

APPROVED APRIL 23RD

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

March 12, 2014

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Todd Cloutier, Chair
Neil Tibbott, Vice Chair
Philip Lovell
Valerie Stewart

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Development Services Director
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Bill Ellis (excused)
Ian Duncan (excused)
Kevin Clarke (excused)
Madeline White (Student Representative)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VICE CHAIR TIBBOTT MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2014 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER LOVELL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Roger Hertrich, Edmonds, suggested that, for the benefit of the audience, each Board Member should provide a short explanation of what form-based code means to them. He noted that most people do not have a clear understanding of this different type of zoning approach and how it will change things.

PUBLIC HEARING ON A PROPOSED PLAN AND FORM-BASED CODE GUIDING FUTURE COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTGATE COMMERCIAL AREA. THE WESTGATE COMMERCIAL AREA CONSISTS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (BN), COMMERCIAL BUSINESS (BC) AND COMMERCIAL BUSINESS-EDMONDS WAY (BC-EW) ZONES NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF SR-104 (EDMONDS WAY) AND 100TH AVENUE WEST.

Mr. Chave emphasized that the area included in the proposed plan and zoning only includes the properties in the Westgate area that are commercially zoned. No changes have been proposed for the surrounding residentially-zoned properties. He explained that the planning process was initiated by the City, and began with the City working with a design team from the University of Washington's Green Future's Lab and the Cascade Land Conservancy. Their beginning research focused on

the idea of complete, compact and connected development. He reviewed that the first public meetings (listening sessions) took place in January 2011 where the following concerns were voiced:

- **How much and how fast would change occur.** He said it is important to understand that the proposed document is a plan and not a development proposal. It is up to the property owners to decide whether change will occur and when, but the plan will guide the type of development that is possible.
- **Traffic.** A traffic study was done, which indicated that a large share of the traffic on the corridor is related to the ferry, and the changes discussed at Westgate would not significantly contribute to the traffic congestion or deteriorate the roadways beyond the City's adopted Level of Service (LOS) standard.
- **Types of uses.** Concern was expressed that the plan would push out the existing grocery and drug stores and other uses the community enjoys. He explained that that, as is common with this type of plan, new development will make a place for successful existing stores to fit in. Oftentimes, development comes in the form of adding additional density to an existing development, and he expects that will be the case at Westgate. He noted that the Bartells property recently changed ownership, and the new owners have expressed an interest in reconfiguring the site by relocating the drug store closer to the street to improve visibility. While the proposed plan provides flexibility for redevelopment, it would not require that the existing uses to go away.
- **How the plan will guide future development.** It must be understood that the plan cannot guarantee the exact configuration of uses, but it can give a sense of what the outcome should be. Throughout the process, it was pointed out that change will happen regardless of whether the plan is adopted or not. Jurisdictions have fairly limited control over the types of changes that occur. By enforcing good design, the City can ensure that any development that does occur will improve the area.

Mr. Chave advised that the City held a design workshop on March 12, 2011, where people from the neighborhood were invited to look in detail at what kinds of design would be desirable in the area and how to get more green infrastructure and open space. From the comments received at the public workshop, the design team developed a series of alternatives or ideas, which were later translated into planning documents that incorporated a form-based code approach. He explained that form-based codes have a different emphasis than traditional zoning, which regulates height, bulk, and setbacks, and emphasizes the separation of uses. Form-based codes emphasize the relationship between public and private spaces as a critical component of the overall development scheme, and it that encourages connections between buildings, streets and open spaces.

Mr. Chave advised that the plan currently being considered by the Planning Board has been changed in some significant ways from the initial plan created by students from the University of Washington and representatives from the Cascade Land Conservancy. However, many of the original concepts remain a part of the plan. He referred the Board to the initial plan, which was based on the following goals:

- **Creating a mixed-use walkable, compact commercial center and improving connectedness for pedestrian and bicycle users.** At this time, it is not easy to walk from one commercial location to another, and this encourages people to drive. The idea is to have centralized parking and arrange buildings, walkways and landscaping in such a way that people feel comfortable walking from one store to another.
- **Enhancing the identity and visibility of Westgate and prioritizing amenity spaces for informal and organized gatherings.** The plan calls for providing pleasant places for people to gather and encourages developers to provide small plazas, fountains, pocket parks, etc. as part of any project.
- **Promoting civic and private investments that contribute to increased infrastructure capacity and benefit the surrounding neighborhood and community at large.** Currently, there are problems associated with the access points on 100th Avenue West and there is no safe way to cross the street, except at the intersection. There may be some opportunity for the City to invest money to addresses these issues in the future.

