

# APPROVED

## CITY OF BREMERTON

### PLANNING COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING

### January 24, 2022

---

---

#### CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Tift called the regular meeting of the Bremerton Planning Commission to order at 5:31 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

##### Commissioners Present

Chair Tift  
Vice Chair Rich (joined at 5:51 p.m.)  
Commissioner Flemister  
Commissioner Mosiman  
Commissioner Pedersen  
Commissioner Wofford

##### Staff Present

Garrett Jackson, Planning Manager, Department of Community Development  
Kelli Lambert, Senior Planner, Department of Community Development  
Sarah Lynam, Project Assistant, Department of Community Development

##### Others Present

*Quorum Certified*

#### CHAIR CALL FOR MODIFICATIONS TO AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COMMISSIONER FLEMISTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2021, AS SUBMITTED. COMMISSIONER WOFFORD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### PUBLIC MEETING

Call to the Public (public comments on any item not on the agenda)

Chair Tift invited comments from citizens. There were none.

#### Public Workshop: Eastside Village Subarea Plan Revisions

Mr. Jackson explained that the purpose of the workshop is to discuss potential changes to the Eastside Village Subarea Plan. After soliciting input from the public, the Commission will be asked to provide guidance to staff about whether or not to proceed with the proposed revisions.

Mr. Jackson provided a map illustrating the boundaries of the Eastside Village Subarea Plan. He reviewed that, in preparation for the departure of Harrison Hospital, the City commissioned a market study in 2019 to determine what uses would most likely

**Mr. Jackson** provided a map illustrating the boundaries of the Eastside Village Subarea Plan. He reviewed that, in preparation for the departure of Harrison Hospital, the City commissioned a market study in 2019 to determine what uses would most likely be supported as the area transitioned. The study recommended that the regulatory requirements for the area should be relaxed and that a clear approach to planning should be provided to ensure continued activity in the area. The study also recommended that the City tailor regulations to encourage the existing strong housing market. A concurrent Planned Action Ordinance (PAO) was passed to provide updated land-use regulations that streamlined the environmental review process. The Eastside Village Subarea Plan was adopted in October 2020. In addition to the regulatory framework, the plan included a provision to continue to monitor the execution of the subarea plan to ensure it functions properly. The success of the subarea plan in attracting further development is important to the long-term growth strategy of the City.

**Mr. Jackson** advised that there are currently six land-use centers within the City, which are intended to absorb the majority of the population growth in the years to come. He shared a map showing the location of each of the six centers: Wheaton Riddell District Center, Wheaton Sheridan District Center, Eastside Village Center, Manette Neighborhood Center, Charleston District Center. He explained that the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to plan for future growth. At a regional level, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has adopted Vision 2050, which is a multi-county effort between Kitsap, Snohomish, Pierce and King Counties to have a regional strategy for where growth will be allocated. Via the Kitsap County Planning Policies, all of the jurisdictions within Kitsap County have agreed to incorporate the growth strategies put forth in Vision 2050 into their local comprehensive plans.

In the time since the subarea plan was adopted, **Mr. Jackson** said staff has taken notice of feedback from potential investors that the maximum density, maximum height, and maximum floor area ratio (FAR) in the Eastside Village Subarea Plan were too low. With that feedback, staff reviewed the trends that were occurring in the City's successful growth centers. There has been a lot of growth in the Wheaton Riddell, Wheaton Sheridan and Charleston District Centers, with 885 units in some level of development. Staff believes this is because there is no maximum density or maximum FAR, and the maximum height is set at 80 feet. Another reason for success in the Downtown Center is the Design Review Board (DRB) that reviews projects for compliance with the Downtown Subarea Plan and grants departures from some standards on a site-by-site basis. There isn't a single development in the Downtown Subarea Plan that hasn't needed at least one departure from the requirements.

