

Approved January 14th

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

December 10, 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
Daniel Robles
Valerie Stewart
Mike Nelson
Evan Zhao, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Bill Ellis (excused)
Careen Rubenkonig (excused)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VICE CHAIR TIBBOTT MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2014 BE APPROVED AS AMENDED. CHAIR CLOUTIER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

There was no one in the audience.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT TO PLANNING BOARD

Mr. Chave referred the Board to the Development Services Director's written report dated December 5, 2014. He particularly noted the Building Division's report that permit activity in 2014 has been very good. Board Member Stewart expressed concern that very few of the new permits were for multi-family housing units. Although infill single-family residential development is important, it will not strike the balance needed for the City to meet its growth targets. The City must continue to focus on ways to enable more multi-family residential development. Mr. Chave noted that permits were issued for one significant mixed-use project at the post office site, which includes quite a number of multi-family residential units. Board Member Stewart suggested that the statistics need to be broadened to identify the number of residential units created in the mixed-use projects. Chair Cloutier reminded the Board that these numbers are part of the proposed matrix for measuring the effectiveness of the housing element. Mr. Chave agreed that it is possible to track the number of residential

units that are constructed as part of mixed-use projects, and these numbers could be added to the Building Division's next report.

Board Member Lovell referred to the section in the report related to the Development Code Update and advised that he is familiar with Makers, the firm the City selected to assist with the update. They were the lead architectural firm that assisted the Port in preparing the Harbor Square Master Plan. They are a capable organization and possess the software that was utilized to create the view corridor analysis that accompanied the Harbor Square Master Plan. In addition, they are well known throughout the Puget Sound region. Mr. Chave added that Makers also has significant experience working with codes and design standards. In addition, they assisted the City in creating the 1984 Downtown Plan, which was well received and used for a long time.

Board Member Lovell asked if the bulleted list of topics to be covered as part of the Development Code Update is intended to identify priorities. If so, he suggested it would be appropriate to move the discussion regarding "definitions" to early in the update process. Mr. Chave agreed and advised that the list is not intended to show prioritization.

Chair Cloutier requested an update regarding the Council's review of the Housing Element. Mr. Chave explained that each element of the Comprehensive Plan would be presented to the City Council for a public hearing and study session prior to the Planning Board conducting a public hearing and making a recommendation.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF DRAFT GENERAL BACKGROUND SECTION AND DRAFT LAND USE ELEMENT

Mr. Chave advised that this item concerns two different but somewhat related sections of the Comprehensive Plan: the General Background Section and the main Land Use Element. He referred the Board to the following attachments to the Staff Report:

- Attachment 1 – Clean version of the General Background Section
- Attachment 2 – Marked up version of the General Background Section showing edits
- Attachment 3 – Clean version of the Land Use Element
- Attachment 4 – Marked up version of the Land Use Element showing edits

Mr. Chave explained that the marked up versions (Attachments 2 and 4) illustrate the work done thus far, including updates to the narratives and data and reformatting the goals and policies to be more consistent with the format used in the Sustainability Element. He emphasized that no significant changes have been proposed in terms of goals and policies. However, staff is proposing that language related to design be moved to the Design Element. Staff is also proposing an additional bullet in the Plan Context Section (Page 59 of Attachment 4) to emphasize the City's increased concern about conflicts and safety issues related to the interaction of ferry, rail, vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In the past, a lot of the discussion about ferry traffic and safe access over the tracks has focused specifically on the Edmonds Crossing Project. The proposed language will acknowledge that there may be something the City can do, aside from the Edmonds Crossing Project, to address these problems. In addition, a new Goal B was added to the Downtown/Waterfront Area Section (Page 61 of Attachment 4) to emphasize the need to plan for improvements to resolve transportation and safety conflicts in the downtown/waterfront area.

Mr. Chave invited the Board Members to provide their comments and suggestions for change related to both the General Background Section and the Land Use Element.

General Background Section

Board Member Robles referred to the Economic Factors Section on Page 16 of Attachment 2 and expressed concern that the last paragraph uses "global recession" as a point of reference, without providing additional information about when the recession occurred and what conditions were like in the City before the recession. It also does not provide any direction for what should happen if another global recession were to occur. Mr. Chave suggested, and the Board concurred, that the term "global recession" should be eliminated from the language.

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Board Member Stewart referred to the Historical Development Section (Page 11 of Attachment 2) and recalled her previous recommendation that reference to “nomadic bands of Native Americans” should be eliminated. Mr. Chave said he plans to edit this section to incorporate Board Member Stewart’s comments from the last meeting.