- **Emphasizing green building construction, stormwater infiltration and low-impact site design.** The intent is that the plan should encourage, and in some cases insist, on green building construction to reduce energy use and create a more pleasant environment both inside and out. In addition, the plan calls for using stormwater management techniques that are part of the landscaping.
- **Regulating building placement and form.** The intent is to establish a flexible regulating system to encourage development and provide amenities, and the initial plan called for pushing the buildings closer to the street to create more walkable areas. The “built-too” lines identified in the plan focus on SR-104 and 100th Avenue West, where there is potential for an internal connection that would allow traffic to meander throughout the site without having to go onto the highway. Landscape standards could be used to ensure that traffic on the internal connection moves slowly to provide pedestrian safety. The buildings could be located close to the internal connection, with amenities and walkways to allow pedestrians closer access to the buildings.
- **Encourage the development of a variety of housing choices available to residents of all economic and age segments.** The plan allows for a mixture of uses, including opportunities for additional housing. The Economic Development Commission pointed out that demographics in Edmonds are changing; the population is aging and there is a need to create more opportunities for different housing choices. In addition, there is a need for more housing opportunities for young workers. The plan envisions a community where people can walk to the services they need, which is consistent with the nationwide movement of people being drawn to walkable, urban areas. The idea is to provide different housing opportunities at Westgate.

Mr. Chave said the initial plan regulates:

- **Amenity spaces.** In the plan’s terminology, amenity space includes a variety of options, but basically refers to green spaces integrated into the development. This could take the form of walkways, lawns, pocket parks, etc. It is also important to have green spaces in parking lots as part of the landscaping. Stormwater management could be addressed as part of the landscaping, as well. Amenities are important to the overall development, but the current zoning code does not really talk about them at all.
- **Required building lines.** The required “built-to” lines were set at 8 feet from the SR-104 right-of-way, 5 feet from the 100th Avenue West right-of-way, and 3 feet from the edge of the internal road.
- **Street types.** The initial plan includes specific streetscape standards for SR-104, 100th Avenue West, and the internal roadway.
- **Building types.** The initial plan called for buildings up to 3 stories in height, with an additional 1 to 2 stories permitted for development that meets the bonus criteria, including consideration for topography. The plan identified a number of different building types (both commercial and residential) that could go in and around the Westgate area. Rather than specifying where each type must go, the plan allows a variety of locations for each of the building types. For each building type, the plan provides a discussion about what the design of the building should be, the types of open space that should be integrated into the design, and how the development should be laid out.
- **Building frontage types.** The plan emphasizes the connection between the building and public way or street front. It talks about the kinds of street furniture, public spaces, etc. that would make the area more inviting and encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Sustainable and green features.** The plan calls for the implementation of a Green Feature Program similar to the Green Factor Program implemented by the City of Seattle for all commercial and multi-family zones. The program provides a variety of green and sustainable building options and requires a developer to obtain a certain number of points by incorporating the options into a project. Using this approach, no development would look the same, and the end result would look different than a standard building with no green elements. He provided an example to illustrate how the Green Feature Program would work.

- **Development requirements and options.** While the Green Feature Program would be required for all development in the Westgate commercial area, the City could require developers to obtain a higher level of green features in order to achieve additional height beyond 3 stories.

Mr. Chave said the planning process resulted in a lengthy document of plan and code suggestions that were presented to the City Council, and the City Council referred it the Planning Board for further review, a public hearing and a recommendation. The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on September 12, 2012. Since that time, the Planning Board's review has focused on producing a plan and code amendments that fit within the City's regulatory system and are acceptable to the community. The current proposal is a product of the Planning Board's review and reflects a number of changes from the original proposal. He highlighted the changes as follows:

- The initial plan called for pushing buildings out to the street and focusing on the street fronts. The Planning Board has shifted the emphasis to a quadrant (Southwest, Southeast, Northwest, Northeast) approach. The Board's intent is to emphasize development within the quadrants rather than at the edges. The idea is to set development up with an internal focus would result in more walkable commercial areas within each of the quadrants. Rather than worrying about finding safe ways for people to cross SR-104, which is not likely to happen, the commercial areas within each quadrant should be easy to access and provide a sense of place.
- The proposed plan provides for opportunities without mandating that new development conform rigidly to certain minimum building heights or insisting that all buildings be pushed up against the sidewalk lines. However, open space and amenity space would still be required, as well as pedestrian and non-motorized circulation within each of the four quadrants. The plan still encourages development closer to the street. If buildings are placed along the edges, there will be more space within each quadrant for open space and public amenities. Although the Board felt it was less important to focus on the SR-104 frontage, elements such as open space, amenities, pedestrian circulation, and connections are still a main emphasis of the plan. Examples were provided to illustrate the concepts contained in the current proposal.
- Instead of development of up to 5 stories, the proposed plan would cap the height of buildings in most places at 3 stories, with an opportunity to obtain 4 stories only where the nearby slopes are higher or no residences are nearby. The plan calls out the specific locations where additional height would be allowed based on topography. A topographical map was provided in the plan, which identifies a slope of 30 to 35 feet in the southeast quadrant, 45 to 50 feet in the northeast quadrant, and 55 to 70 feet in the southwest quadrant. The Planning Board observed that a 5-story building (up to 55 feet in height) would be close to or above the height of the residential properties located above. They felt that a maximum height of 4 stories (45 feet) would be more appropriate, with a standard height of 3 stories (35 feet) for properties that have little or no slope and located closer to single-family development. It was noted that the northwest quadrant is adjacent to the cemetery, and the nearest residential home is quite some distance away.

