

**City of Lynnwood
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
January 12, 2012 Meeting**

Commissioners Present:	Staff Present:
Richard Wright, Chair	Community Dev. Director Paul Krauss
Bob Larsen, Vice Chair	Deputy CD Director David Osaki
Chad Braithwaite	Administrative Asst. Shay Davidson
Doug Jones	
Michael Wojack, Second Vice-chair	Other:
	Councilmember Van AuBuchon
Commissioners Absent:	
Maria Ambalada	

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order Chair Wright at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

1. Meeting of December 8, 2011

The minutes were approved as presented.

Council Liaison Report

Councilmember AuBuchon wished everyone Happy New Year. He reported on the make up of the new Council. The new Council President is Loren Simmonds. Kerri Lonergan-Dreke will continue as the Vice President. Councilmember AuBuchon stated that he is glad to be working as the Council Liaison. He has been talking with staff about doing more joint meetings with the Council, Planning Commission, Parks and Rec, and other departments to save staff time with presentations. He will be following up on this with staff.

Citizen Comments

None.

Public Hearings

None.

Work Session

1. Sound Transit City Center Extension Study Technical Memorandum (Briefing)

Director Krauss explained that under ST2 light rail would be extended to Lynnwood Transit Center and is expected to be open for service in 2023. City staff is working with Sound Transit on realizing that line. Sound Transit has selected the route up I-5 to the Lynnwood Transit Center. The next step will be environmental review, preliminary engineering, right-of-way development, and then construction.

He commented that, worldwide, light rail is a major catalyst for development to occur. He noted that four or five years ago there was a program sponsored by the Urban Land Institute looking at the potential impacts of light rail on urban development. One of the station areas they looked at was in Lynnwood. There were some concerns raised at that time that a station at the Transit Center was not ideally suited to serve City Center. The center point of City Center is across 44th Street, closer to the Convention Center. They also learned at that time that Bellevue was proposing three stations between Bellevue and Overlake. Given that they started looking at potential locations for a City Center station with direction from the City Council. There is a potential that if the economy rebounds strongly then Sound Transit will end up with better revenues than they have experienced recently. He noted that light rail is eventually supposed to reach Everett. There will be a Sound Transit 3 although nobody is sure when it will go before the voters. The City wants to be prepared so they can promote development in City Center.

The City was able to hire Sound Transit's consultant to focus on a City Center station. They looked at an urban style station with no parking. It would be an elevated station with escalators down to the street. The location that was ultimately picked is adjacent to and almost above the undeveloped former school district site and Alderwood Mall Parkway. That point provides excellent access to City Center, the Convention Center, the southern end of the transition area, and Bus Rapid Transit along 196th Street. Staff believes the work they have done supports the ultimate extension of light rail to Everett. They also believe that running the light rail up Alderwood Mall Parkway with a station at Alderwood Mall, then the Ash Way Park and Ride, and then heading north is a fairly direct route to Everett.

Unfortunately, as a standalone project, the City Center station is very expensive because of the cost of extending the line and because it would require an additional train. Also, the ridership projections at this time are pretty low. Staff believes that they grossly under-estimated projected development because potential development was not allowed to be considered in calculations. Regardless of what happens with the City Center station, as a result of this process staff learned how the existing planned Transit Center station needs to be developed to promote future extension. Dr. Krauss displayed a map of the area

and discussed conceptual plans and impacts to the area for both the Transit Center station and the City Center station. He also reviewed proposed options for getting light rail from the Transit Center to the City Center.

Commissioner Larsen asked how much additional line would be required to get to the City Center station. Director Krauss said it would require 3400 more feet of line. Commissioner Larsen asked if anyone has projected the travel time from City Center to downtown Seattle. Director Krauss was not sure if they looked at that, but said he would try to find that out. Commissioner Larsen thanked him and added that that would probably be a selling point of this for people that want to use it.

In response to Commissioner Braithwaite's questions regarding parking and light rail alignment, Director Krauss had the following responses.

Director Krauss said there are no plans for parking. The Transit Center station is clearly commuter-oriented parking and will have more in the future. It is a hub for a lot of bus lines and will be the end of the line for some time so there will be a lot of commuter traffic coming into Lynnwood that will not benefit the City in any way. There is some benefit to segregating out a purpose-built City Center station that is for people that live, work, and recreate in the City Center.