Board Member Stewart referred to the graphs on Page 13 of Attachment 2 and asked the difference between the “Edmonds Area” and “City Population.” Mr. Chave answered that census tracts are the only way to collect comparable decade data, and all of the census tracts that encompass Edmonds include Esperance. Board Member Stewart suggested that this information be referenced better so people have a clear understanding of what the differences are.

Board Member Stewart referred to the chart at the top of Page 17 of Attachment 2 and asked what “WTU” stands for. Board Member Nelson answered that it stands for warehousing, transportation and utilities. Mr. Chave added that “FIRE” stands for finance, insurance and real estate.

Board Member Stewart referred to the 3rd page from the bottom on Page 23 of Attachment 2, noting that the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update included numerous public workshops, open houses and televised work session both at the Planning Board and City Council level. She suggested the Board request that the City Council also televise public hearings for the 2015 update. She recalled Mr. Zhao’s comment at the last meeting about the importance of televising public meetings. The Board agreed that televising the public hearings would be helpful. Mr. Chave pointed out that this language would be replaced with new language. Instead of providing language that relates to just one specific adoption process, the intent of the new language is to outline a general process that is applicable to all land use planning processes.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the City has a definition for “single family.” Mr. Chave answered that the City’s current definition for “family” is “any number of related individuals or up to five unrelated individuals. That means that up to five unrelated individuals would be allowed to reside in a single-family home.

Board Member Nelson said he appreciates the new language for the public process, which will be easy for the general public to understand. He also complimented staff for attempting to define all of the acronyms used throughout the Land Use Element.

Land Use Element

Board Member Lovell expressed concern that the Land Use Element repeatedly refers to the Edmonds Crossing Project, which has no funding and is no longer a viable project. He suggested that it might be more appropriate to refer to a generic multi-modal transportation facility rather than specifically to the Edmonds Crossing Project. Mr. Chave recalled that a lot of federal funds went into the Edmonds Crossing Plan, and the City should be very careful about unilaterally abandoning the project because the Federal Government could ask for their money back. Although there is no funding for the Edmonds Crossing Project at this time, the concepts in the plan are still valid in some form or another. He acknowledged that there needs to be a realistic look at which of the concepts are viable to carry forward and whether they need to be configured differently. Again, he cautioned against eliminating the plan completely.

Board Member Lovell questioned if there is something the Board could do to strengthen the multi-modal concept. He suggested it might be appropriate to emphasize shorter term solutions for resolving issues related to transportation and safety conflicts in the downtown/waterfront area. Mr. Chave said there is consensus at the local, regional and state level that there are still valuable concepts contained in the Edmonds Crossing Plan, but something needs to happen for things to move forward. However, he noted that reviewing the Edmonds Crossing Plan will require a significant effort and cannot be included in the update currently in progress.

Board Member Lovell observed that there has been significant discussion in the community about the need to study potential solutions to crossing the railroad tracks and getting around the ferry queueing lanes. This is of particular concern given the anticipated increase in train traffic projected by 2030, which could end up isolating the waterfront area from the rest of the town for a significant period of time each day. Mr. Chave recalled that the Edmonds Crossing Project originated from a desire to address conflicts between ferries and cars. Safety concerns related to trains have come to the forefront in recent years. He noted that ferry traffic declined significantly between 2000 and 2010, which suggests that ferry traffic may be a less important issue to address than access over the railroad tracks. Board Member Nelson added that recent statistics from

Washington State Ferries show that ferry traffic continued to decline over the past three years, and in 2014 there was an average of 599 fewer passengers each day than in 2013.

Board Member Lovell agreed that it is important for the Land Use Element to emphasize that safe access over the railroad tracks is becoming more of an issue and the City needs to study the alternatives. Mr. Chave suggested it is important not to lose the term “Edmonds Crossing” but separate it from the original big project. Given the current limitations, recent changes, and other problems, revisiting and reconfiguring the plan in conjunction with state and regional partners would be appropriate to look for solutions to the current problems. This work should be done before a decision is made to abandon the project entirely.

Board Member Robles referred to the section related to Population and Employment Capacity (Page 50 of Attachment 4) and asked if the City Council has taken the actions outlined in the second paragraph. Mr. Chave answered that the City Council is currently considering a draft Westgate Plan and they recently approved the Board’s recommendation to remove restrictions on 1st and 2nd floor residential development in the CG and CG2 zones along the Highway 99 Corridor.

Board Member Robles again referred to the section related to Population and Employment Capacity (Page 52 of Attachment 4) and suggested that the last paragraph should not only highlight the measures that could be taken to encourage development, it should also talk about how the measures could be used to inform the process and revisit the language in the future. Mr. Chave noted that no performance measures have been included in the Land Use Element at this time. He invited the Board Members to share their thoughts on what appropriate performance measures might be.