The City typically calculates building height based on the average ground height of the four corners of development footprint, and developments on slopes could appear higher. The proposed plan calls for a different way of calculating height that would not give a bonus based on topography. The height would be calculated based on the ground height at the street front. This new way to measure maximum height is intended to ensure that any new commercial buildings would not extend beyond the top of the slope where single-family homes are located.

- The initial plan called for an 8-foot setback on SR-104 and 100th Avenue West. The proposed plan increases the setback to 12 feet to provide a wider street interface and to assure that, if needed, turn pockets could be provided for traffic access.
- The intersection at SR-104 and 100th Avenue West has a significant step back requirement (30 feet from the intersection right-of-way) for the 3rd and 4th floors. The intent is to assure that a sense of place is provided at this key intersection.

Mr. Chave summarized that, after the public hearing has been closed and the Planning Board completes its recommendation, the plan and code will be forwarded to the City Council for review. The City Council will conduct another public hearing before adoption is considered.

Chair Cloutier reviewed the rules and procedures for the public hearing and opened the hearing. Mr. Chave noted that the Board received comment letters regarding the proposal from Jan Robertson and Larry Williamson.

Joe Tedesco, Edmonds, said he just purchased a home immediately adjacent to the Westgate commercial area and had no idea that the City was in the process of creating a new plan. He expressed concern that implementation of the plan, as proposed, would cause his property's value to go down. He said he does not want 3 or 4-story commercial development to look down onto his property, which is in a quiet area now.

Kathy Madigan, Edmonds, voiced concern about the idea of redevelopment, especially on Edmonds Way near 102nd Avenue West. Because of the steep slope, 4-story development would be allowed. There is currently not enough parking in this area and traffic backs up all the way past the PCC with cars waiting for the ferry. She said she does not support the plan to add additional residential units on the site, creating more demand for parking. While her property is located across the street from the Westgate commercial area and would not be directly impacted, her neighbors could end up with 4-story buildings behind their homes, and their property values would diminish. She expressed her belief that the space is too small for apartments or condominiums. She said she lives at the top of the hill and walks to the businesses at Westgate. However, people do not walk along Edmonds Way, which is busy and unsafe.

Deborah Wertz, Edmonds, said her home is on 232nd Street, and it currently backs up to a quiet business park where trees line the southern edge. She is very concerned that the proposed plan would allow 2 and 3-story development that would look down into her backyard. She hopes the Board's desire to limit building height so that commercial buildings do not look down on residential homes will also pertain to future development on the south end of the commercial area. These residential property owners do not want commercial uses peering down into their backyards. She said she is actually excited about the area being spruced up. She loves the green idea and would love the City to address walkability, but she asked that the Board be mindful of potential impacts to residential property owners.

Robert Dofredo, Edmonds, said he likes the idea that the vicinity is getting an upgrade. He said he lives on the southeast corner of 100th Avenue West and 227th Street across from the cemetery. He asked if his property would be included in the plan. Mr. Chave answered that the plan would only apply to the commercial-zoned properties at Westgate, and no changes have been proposed to surrounding zoning. He agreed to talk with Mr. Dofredo after the meeting to address issues specific to his property.

Roger Hertrich, Edmonds, said he has been following the Westgate planning process since it started in 2011. One of his main issues has been somewhat addressed by the change to increase the street setback from 8 to 12 feet. This would allow space for the City to add deceleration lanes or other traffic improvements to address congestion created by future redevelopment. He expressed concern that the plan only identifies the number of stories allowed. If each floor of a development has a greater than average ceiling height, the overall height could be significant. Rather than specifying the number of stories allowed, he suggested a better approach would be to establish a specific height limit.