**Mr. Jackson** said the current zoning in the Eastside Village Subarea Plan is composed of four zoning districts and three overlay districts. However, the uses that are permitted in all of the zones are somewhat similar. The Center Residential High Zone is primarily intended to support residential growth, and the Center Residential Low Zone is intended for lower-density residential uses. The Mixed Use Zone allows a variety of uses but strongly promotes commercial uses. The Multi Use Zone is the largest of the zones (about two-thirds of the subarea) and provides the most flexibility. The Multi Use Residential Overlay is intended to allow increased density based on the Incentives Program Table and to prohibit commercial uses of some size. The Multi Use Entrepreneurial Overlay is intended to promote small businesses in the subarea. Staff is proposing that the overlay be removed. He explained that the B&O Tax Exemption was raised from \$240,000 in 2021 to \$1 million in 2022. As the exemption applies to the entire City, the relevance of the overlay goes away. The Multi Use Commercial Overlay is intended to provide an area where incentives are offered to promote commercial growth.

**Mr. Jackson** said staff is proposing to remove the limits on density and FAR, and increase the maximum height limit to 80 feet, with these changes adopted the differences in the current zones would be minimal. As currently proposed, there would be two zoning districts and one overlay district. The Center Residential High, Mixed Use and Multi Use Zones would be consolidated into the Multi Use Zone, and the Center Residential Low Zone would be retained to preserve the existing low-level development. The new Multi Use Commercial Overlay District would capture the areas that were previously under the Mixed Use Zone and the Multi Use Commercial Overlay into one feature. The new Multi Use Commercial Overlay District would require that the ground level of structures be either commercial uses or built to support future commercial uses.

**Mr. Jackson** shared two maps showing a side-by-side view of the existing and proposed zoning. He summarized that, as proposed, the zoning would be simplified but provide the same purpose of promoting commercial areas where recommended by the subarea plan, providing flexibility within the remaining zone, and providing some protection against higher-intensity uses in the Center Residential Low Zone.

**Mr. Jackson** advised that, currently, the Center Residential Low Zone prohibits single-family homes but the minimum density is six dwelling units per acre (DUAs). Staff is seeking feedback from the Commission about raising the minimum density or

removing the prohibition of single-family homes. It doesn't seem appropriate to retain both requirements. He summarized that the proposed changes are intended to standardize and simplify the process to make it easier for the public and developers to understand the subarea plan requirements. To accomplish this, staff is recommending the following:

- Reducing the number of zones and overlays as previously described.
- Changing the Multi Use Zoning Standards to District Center Core Zoning Standards.
- Removing the Street Frontage Design Standards from Chapter 5.4.
- Altering Chapter 6 Design Guidelines to transition to a chapter that the DRB can use as a guidance piece.
- Removing subarea plan specific regulations that are already addressed in the Bremerton Municipal Code (BMC). (i.e., drive-through facilities, parking, etc.)

**Mr. Jackson** advised that the City received a number of comments related to the proposed amendments. He briefly reviewed each one as follows:

- **David Kessler**, owner of the Sheridan Village Shopping Center, supports the proposed changes. He noted that he had to abandon plans to redevelop his site due to the new subarea plan height and density restrictions.
- **Allen Sweet**, owner of three buildings at 2625 Wheaton Way, also supports the proposed changes. He noted that he took part in the subarea planning process but didn't realize the negative effect it would have on his property.
- **Rob Spitzer**, owner of a 30,000 square foot vacant property in the subarea, supports the proposed changes, as well. He stated that he was planning to construct a 119-unit apartment complex, but the current subarea plan limits the project to just 40 units. He reminded the City of the current housing shortage and requested that the height limit be increased to 80 feet.
- **Mark Gold** also indicated support for the proposed changes. He noted the current housing crisis and felt that the current density limits in the subarea are inappropriately low. He encouraged a maximum height of 80 feet. He commented that potential redevelopment of sites, such as Sheridan Village, will require code revisions.
- **Beverly Maine** noted that the Episcopal Church planned to construct a 75-unit apartment but the current density requirements are prohibitive. She requested that the height limit be increased to 80 feet. However, she asked that the parking requirement of .5 parking stalls per senior welling unit be maintained. She also noted that the open space requirements are prohibitive to development.
- **Dale Sperling**, a local developer, observed that the City needs housing and that the Eastside Village Subarea is an ideal location to satisfy this demand. He recommends increasing density and lowering parking requirements and notes that there is adequate transit in the area to support that change.
- **Will Mentor**, owner of parcel on Claire Avenue, commented that the current density limitation makes projects hard to justify, as revenues do not cover costs. He said he supports townhome development, as well as parking reductions of 25%. He also supports a minimum ceiling height of 8 feet.

