

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES February 25, 2004

Chair Young called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5th Avenue North.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

James Young, Chair
Janice Freeman, Vice Chair
Jim Crim
Virginia Cassutt
John Dewhirst
Cary Guenther
Judith Works

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Don Fiene, Asst. City Engineer
Karin Noyes, Recorder

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BOARD MEMBER CASSUTT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2004 AS CORRECTED. BOARD MEMBER CRIM SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

There were no changes made to the proposed agenda.

REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No one in the audience expressed a desire to speak before the Board during this portion of the agenda.

PRESENTATION OF CITY OF EDMONDS 2004-2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Don Fiene, Assistant City Engineer provided a brief presentation on the City's proposed 2004-2009 Capital Improvement Plan. He advised that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is intended to be a blueprint showing how and when money will be spent on capital projects. These projects include facility improvements, the replacement of infrastructure and the development of new facilities. He advised that the CIP is updated yearly with input from six different City departments. Most of the projects included in the CIP are also identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Planning process includes input from the staff, the public and consultants.

Mr. Fiene referred the Board to a detailed spreadsheet which identifies the various sources of funding for each of the funds. He noted that staff would also be updating the project description booklet, which describes each of the CIP projects in greater detail. He reviewed each of the funds as follows:

- **Fund 112** – This fund is used for transportation projects, including street overlays, road improvements and widening, signals, road stabilization projects, traffic calming projects, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, etc. He noted that before

the passage of I-76 in November of 2002, there was more than \$766,000 in total revenue. However, the elimination of the vehicle registration fee has reduced this amount by 46 percent. This has resulted in heavy cuts in most of their transportation projects. He explained that the City's ability to obtain grant funding for projects in the future is also more limited because the necessary matching local funds are no longer available. In addition, the City's street overlay program is now on a cycle of greater than 50 years compared to the previous cycle of 30 years. He said he has researched the overlay programs of other jurisdictions in the area and found that several of them have sufficient funding to provide an overlay program on a 20-year cycle. Mr. Fiene reviewed the specific cuts that were made as a result of the decrease in funding.

- **Fund 113** – This fund is used for the multi-modal transportation center project that is intended to improve connections between the ferry terminal, buses, trains, vehicular traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists. The City's Community Services Director has indicated that the environmental impact statement for this project is 96 percent complete, and they anticipate that it will be completed sometime in 2004, with construction starting within the next three years and completion being six years down the road.
- **Fund 116** – This fund is used for building maintenance and provides funding for repairs on various City buildings including the Anderson Center, City Hall, fire stations, the library, the public safety building, the public works buildings, etc. The funding for building maintenance comes from the general fund, but the amount was recently cut by 44 percent. This cut requires the City to defer building maintenance, which leads to overall deterioration and damage of the City's assets.
- **Fund 125** – This fund is used for parks, open space, recreation and beautification projects. This includes trails, environmental protection, pool improvements, sports field improvements, etc.
- **Fund 412-100** – This fund is used for water projects. The goal of these projects is to improve water flow, replace deteriorated pipes and improve storage capacity.
- **Fund 412-200** – This fund is used for drainage projects. In 2002 the City approved a storm drainage plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan addresses capacity, maintenance problems and environmental concerns.
- **Fund 412-300** – This fund is used for sewer projects. A sewer maintenance plan was approved in 2002 as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan addresses capacity, maintenance problems and environmental concerns.
- **Fund 412-400** – This fund is the engineering, wastewater treatment plant fund.

Mr. Fiene said that at an upcoming City Council retreat, staff would discuss their concerns regarding recent budget cuts in the Fund 112 and 116 accounts. The other funds appear to be meeting the minimum needs.

Mr. Fiene said no action by the Board is necessary at this time. A public hearing on the draft document has been scheduled for March 24th. After the Board makes their recommendation, the City Council would review the document on April 6th and, hopefully, give their final approval.

Board Member Dewhirst referred to Fund 126, which is designated for park acquisition and improvements. He noted that the CIP indicates the City's plans to acquire the fish hatchery in 2004 and the old Woodway Elementary School in 2005. He asked if the City would seek grant funding for these acquisitions. If the City is in such dire straights in the operations and maintenance fund, he questioned why they would be interested in acquiring more property to take care of. Why acquire more property when they don't have the necessary funding to take care of what they have?

