

**CITY OF EDMONDS
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

August 24, 2016

Chair Lovell 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

Philip Lovell, Chair
Carreen Rubenkönig, Vice Chair
Matthew Cheung
Todd Cloutier
Nathan Monroe
Daniel Robles

STAFF PRESENT

Rob Chave, Planning Division Manager
Patrick Doherty, Economic Development/Community Services Director
Jerry Bevington, Video Recorder
Karin Noyes, Recorder

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Valerie Stewart (excused)
Alicia Crank (excused)

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CLOUTIER MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 10, 2016 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. VICE CHAIR RUBENKONIG 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

Chair Lovell referred the Board to the written report that was provided by the Development Services Director. He pointed out that the report provides links to information relative to the OSO Recovery Plan, Sign Code Update, and National Citizen Survey. The community calendar of events was also provided at the end of the report, but it did not reflect that the opening of the Edmonds Fishing Pier was postponed until early September.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig drew the Board's attention to the report that the City Council held a public hearing and adopted Resolution 1368 to designate the Westgate Mixed Use Zone District as a Residential Targeted Area, which is the second step in a series of actions that could result in a tax incentive program for multi-family development in the zone.

PRESENTATION OF NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY (NCS) RESULTS

Mr. Doherty provided a summary report on the National Citizen Survey (NCS) that was administered in Edmonds in June and July by the National Research Center (NRC). Approved and funded by the City Council, the survey was conducted in a scientifically valid, statistically significant fashion. The surveys were sent to 2,200 randomly selected households, and 586 citizens responded (28% compared to the national average of between 20-40%). He provided a map to illustrate the location of the households that received the standardized survey. He explained that, at the end of the standardized survey period, the survey was opened to the entire public in an online format that ran from July 1st through July 17th. With the 320 online responses that were received, the total responses were 906. Because the results from the written and online surveys were very similar, the NRC suggested that the results could be combined to increase the confidence level to only 3% margin of error.

Mr. Doherty explained that the NRC conducts detailed analysis and draws conclusions via a “Community Livability Report,” which examines three pillars of community: community characteristics, governance and participation. The Community Livability Report addresses the following central facets of community: safety, mobility, natural environment, built environment, economy, recreation and wellness, education and enrichment, and community engagement. The survey questions were grouped to come up with conclusions that were then compared against nationwide averages. At an additional cost, the City was able to also compare the results against 25 Pacific Northwest cities (20,000 to 60,000 population), and compare and contrast across five demographic cohorts: length of residency in Edmonds, annual household income, rent or own dwelling unit, age, and gender. The following is a summary of the survey’s conclusions:

- The overwhelming majority of respondents gave the City a resounding thumbs-up. Nine in 10 positively rated the City’s overall image, overall appearance and as a great place to raise children. In addition, 96% rated Edmonds as an excellent or good place to live, which is much higher than responses in nationwide surveys, as well as those throughout the Pacific Northwest.
- Safety is an asset and priority, with 9 in 10 residents stating that they feel safe and identifying safety as a priority to focus on in coming years.
- The economy is important and highly rated in Edmonds. About 8 to 10 rated the City’s economic health as positive. However, it was recognized that more jobs in Edmonds for Edmonds residents would be desirable, as only 3 in 10 work in the City.
- The City supports a culture of diversity and opportunities for citizen engagement. At least 75% gave excellent/good ratings to opportunities for cultural/arts/events engagement. In addition, 6 in 10 felt that the City has high levels of community engagement and is open to people of diverse backgrounds.
- Categories in which responses were well above the national average include ease of walking, overall natural environment, air quality, vibrant downtown area, mental health care, adult education, traffic flow, cleanliness, public places, places to visit, preventive health services, cultural/art/music activities, and social events and activities.
- Only one category, affordable quality house, ranked lower than national average. The Pacific Northwest is an expensive part of the country, and Edmonds is one of the costliest.

Mr. Doherty advised that, in addition to the standardized questions, the survey included five customized questions that were unique to Edmonds:

- **How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased local public funding for transportation-related services in Edmonds?** Respondents indicated strong support for repair/replacement of existing sidewalks (86%), repair/maintenance of City streets (88%) and construction of new sidewalks (84%). About 59% were favorable towards expansion of bicycle facilities, as well.