**Jaе Evans** asked why the parks and open spaces were completely eliminated on the map provided by Mr. Jackson to illustrate the proposed zoning changes. **Mr. Jackson** explained that these areas were removed from the zoning map because they are not zones. They were shown as part of a story map that was intended to show where public open space could occur in the future but not required. **Mr. Evans** asked if the spaces are required to be purchased by the City in order to be open spaces or if they are currently owned by the City. **Mr. Jackson** said only one of the spaces is privately owned, and the remainder are publicly owned. There are open space requirements for every development, but they are not identified on the zoning map. Each development would be responsible for providing its own open space areas. The specific areas on the existing zoning map are to indicate good places for enhanced public access in the future.

**Mr. Evans** asked if the proposed amendments would change any of the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) requirements for properties along the waterfront. **Mr. Jackson** answered no. He explained that the Shoreline Management Program (SMP) is an independent document that has separate requirements for all commercial and multifamily development along the waterfront.

**Commissioner Flemister** asked if the proposed amendments could also address the issues that were raised in some of the public comments related to parking. **Mr. Jackson** answered that staff is recommending that the current requirement of .5 parking spaces per unit for senior housing and .33 parking spaces per unit for assisted living housing be retained. However, staff is recommending that the other parking provisions, including the parking reduction provision, be replaced with a reference

**APPROVED**

to the parking provisions that already exist in the BMC. He explained that Bremerton is very sensitive to parking reductions due to the shipyard, and parking reductions below 1 space per unit are generally only allowed in exceptional cases. There is concern that requiring less on-site parking will push cars out onto the street. There is always a push from developers to provide less parking, but Bremerton's specific circumstances do not favor significant parking reductions.

**Commissioner Pedersen** recalled that he has consistently supported reduced parking requirements during his time on the Commission, and he would be supportive of reducing the parking requirements in this case, as well. Because the Eastside Village Subarea is a bit further from the shipyard, perhaps there is an opportunity to reduce parking requirements without creating significant parking issues.

**Commissioner Wofford** expressed his belief that a certain amount of parking must be provided, even for assisted living and senior housing, to accommodate visitors.

**Commissioner Mosiman** requested clarification on what the proposed amendments are intended to accomplish. He reviewed that the process to take the area from an employment center to the Eastside Village Subarea started back in 2019, and the Planning Commission spent more than a year discussing the character and vision for the subarea. City staff did a great job with public outreach and getting input from a variety of people (community members, property owners, developers, etc.) He voiced concern that the proposed amendments would significantly change the zoning in the subarea, and he felt that a more substantial public process is needed to solicit feedback from the community and stakeholders. **Mr. Jackson** said it is humbling to see that the current plan hasn't functioned as hoped. Rather than go forward with a plan that isn't working, staff is proposing some revisions. He reminded the Commission that the Eastside Village Subarea is one of the few growth centers identified in the City. If a growth center isn't growing because of regulatory reasons, monitoring provisions within the current subarea plan beckon them to make revisions. He explained that this is just the initial introduction of the proposed changes. An environmental review and further public outreach will be the next steps, and stakeholders from the previous subarea plan work have been notified and encouraged to provide feedback. He reminded them that traffic will be addressed as part of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, and the Planned Action Ordinance (PAO) for the subarea requires that individual developers pay a proportionate amount of compensation towards the traffic improvements needed in the subarea.

Once again, **Commissioner Mosiman** noted that, as explained in the Staff Report, the proposal would apply the District Center Core zoning code to this Eastside Village Subarea. He wants to make sure that the process is honored for this extensive change. **Mr. Jackson** said staff will outreach to the stakeholders from the previous subarea plan process. They will also send notices to the property owners and residents within 300 feet of the subarea. He invited the Commissioners to share their thoughts on additional outreach opportunities. **Commissioner Mosiman** expressed his belief that the stakeholder comments provided thus far are worthy of consideration, but he would encourage the Planning Commissioners to reread the documentation from when the subarea plan was initially created. What is currently being proposed will potentially change the zoning of every property in the subarea. Applying the District Center Core zoning to this subarea is a big deal, and using a shortcut process would be a mistake.