Mr. Fiene suggested that this question would be best directed towards Ms. Ohlde at the public hearing. He noted that park funding is fairly healthy right now. He said that, at this time, he does not know if grant funding would be sought for these two acquisitions. Board Member Dewhirst said it appears that the City is in a self-defeating situation because they have funding to purchase additional facilities, but they don't have enough to operate and maintain the existing facilities to an acceptable level.

Board Member Young agreed. He suggested that this issue be raised at the public hearing. He said it is important for the public to be aware that even though they have a very aggressive and progressive parks department, there is a cost associated with this program. If the public wants to keep up the kind of parks system they have come to enjoy in Edmonds, they need to know the costs involved. He asked that Ms. Ohlde clearly make this point at the public hearing.

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Board Member Young recalled Mr. Fiene's comment that most of the CIP projects have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Fiene advised that all of the projects in the 412 accounts have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, there is a Parks and Recreation Plan and a Transportation Plan that includes most of the projects identified in the other accounts. Board Member Young inquired if the projects identified in the CIP are in support of the goals and objectives of the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Fiene answered affirmatively. Board Member Young said this would be good information for the public to understand at the public hearing.

Board Member Young requested that Mr. Fiene elaborate on his comment that other jurisdictions of similar size in the area have found funding sources to support their transportation plan. Mr. Fiene said he collected data from four different jurisdictions close to Edmonds (Mountlake Terrace, Bothell, Redmond and Mercer Island). He found that Mountlake Terrace has three times more local revenue dedicated per mile of roadway compared to the City of Edmonds. The other three cities have more dedicated revenue sources, as well. The City of Edmonds is on an overlay cycle of about 60 years, and the four cities he surveyed have an overlay program that is on a 20 to 30 year cycle. He noted that all four of the other cities obtain transportation funds from the real estate excise tax. Edmonds has chosen to designate all of the revenue from the real estate excise tax to parks projects. In addition, many other cities have additional sources of funding such as gambling taxes, development impact fees, business license surcharges, etc. He said City staff is close to obtaining City Council approval to implement a development impact fee, and this will provide some revenue for transportation projects. He said that some cities are considering the option of having a street utility fee, but this is currently unconstitutional. However, there is legislation being proposed that would allow cities to institute this fee in the future.

When comparing the City's transportation funding to that of the City of Mountlake Terrace, Mr. Fiene pointed out that Mountlake Terrace has \$637,000 in revenue and only 57.7 miles of roadway, while the City of Edmonds has \$511,000 in revenue and 138 miles of roadway. Mountlake Terrace has three times more revenue per mile of roadway than does the City of Edmonds. Their overlay cycle is every 17 years compared to Edmonds current 58-year cycle.

Board Member Young encouraged Mr. Fiene to make this information known at the public hearing. He asked that Mr. Fiene point out to the public that the City is choosing to spend all of their real estate excise tax on parks. While this is good for the parks system, it is coming at the expense of the transportation system. He said that almost every jurisdiction he has contacted uses a good percentage of this tax for roadway maintenance. He said he is not advocating that the City change their policy, but it is important to let the public know the current situation. He suggested that perhaps it would be appropriate to ask the City Council to pursue some other type of dedicated revenue source for transportation projects.

Given that many other jurisdictions have a dedicated source of funding for transportation projects, Board Member Young inquired if this enables them to obtain more grant funding. Mr. Fiene answered affirmatively. He said the City is definitely impacted because of their lack of ability to provide local matching funds, which is usually a requirement of grant funding. Board Member Young said this fact should be clearly stated at the public hearing, as well. He pointed out that when public agencies apply for grant funding from the Transportation Improvement Board, one of their criteria is that there be a dedicated source of revenue that would allow them to match the grant funding.

Board Member Young inquired if the City has the ability to carry funds from one fiscal year to the next if projects are started but not completed. Mr. Fiene said the City requires that a new budget be established each year. While the funds are not necessarily carried over, there usually is no problem with appropriating the necessary funds to cover the remainder of the project. Staff is working with the Finance Department to come up with a policy that would allow them to carry over funds from one fiscal year to the next for projects that are not completed.

Board Member Young expressed his concern that an overlay program of roughly every 60 years is totally inadequate. Once the streets fall into significant disrepair, it will cost significantly more for the City to repair them. He encouraged staff to emphasize this situation at the public hearing. He suggested that graphs and charts should be provided as visual aids. It is important that the public understand what they are being asked to pay for.

