

**CITY OF EDMONDS  
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**February 11, 2015**

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Chair Tibbott called the meeting of the Edmonds Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Public Safety Complex, 250 – 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Neil Tibbott, Chair  
Philip Lovell, Vice Chair  
Todd Cloutier  
Careen Rubenkönig  
Daniel Robles  
Valerie Stewart  
Mike Nelson

**STAFF PRESENT**

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager  
Patrick Doherty, Economic Development and Community Services Director  
Bertrand Hauss, Transportation Engineer

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Evan Zhao, Student Representative

**READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBER STEWART MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2015 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER NELSON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, WITH BOARD MEMBERS RUBENKONIG AND CLOUTIER ABSTAINING.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Board.

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD**

Chair Tibbott invited the Board Members to comment on the written report provided by the Development Services Director.

Vice Chair Lovell said the report indicates that the Draft Land Use Element for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update was the subject of a City Council study session on January 28<sup>th</sup>. He said his understanding is that the Board will have another work session on the element, as well. Mr. Chave clarified that the Board has not technically finished its work on any of the Comprehensive Plan elements.

Board Member Stewart complimented Ms. Hope on the good Director's Report. She said she appreciates learning about the activities that are going on in the City and in other jurisdictions. The information is helpful to the Board's discussion and decision making process.

Chair Tibbott asked if anyone had visited the new Hawk Crossing Signal that was recently installed on SR-104. Board Member Stewart said she used the signal with a group of people and found it works very well. Vice Chair Lovell said he has also traveled by vehicle past the signal, but there was no one waiting to cross. He pointed out that lights flash when someone is waiting to cross to alert vehicular traffic to stop. It was noted that the City's website includes a link that provides instructions on how the signal works. Chair Tibbott commented that it is likely this type of signal will be used in other locations throughout the City in the near future.

## **DISCUSSION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT OF 2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

Mr. Doherty distributed colored copies of the Goals and Policies Section of the Economic Development Element, which tracks the changes that have been made to date. He advised that substantial changes were made to the narrative portion of the Economic Development Element, and providing a document that tracks the changes would have resulted in numerous pages for the Board to review. However, it is available upon request.

Mr. Doherty reviewed that the existing Economic Development Element was approved in 2006 and is the oldest and least updated element of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed revisions constitute a substantial rewrite of the element. He reported that a working subcommittee of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) reviewed the Goals and Policies Component and it was presented to the entire EDC for review and input on December 17<sup>th</sup>. The Goals and Policies Component includes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, which was also the subject of the EDC's review and comment. About 90% of the EDC's comments were incorporated into the draft goals and policies.

Mr. Doherty explained that while much of the text in the Draft Economic Development Element is new or revised, the preexisting format was followed to be consistent with the other elements in the Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed that the draft element was broken into the following sections:

- **Introduction and Discussion of Economic Development.** This component is intended to enshrine the City's goals, policies and strategies for growing the local economy in order to enhance the quality of life. It makes it clear that programs and activities are intended to broaden and strengthen the local tax base, provide a greater range of goods and services, and provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **The Edmonds Economy.** This component is comprised of four basic sections: Population, Employment, Retail Sales, and City Revenues and Sustainability.

The Population Section provides information on total population, average age, ethnic make-up, households, household income, and labor force population. The summary of conclusions from the Population Section include:

- The population growth lags countywide averages.
- The labor force population is a smaller percentage than in similar sized cities.
- The retiree population is relatively larger than average.
- The household income is relatively higher than average.
- The higher-income retirees, as a substantial component of the overall population, may create a sizeable cohort with disposable income and leisure time.
- There is potential for turnover in housing stock in the next 10 to 15 years, converting to couples and young families, creating increased demand for certain goods and services. This turnover is from senior population who move from large homes.
- The generally more affluent population creates demand for a wide variety of goods and services, but not all of that is captured in Edmonds.
- The higher-priced housing creates a demand for more affordable housing options.

The Employment Section provides information on jobs per capita, size of the labor force, and jobs per sector. The summary of conclusions from the Employment Section include:

- The services sector is and will continue to be the largest, especially the health care sector.

**APPROVED**

- The retail sector provides potential for growth, both in sales and employment
- The education; government; finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) and Wholesale Trade and Utilities (WTU) sectors are expected to remain stable.
- The manufacturing sector is currently small, but the artisanal industries are rising.
- There is a substantial gap between residents in the labor force (21,174) and in-city jobs (13,149).
- Only 20% of the labor force works in Edmonds, meaning that approximately 17,000 residents commute away for work and approximately 8,900 commute into Edmonds to fill the jobs not taken by the City's residents.

Given the higher average income in Edmonds, the fact that only 20% of the work force can find jobs in Edmonds suggests that the higher paying jobs to sustain people are not found in Edmonds. Conversely, of the 9,000 jobs in Edmonds, most are in the low paying service sector. Because of housing costs, people who occupy these jobs cannot live in Edmonds. This suggests two goals in planning. First, the need to seek more high paying jobs through economic development; and second, the need to seek more affordable housing for people who occupy jobs at the lower level of income.

