

GCITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

East Main Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2018

Mac Cummins, Director, 452-6191

Arun Jain, Assistant Director, Comprehensive & Strategic Planning, 452-5255

Terry Cullen, Comprehensive Planning Manager, 452-4070

Community Development Department

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**DIRECTION**

Based on previous direction from Council undertake additional study sessions during the months of January and February 2019. These study sessions will inform staff's preparation of the Ordinance for a proposed East Main Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the city work to retain the intent of the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Council) Vision and support efforts that advance the East Main Station Area Plan Initiative. Any major shift away from this vision will likely impact both the outcome and its timing.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) for East Main was included in a larger annual package of five proposed CPA amendments for City Council approval on November 26th. At this meeting, staff identified deviations from the City's vision for the creation of a new neighborhood. In response to these concerns, Council has asked that this CPA be deferred to 2019 and directed planning staff to organize a series of study sessions to better understand the basis for further action.

Planning staff concerns can be summarized as follows:

- Specific changes that alter the intent (and outcome) of the CAC Vision for the station area.
- Introduction of regulatory language into the Comprehensive Plan (which is a policy document subject to State compliance and internal consistency mandates).
- Growing concerns about the transparency of the current process and its outcomes.
- Use of this annual amendment process to lock down a specific development configuration, severely constraining the ability of both the city and one specific stakeholder to adapt to any future changes in development economics and conditions.

Context

In April 2013, Sound Transit and the City agreed to the East Link light rail alignment. In May 2013, the City Council approved the station area planning work program, which included the East Main Station Area Plan. The Council appointed the East Main Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) in April 2014. The CAC worked on the East Main Station Area Plan report from August 2014 to June 2016. The CAC's vision sought to leverage this light rail investment to realize an outcome that is based around a public and pedestrian friendly-centric transit station area. The city's objective in increasing development

density around the station area is intended to take full advantage of the reduced need for cars and individual vehicles. The CAC's vision is centered on greater public access via transit as supporting more economically viable and vibrant businesses and retail at the street level. The Council accepted the CAC's report in August 2016. In December 2017, the Council adopted guiding principles for the Planning Commission in anticipation of the implementation of the East Main Station Area Plan.

Chronology

The implementation of the East Main Station Area Plan included a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA), a Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA), and an area wide rezone. The East Main CPA was included in the 2018 CPA work plan as an extensive publicly initiated amendment.

The chronology of Planning Commission engagements leading to this amendment (with associated planning staff actions) are as follows:



- Six 2018 study sessions - January 10, February 28, March 28, May 16, July 11, September 26
- Two walking tours - February 9 and March 31, and two open houses on February 14, September 5.
- Planning staff edits following Planning Commission's review of the CPA drafts on March 28, July 11, and September 26, 2018.
- In advance of a November public hearing, planning staff made additional changes to the draft CPA on September 26 at the request of the Planning Commission. The public hearing notice, SEPA, and the staff report were issued and noticed on October 18 in the City's Weekly Permit Bulletin and also posted on the City's website.
- A public hearing on this CPA was held by Planning Commission November 7, 2018. The Planning Commission Packet included the draft CPA, and a related agenda memo with a link to the public hearing notice.

Proposed Schedule

Council has directed planning staff to organize a series of study sessions in as expeditious a timeframe as possible. To meet this expectation, and organize a cogent basis for a comprehensive discussion, staff proposes Council study sessions on January 21, and February 18, 2019. These meetings remain subject to further Council direction and are structured to allow staff adequate time to fully respond to any ongoing and related requests.

The January 21 study session will focus on the key tenants of the CAC Vision, its intent, and the process behind its creation. It will also touch upon how various development models can be accomplished within the CAC vision. Staff will discuss with the Council the degree to which the Council is (or is not) comfortable changing the City/CAC's vision at this time.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Comprehensive Plan

The Growth Management Act states that comprehensive plans may be amended no more frequently than once per year (with limited exceptions) so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be considered. Bellevue's annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program includes privately-initiated amendment proposals advanced into Final Review, and city-initiated amendments in Final Review by action of the City Council under LUC 20.30I.130. B.1. The East Main plan amendment was included in this cumulative 2018 review and can continue to rely on that analysis in 2019.

State Environmental Policy Act

The Environmental Coordinator for the City of Bellevue determined that the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program—consisting of the five 2018 proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments - will not result in any probable, significant adverse environmental impacts. Final threshold Determinations of Non-Significance (DNS) were issued on October 4 and October 18, 2018.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Planning Commission Resolution
- B. Planning Commission Recommendation
- C. Staff Recommendation
- D. City Council Guiding Principles for Planning Commission

E. AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A