Commissioners Present:  
Robert Larsen, First Vice Chair  
Chad Braithwaite, Second Vice Chair  
Maria Ambalada  
George Hurst  

Staff Present:  
Corbitt Loch, Dep. Director Comm. Dev.  
Paul Krauss, Director Comm. Dev.  
David Kleitsch, Director Economic. Dev.  
Janiene Lambert, City Center Prog. Mgr.  

Commissioners Absent:  
Michael Wojack  
Richard Wright, Chair  
Doug Jones  

Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Larson at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes  
1. Minutes of the May 22, 2014 Meeting  
2. Minutes of the June 26, 2014 Meeting  

Motion made by Commissioner Ambalada, seconded by Commissioner Braithwaite, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2014 Meeting and the minutes of the June 26, 2014 Meeting. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Citizen Comments

Public Hearing  
1. Mixed Use in the PRC and PCD Zones  
The hearing was opened at 7:05 p.m.

Staff Presentation:  
Community Development Deputy Director Loch explained that the proposed code amendment related to the mixed use regulations in the Planned Regional Center (PRC) Zone and the Planned Commercial Development (PCD) Zone. There is another amendment that applies to all commercial zones where there would be mixed use, but the majority of the issues relate to the PRC and the PCD zones, located primarily in the vicinity of Alderwood Mall. He reviewed the zoning map
showing these areas. He reviewed the background and actions taken regarding this item and the process for moving forward. He then discussed the proposed code amendments as contained in the packet which would:

1. Repeal the prohibition of multifamily dwellings on the second and third building levels.
2. Repeal the requirement that floor area dedicated to residences not exceed the amount of floor area used for the non-residential purposes.
3. Repeal the 35% maximum lot coverage provision for the PRC and PCD zone.
4. Add requirements for onsite recreation area/open space for dwellings in commercial zones. Applicable to the B-1, B-2, B-3, C-G, PRC, PCD and C-R zones. Separate regulations apply to the HMU and City Center zones.

Reasons for the code amendments are:
- They would align the development regulations with real estate market realities (regarding demand for ground level retail and upper level residential units, construction costs, as exemplified by the Lynnwood Place development).
- They would be consistent with the City’s obligation to accommodate future population growth as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA).
- The residents create a built-in market for the businesses in the vicinity.
- Sound Transit 3 will have a stop in the mall area, which will dramatically increase the accessibility of the Mall area.
- Supports structured parking rather than surface parking, and in turn better utilize land in the Mall area.
- They will reduce dependence on the automobile.
- They will create a walkable community and help with wellness and sustainability.
- They will create an interesting living environment, especially with the amendments regarding the onsite recreation area and open space.
- They will focus growth within areas where infrastructure is planned or exists, as required by the GMA.
- This will all occur while maintaining environmental protections and mitigation for adverse impacts that can occur as a result of new development.

Deputy Director Loch exhibited photos of example mixed use buildings to show how the area might mature over time based upon these code amendments.

Community Development Director Paul Krauss added that the planned Poplar Way Bridge will have a positive impact on transportation movement and development around the mall. Also Sound Transit is currently preparing preliminary designs for alternative layouts for the ST-3 route through the Mall vicinity. While not finalized, every design alternative includes transit stops at Lynnwood City Center, Alderwood Mall, and Ash Way.
Economic Development Director Kleitsch discussed related policies included in Ordinance 2320, adopted by City Council in 2001, creating the Economic Development Department and pursuing economic development policies and actions in 2001. Ordinance 2320 calls for enhancing the economic health of the community by identifying areas where future economic activity and growth is intended or desired to occur including redevelopment of specific areas or sites. Also in that ordinance, item K says that the City should review the regulations, plans, and policies on the future vitality of the economy and reduce both the burdens and the cost of government regulations on the future development of residentially and commercially zoned land.

Deputy Director Loch stated that staff has received three letters in support of the amendments and none in opposition. Staff is recommending that Planning Commission recommend approval of the code amendments to the City Council.

Public Comments:

Wayne Reisenauer, 4323 Burke Avenue N, Seattle, WA, Real Estate Consultant for the Edmonds School District, on behalf of Stewart Myhre, spoke in support of this item and urged the Planning Commission to recommend approval of the code amendments to the Council. He thinks the timing is very positive for property owners like the school district who will want to relocate the bus facility. The recent bond measure was approved by the voters funds that replacement facility and construction is to begin next year. These code amendments will give the district’s property a better opportunity to succeed in the marketplace.