APPROVED

- **How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased local public funding for parks and recreation-related services in Edmonds?** Respondents indicated strong support for the acquisition of parkland and beachfront property (77%), capital projects such as Civic Field and Marina Beach Park (83%), upgrading the Frances Anderson Center (79%), and upgrading maintenance levels of existing parks (85%).
- **Please indicate whether or not your currently experience discrimination in Edmonds based on various characteristics.** The respondents who indicated experience with discrimination in Edmonds was very low: sexual orientation or gender identity was 3%, disability was 3%, religion was 3%, national origin was 3%, race was 4%, gender was 3% and age was 5%. While these numbers appear to be small, it is important to recognize that for some of the categories (sexual orientation, disability, national origin and race) the portion of Edmonds population who fall within the cohorts is mostly under 10%, making the response rates more significant within each cohort. For example, if 2% of the population states they experience discrimination based on sexual orientation, when approximately 5-10% of the population may be a member of this cohort, that means that 20-45% of that cohort may be experiencing discrimination.
- **How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased funding to enhance Edmonds police-related services?** A large number of respondents indicated they would support increased funding to enhance domestic violence services (89%), patrol presence (89%), crime prevention (89%) youth service programs (74%), crime analysis (82%) and traffic enforcement (65%).
- **Rate how various media are a regular source of information for you about City functions, activities, programs and events.** About 46% of the respondents indicated that they use online media as a source of information, while 36% indicated they receive information via word of mouth, 32% via signage, 43% via printed media, and 26% via the City's website.

Based on the survey responses, Mr. Doherty summarized that the residents believe the following should be areas of focus over the next two years: overall quality of life (83%), overall quality of the built environment (79%), health and wellness opportunities (65%) and sense of community (84%).

Mr. Doherty referred the Board Members to the memorandum he prepared for the City Council, which was attached to the Staff Report. He noted that the NRC's report includes interesting information about how different demographic cohorts responded to the questions. For example, people who have lived in Edmonds for longer and are of the oldest cohort group gave lower ratings relative to community livability. These people have witnessed changes over the years and tend to think the situation is worse than the younger respondents and newer residents.

Board Member Cheung asked if the survey results had been broken down based on demographics such as income, age, sexual orientation, etc. Mr. Doherty answered that demographic information is available for the written survey but not for the online survey. He agreed to forward a summary of the demographic information to the Commissioners. He also agreed to forward the Technical Appendices, which contains more detailed data.

Board Member Robles referred to the map that Mr. Doherty provided to show where the respondents to the written survey lived and noted that the locations were staggered towards density. He asked if other stratification could also be used to gain valuable information. For example, it would be interesting to arrange the data based on distance from downtown or the freeway. Mr. Doherty answered that the City did not take the strategy of comparing different parts of the City and closely referencing them to each other because they were not sure there would be agreement on what those areas could be. Without strong neighborhood identify, it is difficult to stratify based on areas of the City. However, any community that engages in the survey process can participate again in three years, and this would give the City the ability to compare against itself. The total cost of the survey was \$18,000. The City also has the option to pay more money to obtain additional data in the report.

Mr. Doherty said that he is working with other City staff to plan an open house to share the survey results with the public. He commented that the public took the time to engage in the survey and the City needs to let them know that the results have validity and will be worked into not only the budget process, but the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), as well.

Chair Lovell asked what facilitated the study. Mr. Doherty answered that the City Council briefly discussed interest in conducting a survey at their 2015 retreat. Staff researched the concept further and presented options for the City Council to

consider. It was also identified as a possible expenditure to consider for the 2016 budget, and the City Council elected to fund the project and move the survey forward.

Chair Lovell said that, as he read through the summary results, he noticed what appears to be opposing views. For examples, the survey results suggest that there are not enough jobs in Edmonds, yet he has always been under the impression that Edmonds is a bedroom community for Seattle. As such, people want to move out of the City into Suburban Edmonds. There have been periods of significant housing expansion and individual private homes were developed that were reflective of the higher-income people who wanted to live in Edmonds. A number of other cities in the county have experienced the same conditions. The cities are now getting crowded and people can no longer afford to move out to suburbia. He observed that Edmonds has a history of being a community of single-family residences for higher income people who commute to Seattle for work, and this will be difficult to overcome.