The Retail Sales Section provides information regarding the top retail sales sectors, taxable retail sales per capita, and retail sales "leakage" by category. The average retail sales expenditures are based on the number of households in Edmonds, the average income of those households, and the City's geographic location. The summary of conclusions for the Retail Sales Section include:

- Edmonds captures 84% of the total anticipated retail sales per capita.
- Vehicle sales, which draw people from outside of Edmonds, skew the data. Extracting vehicle sales leaves only 51% of anticipated retail sales per capita.
- There is almost a 50% leakage of potential non-vehicle sales.
- Non-vehicle retail sectors could provide substantial growth potential.

The City Revenues and Sustainability Section provides information on the relationship between City revenue, provision of services and quality of life; the municipal revenue by source (almost 75% derived from taxes); and the split between sales and property taxes as compared with other cities. It points out that Edmonds relies more on property tax. The summary of conclusions for the City Revenues and Sustainability Section include:

- Recapturing of even a modest amount of retail sales leakage could yield much needed sales tax revenue.
- Appropriate new development or redevelopment would provide a one-time "new construction" property tax, adding to the future property tax revenue baseline. It would also provide sales tax from construction materials and activities, as well as sales and utility tax from new residents, workers, etc.

- **Economic Development Goals and Policies.** This component is based on the SWOT Analysis. The staff and EDC worked through the SWOT Analysis and placed particular emphasis on identifying new opportunities. Highlights of the opportunities include:

- Leveraging the City's wonderful amenities and "character" for business growth.
- Leveraging arts community and the Edmonds Center for the Arts (ECA) for economic impact.
- Leveraging telecommunications/technology assets.
- Planning and implementing infrastructure improvements. Tie improvements where they will see commensurate development and uses.
- Working with property owners and developers to pursue appropriate redevelopment, including hospitality, in key locations such as Highway 99, Westgate, and the fringe of downtown.
- Expanding and enhancing tourism.

This component outlines the following goals:

- **Goal A** – Foster a healthy business community that encourages appropriately-scaled growth and investment that offers a wide range of goods and services, provides employment and enhances revenues.

- **Goal B** – Revitalize and enhance the City’s business districts, balancing the needs for housing, commerce and employment development with neighborhood character, amenities and scale.
  - **Goal C** – Diversify and grow the City’s economic make up to reduce sales leakage, attract spending from nearby communities, enhance local employment, and increase municipal tax revenues to support local services.
  - **Goal D** – Support and enhance the community’s quality of life for residents, workers and visitors in order to sustain and attract businesses and investment and enhance economic vitality. Not only is quality of life important for those who are already live in Edmonds, it is also important to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses. Quality of life is also important to attract new people to live in Edmonds and be part of the economy.
  - **Goal E** – Expand and enhance the tourism sector to attract outside spending to help fuel the local economy. This is an entirely new goal.
- **Implementation.** This component discusses measures, resources and programs that can implement the various goals and policies, including staff support, outreach and activities; legislative actions; City expenditures; activities and programs by Port of Edmonds; programs by Edmonds Community College; and collaborative efforts between the Chamber, City and others.

The City adopted a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) in 2013, and Strategic Objective 1 calls for “creating economic health, vitality and sustainability. In addition, 22 of the 88 action items in the SAP relate directly to economic development, including both short-term (3-5 year) actions and long-term (5-10 year) actions. An implementation plan for the SAP will be presented to the City Council during the first quarter of 2015.

Success of the City’s economic development efforts can be difficult to pinpoint and measure because economic growth or decline may be more tied to regional and national economic cycles than the City’s efforts. Nevertheless, progress can be measured to some degree. Staff is recommending two basic performance measures to officially track and measure employment. First, annual employment growth (or decline) is trackable via State and U.S. census data. Not only would the City track the number of jobs in Edmonds, but the number of jobs that are filled by Edmonds residents and the number of Edmonds residents who work outside the City. In addition, Snohomish County growth targets have assigned 2,269 new jobs to Edmonds for the planning horizon of 2035, and the City can measure employment both in absolute terms and in relation to this target number.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to written comments he previously submitted about the need to increase affordable housing stock and emphasize and protect the desirability of Edmonds. He said he believes his concerns have all been addressed via the summaries that were provided at the end of each section. The document clearly emphasizes the concept of working both ends to the middle when looking at the statistics, dichotomy and incongruent aspects of the City. The fact that the City has higher incomes and higher housing costs leads to the conclusion that people are going elsewhere to get higher paying jobs. Conversely, the lower paying, service-oriented jobs do not pay enough for people to afford the high cost of housing in Edmonds. He expressed his belief that the City needs to put more focus on affordable housing. He said he would like to see the conclusions relative to the statistics incorporated into the element so people can have a clear understanding of the situation. Mr. Doherty pointed out that, as currently drafted, each component of the Economic Development Element provides a summary paragraph of what can be concluded from the data and statistics. Board Member Nelson noted that the report identifies the percentage of people leaving and coming into the City for jobs, but identifying the actual numbers would make the situation clearer.