Robin Murphy, 4411 SW 100th Street, Seattle, WA, stated he is an architect and a member of Seattle’s Southwest Design Review Board. He spoke in support of this code amendment to support mixed use in the PRC and PCD zones. He shared some examples of his work in community-centric design in West Seattle and Redmond to illustrate points Deputy Director Loch had made. He spoke in support of high-density housing in appropriate areas to prevent housing sprawl.

Oscar del Moro, Executive Vice President, Cosmos, 11747 NE 1st Street, Bellevue, WA, stated he represents a property owner in the affected area. He is a licensed architect focusing on architectural design, urban design, and real estate development. He has focused his company on mixed use and has worked exclusively in downtown urban environments including Seattle, Redmond, Bellevue, Lynnwood, and Mountlake Terrace. He shared examples of his work. He commented that Lynnwood’s size and the number of roads are both blessings and problems. He encouraged the Commission to recommend adoption of the proposed code amendments. He explained that the City of Redmond has a wonderful code which is prescriptive in nature, but encourages creativity. The results are qualitative versus quantitative.
Planning Commission Questions:

Commissioner Braithwaite asked whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) has or would be prepared for this amendment. Deputy Director Loch replied an Environmental Impact Statement was not required, but that environmental review was conducted in full compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and a Determination of Non-Significance had been issued as a result.

Commissioner Braithwaite asked if consideration was given to the additional traffic congestion related to this development. Director Krauss replied that more traffic is healthy for businesses in the area as long as you can handle it. Every project that is proposed in this area will be subject to its own environmental review and to traffic mitigation. He noted that the Community Transit bus route around the mall area has been the fastest growing route for Community Transit so cars are not the only way to move in the area. Finally, he added that mixed use development is much more efficient from a traffic standpoint than standalone commercial since people have the ability to walk instead of drive for some of their trips.

Commissioner Braithwaite asked about the changes to lot coverage and height limitations. Director Krauss explained that the changes in lot coverage were made due to changes in how urban buildings are handling recreational space and green space. Deputy Director Loch explained that the two zones currently do not have a maximum height limit for buildings. No change is proposed to that. Off-street parking requirements are a self-limiting factor for the amount of floor area that may be constructed.

Director Krauss gave an update on Council’s activity related to the Transition Area zoning. He explained that part of that area is being proposed for 120-foot height limit, but the area in general is closer to a single-family neighborhood. Commissioner Braithwaite referred to page 3 of Cosmos handout and asked if the code would allow residential-only buildings or commercial-only buildings on the same site instead of each building being mixed use. Director Krauss replied that the goal was to encourage mixed use. He thought that sort of development would be allowed and noted a similar thing has been done along Highway 99. There was discussion regarding the likelihood that in some instances (such as a building located to the rear of a street-front building, where it could be appropriate to allow residences on all floors of the building. Another example mentioned was on back side of a street-front building, residences may be desirable on the building’s first floor.

Commissioner Hurst said he had concerns about the allowable heights, but thought it might be taken care of by the parking requirements. He expressed support in general for these amendments and spoke to the importance of being friendly to developers.
Commissioner Ambalada expressed support for an upscale building to attract residents and be a benefit to economic development in Lynnwood. Director Krauss commented that the City can’t legislate building quality or cost, but noted that building a substantial building is very expensive. As a result, the cost of the construction dictates that the rents will be higher than average rents in Lynnwood today. He agreed that Lynnwood needs quality housing attractive to the kids that grew up here who want to stay.

Deputy Director Loch suggested that if the Commission was done asking questions and moving into deliberation, they should close the public hearing.

The public hearing was closed at 8:07 p.m.

Commissioner Deliberation:

Vice Chair Larsen added that the third blessing that Lynnwood has besides roadways and land is location, and that is a big factor. He thinks the Mall is a great node. He referred to the pictures and commented that he thinks there is a market in Lynnwood that would support tall, nice buildings. He expressed concern about recreation being a weak area in the proposed ordinance. He would like to see exercise courts and efforts to better link whatever we get with the area around it. He encouraged staff to work with developers to make sure that the recreation aspect works. He commented that he generally does agree with the increased density residential; however, he’d rather see an organized investment group step forward with a proposal specific to a site.