Chair Lovell referred to the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which provides data on the number of jobs in Edmonds, number of working-age residents, and how many people work outside of the city. Of the 20,000 working-age people who live in Edmonds, about 13,000 of them work outside of the City. A high portion of the jobs in Edmonds are service-oriented, which equates to a lot of lesser-paying jobs and not enough higher-paying jobs that are needed for people to afford the higher housing costs. The challenge is to increase the full spectrum of paying jobs, as well as providing more affordable housing options. Mr. Doherty commented that the idea that Edmonds is a bedroom community is starting to change as traffic now rules more lives. The respondents may be expressing this frustration by suggesting that it would be great if there were more jobs closer to their hometown. They also recognize that this will mean some growth and change. He said the City's Economic Development Department is actively recruiting businesses to garner jobs for people who live in the Edmonds.

Chair Lovell observed that there was a high level of responsiveness to the idea that people are willing to fund more of what they find to be the best elements of the City, and this sentiment will likely be tested in the community in the next few years.

Board Member Monroe referred to the conclusion in the report that having a healthy economy is important to residents and highly rated in Edmonds. He asked if this specific question was asked as part of the survey. Mr. Doherty answered that the question was more like, "what is your rating of the available jobs in Edmonds?" Only 33% of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with the availability of jobs in Edmonds.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig asked if there is something the Board could take away from the survey as it moves forward with discussions relative to housing. Mr. Doherty reminded the Board that many respondents voiced concern about the affordability of housing in Edmonds. He explained that the survey included two questions relative to housing. When respondents were asked whether or not they consider themselves housing stressed, 70% of those making less than \$49,000 answered affirmatively compared with only 33% overall. This is consistent with the national average. However, when asked whether housing was affordable in Edmonds, the response was low and well below the national average. This leads him to believe that people are happy with the housing they are in, but recognize that it is too costly for new residents.

Board Member Monroe asked if there were any surprising differences amongst the various demographic groups. Mr. Doherty answered that there were a few places in his summary memorandum to the City Council where he commented on the differences amongst the demographic subgroups. For example,

- Residents with an annual household income of more than \$100,000 tended to give lower ratings to ease of travel by public transportation than residents with lower annual household income. This difference could be related to the fact that more lower-income people utilize the service.
- Residents who have lived in Edmonds for more than 20 years tended to give lower ratings relative to the general aspects of governance, including the value of services for taxes paid and the overall direction that Edmonds is taking. On the other hand, residents 18 to 34 tended to give higher ratings to general aspects of governance.
- Homeowners reported higher levels of participation for many activities compared to those who rented their homes, and renters were much less likely to have attended a City-sponsored event.
- The rankings for services such as street repair, sidewalk maintenance, traffic enforcement, etc., also showed quite positive marks from those residing less time in Edmonds, while the long-term residents consistently rated these services somewhat lower.

Chair Lovell referred to the list of highlights (Page 7 of the Summary Memorandum) and noted that 56% of those earning less than \$49,999 rated the ease of travel by public transportation highly compared to only 24% of those earning \$100,000 or more. He commented that these responses track with people who have higher incomes, have lived in Edmonds longer and are older. Mr. Doherty pointed that this group of people do not typically rely on public transportation as much. Perhaps they may perceive it is not easy to use because they do not use.

Board Member Cheung commented that sometimes Edmonds is generalized as being an older community. He asked if this perception was indicative to the primary demographics of the respondents. Mr. Doherty answered that there was a good representation across all age cohorts. He pointed out that fewer people in the 55+ cohort responded that Edmonds was a good place to retire than in the younger group.

Chair Lovell asked if all of the detailed statistics would be made available to the community when the study is rolled out at the open house. Mr. Doherty replied that the information is already accessible via the City's website, and the City issued a press release relative to the summary findings. The study was also covered on My Edmonds News.