Board Member Stewart suggested that the language should place more emphasis the City’s unique location on the waterfront, as well as its other incredible environmental assets. She recalled that, a few years ago, some members of the EDC were strong proponents of environmental sustainability and spoke on behalf of the environment enough to create a balance in the discussion. For example, the EDC discussed the need to attract and promote clean, green industry within the City. She suggested it would be appropriate to add language relative to environmental sustainability and social equity. As an example, she referenced the City of Shoreline’s language that includes the goal of “incorporating environmental quality and social equity into economic development as part of a Triple Bottom Line approach to sustainability.” The City of Bellingham also has language to ensure that economic growth is balanced so that the community values of environmental quality and social equity are addressed. She summarized that, if the City wants to be progressive in its thinking, it must include environmental sustainability and social equity in a more clear fashion so that people know the City understands and is trying to address the problem. While the City has housing opportunities (multi-family units) to meet the needs of the young professionals who are

unmarried, many of them leave the City when they have a family and want to purchase a single-family home. The existing housing stock is older, and properties are being snatched up for redevelopment into mega mansions that are more expensive. This eliminates the affordable unit that was there before.

Mr. Doherty pointed out that Goal D calls for a balance between the quality of life and economic development. Perhaps this goal could be enhanced, and an additional policy could be added that makes reference to the balance between environmental goals, sustainability, and social equity. He also pointed out that the SWOT Analysis lists some of the City's strengths and attributes (i.e. picturesque waterfront community, distinct neighborhood business districts, historic downtown, and arts community), and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan talk about the wonderful attributes of the City, as well. Again, he agreed to fashion a new policy for Goal D that touches on the more succinct balance between economic development and recognizing environmental, sustainable and social equity issues. The Board agreed that would be appropriate.

The Board discussed the Introductory Section of the Economic Development Element, which explains why economic development is important. Mr. Doherty said Board Member Stewart is proposing that the following language be inserted before the final paragraph:

*"In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the "Triple Bottom Line" approach is commonly used. This concept was initiated by John Elkington in 1994 and is applied in economies all over the developing world. It integrates economic development with social responsibility and environmental sustainability and is often referred to as the three P's: People, Planet, Profit. The following measures of "Triple Bottom Line" economics are: vibrant communities (people), health environment (planet), and strong profitability (profit). All these considerations are at the forefront of economic development planning in our City."*

Mr. Doherty said staff discussed the language proposed by Board Member Stewart and offered the following verbiage:

*"In simple terms, economic development has often been thought of as meaning encouraging 'growth.' In recent years, more and more communities have been thinking in terms of how economic development fits within a general sustainability framework for the community. For example, some have gravitated toward Triple Bottom Line accounting, which attempts to consider environmental and human factors as well as economic health. An example of another approach is the Circles of Sustainability Framework, which attempts to relate economic prosperity, ecological sustainability, political governance, and cultural engagement to the overall health of the community. Regardless of the specific tools used, the general principle is that economic development is a part of the overall health of the community and must be considered as an integral part of planning for the future—not considered in isolation."*

Board Member Stewart commented that staff's proposed verbiage provides a lot of good information. However, after further consideration, she suggested that both alternatives might be too wordy. She suggested that the following statement would be adequate:

*"Economic Development is essential to preserving the existing level of service and attaining long-range goals for sustainable growth and community vitality. The City will ensure that economic growth is balanced with other community values of environmental quality and social equity."*

Mr. Chave explained that "Triple Bottom Line" is common terminology that is most often used as a reporting tool. He does not necessarily like to use it when talking about sustainability because it infers the notion of balance. Rather than talking about tradeoffs, the intent is to look at the different factors and get them pointing in the same direction. The better approach is to address economic development while considering the social impacts and how to enhance the environment at the same time. This results in a win/win situation rather than looking for equilibrium. Board Member Cloutier agreed that using the word "balance" implies opposing forces rather than aligning all aspects. Mr. Chave explained that his proposed language was an attempt to get at the notion of a combination rather than a balance of all of the various aspects. It goes beyond the concept of Triple Bottom Line to look at the different ramifications and how they fit together. However, he said he would also support the simplified language recommended by Board Member Stewart.

Vice Chair Lovell asked how the City would measure whether they have enough of one component or the other and if the intent is to measure all future development projects based on all three aspects. Board Member Stewart pointed out that there is value in retaining environmental assets on site whenever possible, and dollars values can be attached to the assets. Social

equity could be measured, as well. Walkability, access to jobs, etc. are all important aspects of livability. Vice Chair Lovell questioned how the City would be able to convince property owners who want to get the “best bang for their buck” to invest in the preservation of certain environmental aspects of the site. Board Member Stewart said there are educational materials available to educate builders and realtors about the value of preserving the natural environment.

Board Member Rubenkönig said she views the introduction as a description of the setting in which the City is looking at economic development, and it is not intended to be a policy or guideline. She supports a general approach that identifies the different aspects that will be considered such as sustainability, political governance, cultural engagement, and Triple Bottom Line. The introductory statement is followed by an analysis of the community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and then by goals and objectives.

Mr. Chave suggested that staff could rework the paragraph to retain the concept but reduce the language down and perhaps provide a diagram. Mr. Doherty said an additional policy could be added to reflect that social equity, environmental sustainability and economic development are all vital components. The Board agreed that would be appropriate.