Director Krauss commented that in an urban context it makes sense to not have parking. The Sounder is supposed to support bi-directional trips especially on the south end, but it is basically an attraction for commuters. He reviewed his experience working on this when he worked with the City of Auburn. He noted that they exceeded the 8-year ridership estimate there in two years with half the trains that they were promised because it offered people a 23-minute commute to Seattle regardless of the weather or traffic conditions. People would drive from Auburn and Federal Way to the station. A City Center station would be very different from this.

Director Krauss stated that if a city center station is done under ST3 all the costs would be subsumed into a much larger project. The cost right now is so high because it does not factor in expected development. Also, it has to bear all the cost just for one station and that will not be the reality.

Sound Transit knows that this line will be extended at some point in the future and they will be responsible for doing it. The information that the City started developing is going to help guide how this comes into the Transit Center because if it's pointing the wrong way there's no question that it will hit something.

2. City Center Planned Action Ordinance

Deputy CD Director Osaki briefly reviewed that Growth Management in the State of Washington is composed of plans and policies, codes and regulations, and

permitting. He explained that the Planning Commission is heavily involved in the policy development and the regulation development, but not so much in the permitting. He explained that he wanted the Planning Commission to be aware of the Planned Action Ordinance even though they won't conduct a hearing on it or take action on it. The Planning Commission invested considerable time in the City Center Subarea Plan and the policies that went into developing that. They also spent a considerable amount of time in the initial adoption and fine-tuning of the City Center Zoning Regulations and the City Center Design Guidelines. The Planned Action Ordinance is the next step.

He discussed the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review process. Back in 1995 the legislature authorized and adopted a concept called Planned Actions as part of the Regulatory Reform Act. The Regulatory Reform Act tried to shift emphasis from the individual project level review to where, if possible, you could use up-front SEPA review of plan and development regulation documents. This was intended to make the Growth Management Act and SEPA work together better and to streamline the permit review process.

He explained that a Planned Action project has the reviews done at a broader plan level and does not have to go through the individual environmental review when they come in for an application later on. This benefits the applicant because they do not have to go through the project-level environmental review at the very beginning because they have a streamlined permit process while still protecting environmental quality. This reduces uncertainty, time, and risk for a developer because it eliminates the public comment period and reduces substantially the appeal period. It also reduces an applicant's time and expense to prepare, produce, and revise studies.

Planned Actions benefit the City by expediting and streamlining the permit process while still protecting environmental quality. The City can identify and mitigate impacts area-wide and not duplicate that review project by project. They utilize existing documents. This is an enormous economic development tool and an incentive to attract development to the Lynnwood City Center. It will also save time and resources for the City.

The City of Lynnwood is looking at adopting a Planned Action Ordinance for the City Center Sub-area. The Environmental Impact Statement was done in 2005 and some additional environmental analysis since that time is reflected in certain environmental documents. The Ordinance in the Planning Commission's packet designates Planned Action by Ordinance. It establishes the review process for how we will evaluate Planned Action requests in the City Center to confirm whether or not a development proposal does or does not meet the Planned Action criteria. It identifies the Planned Action area as Lynnwood City Center. This would be an area where individual projects would not need to go through detailed SEPA review. It also states the criteria for a Planned Action project. Many of those criteria are set forth in state law. Additionally, the draft Ordinance

concludes that our existing codes are sufficient to mitigate the environmental impacts for designated Planned Action projects. There is a requirement in the code already in place that says they need to evaluate and review the Environmental Impact Statement every five years to make sure that it is still adequate and consistent with identifying environmental impacts.

He reiterated that the Planning Commission does not need to hold a hearing on a Planned Action Ordinance, but it is a key implementation tool to fostering and encouraging development in the City Center. This allows the City to keep up with the times by using a tool that has been available for over 15 years in order to begin to attract more development in the City Center.

Commissioner Larsen summarized the process as the City having a Planned Action Ordinance and build-out impacts such as parking, water, etc. As development occurs thresholds might be reached, where at some point we will need improvements in stormwater or additional capacity for something else. The Planned Action Ordinance would be almost like an accounting sheet in this scenario. Deputy Director Osaki commented that this was a pretty good description. A Planned Action Ordinance goes back to the Environmental Analysis and the Environmental Impact Statement which assumed a certain level of growth in the City Center as the cap. It assesses the ability of the City to provide for the infrastructure and to analyze the traffic impacts of what will happen up to that cap. If they go over that cap then that means there is a lot of development in the City Center and the Planned Action Ordinance is no longer applicable. Over the last few years the City has done traffic impact fees which helps mitigate traffic impacts, adopted and updated new Stormwater codes, and made provisions for how infrastructure gets provided with new development. The Planning Commission's work developing codes over time has put the City in a position to adopt this Ordinance. Commissioner Larsen asked if there is a formal review process. Deputy Director Osaki replied that there is one set forth by code. He thanked the Planning Commission for all their hard work.