PREPARING FOR JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Chair Lovell reviewed that, at their last meeting, the Board discussed the results of a preparatory meeting that he and Vice Chair Rubenkönig had with Ms. Hope to discuss the agenda for the upcoming joint Planning Board/City Council meeting on September 6th. He recalled that Ms. Hope encouraged the Board Members to review information that was prepared by Snohomish County's Alliance for Housing Affordability, as well as the Housing Element contained in the City's Comprehensive Plan. She suggested, and he concurred, that the goals and policies called out in the Housing Element should be the focus of the joint discussion.

Chair Lovell specifically referred to the last section, which identifies an implementation action and performance measure for evaluating the City's progress towards achieving its goals and policy direction. He asked if the City has been tracking the number of residential units permitted each year. Mr. Chave replied that the Building Division reports on housing on a monthly basis, and the Board can extract data from this report to contribute to the metric for the Housing Element. He pointed out that housing information is also reported to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, and they produce estimates on population changes on a yearly basis. Board Member Cloutier recalled that the last time the Board talked about metrics for measuring the City's progress towards achieving its housing goals and policies was in 2010. Since that time, he conducted a web search to learn how other jurisdictions make their metrics available.

Board Member Monroe asked if the Board has previously discussed how to get affordable housing on a regional basis and improve transportation partnerships with the City's regional neighbors rather than doing it all on a local basis. Vice Chair Rubenkönig said she and Chair Lovell discussed this concept with Ms. Hope, who indicated that Snohomish County's approach is to make sure affordable housing is provided, and one way to address this need is to look at road network improvements. However, more specifically, the Board is being asked to look at Edmonds. Although infrastructure is in place to support affordable housing, it seems that the majority of affordable housing is located outside of Edmonds. She agreed that one strategy could be for the City to work more closely with neighboring jurisdictions to address the need. Affordable housing will not be possible in many areas of Edmond, so it will be important to take advantage of and improve upon the affordable housing opportunities that are provided in neighboring communities by improving connections.

Chair Lovell recalled that, at their last meeting, the Board discussed Ms. Hope's recommendation that they look at housing from two perspectives: What can be done to create more opportunities and an environment that encourages the development of affordable housing and what can be done to force the development affordable housing. He voiced concern that simply creating opportunities for affordable housing might not be enough without the ability to force it upon future redevelopment.

Board Member Cloutier clarified that affordable housing is only one subset of the housing issue. While affordability needs to be addressed as part the mix of solutions, the discussion must also include other potential strategies such as retrofitting existing buildings and encouraging opportunities for residents to age in place. He pointed out that the goals in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan read more like strategic goals, and each has a set of policies the City could use to implement them. What is missing is prioritization on which strategies should be pushed harder than others. He suggested

that the joint meeting discussion should focus on the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically seeking feedback from the City Council relative to prioritization. Once they identify the policies they want to focus on, they can create metrics to measure the City's progress. As progress is measured, the City can create a follow up plan as necessary.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig suggested that the joint meeting discussion could focus on the housing needs of a segment of the City's vulnerable population such as housing that allows people to age in place. This group could be used as a focus for addressing the housing strategies. She specifically suggested the discussion could focus on the following Housing Goals:

- **Housing Goal C.** Encourage the utilization of the housing resources of the state or federal government to assist in providing adequate housing opportunities for special needs populations, such as low income, disabled, or senior residents.
- **Housing Goal E.** Provide opportunities for affordable housing (subsidized, if need be) for special needs populations, such as disadvantaged, disabled, low income, and senior residents.
- **Housing Goal F.** Provide for a variety of housing that respects the established character of the community.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig suggested that the Board could focus on potential regulatory changes and the City Council could consider possible incentives that would encourage the type of development that meets the needs of the vulnerable populations. She said she views strategies that allow people to age in place as one way to promote affordable housing. Board Member Robles asked if Vice Chair Rubenkönig is suggesting that "aging in place" should be used as a proxy for affordable housing. In other words, if they serve that need, they will, in fact, be serving the entire need. Vice Chair Rubenkönig acknowledged that addressing the needs of our senior citizens could assist addressing the more general need for more affordable housing.

