



## **Memorandum**

**DATE:** August 20, 2009

**TO:** Shoreline Planning Commission

**FROM:** Joseph W. Tovar, FACIP  
Paul Cohen, Senior Planner

**RE:** Town Center

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On July 9<sup>th</sup> staff reintroduced to the Commission the Town Center Subarea Plan project with its timeline to adopt in spring 2010. Since then the Commission conducted a Walkabout on July 23 to observe opportunities and limitations of the subarea by foot. The Commission requested a synthesis of past relevant actions and projects, an update on the Aurora Ave improvement project, an economic development potential, and the upcoming public outreach.

### **Synthesis of Previous City Actions in the Town Center**

The Commission commented that they would like to be briefed on the past City actions that affect the Town Center so that they can see what has been decided or done and what aspects remain open to their recommendations. Below is a synthesis of key actions and development in the Town Center and their status.

1. Central Shoreline Subarea Report (2001-03) – The report was completed and recommended to the City Council in 2003. The Council included it in the Comprehensive Plan appendices. The report was inserted into the Comprehensive Plan without formal adoption and then removed by repeal in 2008.

The subarea report's vision statement has been supplanted by the City's adopted 2009 Vision for Aurora Ave. and the Town Center.

The subarea study's overall concept was to have all buildings front on their adjoining streets making a distinction between development along Linden (transitions in scale to single family, Aurora (commercial image improvement with more visible building and less parking lots), and Midvale (mixed-use development). Currently, the City has

transition area requirements to single family, frontage requirements for new commercial development, and allows mixed residential / commercial development.

Much of the subarea report is background and context – much of which has changed in the previous 8 years. The plan elements of the Interurban Trail and Aurora Avenue have been completed either by approved design or by construction. The third element of Midvale Main Street area includes the Ronald Street “Wedges”, the Brick Road, Top Foods, Seattle City Light R-o-W, Midvale and Gateway Plaza. The only portion of this area not completed and relevant to the 5 and 25-year plans are properties on the east side of Midvale between City Hall and N 183<sup>rd</sup> St., side streets, and its accompanying east-west cross section across Aurora Ave.

The report has three demonstration sites which present more site design detail for the “Wedge”, City Hall site, and Gateway Plaza, which have all been developed since this report was completed.

Development standards were proposed to implement the subarea report but were not included in the Comprehensive Plan appendix. These standards may be useful when the Town Center development code amendments are being developed.

Status: Repealed from the Comprehensive Plan 2008

2. Cascade Agenda (2007) – The Cascade Agenda promotes planning and development that intensifies urban development to be more efficient and more sustaining so that the need to accommodate future growth requires less rural, agricultural, and forest lands.

Status: The Council adopted by resolution the program to be a Cascade Agenda city.

3. 5 Framework Goals (2007) - These goals were adopted into the Comprehensive Plan as the framework for development of the land use, capital facility and programmatic aspects of the Town Center Subarea Plan.

FW-1 Articulate a community vision for the town center as an early step in the development of detailed provisions for the subarea.

FW-2 Establish a study area boundary (Figure 1) to provide context for evaluating the opportunities and potential impacts from future development of commercial and mixed uses along Aurora Ave. N.

FW-3 Engage Shoreline residents and businesses in detailed design processes for a ) a “heritage park” site on both sides of the Interurban Trail and b) Midvale Ave N.

FW-4 Design roadway, transit and pedestrian facilities consistent with the City’s preferred “Flexible alternative” for Aurora Avenue between N. 165<sup>th</sup> St. and N. 205<sup>th</sup> St.

FW-5 Prepare a program of civic directional or ‘wayfinding ‘ signage and evaluate refinements to city sign regulations to reflect the emerging function and visual character of Aurora Avenue.

Status: Policies FW-1 and 2 have been implemented. Policy FW-3 will be implemented soon. Policy FW-4 has been implemented up to Aurora and N. 192<sup>nd</sup>. Policy FW-5 is being implemented now.

4. 2007 Speaker Series – These were created to bring in outside expert opinions on subjects relevant to the Town Center.

Dan Burden – Walkable Communities

Ron Sher – Community Gathering Places

SvR Design Company – Creating and Implementing Green Infrastructure

Gene Duvernoy - How Can We Preserve the Quality of Life We Have Today and 100 Years From Now?

Mark Hinshaw – Demographic Trends and Innovative Responses.

Status: Available to review in full on the City website

5. 2 UW Studies (2007 and 2008) – The first study presented potential changes to the town center and conceptual strategies. The second study offered a wide range of design themes to distinguish the core of the town center.

Status: Projects are done and are available to review for subarea concepts and strategies.

6. Community Meeting (January 30, 2008) – The community response to the Town Center project varied with many small recommendations but no overall impression or vision of the subarea.