Board Member Freeman inquired how long a roadway would normally last between overlays. Mr. Fiene said the average lifespan of a roadway is between 20 and 30 years. If the City were to wait 40 or 50 years to do an overlay, it would cost them more overall than if the work were done on a 30-year cycle. Board Member Freeman said that in addition to the higher

cost of building the road, there would also be a significant impact and cost to the citizens of Edmonds who have to drive on the damaged roads. Mr. Fiene stated that any overlay cycle that is greater than 40 years could cause significant problems in the future.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if the Board could recommend denial of the transportation plan as a wake up call to the City Council that something needs to be done. Mr. Fiene said it is important that the facts are presented. Board Member Dewhirst agreed, and said this review process provides an opportunity for the staff to clearly present these facts.

Mr. Chave cautioned that it is important to look at the total funding picture for all funding sources and expenditures. It is not as simple as comparing funds between cities and how they collect and allocate their money. It is also important to look at how the various cities use their funding tools. To make an educated review, the Board would really have to look at the total picture. He said Mr. Fiene has provided a good run down of the transportation situation, but Ms. Ohlde should also be given an opportunity to go through a comparison of how she operates parks program verses other cities, as well.

CONTINUED REVIEW OF POTENTIAL CODE AMENDMENTS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE DRAFT DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

Mr. Chave recalled that this item was carried over from the Board's last meeting because there were some issues they wanted to discuss further. He noted that a public hearing has tentatively been scheduled for March 10, 2004.

EMC 8.51.030.A.7

Mr. Chave said that, at the request of the Board, staff invited Jerry Gannon, Assistant Edmonds Police Chief, to provide information related to the enforcement issues raised by the Board at their last meeting.

Jerry Gannon, Assistant Edmonds Police Chief, explained that the City currently has two ordinance enforcement officers. One is full time and the other is shared with the City of Mountlake Terrace. The ordinance enforcement officers are charged with the responsibility of both animal control and parking enforcement. However, the police department has placed a greater priority on animal control because it is more directly related to public safety. Parking enforcement issues are typically only addressed if the City receives a complaint.

Board Member Crim noted that one of the suggestions from the parking study is that the City should somehow enforce the prohibition against employees parking in certain areas in the downtown. The Board has raised the question of how the enforcement officer would be able to differentiate between employee and customer vehicles. Officer Gannon said this would require some type of database for the enforcement officers to use when checking license plates. Board Member Crim noted that it would be difficult to differentiate between employees who are parking to shop and those who are parking for work.

Mr. Chave recalled that the Board had a question as to whether an increase in parking fines would help the enforcement situation. Officer Gannon said that would be questionable. He noted that State courts get a portion of the revenue from each ticket, so the increase would have to be rather significant to have an impact. He questioned whether a significantly higher fee would really help the downtown businesses. He said it would take a lot of tickets to generate enough revenue to support even a part-time parking enforcement officer. He estimated the cost of a part-time officer to be about \$30,000 per year.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired if the police department receives a lot of complaints related to parking at this time. Officer Gannon answered that they do not receive a lot of complaints about overtime parking, but they do receive numerous complaints about abandoned vehicles.

Board Member Young inquired how the aggressiveness of enforcing the parking regulations would impact the turn over rate of parking in the downtown area. He noted that it would almost require a full-time officer to patrol all of the areas where parking is regulated in the City. If this is not possible, then perhaps it would be counterproductive to have regulations that cannot be enforced properly. Officer Gannon said that unless the City had a dedicated parking enforcement officer, it would be hard to keep up with enforcement of the parking regulations. From time to time, the patrol officers monitor the parking situation and issue tickets. This tends to clear out the problem for a while, but as soon as they stop enforcement on a regular

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basis, the problems resurface. If a full-time officer could be dedicated to parking enforcement, that officer would become familiar with regular violators, and they would likely be able to get these individuals to comply with the regulations. But it takes consistent enforcement to get the parking regulations to work well. Right now, the City does not have the personnel to provide a full-time officer for parking enforcement.

Board Member Young said the Board heard a lot of testimony from the downtown business owners, and the Board agrees, that they do not want to make parking a burden of doing business in the downtown area. He questioned how the City could enforce the parking regulations to maximize the turn over in front of business establishments. Officer Gannon said he often receives calls from business owners complaining that a neighboring business owner is parking three or four vehicles in front of his establishment.