Board Member Robles said that while the information in staff’s alternative is good, perhaps it could be rewritten in the collective tense to make it clear that Edmonds is a community that looks through this lens. He also asked if a distinction could be made between economic development and economic growth. He commented that it has been well established that infinite growth on finite resources is a thing of the past. Also, if economic growth is due to regional and state externalities, he questioned why it needs to be addressed in the City’s Economic Development Element. The plan should define development in terms of things that are important to the City, and economic growth should be left up to other factors. He commented that, unfortunately, there is no accounting system for the intangible items they are talking about. However, it may be to the City’s advantage to define what social, creative and intellectual capital is. If there is no measurement system, they could make one.

Board Member Robles voiced concern that the economic development profile glossed over manufacturing. He noted that a lot of things are being manufactured now that would be ideal for the Edmonds environment such as 3-D printing, software development, recording studios, energy production and so forth. This seems like an opportunity that should show up someplace as a way to generate jobs to keep people here and to provide the development that the City seeks to pay its liabilities.

Board Member Robles commented that the SWOT analysis is supposed to be the result of a very durable and rigorous process where the truth really comes out. He expressed concern that the SWOT Analysis contained in draft language does not identify any of the threats to the City such as the train, rising sea level, and so forth. He expressed his belief that if the analysis is going to be useful, it must include the threats, along with the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Board Member Nelson noted that statistics related to demographics identifies where Edmonds stands in relationship to eight other cities in its lack of diversity. However, there is no analysis attached to illustrate how this information is relevant to economic development. While the plan could recognize diversity in broad terms, Mr. Doherty cautioned against specifically recognizing the lack of diversity at this time.

Board Member Nelson said the draft language talks about a retail sales leakage of more than 50%, and it would also be helpful to attach a dollar amount to show what is being lost every year. Mr. Doherty said the draft narrative is intended to set the stage and make the point that vehicle sales skew the data. He does not have any information on how many vehicles were purchased by Edmonds residents. While he could do a dollar amount, he is not sure how much it would help. He emphasized that the 50% number gives a high-level notion that there is room to capture more retail growth.

Chair Tibbott said it would be interesting to know the total cost to the City as a result of 50% of sales going to other cities. However, leakage is a difficult economic concept for the City wrap its mind around when it does not know what the opportunities are within Edmonds. For example, could businesses such as Home Depot be duplicated in the City of Edmonds. Mr. Doherty said the City actually has a list by category (Table on Page 102), and the information related to retail sales led to a policy statement that talks about continuing to strive to capture more retail sales.

Chair Tibbott said it would be helpful if the document identified some of the City's opportunities. Mr. Doherty said there are numerous opportunities. For example, there are some large sites, particularly Highway 99, that are underdeveloped and underperforming. There are all sorts of possible development scenarios that could happen in the future such as life style center, mixed-use, office, etc. Any one of these would add retail sales.

Mr. Doherty emphasized that the Economic Development Element is a policy level document that sets up the framework that allows the detailed decision making to happen in the future. The next step is to implement the plan via changes to the zoning regulations, etc. For example, if there is a policy to capture more retail business, then regulations should be generous in accommodating that type of use. Although the draft language invites the Board to go further by presenting some of the detail, that is not the level they are at today. Many of these questions will be answered in other documents, code regulations and future actions. Mr. Chave added that there is a difference between the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan and the actual implementation steps, which might include a marketing plan, business retention plan, etc. That is when you really get into the details of who the City wants to recruit and/or retain. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance as the City figures out future implementation steps.

Board Member Rubenkönig asked if the entry of \$279,092,756 for estimated actual Edmonds taxable sales in retail categories listed includes internet sales. If not, this should be noted because the leakage share could extend beyond the neighboring local economies. Mr. Doherty said this number represents the tax dollars the City received from retail sales, and he is not sure if the streamline sales tax regulations would capture it down to the City level. He agreed to research the issue and report back.

Board Member Nelson suggested that the lack of higher paying jobs and affordable housing options and the lack of diversity should be included on the SWOT Analysis as weaknesses. At the same time, recruiting new businesses that support higher paying jobs and affordable housing options should be identified as opportunities. Board Member Robles observed that the SWOT Analysis could use more work.

Board Member Nelson referenced Policy D.3, which calls for pursuing efforts to communicate with the public about the value of economic vitality to sustain the cities quality of life, services and amenities. He commented that failure to communicate and get the public on board early on and truly engaged in the process will sink the City in many things. He suggested that perhaps it should even be a separate goal; or at the very least, it should be highlighted. Mr. Doherty said the EDC emphasized the need to inform the public, not just at this level, but when they get to discussions about zoning provisions, strategic actions, and infrastructure investments. Explaining how these things can become a platform for economic vitality needs to permeate the greater consciousness to a higher degree.

