

**City of Lynnwood  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
April 28, 2011 Meeting**

<b>Commissioners Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
Richard Wright, Chair	Kevin Garrett, Planning Manager
Bob Larsen, Vice Chair	Janine Lambert, City Center Prog. Mgr.
Van AuBuchon	Shay Davidson, Administrative Asst.
Chad Braithwaite	
Doug Jones	<b>Other:</b>
Michael Wojack, Second Vice-chair	Councilmember Loren Simmonds
<b>Commissioners Absent:</b>	
Maria Ambalada	

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order Chair Wright at 7:05 p.m.

Chair Wright asked when Commissioner Ambalada is expected to return. Planning Manager Garrett thought that it would be sometime in May.

**Approval of Minutes**

1. Meeting of April 14, 2011

Chair Wright referred to the last full paragraph on page 7 and requested that the first two sentences be replaced with the following:

*Director Krauss noted that an issue with Highway 99 has come up involving the Seaview Chevrolet property. The former building for Pontiac and GMC in the northern portion of their site was inadvertently included in one of the nodes.*

*Motion made by Commissioner Braithwaite, seconded by Commissioner AuBuchon to approve the April 14, 2011 minutes as revised. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Public Comments**

None.

## Public Hearings

None.

## Work Session

1. **Revisions to City Center Development Regulations (2011CAM0006).** Amendments to Ordinance No. 2627 (City Center Street Grid Protection Ordinance), Title 21 (Zoning), including (but not limited to) Chapter 21.60 of the Lynnwood Municipal Code (City Center (CC) zones), the City of Lynnwood Zoning Map, and the City Center Design Guidelines. These amendments, if approved, would revise:
  1. the requirements to dedicate property for grid street right-of-way purposes;
  2. the zoning regulations for development/redevelopment of properties in the City Center (including, but not limited to building height, floor area ratios, bulk, street standards, setback and signage);
  3. City Center design guidelines for site planning and building design; and
  4. Zoning Map to identify gateways and prominent intersections.

Planning Manager Garrett introduced City Center Program Manager Janiene Lambert, who gave a presentation regarding the proposed revisions recommended by the interdepartmental staff working group. She summarized the purpose and goals of the City Center, discussed the purpose of the recommendations, gave an overview of the revisions, and reviewed the next steps as contained in the Planning Commission's packet for this meeting. Program Manager Lambert and Planning Manager Garrett discussed the significance of adopting a Planned Action designation for development in the City Center.

Program Manager Lambert highlighted the following proposed code amendments:

- Grid Street Preservation Ordinance Amendments – Adopt the interim regulations into the “permanent” regulations. Remove the non-capacity grid streets from street preservation requirements.
- City Center Design Guidelines Amendments – Create standards for increased pedestrian connectivity through sites in lieu of new public streets. Update the Pedestrian Promenade concept.
- Zoning Code Amendments – Amendments address: parks, uses, height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR), parking, street standards, gateways, and sign regulations.

Staff expects that a public hearing before the Planning Commission on these proposals will be scheduled in June. They will then go to the City Council who will hold a hearing in August or September. The goal is to begin marketing the City

Center including creating a development handbook, site information reports, and adoption of the planned action ordinance to attract redevelopment. Staff will then work with the Planning Commission and City Council to determine priorities and implementing activities in the City Center.

*Discussion:*

Commissioner AuBuchon thanked Program Manager Lambert for the presentation. He recalled that in 1998 or 1999 there was a presentation to the City by a firm out of Washington DC that had a plan that would do the City Center at no cost to the City and would run the City Center after that. He then asked for an estimate of the total costs accrued so far roughly hundreds, thousands, etc... Program Manager Lambert indicated that it was hundreds of thousands of dollars in seed money projects approved by City Council. The Supplemental EIS includes the up-front mitigations. Planning Manager Garrett added that original planning project was \$500,000 through a three-way partnership and the City's general fund supported one-third of that. Other parts of the planning were done with mostly federal grants. He offered to bring back more information on this.

Planning Manager Garrett responded to the comment regarding the firm from Washington DC. He did not recall a firm offering to develop the whole City Center, but he did recall a firm from Texas proposing to develop and operate a performing arts center. This idea pre-dates the idea of the convention center which eventually came to fruition. Commissioner AuBuchon stated that the presentation he saw included everything that Program Manager Lambert was discussing in that area with the addition of new parks, anchor stores, high density housing over retail office space, and a promenade. The whole idea was to cut down on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by cutting down on traffic. Planning Manager Garrett did not recall that, but noted the federal money that was available at that time has since dried up. Staff is working with the resources at hand to achieve the vision of the City Center. Commissioner AuBuchon acknowledged that they are doing this in part to comply with the state's growth targets and the vision of the PSRC; he asked how this complies with the citizen of Lynnwood's vision. Program Manager Lambert affirmed that they are working under the vision guidance of the citizens of Lynnwood. Commissioner AuBuchon expressed appreciation for that.

Commissioner Larsen asked if a marketing plan has been developed yet for the City Center. Program Manager Lambert replied that these recommendations are the first step towards marketing efforts and that this is setting the foundation to go to market. Commissioner Larsen noted that right now the City Center is a boundary. He suggested considering some sort of construction or action that would begin to bring character to the area. Program Manager Lambert agreed that there are the catalyst opportunities that they will be looking at, including the ST2 Light Rail extension at the Transit Center, the Convention Center and 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. in the core, as well as the Town Square Park and government offices.

Commissioner Larsen suggested that they could develop 42<sup>nd</sup> with city money first to start to show what that corridor could look like.