Commissioner Ambalada thanked the designers who provided testimony for beautiful work and asked them to bring investors to Lynnwood to create buildings such as were depicted.

Commissioner Braithwaite commented that onsite amenities are great, but expressed concern about the existing lack of open space in the city.

Vice Chair Larsen asked Director Kleitsch if the Planning Commission needs to be concerned about City Center with all the focus on the Mall area. Director Kleitsch said it is inevitable that there would be a big attraction around the Mall. The City Center is faced with uncertainties related to the light rail. The City offers numerous incentives to encourage development within City Center, and investors are pursuing opportunities in this interim period before light rail service begins.

*Motion made by Commissioner Braithwaite, seconded by Commissioner Ambalada, to forward the draft Ordinance to the City Council with a recommendation to approve with a recommendation to allow extra flexibility for investors to include residential on the first floor as discussed with staff. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).*
Work Session Topics

1. Draft City Center Streetscape Plan

Janiene Lambert, City Center Program Manager, reviewed background on this item, including previous Planning Commission/City Council actions. She introduced consultants Liz Gibson and Fong Nguyen from KPG, Inc. who presented the Draft City Center Streetscape Plan via PowerPoint presentation (contained in the Commission’s packet). Ms. Gibson stressed that the document is meant to be a living document and could be changed over time, but it should start to set the standards for the development of the City Center. She and Ms. Nguyen then proceeded to discuss the proposed streetscape types and standards for each type. They also described the conceptual designs for transit shelter and the underpass improvement of 44th Ave W at I-5.

Discussion:

Vice Chair Larsen commented that this is quite complicated, similar to a Rubik’s cube. He expressed concern about streetscape improvements being done piece-by-piece with gaps in between. He asked if the City could somehow fund the streetscapes in order to facilitate development and consistency. Ms. Lambert stated that the document would provide guidance for the boulevard improvements on 196th Street SW, which runs the entire length of the City Center. That will be the first street project to reflect the Streetscape Plan. That project is in design now and the Streetscape Plan can guide many design details. Another project in design is the Poplar Way Overpass Bridge. This will be visitors’ first impression of the City Center from I-5. “Main Street” type improvements could be a next step. These would include 42nd Avenue West and the future 194th Street SW extension. Those would likely be city-led projects, but Streetscape Plan also guides private development that occurs in a piecemeal fashion. Ms. Gibson commented that the City Center Main Street would definitely benefit from a CIP project and suggested seeking federal funding. This has helped other cities such as Auburn and Redmond complete larger streetscape projects and attract private investment.

Commissioner Braithwaite commented that pedestrian crossing at the intersection of 196th Street SW and 44th Ave W will be dangerous no matter how nice it looks. This is also true in other areas. He asked if any thought had been given to incorporating pedestrian overpasses. Ms. Lambert referred to the newly constructed overpass over 44th near the Interurban Trail. That bridge will be highly utilized when Lynnwood Link is operational. A pedestrian overpass for 196th Street SW near the Convention Center is one of the higher-prioritized projects for the City Center, but this is dependent on private development in the area. Other discussions they have had regarding crossings of the major arterials have included pedestrian refuge areas, but this creates difficulty with WSDOT, signal timing, and making sure pedestrians aren’t caught in the middle.
Commissioner Braithwaite referred to signals he had seen which had an all-way stop allowing pedestrians to cross in all directions. Ms. Gibson said she didn’t think WSDOT would allow that on 196th Street SW as it is a State Highway, but the crosswalks being planned now are wider, which helps cue drivers and pedestrians.

Commissioner Braithwaite asked about pavement lights or other ways of designating pedestrian crosswalks. Ms. Gibson commented that cities are moving away from lights in the pavement because they require a high level of maintenance. She noted that overhead warning lights may be appropriate.

Commissioner Braithwaite discussed a recent visit to San Mateo, California, which is very pedestrian-friendly. They have incorporated off-street parking clustered around the pedestrian areas which serves to separate moving traffic from pedestrian areas. Ms. Gibson commented that along a Main Street, it is essential to keep on-street parking, not only for the businesses to have parking, but to create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Commissioner Braithwaite then discussed Ashland, Oregon which has an inviting downtown and offers a model of what can be done. He suggested embellishing the Interurban Trail bridge over 44th Avenue W with a Welcome to Lynnwood sign. The consultants indicated this is an option and has been considered.