Board Member Cloutier recalled that a few years ago, Sustainable Edmonds conducted a study of utility usage in Edmonds. Rough numbers indicated that business and residential structures lose approximately \$40 million in gas and electricity. Once this energy is used, it is gone. The Waste Water Treatment Facility and residential homes are the biggest users of gas and electricity in the City, and many of the homes are poorly insulated and water fixtures are inefficient. Improving energy efficiency by just 10% would result in a savings of \$4 million for Edmonds residents, and it is estimated that about 50% of this savings would go into the economy. While decreasing utility usage is good for the environment, it also gives increased resilience in the face of the uncertain future of resources. In addition, it increases affordability because people will be required to spend less to heat their homes. He noted there are also opportunities for local power generation such as local solar water heaters and photovoltaic electricity. He summarized that the discussion about utilities affords an opportunity for the City clean up the existing housing stock relative to insulation and water fixtures, in particular.

Mr. Doherty agreed there is a connection between sustainability and economic vitality, and he agreed to craft language to add in the appropriate locations to make this point clearer. This would be a referential policy that supports the sustainability element goals and policies, with the ancillary benefit of enhancing economic vitality by the liberated income and/or greater affordability that results. Board Member Cloutier said he would like the Economic Development Element to identify the amount of money spent in the City on electricity, natural gas and water, as well as define the leakage and how much money could be saved. This will make it clear energy efficiency can be an economic opportunity as well as a sustainability opportunity. Mr. Doherty asked if Board Member Cloutier has actual numbers to identify what a reasonable delta would be. Board Member Cloutier said Sustainable Edmonds did an experiment with 10 business owners and 10 homeowners in Edmonds. At zero cost, they each saved between 10% and 15% with no work done at all. Those who actually insulated or

took other steps to make their structures more energy efficient were able to save even more. Mr. Doherty suggested that narrative, along with some statistics, could be added in a few places within the element to address how recapturing utility dollars can be a component of economic development. Chair Tibbott said the concept could be expanded on as part of the Utilities Element, as well. The Board agreed that would be appropriate.

Board Member Rubenkönig suggested that another strength is that the City is “*a community that attracts those of a certain demographic to its amenities, services, and variety of housing stock.*” She pointed out that the rate of ownership is higher in Edmonds than in other towns. People choosing to purchase homes in Edmonds should be viewed as a strength.

Next, Board Member Rubenkönig suggested that the following be added to the SWOT Analysis as a weakness, “*The majority of the City’s labor force spends discretionary income in other economic activity centers such as Seattle, Bellevue and Redmond, which are all locations for jobs with higher income potential.*” Mr. Doherty pointed out that not only is the fact that people are leaving the City to find work a weakness, it also results in people spending money outside of Edmonds.

Board Member Rubenkönig observed that other weaknesses, which could also be viewed as opportunities, should also be identified in the SWOT Analysis including:

- “*The infrastructure to support start-up business needs to be identified and strengthened.*”
- “*The virtual business community of Edmonds has low visibility.*”
- “*The perception that Edmonds is not business friendly.*”
- “*The perception that Edmonds does not have infrastructure supporting consistency and predictability in their development activities.*”

Board Member Rubenkönig suggested that the following be added to the SWOT Analysis as opportunities:

- “*Leverage beautiful natural setting of the waterfront, marsh and forests with our walkability factor to garner our share of retail outdoor business activities.*”
- “*Recruit businesses to serve the needs of an aging population (i.e. aging in place design and construction companies; personal assistance services; health support services and independent living services).*”

Mr. Doherty recalled that the EDC tried to make a correlation between the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the SWOT Analysis and the goals and policies in the Economic Development Element. For example, an opportunity would be to recruit more businesses to serve the needs of an aging population, and the policy would be to actually recruit the businesses. The opportunities and policies should work together.

Board Member Rubenkönig recommended that the first bullet on Page 106 should be separated into two sentences. She also recommended that the following two threats identified in the 2006 SWOT Analysis should be retained in the new analysis:

- “*Lifestyle village and new town centers in nearby cities.*” People are attracted to town centers and the City is losing some of this market share, and there is a perception that other communities have a higher quality of life (living green, walkability, housing variety, etc.). Mr. Doherty said these were perceived threats on the horizon when the last SWOT Analysis was created in 2006. Because this now represents the current situation, it must be considered a weakness rather than a threat. The Board agreed this should be listed as a weakness rather than a threat.
- “*Wider variety of housing options and more commercial space.*” Mr. Doherty agreed that this should remain as a listed threat.

Board Member Rubenkönig recalled that when she participated in the Strategic Action Plan process, there was concern that youth and adults continue to leave the City. Because she considers this a threat, she suggested that the following be added to the SWOT Analysis, “*Youth and young adults continue to leave the City.*” While she knows how wonderful Edmonds is as a place to live, it would be interesting to see how the City ranks compared to other Cities relative to livability. If they are not near the top, it should be considered a threat.

Chair Tibbott referred to Board Member Rubenkönig's comments about virtual businesses and noted that the proposed language includes several references to fiber optic, which is infrastructure for virtual businesses. Board Member Rubenkönig said the fiber optic references are related to the cable the City owns that could provide free internet service to the businesses in Edmonds. However, the current virtual businesses are paying for their subscription to the internet. She suggested that they are talking about two separate issues; one is a service that could support and promote virtual businesses, and the other relates to opportunities to create more virtual businesses.