Board Member Cloutier emphasized that, in order to solve problems, the Board must first identify the problems and then prioritize them. The Housing Element contains a number of goals, policies and strategies, and the ones they choose to focus on should be data driven. He reminded the Board that the survey indicated that older people feel that housing is less affordable, which indicates there is a concern that they will not be able to stay in the community. This survey information could be considered a data point.

At the request of Board Member Monroe, Vice Chair Rubenkönig explained the concept of "aging in place." As people age, their physical, economic and social circumstances change and they may find they no longer have the physical and/or economic ability to remain in their current homes or even in their communities. The concept is to create strategies that result in housing opportunities for this segment of the population, such as accessory dwelling units. She said studies show that people live longer and are happier if they can remain in their communities. Board Member Robles added that one strategy for "aging in place" is to split a fairly large house into two units, where the aging person lives on one floor and rents the other space for additional income. He expressed his belief that the strategies should be aimed at economic incentives that allow the citizens of Edmonds to act in their own best interest. While these types of strategies would not count towards meeting the City's statistical requirements for housing, they would benefit the existing citizens rather than just turning the property over to a developer. He suggested that incentives should be aimed towards what people can do in their community rather than towards developers.

Mr. Chave referred the Board to the memorandum prepared by Ms. Hope, in which she recommended that the joint meeting agenda include a 90-minute discussion about developing a Housing Strategy and the remaining time could be spent soliciting direction from the City Council on other topics (Highway 99 redevelopment, 5 Corners redevelopment, Edmonds Marsh progress, railroad crossing alternatives, and Civic Field master planning). He reviewed that because time will be limited, Ms. Hope recommended the Board identify a few key questions they would like to discuss relative to housing and not get into too many details. For example:

- Should the Board be involved with the Housing Strategy that is promised in the Comprehensive Plan? If so, should the Strategy start getting developed sooner than 2019?
- Should the Housing Strategy provide a framework that includes both data and recommendations for addressing housing issues?
- While the Housing Strategy is to focus on increasing the supply of affordable housing and meeting diverse housing needs, should it prioritize particular issues or population groups?

In addition to the questions outlined in the memorandum, Mr. Chave suggested it might be helpful to review the goals contained in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan to determine if some should be prioritized over others.

Board Member Cheung reminded the Board that one of the overarching goals of the Housing Element is to accommodate the anticipated growth by providing a variety of housing options. In addition, there are goals to address the housing needs for diverse levels of income. Mr. Chave said affordability is only one component of addressing the City's diverse housing needs. Aging in place is another component that addresses both demographics and affordability. He acknowledged that housing is a complex subject, and he cautioned against diving too far into the details without a strategic overview of the issues and implementation strategies, as well as direction on prioritization.

Board Member Cheung asked if an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) would count as an additional housing unit. He said he would like to explore the possibility of allowing detached ADUs, particularly for people who want to age in place. Mr. Chave answered that ADUs could help address the issue of affordability by allowing a homeowner to subsidize housing costs, and they could also provide a different housing type. However, they would not change the density equation. Currently, the code defines ADUs in such a way that makes them part of an extended family situation, which means that only one family can live on the property. A "family" is defined in the code as up to five unrelated people. The fact that an ADU is constructed on the property does not change the requirement. If the code is changed to allow two families to live on the property (one in the house and another in the ADU), you are essentially allowing duplexes in the single-family zones.

Board Member Robles suggested that the City could revise the definition of "family." Mr. Chave acknowledged that is possible, but cautioned that there would be implications that must be considered. Board Member Cheung said he would be interested in gauging the public's general support for the concept of detached ADUs. Mr. Chave cautioned that attached ADUs would be an easier argument to make than detached ADUs, and the public may be willing to support the concept as long as the definition of "family" is maintained. Once you cross over to allow more than one family to live on a single-family residential property, he suspects there will be significant neighborhood concerns. He explained that although ADU permits are straightforward and there is no appeal process, there is still a lot of skepticism from surrounding neighbors. He emphasized that it is important to have a clear definition of "family" in order to address enforcement issues that come up.