Board Member Lovell referred to draft language he sent via email to Commissioners to address the matter of sustainability and soft versus hard infrastructure. The Board indicated support for the draft language, and Mr. Chave suggested that it could be inserted into the 2nd paragraph on Page 52 of Attachment 4.

Board Member Lovell commented that there have been ongoing discussions amongst the community and the City Council about potentially funding a study to look at solutions to the overall problems of ferry queueing and getting over the railroad tracks. While the Point Edwards solution would be great for SR-104 and eliminate the ferry queueing problem in downtown, it would not address the need for railroad crossings at Dayton and Main Streets. Perhaps a ramp that lands people on the downside of the waterfront is one alternative that could be studied. He agreed with Mr. Chave that the Edmonds Crossing terminology and information should not be eliminated from the Land Use Element, but it should be acknowledged that the certainty of the project is by no means determined at this time.

Mr. Chave said staff will review Pages 68 and 69 of Attachment 4 and likely propose adjustments to the timeframe of long and short-term actions. Board Member Stewart suggested that addressing emergency access over the tracks should be identified in the Comprehensive Plan as a short-term goal. She noted that this issue was discussed at the last City Council meeting. Mr. Chave agreed but said the goal should be general rather than assume any certain conclusion. For example, “take steps to resolve safety and access problems that arise with the railroad.” He noted that a general goal that identifies the problems is all that would be needed for the City to apply for state and federal grant funding.

Board Member Lovell commented that, in his opinion, there is a lack of progress or process in the City at the moment with respect to moving forward with certain issues, particularly land use and redevelopment. There is a huge constituency who does not want change, yet the City must meet state and regional mandates that require it to accommodate more residents. While it is important to preserve the character of the City, it is also important to provide for reasonable growth and redevelopment. This message should be clearly stated in the Land Use Element so the public has a clear understanding of why certain land-use changes are being proposed.

Vice Chair Tibbott suggested that perhaps the last paragraph on Page 50, which is based on certain assumptions such as encouraging mixed-use development at Westgate and Five Corners, would adequately address Board Member Lovell’s concern. Board Member Lovell agreed that this paragraph somewhat addresses his concern, but additional language could be added to emphasize the need to continue with this same strategy. Mr. Chave advised that the last paragraph on Page 48 also places an emphasis on mixed-use development, activity centers, etc. Perhaps this paragraph could be further expanded to make it clear that mixed-use development is one of the key underlying assumptions for meeting the City’s growth targets.

Board Member Lovell asked if it would be appropriate to reference the recently adopted Strategic Action Plan somewhere in the Land Use Element. Mr. Chave noted that the Strategic Action Plan is mentioned as an implementation tool in the Sustainability Element. He explained that the Strategic Action Plan is not intended to be a policy document. Instead, it serves as a link between the overall policy document (Comprehensive Plan) and the budget. He did not feel it would be necessary to mention the Strategic Action Plan in the Land Use Element, as well.

Board Member Stewart reported that at last night's City Council Meeting there was a lot of discussion about the senior center becoming a community center, as well. She questioned if references to senior center, such as in Item 7 on Page 69 of Attachment 4, should be changed to senior center/community center. Chair Cloutier cautioned against anticipating a name change in the update. If the name of the facility is changed in the future, the Comprehensive Plan could be updated accordingly. The remainder of the Board concurred.

Board Member Robles suggested that additional language be added on Page 82 of Attachment 4 to address concerns raised about the need for better buffers between the residential and commercial development along Highway 99. While a business along the Highway 99 Corridor may look pleasing from the front, business owners often dump unwanted items behind their buildings, creating an eyesore for adjacent residential neighbors. He suggested the language related to the Highway 99 Corridor should be more balanced to address the needs of both the commercial and residential property owners. Mr. Chave pointed out that this section actually refers to the Medical/Highway 99 Activity Center, which focuses on the hospital and high school. The Highway 99 Corridor is addressed starting on Page 86 of Attachment 4. He specifically noted that Items A.3, C.1 and D.1 help address the concern raised by Board Member Robles. Chair Cloutier pointed out that these items address the front side of commercial buildings along the Highway 99 Corridor as opposed to the transition area between the businesses and residential uses. Mr. Chave added that Item D.2.d on Page 89 calls for adequate buffering between lower intensity uses and residential neighborhoods. Chair Cloutier suggested that this policy should apply to the buffer area between higher intensity uses and residential neighborhoods, as well.