Chair Tibbott asked the Board Members to share their thoughts on whether or not counting employment would be an effective performance measure for the Economic Development Element. If so, then what would be the merits in terms of measuring the progress in economic growth and development in the City? Mr. Doherty said staff is recommending counting employment as a performance measure because there is already a target number for Edmonds called out in the countywide planning policies. With any other measurement, there would be no implicit goal, and the City would have to arbitrarily make one up. Board Member Stewart asked if the employment statistics would include sole proprietorships, individuals who are self employed, and individuals who do internet sales. Mr. Doherty said that would be the intent. However, he acknowledged that there will always be some employment that will not be captured in the statistics, but every city would have the same phenomenon. While they will always be reporting with some lack of precision, it will be the same each time.

Vice Chair Lovell asked if the employment measurement would count all jobs within the City limits of any nature. Mr. Tibbott answered affirmatively and added that the county will be measuring the number of jobs that are created, as well, so the numbers would be readily available. Mr. Doherty said the City would utilize the state's employment numbers and the census to count employment on a yearly basis.

Mr. Doherty said another option would be to track retail sales, but there is no implicit goal as to how it should grow. Mr. Chave pointed out that retail sales is cyclical in nature and prone to downturns and upturns. Because of this, it would be difficult for the City to establish whether or not the policies in the Economic Development Element are successful. He suggested it makes more sense to use employment as an ongoing measure of success because it is not as cyclical in nature as retail sales.

Board Member Cloutier referred to the following four sustainability indicators related to economic development the Board discussed on May 30, 2010:

- Have diversity in the business environment. Recognize that the City's reliance on the auto industry is such a large portion of sales. Work to be more resilient by promoting diversification of businesses. This can be statistically measured by comparing the two leading business sectors against the other retail sales.
- Local jobs. This can be measured by calculating the number of people who live and work in Edmonds and working to ramp it up. This effort can increase the quality of life and result in less money spent on commutes.
- Goods and services provided locally. This can be measured by calculating the fraction of the goods and services that are provided locally.
- Community reputation as supporting businesses. If the City does not have reputation of supporting businesses, the dollars today will not be here tomorrow.

Mr. Doherty summarized that the four items listed above represent overarching goals for the business environment, and they are addressed in the proposed plan. Board Member Cloutier agreed, but said it is also important to have metrics in place to measure the City's success in these four areas. Mr. Doherty explained that, in his role as the City's Economic Development Director, he will gather as much information as possible and report to both the Planning Board and the City Council. While he is proposing just one performance measure in the Economic Development Element, he would not dismiss the notion that there are other things that could be measured and reported on as appropriate. Board Member Cloutier agreed that the number of performance measures should be minimal. However, he felt there should be at least two specifically called out in the element.

Mr. Chave advised that the Economic Development Element would be updated to incorporate the Board's comments and presented to the City Council for review and a public hearing next week. However, the Board would have an opportunity to continue their discussion at a future meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ON TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT OF 2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

Mr. Hauss introduced consultant, Don Samdahl, Fehr and Peers, who is working with City staff to update the Transportation Plan and was present to specifically review the goals and policies of the plan. Mr. Hauss explained that the Transportation Plan is an element of the Comprehensive Plan and identifies various transportation improvements and services that need to take place in order to support the projected land use through 2013. The plan was last updated in 2009, and the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the plan to be updated every six to eight years. The current update project started in October of 2014 and is scheduled for completion in June 2015.

**Don Samdahl, Fehr and Peers, Seattle**, explained that he would come before the Board several times over the next few months to discuss components of the Transportation Plan, the first being the goals and policies that will set the stage for the rest of the plan. He reminded the Board that all of the planning work will be done consistent with GMA, which includes requirements at the state and regional level. He particularly noted that one area that will be given more emphasis is the new requirement relative to defining Level of Service (LOS) for all modes of transportation. He advised that LOS would be discussed in greater detail when they come back to the Board with a potential list of projects.

Mr. Samdahl said he has worked closely with City staff to ensure the transportation goals and policies are consistent with the rest of the Transportation Plan. They also have a lot more emphasis relative to the regional plans such as policies from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and the Vision 2040 requirements. In particular, the plan will focus on maintaining, preserving and operating the existing transportation system in a safe and usable state and supporting the regional growth strategies by connecting centers with a highly-efficient multimodal transportation network.

Mr. Samdahl pointed out that the current Transportation Plan has 19 goals, 22 objectives, and 132 policies organized in 8 major categories. The proposed document would be streamlined and reduced into the following six goals:

1. **Provide a safe and user-friendly travel experience for all users.**
2. **Build a transportation system that enhances the City's land-use vision.**
3. **Be sustainable, both financially and environmentally.**
4. **Foster an active and healthy community.**
5. **Create a complete and connected system that offers efficient transportation options.**
6. **Partner with other entities to create a logical system that integrates within the regional transportation network.**

Mr. Samdahl advised that some of the 132 policies were combined, some were eliminated because they were redundant, and the remaining policies were embedded within each of the six goals. He invited the Board Members to provide feedback relative to whether the proposed goals and policies are in line with the City's overall vision, as well as whether there are specific policies that should be changed or removed.