Mr. Chave pointed out that expanding the code to allow detached ADUs without changing the definition of "family" would not really address the density issue, but it could address other aspects of the housing such as affordability, different housing styles and/or living arrangements, aging in place, etc.) He suggested that the City needs to be strategic when addressing density. He reminded the Board that the Westgate Plan was intended to include more residential density, and that is one of the goals of the Highway 99 Study, as well. The City currently has enough density to accommodate anticipated growth, so it is not necessary, at this time, to densify the single-family neighborhoods. However, he acknowledged there may be other reasons to consider ADUs to meet certain housing needs.

Mr. Chave suggested that the joint meeting discussion could focus on the goals called out in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which cover a broad spectrum of issues. The intent of the discussion would be to identify the goals they want to actively pursue. This would allow the City to move forward with a Housing Strategy that sets out a plan for accomplishing the goals. He noted that there is a lengthy list of housing strategies the Board and City Council could consider. It may be valuable to gauge whether the City Council would be amenable to considering other options, in addition to those the City has already implemented.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig asked who would moderate the joint meeting, and Mr. Chave answered that, typically, the Mayor would moderate the meeting, but he will not be available on September 6th. Therefore, it is likely the Council President will lead the meeting on behalf of the City Council. However, the Board Chair will likely have an opportunity to encapsulate the Board's discussion by introducing a few thoughts to start off.

Vice Chair Rubenkönig asked staff to clarify the land-use strategies to promote affordable housing, as listed on Page 90 of the Housing Element. She asked if staff could map where upzoning has occurred and if there is a size criterion to qualify for a density bonus. She also asked how small of a parcel can be developed as a Planned Residential Development (PRD) and if there are areas in Edmonds where infill development could occur. Mr. Chave pointed out that the density bonus would only apply to multi-family development. He also said "infill development" is a generic term, and typically occurs on multi-family

zoned properties that are currently developed as single-family residential. He said it would be very difficult to map where infill development has and can occur. Vice Chair Rubenkong asked if the Conversion/Adaptive Reuse Strategy would apply more to commercial properties than residential properties, and Mr. Chave said the strategy can have a broad application and could include converting single-family homes into multiple units. He said it would also be difficult to map these changes.

Mr. Chave suggested that the joint meeting could include a review of the land-use strategies on Page 90 of the Housing Element, as well as a discussion about how well each one is working. The list could then be tweaked as appropriate and other strategies could be added. He acknowledged that it will not be possible to reach conclusions on the list of strategies at the joint meeting. The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to evaluate the different strategies, match them with the Comprehensive Plan goals, and identify other strategies the City hasn't yet tried. To create the Housing Strategy, it will be necessary to review all of the data and information that has been assembled and identify the goals they want to achieve. This approach will allow them to focus on the needs, adjust and/or expand the list of strategies, and identify the metrics that will be used to gauge the success of the strategies.

Board Member Cloutier asked if the Housing Strategy would be done by City staff or if an outside consultant would be hired. Mr. Chave answered that the project may require help from a consultant, which means it will have budget implications. He reminded the Board that a Housing Strategy is high on the City Council's agenda, and it was also identified in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) as a high priority. Given the current status of projects such as Highway 99 and 5 Corners, it is not likely that the Housing Strategy can be completed in 2017, but it could be started in 2017 and finished in 2018. This schedule would still be well ahead of the 2019 date.

Board Member Cloutier suggested there are things the City could do in the meantime while waiting to hire a consultant to work on the Housing Strategy. This could include amendments to the Development Code to address ADUs and PRDs. Mr. Chave agreed and said the City could also update its Multi-Family Residential (RM) zoning provisions. Currently, the bulk requirements are the same across all of the RM zones, and the only thing that is different is density. Because the bulk standards are the same, the buildings also look the same. Independent of the Housing Strategy, the Board could ask the City Council to evaluate the different RM zones to see if the regulations could be tweaked. Also, Mr. Chave reminded the Board that staff is working with a consultant to introduce stronger design standards for the RM zones. If the design standards are improved, perhaps density would become much less important. Board Member Cloutier expressed his belief that reviewing the RM zone bulk standards at the same time as the design standards are being created would have an impact on affordability, as well as meeting the Growth Management Act requirements for additional units to accommodate growth. Mr. Chave agreed and noted that these changes would not impact single-family neighborhoods, either.