Commissioner Braithwaite expressed concern about using wood in streetscape features such as benches due maintenance issues. He thought that landscaping might be a better way of incorporating natural elements. Ms. Nguyen commented that the plan requires specific tropical hardwoods which are very durable, resist scraping, and do not need finishing. These have been used very successfully around South Lake Union. Commissioner Braithwaite commented on the need to limit curb cuts. Ms. Lambert noted that there are curb cut standards in the City Center Design Guidelines. The goal is for consolidation. The plan also includes U-turn access with the medians to have access to the properties as opposed to a free left turn. Commissioner Braithwaite referred to the new multi-tenant retail buildings within Lynnwood Crossing (196th Street SW and Highway 99) which contain examples of things not to do—such having no landscaping between the street and sidewalks. He commented that even though the buildings are pushed up close to the street, the retail is really focused on the parking lot on the inside so there is not a good streetscape feel. Ms. Lambert noted that in the City Center there is a code provision for new development for window signage which should help alleviate the feeling of facing the back of the building.

Commissioner Hurst expressed concern about the pedestrian lighting not being dark sky compliant. Ms. Nguyen commented that shields can be installed above the spectra lighting. There is an option of making it opaque which would have full cut off. Commissioner Hurst asked about specific details of some of the other lights. Ms. Nguyen explained the Streetscape Plan contains recommendations and examples of the desired look and feel, but that the lighting industry was changing rapidly and improved equipment.
Commissioner Ambalada commended staff and the consultants for the plan. She likes the ideas for the I-5 bridge over 44th Avenue W.

Vice Chair Larsen asked about the essential versus optional details of the Streetscape Plan as this is forwarded to the Council. Ms. Gibson explained that certain details are already part of the Code. The standards of the sidewalks are important and are not expensive. She thinks having high quality and cohesive look for street furniture is important. The quality of the pedestrian lighting is also important. Ms. Lambert remarked that what the City has charged KPG to do is to provide standards that offer the biggest bang for the buck while keeping it within a very reasonable price.

Vice Chair Larsen said he didn’t see bike lanes in the plan, but he hopes they are in there. Also, he suggested preserving larger trees slated trees identified for removal by having an arrangement with nurseries to take out the larger ones for replanting elsewhere, rather than simply destroying the large trees. He expressed concern about people lying on park benches and noted some places are using vertical designs as barriers to that. Additionally, he noted that the designs for transit shelters are attractive, but he wondered if the City had the authority to build those. Ms. Lambert stated that this is proposed to be built by the developer or as part of a city-sponsored improvement project. She noted that the Convention Center has a unique transit shelter.

Commissioner Ambalada suggested having bamboo and midget palm trees incorporated into the landscaping. Ms. Lambert commented that staff had directed KPG to keep things as native and low-maintenance as possible.

Commissioner Braithwaite noted that the proposed lighting was LED. He asked if there has been any thought as to how the color of the light affects the mood of the streetscape. Ms. Nguyen explained that there are several different types of lighting. What the consultants are recommending is warmer than the stark highway/freeway lights, but is still bright, modern, and allows for good facial recognition. They are suggesting a 4000K LED light.

Commissioner Ambalada asked what kind of night lighting would be on the promenade. Ms. Lambert replied they have decorative bollards with lights, and tall columnar type of lights as accent lights. Ms. Gibson added that the developer would be the one doing the lighting for the promenade, but they would have to meet standards for lighting. Commissioner Ambalada asked if there would be poles with hanging baskets around the city. Ms. Lambert replied that there would be along the downtown core area along 196th and along 40th and 42nd.

Vice Chair Larsen commended he consultants for the Plan and recommended they add their names to the acknowledgement section of the document.
2. Draft Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan

Deputy Director Loch presented options for this item given the late hour and that only four commissioners were present. There was consensus to defer this to a later date when there were more commissioners present.

Council Liaison Report

Councilmember AuBuchon stated that his comments regarding the Transition Area were made earlier by Director Krauss.

Director's Report

None

Commissioners' Comments

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Braithwaite, seconded by Commissioner Ambalada, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

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

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Richard Wright, Chair