Board Member Stewart referred to the second paragraph on Page 96 of Attachment 4, which references a 2004 overlay of the critical areas inventory. She asked if the overlay would be updated as part of the 2015 update. Mr. Chave explained that the language in this section explains that the 2004 Comprehensive Plan update changed a lot of RS-12 zoned properties to RS-10 because of the bright-line rule through the Growth Hearings Board requiring a certain density. Because this rule is no longer applicable, most of the language in this section will be eliminated. Board Member Stewart asked if the Best Available Science Report would be updated as part of the current update, and Mr. Chave answered affirmatively.

Board Member Stewart referenced the chart on Page 97 of Attachment 4 and asked if the "single-family-resource" designation is intended to imply that the City is saving natural resources and critical areas by making large lots in that part of the City. Mr. Chave answered affirmatively. He said the intent was to be clearer in zoning and land-use mapping and descriptions as to why they have large-lot, single-family zones in the City.

Board Member Stewart recalled the Board's previous discussion with staff that the Comprehensive Plan should avoid using specific measurements such as "15 feet" in Item A.6 on Page 110 of Attachment 4.

Board Member Stewart suggested that the 3rd Paragraph on Page 111 of Attachment 4 should be changed to read, "Wildlife is a valuable natural resource that greatly enhances the aesthetic quality and well being of human life." Chair Cloutier said another option would be to simply remove the word "aesthetic." The Board concurred with Chair Cloutier's recommendation.

Board Member Stewart referred to the 2nd to the last paragraph on Page 112 of Attachment 4 and suggested the last sentence be changed to reflect that noise can also affect quality of habitat and wildlife. She agreed to send draft language for staff to consider. Mr. Chave noted that a lot of the language in this section is old and needs to be updated.

Vice Chair Tibbott asked if the Noise Section should include language related to unmanned vehicle and/or aircraft. Board Member Robles explained that these devices create more of a privacy issue than a noise issue. The modern drones for aerial surveillance are electric.

Student Representative Zhao said he was excited to learn about the concept of the senior center being changed into more of a community center. He said he and his friends go to the beach a lot, and high school students also hang out near the senior center. It will be good to create more of a community space to serve all citizens of the City in this great location.

INTRODUCTION OF UTILITIES ELEMENT AND RELATED ELEMENTS

Mr. Chave referred the Board to the current Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements of the Comprehensive Plan (Attachment 1). He noted that the 1st Paragraph makes reference to other plans for the sewer, water and stormwater systems. He reported that, at this time, staff is working to extrapolate all of the goals and policies contained in these individual plans so they can be called out to the Utilities Element. While this will add a few more pages, it will be helpful and necessary information. Staff will also consider policies for other utilities that do not have specific plans in place, such as solid waste. He invited the Board Members to offer their comments and suggestions as staff moves forward with the draft update.

Chair Cloutier asked if fiber optics would be addressed as a separate utility. Mr. Chave answered that he is not sure it would be a separate utility, but it should be mentioned in the plan. Chair Cloutier noted that it was recently discussed as being regulated as a utility at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) level.

Board Member Lovell asked if Goals B.1, B.2, B.3 and C.1 on Page 101 of Attachment 1 are current enough to represent what is actually happening. Mr. Chave reported that the Public Works Department has been invited to review the Utilities Element and provide feedback to make it more current. He agreed that some of the language is dated. He noted that solid waste and recycling in Edmonds is unique because the City relies solely on independent carriers. Many jurisdictions actually contract with carriers because they feel they get a better deal for their residents.

Board Member Lovell asked if it would be appropriate to include an additional goal that encourages recycling and reuse of materials when demolition or redevelopment occurs. Mr. Chave agreed that would be an appropriate goal to include in the Solid Waste Section, and it could be implemented via the Development Code.

Board Member Stewart suggested that the 1st Paragraph in Item A on Page 101 of Attachment 1 could be changed by replacing the word “efficient” with “sustainable.” Chair Cloutier noted that the Solid Waste Section also needs to address composting and salvaging materials during demolition.

Mr. Chave said staff would like the Board to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to also include a policy related to underground utilities.

Board Member Lovell suggested that the need for public restrooms and the senior center should be specifically referenced in Goal F on Page 106 of Attachment 1. Mr. Chave pointed out that Goal F refers to “essential public facilities,” which is a term of art in State Law and is not the same as “important public facilities. Essential Public Facilities include uses, such as prisons, that are difficult to site because the community by and large does not want them. The City must have a section in the Comprehensive Plan that talks about how to deal with these uses, and that is what this section attempts to do. It is not about important facilities such as restrooms, etc.