Vice Chair Lovell commented that the proposal still identifies a high number of policies; some of them are redundant and many will be difficult for a lay person to understand. Mr. Samdahl acknowledged that there are still opportunities to further streamline the policies, but the size of the document has been reduced by half.

Board Member Cloutier asked if it is necessary to have specific policies to state that the City should follow the established policies in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Because this is understood, the policies could be eliminated as redundant.

Board Member Cloutier expressed his belief that Goals 5 and 6 could be combined. Making a complete, connecting system implies that the City will work with regional partners and neighboring cities. Chair Tibbott expressed his belief that the two goals are different and distinct. Goal 5 refers to connecting pedestrian and bicycle routes within the City, and Goal 6 refers to connecting the City's system with the regional transportation network. Board Member Cloutier pointed out that there are policies that speak to sidewalks within the City being adequate to connect to all the transportation needs. However, continuity of transportation does not end at the border, and people do not move from one end of Edmonds to the other and then stop. He cautioned that the City should not look at transportation in isolation.

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Board Member Robles noted that the draft goals and policies are silent relative to electric cars, which impact several components of the Comprehensive Plan, including land use. Electric vehicles need a place to charge, which typically requires opportunities for medium-term parking. He noted that electric vehicles can impact the City's overall environmental vision. They do not typically have a long range, so providing strategically located charging stations could encourage people to come to Edmonds. While their cars are charging, they could shop at the local businesses. He noted that this is a burgeoning industry and the Transportation Plan should contain at least one policy related to the use. Mr. Hauss agreed to consider policy language relative to electric cars and their required infrastructure.

Board Member Rubenkonig requested clarification of the terms "motorized vehicles" and "non-motorized vehicles." Specifically, she would like more information about where motorized bicycles, unicycles, scooters, and golf carts would be allowed to travel within the City's system. She said the Transportation Element appears to sort out motorized as using the streets and non-motorized as using the bike lanes. Board Member Cloutier explained that motorized scooters, bicycles, etc. are considered "non-motorized vehicles" unless they travel faster than 35 miles per hour. He added that the distinction between motorized and non-motorized vehicles is clearly spelled out in the WAC. Bike lanes are limited to non-motorized vehicles, including motorized bicycles, scooters, Segways, etc. Mr. Samdahl agreed to add language to clarify the difference between "motorized" and "non-motorized."

Board Member Stewart commented that she enjoyed reading through the proposed goals and policies. The staff and consultant did a great job identifying goals and policies that truly reflect the "Complete Street" concept. However, she was surprised that the proposed language does not mention the City's participation in the Complete Streets Program and provide a definition of what the program is. Perhaps the following language could be included in the introductory paragraphs: *"The City of Edmonds adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance, which pledges that the City will plan, design and implement transportation projects, accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders."* Mr. Chave agreed that the additional language could be incorporated into the overall Transportation Element but the goals and policies section may not be the correct location. Mr. Samdahl also agreed that it would be appropriate to make mention of the City's Complete Streets Ordinance in the Transportation Element.

Board Member Stewart proposed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph of the introductory statement to the goals and policies be changed to read, *"Goals are generalized statements which broadly relate the physical environment to values. Under each goal, policies are listed that provide specific direction for meeting the goals."* She also suggested that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph be change to read, *"Conflict will occasionally arise between a transportation policy and real-world constraints. The conflict will be resolved using the best judgment of the City Council, as advised by City staff and the Citizen Advisory Transportation Committee."*

Board Member Stewart observed that a few policies address the issue of LOS. Mr. Hauss replied that LOS would be the topic of discussion at a future meeting. Board Member Stewart cautioned that rather than relying strictly on the conventional LOS analysis, it is important to open the door to the possibility of adapting the analysis to new trends of human mobility analysis that includes bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular conditions. She noted that Policy 15.7 shows forward thinking and is consistent with this new approach.

Board Member Stewart said she was pleased to see a policy that called for adding easements to create more opportunity for alternative modes of mobility such as bicycle and walking paths. She expressed her belief that easements could be created in neighborhoods to enable walking paths. Walking paths exist in the City already, and more could be created with some effort. She noted the more connections is an expressed goal of the City. Mr. Samdahl asked if Board Member Stewart is suggesting that the plan make more use of the term "walking path." Board Member Stewart answered affirmatively and said using the term "walking path" would include more than just sidewalks.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph in the introductory statement and asked what is meant by the term "situation." Mr. Santau said it is intended to refer to the situation of the constraints. He said he supports the changes recommended by Board Member Stewart, which would eliminate the sentence that contains the word "situation."

Vice Chair Lovell asked if the policies would be renumbered sequentially to be consistent with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Samdahl answered affirmatively.

Vice Chair Lovell referred to Policy 18.3, which calls for encouraging neighborhoods to form Local Improvement Districts (LID) to fund improvements that exceed the City standards. He cautioned that this could have the potential of creating private streets, which is something the City may want to avoid. Mr. Hauss agreed to research the impacts of this policy further and report back.

