that are neighborhood specific
- People will take ownership of new city hall – hopefully gear up to capitalize on change
- Reinforce that the purpose of the PC is to take public testimony
- Conscious efforts for community ownership

### Identified Strategies

#### Outreach

##### 1. Council of Neighborhoods

- Look into using Neighborhood newsletters to get information out
- Attend quarterly meetings with neighborhood organizations
- **Pyle Comment: Again, can we set up a calendar of attendance? I would volunteer to go to the Council of Neighborhoods twice in one year. If there are 9 of us, that means we really only need to attend once or twice a year, and we can report back to the Commission.**
- Get a copy of the Council of Neighborhoods Charter and get on their mailing list

##### 2. Community

- Promote the PC agenda packet email list
- Standing column or quarterly article in *Currents* – aim at keeping article within the context of economic viability, the tax base, and Shoreline’s vision
- Send press releases to Seattle Times/PI
- Go to community events

#### Enhancements to Process

- Adjust meeting structure for “hot topic” items
- Create sign-up sheet to add people to the agenda packet email distribution list
- Improve the agenda template by adding descriptions of the action, and links to specific section of Development Code
- Enhance Constant Contact email: add bullet points and abstracts to body of email
- Prominent signage at new city hall
- Goal to synthesize discussions of budget implications, work plan, etc.
- Add a column on meeting agendas that explains the action set to take place, has a glossary and is in layman’s terms

## Topic Prioritization Exercise

Prior to the retreat Commissioners were asked to send in possible topics that they would like to see added to their 2007-08 work plan. At the retreat the Commission participated in a “vote by dot” exercise that identified the top five topics. Each Commissioner was given 4 green dots and 1 red dot, green meaning put it on the schedule, red meaning not interested. Only one dot could

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be used per topic, per Commissioner (in essence, no one could put all dots on one item). The following is the outcome of the exercise:

# Dots Green/Red	Work Item
0	<b>145th &amp; 205th ROW Ownership</b>
1 Green	<b>Adult Family Homes and Emergency Planning</b>
0	<b>Box Stores along Aurora</b> Do we want these types of large dominant facades along Aurora?
0	<b>Climate Change</b> Explore the topic with community. How do we live out the Kyoto principles?
4 Green	<b>Design Review</b>
6 Green	<b>Is Shoreline's Vision still valid?</b>
6 Green	<b>Low Impact Development regulation and code</b> Begin to address using the 2005 "Low Impact Development Local Regulation Assistance Project" as a starting point. <i>Green Sts/Sustainability/C-Sts/Energy</i>
0	<b>Meaningful landuse designations for special study areas</b>
0	<b>Mega Mansions</b> How to address them?
6 Green	<b>Mixed Use Designation</b> MU allows all land use type on property but does not require residential. Review and possibly amend term and conditions to have it reflect what many expect.
2 Green	<b>Open Space / Habitat Connectivity</b> East-west connections, east-west wildlife corridor, etc.
0	<b>Outreach Strategy &amp; Public Involvement</b>
0	<b>Review Tree Code (20.50.350 Development standards for clearing activities)</b>
0	<b>Rezone Criteria</b> Review and amend

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<b>3</b> <b>G</b> <sub>reen</sub>	<b>SAT</b> Full report, including overview of performance zoning concept being developed
<b>1</b> <b>G</b> <sub>reen</sub>	<b>Sign Code Amendments</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Speaker Series debrief</b>
<b>1</b> <b>G</b> <sub>reen</sub>	<b>Central Shoreline Sub-area Plan Assessment</b>
<b>2</b> <b>G</b> <sub>reen</sub>	<b>Transit</b> What does the future of transit in Shoreline look like and how can the Planning Commission get involved?

The five items to be scheduled in 2007-08 are:

- Is Shoreline's Vision still valid?
- Low Impact Development regulation and code
- Mixed Use Designation
- Design Review
- Full report on SAT

The remaining topic items that received votes will be placed on the “backburner” and the topics receiving not green dots drop off the radar.

### Wrap-up

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Steve Cohn announced that Staff would take what they heard from the discussion surrounding public outreach and communications and pull together a report to bring back to the Commission for further discussion in September.