NOMINATION/ELECTION OF 2015 BOARD POSITIONS

BOARD MEMBER LOVELL NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER CLOUTIER TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015. BOARD MEMBER NELSON SECONDED THE NOMINATION.

BOARD MEMBER STEWART NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER TIBBOTT TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015. BOARD MEMBER LOVELL SECONDED THE NOMINATION.

AFTER A VOTE, THE BOARD ELECTED BOARD MEMBER TIBBOTT TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015.

BOARD MEMBER ROBLES NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER LOVELL TO SERVE AS VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015. BOARD MEMBER CLOUTIER SECONDED THE NOMINATION.

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BOARD MEMBER TIBBOTT NOMINATED BOARD MEMBER RUBENKONIG TO SERVE AS VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015. BOARD MEMBER ROBLES SECONDED THE NOMINATION.

AFTER A VOTE, THE BOARD ELECTED BOARD MEMBER LOVELL TO SERVE AS VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD IN 2015.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Mr. Chave referred to the updated extended agenda, and noted that the discussion at most Board meetings over the next several months will focus on the Comprehensive Plan Update. He agreed to contact the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director to confirm that she will present a quarterly Parks Report on January 14th.

Board Member Lovell asked when the Board would have its first hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Chave answered that the first public hearing is scheduled for June 10th. He reminded the Board that, as per the current process, the Board will have a study session on each element of the Comprehensive Plan, and then each element will be forwarded to the City Council for a public hearing and study session prior to hearings before the Planning Board.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

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

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

The Board Members thanked Chair Cloutier and Vice Chair Tibbott for their leadership throughout 2014.

Board Member Lovell reported on his attendance at the November 17th Economic Development Commission meeting where there was a fairly substantial discussion about the Commission's role with respect to the Planning Board and City Council. It was suggested that the Commission should work more closely with the Planning Board, and some concern was expressed about the status of things that are and are not happening at the City Council level. They specifically discussed the future of the Commission and whether or not their recommendations provide a value to the City Council. The City Council members in attendance at the meeting assured them that they are a valuable asset to the City and they want their work to continue. Over the past year, the Commission had a good structure of subcommittees that worked on various issues they wanted to advance. This approach worked well and they were able to move a few items forward such as a recommendation to the Planning Board regarding the Westgate Plan. They expressed disappointment that the City Council has not taken final action on the plan, given the great amount of work by the Planning Board and Economic Development Commission.

Vice Chair Tibbott reported that he recently wrote an article that was published in *THE EDMONDS BEACON* and www.myedmondsnews.com titled, "The Future of Housing in Edmonds." He said he intends to write at least two more articles on affordability and transportation in housing. He emphasized that in no way does he intend to represent the Board's thoughts on any particular issue. He said *THE EDMONDS BEACON* has invited him to write a monthly column, but he is concerned that it may create a conflict of interest given his current position on the Board. Chair Cloutier clarified that because the Board does not deal with quasi-judicial actions, Board Members can voice their opinion on anything they wish in any forum. However, they should be careful to make it clear that they do not represent the viewpoint of the Planning Board as a whole.

As chair of the Board in 2015, Vice Chair Tibbott said he plans to continue with the quarter reports to the City Council. He noted that these reports represent a good opportunity to report to the media, as well. Vice Chair Tibbott announced that he has also been invited to participate on the SR-104 Corridor Study Advisory Group.

Board Member Robles reported that he spoke last week at the "Future of Money" Conference.

Board Member Stewart announced that she is working to organize a tour put on by Bill Phillips, who was a Chemistry Teacher at Edmonds High School in the 1970s when biologist John Cook, a college student at the time, led his students to do

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a study of the Edmonds Marsh. Mr. Phillips later became the Vice Principal of Edmonds Woodway High School. He also previously served for 17 years on the Edmonds Planning Board, during which time the City acquired a significant amount of park land and saved natural areas from development. Mr. Phillips will conduct a tour of the shoreline and share the City's history for acquiring waterfront lands. He also plans to conduct an additional tour of upland park space the Planning Board was instrumental in acquiring. She noted that several Edmonds Woodway High School students have been invited to attend, and Planning Board Members are invited, as well. She agreed to inform the Board of the specific date and time as soon as possible.

Board Member Stewart thanked Mr. Zhao for accepting the responsibility of serving as the Student Representative on the Planning Board.

Mr. Zhao said he is currently the Vice President of Edmonds Woodway High School's Environmental Group and he is seeking to contact a City representative to discuss opportunities for local crews to help with park cleanup. Board Member Stewart agreed to provide Mr. Zhao with the appropriate contact information for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services staff.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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