Commissioner Wojack had the following questions:

- He asked if the City Center has gone through an EIS and a SEPA review. Program Manager Lambert stated that it was completed in 2004 and they are now looking at updating that. Revisions are mostly related to the grid street changes and some other minor updates. Commissioner Wojack asked what else would be necessary for the Planned Action Ordinance. Planning Manager Garrett explained that they will be recommending using the 2004 Supplemental FEIS as the environmental document for this set of actions together with an Addendum that brings it up to date. He commented that there are very few environmental concerns in the City Center area; in fact there are some environmental benefits going forward with this.
- He referred to slide #11 under Design Guidelines and asked if lighting is still covered in that section. Program Manager Lambert replied that it is.
- He requested a copy of the development handbook when that is available.
- He asked if this revision will be covered in a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Planning Manager Garrett replied that it doesn't trigger any changes to the Comprehensive Plan so it is not part of the docket.

Chair Wright commented that he was anxiously awaiting the sign ordinance for the City Center. He expressed concern that the only incentive they have in this entire program is the multi-family tax exemption. Program Manager Lambert replied that this is currently through 2012 so they need to look at extending that. She stated that they have also instituted an exemption for the traffic impact fee for the first few projects that meet catalyst-type parameters that they have established. Chair Wright said it looks like the City has done everything they can to get into a position for development to occur. He commented that as the clock ticks the City may consider building the first building as a catalyst. Program Manager Lambert stated that they need to address all of the options they have on the table and prioritize what will be the best investment to attract private investment.

Commissioner Larsen asked how tall buildings would need to be in the City Center before people would have a view of Puget Sound. Planning Manager Garrett said that he not sure, but the Sparling Technology Center on 194<sup>th</sup> Street is 65 feet and on a hill. The top floor on a clear day has three mountain views, but he doesn't recall if you can see the water in Puget Sound.

In terms of incentives, Planning Manager Garrett added that Council has approved the property tax abatement measure for residential development in the City Center. Program Manager Lambert added that the Planned Action Ordinance is a major incentive by alleviating the time cost and uncertainty for the developer.

Commissioner AuBuchon asked if there is an incentive for senior housing in the City Center. Program Manager Lambert said that it is not specifically for senior housing, but the multi-family tax exemption provides incentives at different levels for affordability. Planning Manager Garrett explained that the exemption program is set up by state law and he was not aware if local agencies are authorized to underwrite the cost of senior housing directly. Program Manager Lambert added that the exemption would include but is not specific to the senior housing. Planning Manager Garrett noted that if there are federal or state incentives they would be available in the City Center just as they would be anywhere in the city.

**2. 2011 Amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan (2011CPL0001).**  
Introduction to proposed amendments to the City's Comprehensive plan for consideration in 2011 ("2011 Docket").

Planning Manager Garrett introduced the five items proposed for Comprehensive Plan Amendments. He explained that all of the following items are "housekeeping" items and do not have policy impacts:

1. Environmental Facilities Element – Update descriptions of environmental issues; no policy impact.
2. Capital Facilities Element – Update descriptions of current capital facilities and utility services; no policy impact.
3. Implementation Element – Update land use – zoning consistency table schedule for docket process and schedule for major Plan update.
4. Parks Element – Annual update, no policy impact; and Delete discussion of level-of-service for parks/plazas in City Center and reference LOS in City Center Subarea Plan.
5. Energy and Sustainability Element – Minor editorial amendments; no policy impact.

### **Other Business**

None

### **Council Liaison Report**

Councilmember Simmonds said he is delighted to see the City Center program once again gaining traction. He commented on his long involvement as part of this planning committee. He expressed concern about the loss of the cohesive group of people in the private sector due to the significant lapse in time. Also there are only three council members who were around when this began in 2004 so it can be expected that there will be a lot of questions from the Council about this. He expressed support for the Planned Action Ordinance. Regarding the parking requirements, due to the limited amount of land combined with the

expense, at one point it was suggested that parking be underground. He suggested that this might be something the City could invest in. He stated that one of the potential key partners that had expressed interest in maybe being a catalyst project in the City Center was the Sno-Isle Library System. Finally, in light of the current economic situation, he commented that one of the big points of contention with the planning committee was the fact that we needed to find an equitable way for both the public sector and the private sector to buy in and to pay a fair share of the infrastructure costs.

### **Director's Report**

- Planning Manager Garrett commented on the possibility of the City being part of a parking management system. Developers could then pay into the parking management district to support paying off the bonds that would cover the cost of the construction. He remarked that this is a very common technique in downtown redevelopment.
- He acknowledged that the private/public distribution of cost sharing was definitely a hot topic at committee meetings in the past.
- Regarding the library, he noted that constructing a library facility in the City Center of Lynnwood continues to be a major priority of their Capital Program. Program Manager Lambert commented on the importance of considering the activities and project that would be the most strategic city investment.
- The City Council authorized funding for a study of the City Center Light Rail Station location to extend the line that Sound Transit is committed to building. Program Manager Lambert added that the funding that Sound Transit is going after to accomplish the station at the Transit Center is a federal program called New Starts. One of the criteria is for transit-oriented development. Working together with the City in one or both of their locations could make their pitch more competitive as well.
- Planning Manager Garrett recognized the contributions of Ms. Davidson and other administrative staff in light of the fact that this week was Administrative Professionals Week.

Commissioner AuBuchon led the Planning Commission in honoring Ms. Davidson with a round of applause.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioner AuBuchon referred to the discussion about parking and commented that he was under the impression that vehicular traffic in the City Center was intended to be limited. Planning Manager Garrett noted that it was intended to be limited, but it will not be prohibited. There will be no pedestrian-only zones. The intent by having mixed uses and a walkable area that people will

either walk or bike to the area or bring their car in and leave it for the day and walk from place to place. There still will be a fair amount of traffic and it is forecast to grow substantially.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.



Richard Wright, Chair