Status: Meeting minutes are available for review.

7. Phase 1 Approval and Adoption (2008) – The Planning Commission made recommendations and the City Council approved the Town Center Phase 1 amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Phase 1 repealed the Central Shoreline Right-of-Way Plan and the Central Shoreline Subarea Plan Report, and adopted the 5 Framework Town Center goals.

Status: Adopted

8. Housing Strategies (2008) – The key recommendation made and approved by Council was under the category of Housing Choice and Neighborhood Character Strategies. It states: *“Test changes in the comprehensive plan and /or development regulations designed to encourage housing choices through pilot projects in select and limited sites or on a broader scale as a result of a defined neighborhood subarea planning and design process.”*

Status: To be implemented primarily through the subarea planning process.

### 9. Environmental Sustainability Strategies (2008) –

Framework Policy 6: Manage expected growth in a sustainable way. Growth and density will be focused in environmentally suitable areas and serviced by improved infrastructure, different modes of transportation, parks, and natural features.

Objective 8: Concentrate new growth in proximity of services and transit with Transit Oriented Design.

Status: Early stages of implementation

10. Transition Area Code Amendment (2008) - New code that reduces the building bulk, increases landscape buffers, and street access between RB, I, and CB zones and R-4, R-6, R-8 zones.

Status: Adopted

### 11. 2029 Vision Statement (2009) -

“As you walk down Aurora you experience a colorful mix of bustling hubs with well-designed and planned to transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods gracefully. Structures have been designed in ways that transition both visually and physically to reinforce the character of adjacent neighborhoods.”

“The boulevard is anchored by the vibrant Town Center, which is focused between 175<sup>th</sup> and 185<sup>th</sup>. This district is characterized by compact, mixed use, pedestrian – friendly development highlighted by Shoreline City Hall, the Shoreline Historic Museum, Shorewood High School, and other civic facilities. The interurban park provides open space, recreational opportunities, and service as the City’s living room for major festivals and celebration.”

Status: Adopted April 2009

### 12. Town Center Rezones (2008-09) –

Becker property on Stone Ave from R-8 to R-12 zoning

James Alan Salon at N 185th and Linden Ave from CB to RB zoning

Masonic Temple at N 18<sup>th</sup> and Linden Ave from R-18 to CB zoning

Garden Park Apartments at Linden and N 178<sup>th</sup> from R-48 to RB zoning

Status: All approved and adopted except Garden Park Apartments, which was not recommended by the Planning Commission and subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.

13. Midvale Development Amendment (2009) – Ordinance #549 adopt to allow 150 du/acre, transition standards to single family, green building, and electric plug-ins for cars.

Status: Adopted

14. PSRC Growth Targets (2009) – Targets are due September 2009. Currently the estimates are 5,000 jobs and 5,000 housing units.

Status: In progress

15. Transportation Master Plan (2009-2010) – The master plan will analyze future land use potential with concurrent transportation facilities. The TMP is target to be finished summer 2010.

Status: In progress

16. RB Moratorium (2008-2009) – Interim regulations cap density at 110 units/ acre.

Status: To be resolved in September 2009.

17. Aurora Ave Improvement Project (2009-2010) – The portion from 165<sup>th</sup> to 188<sup>th</sup> has been designed 100% and fully funded. The portion from N 188<sup>th</sup> to 192nd is 30% designed.

Status: To be constructed through 2009 and 2010.

18. Completed Recent Developments (1999–2009) - Cadillac Dealership, Top Foods, Walgreens, Fire Station, Gateway, Fred Meyer Remodel, Interurban Trail, Leiser Building, Sky Nursery, City Hall, Key Bank.

### **Public Outreach**

The City held a community meeting January 30, 2008. At that meeting, staff presented background, current projects, town center concept, key questions, and plan components. It was followed with a small group breakout. A summary of the public comments is available for review on CD. Staff presented this information to the Chamber of Commerce separately. The Commission held a public Walkabout last month. Since it has been at least a year and half, staff recommends that we conduct a Town Center open house this October that will bring the public up to speed with a synthesis of what has been done (see above), show examples of other town centers, and present a conceptual plan.

The public can be involved with the subsequent commission meetings and eventual public hearing. Staff would like to publicize this meeting and proposed concept by website, newspaper, and city publications.

In addition, staff has built a mailing list that includes mailing lists from the Housing Strategy, Environmental Sustainability, City Hall, and Aurora Improvement meetings as well as property owners within the study area and the Chamber of Commerce and Forward Shoreline organizations. We will use this list to send notices of this fall's community meeting and the Commission's public hearing.

Please contact Paul Cohen at [pcohen@shoreline.wa.gov](mailto:pcohen@shoreline.wa.gov) or 206 801 2551 if you have questions.