Mr. Hertrich pointed out that although the plan would require an additional setback for all commercial buildings that are adjacent to single-family residential, it does not address height as it relates to shadow and view blockage, which is also important. The plan also requires a setback for the portion of building that fronts the intersection of SR-104 and 100th Avenue West. However, it is important to note that the City just eliminated the setback requirement in the downtown area. He questioned if the same thing would happen in this location.

Greg Bough, Edmonds, said he lives on the hill directly behind Bartells. He expressed concern that the City has no control of SR-104, and the traffic is already horrid. The ferry traffic during the summer months is horrific, and redevelopment at Westgate would add further congestion. He pointed out that 75% of the commercial space behind the QFC is vacant, and parking is difficult in that area. It is necessary to get in your car to move from PCC to Walgreens because of the way the area is designed. He questioned why the City did not take a more proactive approach to planning in the area before it was too late. He pointed out that most of the commercial space in the relatively new mixed-use development known as the Compass Development is vacant, and he anticipates that vacancies at Westgate will continue in the future, as well. He also expressed concern that the proposed plan would accommodate commercial development that looks down on residential properties.

Brad Ross, Edmonds, said he recently purchased a home on 96th Place West. He and many of his neighbors are concerned that the plan would allow future development to look down on their residential properties. This would cause property values to drop, and many people would likely choose to leave the neighborhood.

Don Ullom, Edmonds, said he lives just north of the cemetery on approximately five acres of land. He expressed concern that a 45-foot tall building on the far side of the cemetery would look into the windows of his home. If the City is going to allow 45-foot tall buildings on commercial properties, then the residential properties should be allowed an additional story, as well. He said he drives, rather than walks, to the Westgate commercial area. While it would be nice to have amenities and landscaping, that is not why he goes there. He noted that parking is extremely limited, especially on the weekends. Many commuters park in this area to catch the bus, and this fills up the parking areas during the weekdays, as well. People who work at the retail businesses park on 100th Avenue West, creating a site distance a problem for cars that are trying to pull out onto the street.

Deb Sabotta, Edmonds, said she likes living on 232nd Street, and she particularly loves how open the PCC parking lot is. When she drives down Edmonds Way, she can see everything. Putting buildings close to the street will make it more difficult to see around the corner. However, her biggest concern is regarding cut-through traffic on 232nd between 100th and 104th Avenues West. She noted that it is already dangerous to walk on 232nd Street where there are no sidewalks, and additional development will only make the situation worse.

Gary Kidder, Edmonds, said he also recently purchased a home on 96th Place West, and most of his back yard backs up o a vacant lot that is zoned commercial. He also expressed concern that a 3-story building on the vacant lot would peer into his back yard. When he purchased the property he was told that a bank or something low density would be developed on the site. He said he works from home and has an office on the second floor where he is able to look out onto Edmonds Way. The cars come down the road at a high rate of speed, and pulling out of the gas station on most days is very dangerous. Allowing another building would make the situation even worse. He said he would like to see some improvements such as sidewalks, but he is opposed to a 3-story building.

Charles Kalkwarf, Edmonds, said he lives on 99th Place, just above the paint shop on 100th Avenue West. He commented that setbacks are extremely important and questioned if the community really wants buildings right up to the street in the future. He specifically noted the difficulty people are having accessing SR-104 from the new veterinary clinic and Compass Development that is located on Edmonds Way east of 232nd because the ferry traffic backs up the street. He urged the City to require greater setbacks to allow space to accommodate an extra lane on SR-104, which he suspects will be needed in the near future.

Deborah Wertz, Edmonds, suggested that the Board look at Westgate as a neighborhood within Edmonds, and not as a destination. The people who live in the surrounding neighborhoods shop at the businesses, but they do not draw people from a regional standpoint. Although making it look like downtown Redmond or Kirkland may improve the City's tax base, this intersection primarily serves as a drive through for people trying to reach other destinations. While some good services are provided at Westgate, people do not drive for ten miles to specifically come to that intersection. She suggested they not lose site of the neighborhood that already exists with the hope of making it into something that will never be.

No one else in the audience indicated a desire to address the Board during the public hearing.

Chair Cloutier noted that several concerns were raised about building heights, particularly in the southeast quadrant. He pointed out that taller buildings would not be allowed on the eastern side of quadrant. The 35-foot height limit would be measured from the front of the street, and the property has a slope of between 30 and 40 feet. The top of the bluff is about 40 feet higher than the street, and no building on the site would be taller than the bluff. Mr. Chave said it is important to keep in mind that the current BC-EW zoning allows development up to 45 feet in height, so the proposed plan would actually reduce the height in this location. Chair Cloutier noted that there is very little topography change between residential and commercial properties at the corner of 232nd Street and 100th Avenue West. Mr. Chave advised that the form-based code approach allows the City to address height differently for these properties if the Board decides it is not appropriate to allow 3-story development in this particular location. For example, a setback could be required for the third story portion of the building.