Board Member Cheung referred to upzoning, which is listed as a land use strategy to promote affordable housing. He asked what the main objections would be to allowing development lots to be smaller. Mr. Chave explained that the number of units allowed on a property is based on zoning. While one strategy is to change the zoning for a certain area to allow smaller lot sizes, it is important to recognize that change would not happen all at once. He said Snohomish County used another interesting approach where existing lots that were 1.5 times the minimum lot size required could be developed as a duplex. Many of the areas that were annexed more recently into the City were developed with duplexes because they were slightly larger lots. He summarized that there are different ways to address infill and density. However, there will likely be push back because people typically do not like change.

Board Member Cheung said he has often heard the argument that changing zoning will decrease property values. Mr. Chave said people tend to believe that allowing more units will decrease the value of the existing homes and change the character of the neighborhood. Upzoning is not something the City has tried to do. Board Member Cheung asked if there is evidence to support the claim that property values would decrease, and Mr. Chave answered that it depends upon the character of the neighborhood. A change in zoning might be subtler in newer neighborhoods and more noticeable in older neighborhoods with oversized lots. He summarized that, to date, the City has taken a very cautious view of zoning changes in the single-family neighborhoods because it can have very unexpected results. They have tried to focus more on multi-family zones where they can get more "bang for their buck."

Board Member Cloutier reviewed the handout he prepared for the Board's discussion, which outlines potential housing metrics that could be used to evaluate each of the goals. He noted that a list of other resources was provided at the bottom of the page for the Board Member's information. The overall community/region metrics dashboard example from southern

Arizona includes a website for showing the metrics to the public in a simple and graphic way. The Metrics for Affordable and Sustainable Housing from the Federation of American Scientists provides a study paper about affordable housing across the board, focusing on affordable and sustainable housing and what metrics can be used. He encouraged the Board Members to review the links, which may help them pick the “low-hanging fruit” that can be addressed before the Housing Strategy has been completed. He suggested they could ask the City Council the following questions:

- What are some opportunities to improve Edmonds’ housing stock today?
- What is the goal for affordable housing?
- What is the goal for the coming year to accommodate the housing goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan?
- What type of units should the City focus on?

Chair Lovell agreed with Mr. Chave that the joint meeting should follow the approach outlined in Ms. Hope’s memorandum. In preparation for the meeting, he encouraged the Board Members to carefully review the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. While the City Council will likely take the lead in the discussion, the Board will have an opportunity to seek direction as to what it should focus on over the coming year. The Board could seek feedback with respect to amending the RM zoning standards to create greater opportunities and perhaps incentive for property owners to redevelop. They could also discuss opportunities for public/private partnerships to redevelop properties along Highway 99.

Mr. Chave commented that a number of things can impact housing. For example, subdivision regulations can discourage the retention of existing housing stock if there is not sufficient flexibility. As currently written, the code may not allow a property owner to subdivide an oversized lot into two or three lots without tearing down the existing home, and existing homes usually provide more affordable housing options. One housing strategy could be to tweak the existing subdivision code to allow variation in lot size, while still achieving the same density overall, but with flexibility in how the lots are arranged so the existing house can remain. The PRD concept could also be used as an effective housing strategy.

Mr. Chave advised that the packet that is prepared for the joint meeting will provide a link to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Snohomish County Alliance for Housing Affordability Report that contains useful data.

REVIEW OF EXTENDED AGENDA

Chair Lovell reviewed that the September 14th agenda will include continued discussion on the Civic Center Master Plan and an update on the Land Division Code. The September 28th agenda will include a discussion on the Highway 99 Subarea Plan and a presentation on the 2017 Capital Improvement Plan and Capital Facilities Plan. Based on feedback the Board receives from the City Council at the joint meeting, they can begin working on housing issues in the near future. In addition, Council President Johnson expressed interest in the Board starting its work on the 5 Corners Subarea Plan as early as October 26th. The initial discussions will include a review of the work performed by the University of Washington students.

PLANNING BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Lovell announced that the Mayor’s Task Force studying railroad crossing alternatives will provide a report to the City Council later this fall. There will be no report to the Planning Board.

PLANNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board Member comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

APPROVED