Other Business

1. Shoreline Master Program (Information Only)

Deputy Director Osaki gave a brief update on this. The City Council had a public hearing in August and approved the Shoreline Master Program. The Department of Ecology had its own review process and sent a letter back to the City saying they approve it as is. He thanked the Planning Commission for their work on this document.

2. 2012 Planning Commission Work Program – Planning Commission Ideas

Director Krauss announced that they will be meeting with the administration and Council to talk about the future and new directions. There may be some work

tasks for the Planning Commission that come out of that meeting. He noted that because of the budget constraints over the last few years they have not planned any big programs or expenditures. They do have a Comprehensive Plan amendment process coming through. Staff expects to put Highway 99, City Center, and possibly the City Center light rail idea into the Plan. He stated that there are some other items that they might look at for the Comprehensive Plan amendment process. There are two very low intensity commercial zones in Lynnwood (B3 and B4) that are used in very few places and are very restrictive as to uses which may need to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. There is also some development standard language relative to the Americans with Disabilities Act in the Comprehensive Plan which caused some usual ripples in development reviews. They may want to look at the Housing section because Lynnwood is a participant with a number of other Snohomish County communities. The County itself has a new housing initiative that is modeled after King County's ARCH which is a joint effort of cities to promote affordable housing. He solicited any other ideas that the Planning Commission might have.

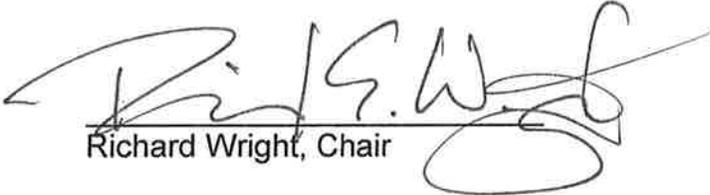
Director's Report

- Director Krauss said he is trying to schedule going back to the Council with an annexation policy paper that he just wrote. He reported that Lynnwood prevailed at the Court of Appeals and Mill Creek decided that they were not going to try to go to the Supreme Court. He stated that he was not surprised that they prevailed because he always believed Mill Creek's position was untenable. He commented that a lot has happened in the last couple years. The economics are completely different. The work they did for the NES annexation which was significant and very good is now stale. They had seventeen public outreach meetings, but they haven't met with people for a long time. The tax basis has changed. The City's ability to provide services has changed with layoffs and budget cuts. The state sales tax incentive to promote annexations looks like it will be going away. He will be recommending to the City Council that they should assume there is still an inevitability of annexation but they should hold off on large annexations for some time. If a regional fire response is developed it would remove a big barrier for the annexation. He thinks they can look at smaller annexations such as non-voter petition method annexations or interlocal annexations as well as voted annexations.
- Director Krauss stated that they have a commission vacancy with two applicants, both of whom are here tonight. They have heard that there are also other potential applicants. Applications will be held open until the end of the month. There is a new link on the front page of the website.
- Staff is still trying to schedule the chicken ordinance. The Council has been very involved in getting their procedural administrative act together

- Staff is still trying to schedule the chicken ordinance. The Council has been very involved in getting their procedural administrative act together at the beginning of the year, but the Council President and the Mayor's office are aware that there is a chicken ordinance *waiting in the wings*.
- The City closed out the year with a good volume of permits. Building permits totaled over \$1 million. More significantly, the nature of the development that occurred was a good sign for Lynnwood's economic future. In the previous couple years our permit dollar value was fairly high, but it was made up of new and renovated schools and the recreation center which do not generate any tax money. This much of the development was re-tenanting commercial buildings that went dark and some new construction. This is a hopeful sign.
- Director Krauss requested that when the Commissioners get messages from Shay they need to try and get back in contact with her.
- Staff is in the final stages of preparing the Final Environmental Impact Statement for project on the former Lynnwood High School site. They got relatively few comments on the Draft EIS for a project of that magnitude. There are some potential issues cropping up with the potential costs of the loop road through there that will need to be worked through.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.



Richard Wright, Chair