Board Member Works asked how other local communities are handling parking in their downtown areas. Officer Gannon said the Cities of Redmond and Kirkland have full-time enforcement officers to work in these areas. The City of Lynnwood does not have a lot of on-street parking, so they do not have the same problem as Edmonds.

Board Member Crim said that after hearing what kinds of problems the employee parking regulations could create, it seems it would be better not to try and set up a separate parking scheme for employee parking. This just seems to compound the enforcement problems. He said he would be inclined to eliminate EMC 8.51.030.A.7 altogether and rely on the City's standard three-hour parking limitation to control parking on the core pedestrian streets of Main Street and Fifth Avenue. The remainder of the Board concurred.

Board Member Cassutt referred to the parking area that is located at Fourth and Main, which is currently dedicated to permit parking only. She noted that at most times, there are numerous parking spaces available in this lot for public parking. She questioned if a portion of the lot could be designated as public parking for customers. Mr. Chave said the parking study recommended that this lot be dedicated for three-hour public parking. This would not require a code amendment. He said the Board could forward a recommendation to the City Council that this policy be changed.

EMC 8.51.040.E

Mr. Chave advised that the proposed amendment for EMC 8.51.040.E would establish the cost for employee parking permits. He advised that the parking study recommends this fee be increased from \$25 per year to \$50 per year. He noted that, even if the fee were increased, it would not likely provide the necessary funding to enable the City to hire even a part-time parking enforcement officer. He asked that the Board provide direction on whether the fee should be increased or not.

Board Member Freeman said she believes that even a \$50 annual fee would be very inexpensive to provide parking for an employee for an entire year. Mr. Chave noted that a \$50 fee would equate to about \$4 per month for each permit.

Board Member Dewhirst said he does not have any feeling one way or the other as to what the appropriate fee amount would be. He suggested that the Board send this matter to the City Council and let them make the decision since this is more of a political decision. He explained that if the fee is raised, the City Council would have to create a policy to identify how the money would be spent. The arguments both pro and con in the report are good. However, since the Board does not have any control over fees, they should leave this decision to the City Council. Mr. Chave said that if the Board does not have a strong feeling one way or the other, they could leave the decision to the City Council. But if they feel that parking is under funded and this revenue could provide more funding for enforcement, they should make the fee increase part of their recommendation.

Don Kreiman reported that of the 500 employee parking permits that are available, the most the City has ever sold in a year is 350, and that number has declined in recent years. He emphasized that he believes a funding mechanism for enforcement of the parking regulations is extremely important.

Board Member Crim noted that the parking study recommended that the employee parking permit fee be increased to \$50 per year. Unless the Board can come up with a real good reason to change this recommendation, he suggested that it stand for the public hearing. While the increased fee would not provide all of the funding necessary for a parking enforcement officer, it could provide partial funding.

Board Member Works referred to the in-lieu-of parking fund that was established by the City several years ago. Mr. Chave said this revenue was dedicated for certain purposes and he does not believe it would be possible to use these funds for parking enforcement. Board Member Young suggested that the City Council could decide that since the City does not need more parking than what is currently available, this funding could be used to help funding parking enforcement instead. He said that while the City Council is responsible for setting the actual fees, he agreed with Board Member Crim that the Board should go with the recommendation made in the parking study.

Board Member Crim expressed his belief that if the City is going to have parking rules, they must provide some enforcement. It would be counterproductive to decrease the amount of money allocated to enforcement. Whether the fee increase would provide enough funding in addition to other available funding to provide a parking enforcement officer should be left to the City Council to decide.

Board Member Freeman said she feels it is important to consider an increase in the parking permit fee to enable the City to collect revenue to get started on the plans identified in the study. For example, signage would be a good place to start.

Mr. Kreiman said he was informed by Mr. Bowman that the revenue generated by the in-lieu-of parking program could only be used for capital projects, and this would not include funding for a parking enforcement officer. Board Member Cassutt said that was her understanding, as well. Board Member Young said that because the City does not need a parking structure, the City Council should be able to direct where this money could be spend. He said it is important to convey to the City Council that no matter what is done to make the physical parking requirements simple, the efforts will not accomplish anything for the commercial health of the downtown if there is not adequate enforcement. The remainder of the Board concurred.