Chair Cloutier reminded the Board that the proposed zoning would not allow buildings to be constructed into the adjacent hillsides. Pushing the buildings towards the street would provide a buffer between the buildings and the hillside. Mr. Chave said the proposed zoning also includes a setback requirement from single-family residential properties. The language makes it clear that buildings are not supposed to march up the slope, and there would be no advantage to placing a building closer to the slope because height would be calculated based on the street front elevation. The Board could consider increasing the setback more or be more specific about how much of the slope must be protected.

Chair Cloutier recalled that early stage drawings emphasized pushing buildings closer to the street, but the Board felt a setback of 12 feet would be more appropriate. Allowing buildings closer to the street can create a sense of neighborhood and tie developments together. He emphasized that, as per the proposed plan, developing closer to the street would be an option and not a mandate. However, it would require a minimum 12-foot setback from the street right-of-way.

Chair Cloutier referred to comments regarding parking. He suggested that the problem is less about the number of parking spaces available at Westgate and more about where they are located. Mr. Chave pointed out that any redevelopment at Westgate would be required to meet the parking standards. A developer would be required to replace spaces that are eliminated to accommodate development and provide the additional parking required for the new development. He explained that parking could be arranged differently to be more efficient. For example, underground parking is one option a developer could consider for meeting the parking requirement.

Chair Cloutier recalled that citizens also expressed concern that there was not sufficient space for new development. He explained that the plan is intended to allow property owners to reorganize development to be more cohesive and efficient.

Chair Cloutier suggested that, to address concerns raised by citizens, the Board should also reevaluate the height limit in the northwest quadrant to make sure residential properties are adequately protected from the impacts of potential redevelopment of the commercial properties.

Chair Cloutier asked staff to respond to the suggestion that acceleration lanes on SR-104 and 100th Avenue West be added to address safety issues. Mr. Chave clarified that SR-104 is a State highway that is controlled by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). However, the City could consider this option for 100th Avenue West. He explained that all development proposals would be reviewed by City staff to identify potential impacts, and applicants would be required to provide appropriate mitigation, which could include an acceleration lane. He noted that the purpose of the proposed 12-foot setback is to ensure space is available if changes need to occur.

Chair Cloutier referred to the suggestion that building heights should be regulated by the number of feet and not by the number of stories. He pointed out that the proposed plan identifies the maximum building height as 3 stories or 35 feet. It also indicates that 4 stories means a maximum of 45 feet. He said concerns were also raised about the need for commercial development to be setback from residential development. He noted that this is already addressed in the plan. He also emphasized the setback requirement included in the plan for the intersection of 100th Avenue West and SR-104.

Chair Cloutier recalled comments about 232nd Street Southwest being used for cut-through traffic in order to avoid the SR-104 and 100th Avenue West intersection. He asked if the City's Traffic Engineer considered this problem in his findings and offered potential solutions. Mr. Chave agreed to seek input from the Traffic Engineer regarding this issue and report back to the Board.

Chair Cloutier said residents near the southwest quadrant are concerned about the potential 45-foot height limit, which could result in commercial buildings looking down into residential back yards. Mr. Chave pointed out that the height of the bluff in this quadrant ranges from 65 to 70, so there is no chance that commercial development would be at a greater height than the residential development. He further pointed out that the maximum 35-foot height limit proposed for the northeast quadrant would place commercial property below the top of the bluff, as well. Again, he reminded the Board that the current zoning allows a maximum height of 45 feet, and the proposed plan would reduce the height in the northeast quadrant by ten feet.

Chair Cloutier referred to concern raised by neighbors that allowing residential development at Westgate would result in even greater congestion at the intersection of SR-104 and 100th Avenue West. He pointed out that the traffic study actually studied the impacts of redevelopment at 3 to 5 stories in height, and the proposed plan would reduce the height limit to 3 stories, with

the potential for an additional story in some locations. Mr. Chave agreed that the traffic study considered a much higher level of development than what the current plan contemplates. He explained that, as per the traffic study, the additional number of trips generated by redevelopment at Westgate was dwarfed by the existing volumes on SR-104.

Chair Cloutier agreed that traffic needs to be addressed, particularly on the north side of SR-104, where cars heading towards the ferry back up. Board Member Stewart commented that adding more residential units at Westgate would increase traffic volumes at the intersection of SR-104 and 100th Avenue West, particularly during certain times of the day. The City is “putting its head in the sand” if it thinks that that traffic congestion would not be an increasing problem as redevelopment occurs. Mr. Chave agreed, but reminded the Board that the City does not control what happens on SR-104, and any required traffic mitigation would be addressed on a case-by-case basis as part of the Traffic Engineer’s review of a development permit application. He cautioned that, until a project has been proposed, it is impossible for the City to identify what the exact impacts will be. The Board agreed it would be helpful to have additional feedback from the Traffic Engineer regarding this issue.