Vice Chair Lovell commented that Policy 4.3 outlines a priority for completing arterial sidewalk system improvements and the policy that follows outlines a priority for completing collector sidewalk system improvements. While the latter policy notes that the projects would only go forward as funding permits, Policy 4.3 does not make this clear. Mr. Hauss suggested that the two policies could be combined and language related to funding could be added. Vice Chair Lovell asked if the priorities for arterial and collector sidewalk projects would be somewhat limited by the types of rights-of-way available within the regulatory constraints. Mr. Hauss said the projects would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Samdahl added that the intent is that sidewalks on arterials would have the highest priority.

Vice Chair Lovell voiced concern that there are still a number of policies related to the multimodal transit center at Point Edwards. Mr. Chave said these policies would remain intact since the multimodal transit center is still called out in the Comprehensive Plan as a goal.

Chair Tibbott observed that there were few policies related to funding for maintenance of the existing road system. He voiced concern that the City is currently on an 80-year overlay cycle, and a policy should be included to improve this situation. Mr. Chave suggested this policy would fit under Goal 1, and Mr. Samdahl said it could also be a policy under Goal 3. He agreed it is important to make sure that road systems are kept in good condition.

Chair Tibbott cautioned that the City may be setting too high of an expectation for what transportation is going to be like in the future, particularly relative to automobiles. It is likely that as the population grows, the speeds of traffic moving through the City will decrease and the LOS will remain at level D. It should be made clear that the City's goal is not to edge up to an LOS C or LOS B, but to maintain a comfortable D. While this would be safe and navigable as long as speeds are reduced, he does not know if it would be considered comfortable. Board Member Stewart pointed out that the traditional LOS Analysis favors automobiles, but the trend is to consider transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians as part of the equation so that all users, and not just automobiles, can use the streets. While this may result in slower vehicular traffic, there will be alternatives available. Again, she emphasized that trends in society are evolving, and Edmonds must follow suit. The future population will want to walk, bike and use transit when available and safe, and the City must provide these opportunities. Chair Tibbott suggested that there may be opportunities within the goals and policies to adjust the expectation to a more multimodal approach to getting around the City.

Chair Tibbott observed that there are no specific policies related to improving connections to transit nodes. For example, a bus used to go down his street, and he could take it into Seattle to work. Now he has to make three connections and drive his car to a park and ride lot. He questioned what could be done to enhance the nodes where people can either take a train or bus to work. Mr. Hauss noted that this issue would be addressed as part of Goal 5, and Mr. Samdahl agreed to add policy language as appropriate.

Board Member Stewart requested that Policy 1.2 be changed to read, "*Locate and design transportation facility improvements to respect the residential character of the community, its natural features, and its quality living environment.*" She commented that it is important to respect the existing natural features such as trees and landscaping, which are all part of a quality living environment.

Board Member Stewart suggested that an additional policy be added under Goal 3 to read, "*Add easements to facilitate pedestrian connections and preserve trees and natural landscape where possible when these new connections are created.*"

To address Board Member Stewart's earlier comment about using the term "walkway," Mr. Samdahl suggested that the term "walking pathway" or "walking facility" be substituted for "sidewalk" unless they specifically mean "sidewalk." This would give flexibility for either a sidewalk or a multi-use pathway.

Mr. Hauss concluded his presentation by reminding the Board of the public open house on the Comprehensive Plan Update on February 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Brackett Room of City Hall. The Transportation Element will be the focus on

the event. The Transportation Element goals and policies, including the Planning Board's recommended edits, will be presented to the City Council on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. A draft project list will be presented to the Planning Board on April 9<sup>th</sup> and to the City Council on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Vice Chair Lovell asked about the connection between the project list in the Transportation Element and the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Samdahl explained that a project must be identified in the Transportation Element before it can be added to the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Samdahl credited the Transportation Committee who worked with the staff and consultants to review materials. They provided good input relative to the goals and policies, and they will continue to provide input as the remainder of the element is updated. Mr. Hauss said the staff and consultant are also working closely with the Sidewalk Committee and Edmonds Bicycle Club.

### **REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA**

Chair Tibbott reminded the Board of the public open house relative to the Comprehensive Plan Update that is scheduled for February 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Brackett Room of City Hall. The Board's regular meeting would follow at 7:00 p.m. He also noted that there are public hearings relative to the Comprehensive Plan update scheduled on the first meeting of each month for the next four months. He encouraged Board Members to invite interested members of the public to attend and provide input.

### **PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Tibbott said that as the Board moves forward with their review of the Comprehensive Plan Elements, he would like them to work from the document that shows changes rather than the clean copy. He commented that that discussion can move forward more efficiently if they all work from the same document.

### **PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Vice Chair Lovell reported on his attendance at the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) where they provided input on the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The members were also invited to share their thoughts relative to what the Commission should be working on in 2015. The list of discussion items will be narrowed down and prioritized. They elected Mike Shearer to serve as Chair and John Rubenkönig to serve as Vice Chair in 2015.

Vice Chair Lovell cautioned that it is important to understand that many of the projects will remain unfunded because a majority of citizens do not support higher taxes or bond issuances to accomplish the goals and policies set forth in the Strategic Plan. Sooner or later the City will reach a tipping point.

Board Member Rubenkönig thanked Board Member Stewart for providing wonderful edits and rewrites for the documents the Board is reviewing. Her insight provides a jumping off point for the Board's discussion.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

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