The Board concluded that they would leave the current draft as is. This would increase the permit fee to \$50 per year and allow the money to be used for all manner of things related to parking in the downtown area. Mr. Chave said he would try to provide more information related to this matter before the public hearing.

ECDC 17.50.010.A-C

Mr. Chave recalled that at the last meeting the Board discussed whether the new parking provisions should be applicable to the Commercial Waterfront (CW) zoned properties. As drafted, the regulations would apply to both the CW and the Commercial Business (BC) zones.

Board Member Dewhirst inquired regarding the zoning of the Harbor Square property. Mr. Chave answered that this property was zoned General Commercial (CG) through a contract rezone that governs the use of the property. Any redeveloped on this site would require a new contract rezone. He explained that unless there are parking standards within the contract rezone, the new parking provisions could be applied. He said his recollection is that the contract rezone does not have its own set of parking standards.

Mr. Chave explained that as this section is currently written, any new construction in the BC or CW zones would have to meet a fixed parking standard. Once the construction is completed, the parking standard would not change regardless of what the building is used for in the future. This would continue the trend of parking that is currently available in the downtown area.

Mr. Chave said the CW zones are a little bit different than the BC zones because they provide opportunities for a lot more off-street parking. However, he said he would anticipate some of the same kinds of benefits and concerns that apply to the BC zones. If the ratio is set too low, the amount of available parking could be eroded over time. While the uses allowed in the CW zone are different, he said he does not anticipate that the concerns would be greater.

Board Member Dewhirst said that when the Board reviewed the Port's Master Plan a few years ago, there was a lot of conversation about how much land was dedicated to parking and its proximity to the waterfront. The environmental, land use and aesthetic issues were all discussed. Mr. Chave said that if the Board wants to encourage the use of available space, then including the CW zone would have benefits.

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Board Member Dewhirst said he would support leaving the current draft as is. This would allow properties in the CW zone to make use of the same parking standards as properties in the BC zone. However, he would include the CG zoned property in the downtown, as well. The remainder of the Board concurred.

ECDC 17.50.010.C.1

Mr. Chave said this section would establish a flat parking rate for all commercial buildings or the commercial space of mixed-use buildings at one stall for every 500 square feet of commercial space. He said that at the last meeting the Board discussed other options that included:

- A standard of one stall for every 600 square feet of commercial space.
- No parking standard at all. Let the market drive it.
- A standard of one stall for every 700 feet of building space regardless of the use.

Mr. Chave noted that the parking study concluded that the current parking ratio in the downtown area is one stall for every 480 square feet of commercial space. Board Member Works noted that the public testimony supported the proposal of one stall for every 500 square feet of commercial space. Board Member Crim noted that this standard would be defensible since that is what currently exists, and the study has indicated that there is adequate parking in the downtown area.

Mr. Chave recalled that the Board discussed the option of having the same parking standard for both commercial and residential uses. However, staff is concerned that this would encourage the construction of all commercial buildings in the downtown area. He questioned if this would really be compatible with the mixed uses in the downtown area. He noted that once a building is constructed, there would be no restrictions on the use. He suggested that this could result in a significant parking ratio problem.

The Board agreed to leave this standard as currently drafted.

Board Member Crim referred to the exception proposed by the consultant, which would exempt retail and accessory uses of 1,500 square feet or less from having to meet the parking requirements. Mr. Chave said the intent of this provision is to allow very small additions without requiring additional parking. He noted that the current draft does not include this exception, and staff has cautioned that this provision could potentially leave a loophole open for people to avoid the parking standards.

Board Member Dewhirst pointed out that a 1,500 square foot structure is very small, so this exception might be appropriate. However, he said he is also concerned about ending up with little developments that are done to avoid the parking requirements. Board Member Guenther said this exception could result in the development of a campus of small buildings with no parking. However, he did not feel this type of development would be feasible because the developer would be unable to obtain financing without providing adequate parking. In addition, he said he does not see many opportunities for this to occur in the downtown. He said he can see the benefit of allowing this exemption. It would enable a property owner to add a small amount of space without having to provide more parking. If no exemption is allowed, a property owner would have to have 3,500 square feet of space in order to build an addition of 1,500 square feet and provide the additional required three parking spaces. Mr. Chave said that the City tends to see wholesale reconstruction rather than small additions in the downtown area.