Chair Cloutier recalled that a member of the audience suggested the City keep Westgate as a neighborhood instead of trying to make it a major destination. While he agreed that the goal should not be to make this commercial area like Kirkland, they can make it something better than what it is now and give it new purpose. Mr. Chave suggested that Westgate could provide a dual role. He recognized that the businesses serve the needs of the neighbors who are able to walk to the site; but they also serve as a destination to people who are coming from further away to shop at the two grocery stores. The goal of the plan is to enhance the area, and not necessarily create a new destination.

Board Member Lovell said he was glad that Mr. Chave talked about how much the plan has morphed over the past three years. It initially started with 3 to 5-story buildings, and setbacks between 5 and 8 feet from the property line. The current plan addresses three of the community’s main concerns: building heights, street setbacks, and walkability and connectivity. He said the Board has had a lot of discussion about existing and future problems on SR-104, but it is not likely that WSDOT will be proposing any revisions to the highway in the foreseeable future. He said the plan recognizes that people will drive to Westgate to shop, and they expect to have a place to park. The plan would provide more connectivity and public space within each of the quadrants. It encourages both walking and parking in each quadrant, and enhances workability of the area in terms of space, dimension, green elements, setbacks, etc.

Board Member Lovell expressed concern that no members of the public commented on the fact that the City needs to accommodate future population growth. It sounds like they do not want any more residential units as part of the mixed-use development at Westgate, when in fact, that is the development trend across the nation. He noted that no one mentioned the concept of transit-oriented development or the increased use of public transportation, either. SR-104, 9th Avenue and 100th Avenue West are major thoroughfares that are served by both Sound Transit and Community Transit. He expressed his belief that the City needs to establish reasonable standards to accommodate growth and provide lower cost housing in areas that are not zoned single-family residential. He reminded the Board that, although Firdale Village was rezoned several years ago with the goal of accommodating growth, redevelopment has not occurred because there are too many restrictions. He cautioned against doing the same at Westgate. He summarized that the intent is to provide a soft transition between the commercial and single-family residential development, and he believes the proposed plan accomplishes that goal. He said he supports the plan, but he agreed there are still a few concerns that need to be addressed. The proposed plan calls for a lower building height, setbacks, additional landscaping, and public amenities, all of which will benefit the City and its citizens.

Board Member Stewart said she generally supports the plan, as it has evolved to address a number of her concerns. She reviewed that the purpose of the plan is to encourage public amenities, which is something that is lacking in this area now. The idea is to create a place where people want to be. The concept outlined in the plan is consistent with the national and regional trend that accommodates the needs of the younger generation by providing gathering places and a variety of housing options. She said she supports the implementation of a form-based code approach, which looks at the relationship of buildings to the street, pedestrian activities and creating a sense of place. Westgate is a neighborhood center, and it would be nice to create an area where people will want to stay for a while.

Board Member Stewart said she supports the “green factors” element of the plan, which represents a forward-thinking approach for minimizing human impacts on the environment. Increased height would only be allowed in exchange for additional green features and public amenities. She concluded that the Green Futures Lab (University of Washington) did a

great job of reviewing the area and considering citizen input when they put together the initial plan, and the Planning Board has massaged the plan to a point where it, hopefully, is more acceptable to the public and the City Council.

Vice Chair Tibbott said he continues to be concerned about how increased density will impact traffic, particularly ingress and egress locations. He requested additional information from the Traffic Engineer about the impacts redevelopment would have on this intersection, particularly during rush hour. He said he was specifically interested in learning whether people would use the main thoroughfare or cut through neighborhoods to avoid traffic. He agreed that 232nd Street Southwest is used as a shortcut, and the problems will likely increase with more residential density.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City could require a developer to provide a deceleration lane on private property as opposed to the public right-of-way. Mr. Chave said this would be an option, as long as the improvement is tied to specific impacts associated with a development. These decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis as part of the development permit review. He explained that there are two levels of traffic analysis: project based and system based. There are things that can be done before expanding a roadway, such as changing the signalization to help traffic flow better through an intersection. Unfortunately, the City's history of adding lanes is very nearly a panacea. Board Member Lovell pointed out that lane changes would most likely involve more than one property, and property consolidation would likely be market driven.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked how adding a deceleration lane would impact pedestrian accessibility. Mr. Chave agreed that is a general concern. Adding lanes could end up encouraging greater speeds on the highway. He reminded the Board that in addition to potential traffic improvements, frontage improvements would be required for all projects. These improvements could be located on private or public property, depending on the individual situation.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City did any outreach to discuss what types of amenities would benefit the residents who live on top of the bluffs. For example, there is no pedestrian pathway from the top of the bluff to the commercial areas below. Mr. Chave agreed that the topography acts as a barrier to accessibility, but it also provides a separation between the commercial and residential developments to minimize impacts. He noted that residential neighborhoods could benefit if more services are available as a result of redevelopment.