Board Member Dewhirst felt the proposed parking ratio of one stall for every 500 square feet of commercial space was too strict. But he could accept it if an exception was allowed for small structures.

Board Member Young said that unless the consultant can give a very good reason to support the inclusion of the exception, he would propose that it not be part of the recommendation. The majority of the Board agreed that the exception should be excluded from the draft proposal.

Mr. Chave suggested that this option not be included in the proposal at this time. However, the Board should highlight that this was a recommendation made by the consultant in the parking study.

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ECDC 17.50.070.C

Mr. Chave said this section creates an opportunity for a project to demonstrate a need for a parking requirement that is less than the code and get that approved. However, with the reduction/consolidation of parking standards in the downtown area, this may be too controversial to justify.

Board Member Guenther said he recently worked on a project where a parking study was done that could justify a significant reduction in the number of parking spaces required. This allowed the developer to provide more retail space. He recommended that this option be included in the proposal to allow flexibility.

Board Member Dewhirst suggested that if this provision remains in the document, Section 17.50.060.C.3 should be changed to read, "Institute of Traffic Engineers or Urban Land Institute parking standards or specific use surveys based on regional data that shows the need for less parking." The remainder of the Board agreed that there should be an exception, but the applicant should have to provide very specific information to support the exception.

ECDC 17.50.070.D

Mr. Chave said this section would establish design criteria for parking lots. He noted that the responsibility for this has been located in other sections of the code for many years. Therefore, the Board may wish to eliminate this section from the draft.

Board Member Young said he believes the proposed document must address the amount of parking needed, but it does not need to address design issues. These issues are handled by the Architectural Design Board as they review the design standards. The remainder of the Board concurred that this section should be eliminated. They also agreed that ECDC 17.50.080 should also be eliminated for the same reasons.

Continued Discussion

Board Member Dewhirst recalled an idea brought forward by Mr. Hertrich a few years ago that he picked up from a parking ordinance from a City north of San Diego. When a new development eliminates a curbside parking space, they have to provide another curbside space somewhere else. Curbside parking in Edmonds is a valued commodity. He inquired if the Board would be interested in including language requiring developers to replace any on-street parking that is eliminated in the core downtown area by providing a similar number of parking spaces that are free to the public.

Mr. Chave said he would like to discuss this concept with the Traffic Engineer and Mr. Bullock, who have more experience and knowledge regarding the matter, to see if this is really a problem in the City. He said that in most cases, the redevelopment projects end up consolidating entrances rather than creating new ones. The overall result is probably not a net loss. This option should also be discussed with the City Attorney to find out if it would even be legal. He suggested that since this is a concept the Board and staff has not researched significantly, perhaps it would be best not to include it in the draft document at this time. However, he agreed that it would be a good topic of discussion by the Board at a future date. The remainder of the Board agreed.

WORK SESSION ON ISSUES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE 2004 AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND CRITICAL AREAS REGULATIONS

Mr. Chave referred the Board to the information that was provided by staff on the various plan updates that will be reviewed by the Board as part of the Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas Regulations updates. He advised that staff has interviewed five consultant teams for the critical areas study, and one will be selected shortly. The project should start by the first week of March and staff will work with the consultant to coordinate a schedule for public workshops, etc.

Mr. Chave suggested that the various Board subcommittees provide their reports at the last meeting in March. These reports can be used to help staff formulate a public information piece for the public meetings that will be held the end of April. The intent is to encourage the public to participate and give feedback into the process. In the past, staff has found it successful to explain the range of options that are available and then the public is better able to provide feedback.

Mr. Chave said the goal is to develop a set of options for each of the segments of the Comprehensive Plan Review: the Downtown/Waterfront Plan, the Highway 99 Plan and the Critical Areas Ordinance. This information will be disseminated to the public to help them understand the issues so that they can intelligently comment on them. After the public meetings, the staff and consultant team will sift through the comments to create a logical proposal. He said it is important for the public to provide feedback early in the process.

Board Member Young said it would be helpful to him if the staff could establish a timeline to identify when discrete elements of the plan must be completed after the consultant as has been selected and the scope of work is developed. Mr. Chave said that is the staff's intent. Firm dates will be established for the public meetings and when the various drafts need to be completed. This schedule will be solidified within the next few weeks.