Vice Chair Tibbott pointed out that Edmonds is built out, and the only way to offer more residential space is to increase density. He asked if there is a label for this type of urban transition. Mr. Chave said the City of Edmonds is technically an urban area with some suburban characteristics. Edmonds must plan for the future, which means doing its part to accommodate the growth identified in the regional plan. Rather than creation new multi-family residential and commercial zones, the City of Edmonds has adopted an approach of creating opportunities for more density in the existing multi-family and commercial zones. The City's goal is to create more housing opportunities in these areas, along with enhanced public and private amenities. The idea is to prevent the more intense development from spilling out into the single-family residential neighborhoods by providing a more subtle transition.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if it is possible that the type of development envisioned in the Westgate Plan would actually improve surrounding property values. Mr. Chave said this would be true to the extent each commercial property owner decides to upgrade and provide more public amenities. He expressed his belief that the value of surrounding residential properties could also increase through thoughtful new design. However, he agreed that the residents who live adjacent to the southeast quadrant have a valid concern. It is important to provide an adequate transition between the commercial and residential uses in this location where there is not a significant topographical change to provide separation. He suggested the Board study this issue further.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the proposed plan would require a developer to use innovative techniques to deal with stormwater issues as opposed to drains in parking lots. Mr. Chave answered affirmatively, and noted that developers would be encouraged to incorporate stormwater elements into the landscaping and amenities that are provided on site.

Vice Chair Tibbott referred to the Compass Development, which has raised concerns from a number of citizens. He questioned if the proposed plan adequately describes and illustrates the kinds of things they want to see at Westgate. Mr. Chave answered affirmatively, particularly noting the details regarding amenity spaces and the implementation of the Green Factor program. None of that was in place for the Compass Development.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked staff to respond to concerns raised by citizens about view obstruction for merging traffic. Mr. Chave said the setbacks, rights-of-way and traffic signals are intended to address this issue. Visibility should not be an issue because the traffic signal controls how traffic moves. However, he acknowledged that, at some point, the City will need to consider issues at some of the other access points. It is hoped that a better solution can be found for the opposing turns at the PCC and QFC sites, but this will not occur until redevelopment happens. He summarized that the plan will provide opportunities to address some of the pre-existing problems.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if using a form-based code approach would provide enough incentive for property owners to move forward with redevelopment. Mr. Chave said this will be up to the individual property owners, but one property owner has been following the process and is thinking about the possibilities the proposed plan offers.

Vice Chair Tibbott referred to Board Member Lovell's earlier comment that the Firdale Village code has too many restrictions. He asked if the same would be true about the proposed plan for Westgate. He also asked if developers would prefer to have the kind of guidance that comes from a form-based code or traditional zoning. Mr. Chave commented that the Firdale Village Plan was much more prescriptive, with an assumed layout, and the proposed Westgate Plan provides more options. Developers prefer the form-based code approach because it offers more flexibility but more definition about what the City wants. It provides a number of options to meet the requirements which adds interest and ensures that development is not the same in every location.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if staff has estimated the increase in residential units based on the lower height limits proposed in the plan. Mr. Chave answered that they have not recalculated the number of units, but it would be significantly lower than the number attached to the initial proposal of 4 and 5-story buildings. Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City has considered the impact the additional units would have on schools, parks and other services that are not directly connected to the intersection. Board Member Lovell noted that the initial proposal would have accommodate approximately 180 residential units. Mr. Chave advised that the City would assess both park and traffic impact fees on any new development that occurs at Westgate. Development at Westgate could result in significant contributions to the parks fund and provides opportunities for the City to partner with developers to provide public art, etc.

Board Member Stewart clarified that the proposed plan increases the setbacks on SR-104 and 100th Avenue West from 8 to 12 feet, but it does not mandate that buildings be located 12 feet from the property line. Mr. Chave concurred, but said the plan would discourage developers from having too much parking between the building and the street. If parking is provided between the street and the building, walkways would be required to connect the sidewalk to the building. Board Member Stewart asked if a 12-foot setback would provide adequate space to accommodate a deceleration lane, if deemed necessary at some point in the future. Mr. Chave answered that traffic engineers have assured him that is the case.

Board Member Stewart observed that there is already a parking problem at Westgate. As more development occurs, it may be necessary to construct a parking garage at one of the quadrants. While she anticipates transit use will increase, she does not believe the parking demand will diminish because people depend on cars to do their business. Mr. Chave agreed and said that is why the City has parking standards for all development. He noted that because of the topography at Westgate, there is limited opportunity for parking to spill out into the adjoining neighborhoods, and there is great incentive for developers to provide sufficient parking for their customers.

Regarding amenity space, Board Member Stewart pointed out that the proposed plan requires a 3-story development to dedicate 15% of its parcel size for amenity space, and it significantly limits the amount of impervious amenity space. The idea is to decrease the amount of hard surface over time. She observed that PCC is a great example of sustainable development; and hopefully, other developers will follow suit. The plan encourages "green" building, and it may attract builders who are used to implementing the concept.

Board Member Stewart referred to the Height Bonus Score Sheet on the last page of the proposed plan. She pointed out that the Evergreen Sustainable Development Standards have stringent requirements and suggested that this option be given 2 credits instead of 1. Mr. Chave agreed that the Board could make this change.

Board Member Stewart commented that as the bluff continues to recede, the City will need to reanalyze the slope to make sure it continues to serve as an adequate transition between single-family residential and commercial development.

Chair Cloutier closed the public portion of the hearing and indicated that the discussion would be continued to a future date to allow the Board to revisit the height limit on commercial properties adjacent to residential properties to ensure that the slope would provide an adequate buffer to prevent commercial development from looking down onto residential backyards. The Board would also revisit the height bonus score sheet to make sure the credits are commensurate with the cost of implementing each green option. In addition, the Board will review the traffic study results again in light of comments from the public. Lastly, they asked staff to provide an updated estimate of the number of residential units the plan would accommodate based on the adjusted height limits.

Although the public hearing was closed, Chair Cloutier allowed the audience one more opportunity to address the Board.

Ralph Wuscher, Puyallup, said his family and a limited partnership own the land where the PCC is located, as well as the parking lot to the east. They recently sold a third parcel to Walgreens. He noted that a building permit has been issued for an additional development on the Walgreen's property, and the design includes an 8-foot setback. If this building is developed, there will be no room for a deceleration lane. He said he already gave the City an 8-foot easement to accommodate a wider sidewalk. Adding a deceleration lane would require him to forfeit another 15 feet to the easement, which he is not willing to do.

Mr. Wuscher suggested that the plan require buildings to be placed at the property line, with no setback. He expressed his belief that no one will want to sit out in front of the buildings along SR-104 to watch the busy traffic go by. Requiring a zero lot line would result in more open area for parking and amenities on the interior of the site. He suggested that one way to address the neighbors concerns about buildings looking onto their back yards is to not allow windows on the backside of commercial buildings. He expressed concern that restricting the building height and requiring a 12-foot setback would end up discouraging redevelopment.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

The Board did not discuss their extended agenda.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Cloutier did not provide any comments during this portion of the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board Member Lovell reported on his attendance at the February 19th EDC Meeting, and highlighted the following:

- Mr. Chave introduced the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan.
- Mr. Clifton provided a short update on the City Council's decision to authorize funding for a professional facilitator to help in the process of creating a Strategic Action Plan Oversight Committee. He was asked to participate in the interview process, and it is anticipated that a recommendation will be forwarded to the Council in the near future.
- A subcommittee working on economic incentives reported on a number of ideas from tax deferrals to relief from taxes for new development.
- A subcommittee working on tourism discussed the concept of marketing Edmonds as a place to visit rather than a destination. One idea was drawing cruise ship passengers to shop in the City.
- There was some discussion about the potential of opening a fine arts museum in Edmonds, but major obstacles include both funding and location.

Board Member Lovell reported that he and Farrell Fleming, the Executive Director of the Edmonds Senior Center, will lead a discussion at the City Council's March 14th retreat regarding implementation of the Strategic Action Plan elements related to the Senior Center. They made a similar presentation to the City Council's Parks, Planning and Public works Committee.

Board Member Tibbott thanked the public for participating in the public hearing. The Board takes their comments seriously and hopes to mitigate their concerns to the extent possible before the plan is forwarded to the City Council.

APPROVED

Board Member Stewart reported that she recently met with Shannon Affholter, the new Executive Director for the Master Builders Association of Snohomish and King Counties. He has served on the Everett City Council and has a clear understanding of politics. She appealed to him for ideas on how to attract developers and appropriate development in Edmonds. Tomorrow night she will attend a discussion he is leading with developers, architects and city officers to find out what people want from the Master Builders Association. She asked the Board Members for suggestions about the questions she should ask at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

APPROVED