Mr. Chave said the regional plan update could run well into next year. Snohomish County has several alternatives to consider. When comparing the different maps, it is apparent that the impacts on the Esperance area would remain the same with all of the alternatives being considered. This plan will provide a framework for how the City's Comprehensive Plan must relate to areas in the county and how the City is to do their share to meet the growth targets.

Board Member Young inquired where, in the overall discussion and review of the Comprehensive Plan, the generic subject of residential density would be addressed. Mr. Chave said it would come up in the specific context of the critical areas update for the north part of the City. It will also come up when discussing the Downtown/Waterfront and Highway 99 Plans. The current Comprehensive Plan targets growth into activity centers where they have the most opportunity for change. It will be important to try and explain this at the initial public work session so the public has a clear understanding of the concept that underlies the original Comprehensive Plan that was created in 1994. The staff will ask the public if the same concept is still applicable. They will identify the growth targets the City must plan for. As they talk about the downtown plans and recommendations for Highway 99, these growth targets will have to be factored in to determine how they impact the City's capacity to accommodate the growth. They will also need to factor in the critical areas in the north part of the City. They will get information that impacts density in certain areas, but they will not have a general discussion about density in all areas of the City.

Board Member Young said the Board had talked previously about the possibility of mandates from the Growth Management Hearings Board regarding the issue of looking at large lot zones. Mr. Chave said this issue would be addressed as part of the critical areas review. All of the City's large lot zoning, with one exception, is located in the north part of the City. This is in an area where there are a number of critical areas and that is part of the justification for large lot zoning. There is one area of large lot zoning (RS-12) south of the downtown, and this area has not been identified as a critical area. The City will probably have to change this zoning at some point.

Mr. Chave said the City is not being compelled to look at the general issue of density at this time. The mandate revolves around capacity and the projected growth target. Since the City is in a situation where the capacity is sufficient to handle the growth targets, no changes will be necessary. But the City must review their critical areas regulations from a best available science standpoint and they need to make sure the justification for the large lot zoning is based on best available science.

Mr. Chave said that at the first meeting in March, staff will have more information on the Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas review schedule. They should also have a scope of work ready for the Board's review.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

The Board reviewed the March 10th agenda, which includes public hearing on the draft amendments and administrative actions intended to implement the draft downtown parking study. It also includes an update and background information on the 2004 amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas regulations. Mr. Chave noted that the staff has started to update the City's website to include more information about the Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas regulations review. This will be expanded over the next several months.

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The Board reviewed the March 24th agenda, which includes a public hearing on the 2004-2009 Capital Improvement Plan and a public hearing on the rezone request for property located at 23904 Edmonds Way. A public hearing on the City Park access and circulation study is also scheduled for that evening. In addition, the Board agreed that the subcommittees would report their activities.

Because of the lengthy agenda scheduled for March 24th, the Board discussed that perhaps the subcommittee reports could be done at 6:00 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. Another option would be to reschedule one of the public hearings to a future date.

Board Member Young recalled that Mr. Chave indicated at an earlier meeting that the City Council asked the Board to consider the issue of what quasi-judicial actions were appealable to the City Council versus Superior Court. Mr. Chave said staff is working to redraft Chapter 20 of the Development Code, which has all of the process regulations. As soon as they get this in a workable form, they will bring it before the Board for review.

The Board discussed possible dates for a retreat. They discussed that perhaps it would be appropriate for the subcommittees to report at the retreat rather than at the March 24th meeting. They also suggested that the Highway 99 Task Force provide their report at the retreat. The Board asked that staff schedule a location for the retreat to take place on April 7th at 6:00 p.m.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Board Member Young provided no comments during this portion of the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Guenther inquired about the vacant Planning Board position. Mr. Chave said the deadline for applications has expired, and the Mayor is in the process of interviewing the candidates.

Board Member Dewhirst reported that Sound Transit has started its Phase II Plan. A consultant team has been hired and they are starting to go out to the cities and counties. The first phase is to investigate and update the vision that was adopted in 1996 to see if it is still valid. This will be an interesting project.

Board Member Dewhirst reported that Community Transit is in the process of updating their six-year service implementation plan. They have indicated their desire to implement what is known as "bus rapid transit" on Highway 99. There are examples of this in Vancouver B.C. and Eugene, Oregon. They will want to start meeting with local jurisdictions along Highway 99 to discuss this concept. The Highway 99 Task Force should be aware of this process.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:12 P.M.

APPROVED