**Chair Tift** said he has been on the Planning Commission for a long time and participated in the initial process of developing the Eastside Village Subarea Plan that was eventually adopted. Now the people who would execute the plan are identifying problems from an economic and affordability standpoint, and he is inclined to listen to their concerns, as well as other input from the public. He recalled that the original plan for the Wheaton Riddell District Center sat for 10 years with little or no progress towards redevelopment. The Commission recently recommended, and the City Council approved, a change to District Center Core zoning, and things are starting to happen now. Housing has exploded in that area, businesses have located, and the area has become a very viable and important part of the City. He summarized that they don't always get it right the first time, and they must remain flexible. They should be willing to listen to the people who will execute the plan going forward, and the stakeholders should be invited to participate in the process.

**Commissioner Flemister** noted that some of the comment letters voiced concern that the stakeholders didn't receive adequate notification of the proposed changes. She asked how staff plans to address this concern. **Mr. Jackson** said he would make sure that everyone on the stakeholder list is contacted several times. He also agreed to contact those who voiced concern to make sure they are confident they will get the information they need.

**APPROVED**

**Chair Tift** expressed his belief that the Eastside Village Subarea presents a golden opportunity for the City, and he can foresee it becoming part of a very vibrant loop. Perhaps Kitsap Transit could even run shuttles to and from the shipyard and other businesses in the downtown where parking may not need to be so robust. Walking the bridge is a very popular pastime, and it isn't too far away from the shipyard.

**Vice Chair Rich** referred to Page 31 of the Staff Report, which provides a quick summary of the community input that was received during the initial subarea planning process. One of the main concerns centered on the need for more diverse housing options, including more rental units. There was also a desire for a wider range of economic opportunity. She understands the concern about what might be lost if the subarea plan is amended to address the stakeholder wants. However, she also deeply understands that none of the community goals can be achieved if the current plan isn't working and development isn't possible, even if the vision is amazing and people worked very hard on it. She said she appreciates Mr. Jackson's explanation of what isn't working and what could be done to fix the plan. She expressed her belief that the community's desire for a diverse menu of housing choices and greater economic opportunity could still be achieved via the proposed amendments, but perhaps it would be worth having more discussion about how those things could still be achieved for the benefit of the public and the Commission.

**Mr. Jackson** explained that one way to achieve more affordable housing is to increase the supply of housing units. Most properties in Bremerton are already developed, and developed properties typically cost more to procure than undeveloped property elsewhere. There are costs associated with demolition, as well as a variety of soft costs, too. If these costs are divided among fewer units, then each unit that is produced costs more to develop. The City cannot anticipate the comfort level of financiers and developers, and removing the density limitations would allow for market-based decisions on the number of units required to offset the procurement costs for specific properties. He summarized that the goal is to make the zoning requirements match up with policies in the subarea plan that call for additional housing types and making development of housing more economically feasible.

Regarding the community's vision for the subarea, **Mr. Jackson** said there are people who do not want increased density, but they do want a walkable community. For example, one of the goals for the downtown is to have a grocery store that is within walking distance for residents. However, there needs to be a certain number of residents in the downtown to make the grocery store economically feasible. This same logic could apply to restaurants and other commercial uses. There needs to be an adequate number of residents in the area that can walk to the service in order for it to exist and not be based on automobile traffic. As density increases, the walkable uses the community wants become more practical to develop.

**Commissioner Mosiman** commented that it is important to remember that vision proceeds zoning and not the other way around. Again, he recalled that when the subarea plan was initially created, there was significant opportunity for community input and a lot of Commission discussion about the vision for the area. He suggested they need to have a discussion about the vision before considering whether or not the District Center Core zoning is appropriate. **Chair Tift** agreed it would be helpful for staff to remind the Commission of the vision for the subarea and how it was arrived at.

**Commissioner Pedersen** said he is largely in favor of the proposed changes. He reminded them that the Eastside Village Subarea is one of the City's growth centers. It is located right on the bridge loop, which is one of the most attractive places in the City. He agreed it would be helpful to have a quick review of why they got to where they are today. For example, were the rough points raised by the developers today part of the initial discussions. He recalled that in 2019 he advocated for more flexibility, similar to what staff is currently proposing. While he didn't feel it was necessary to have another full year process, it would be helpful to review why some of the previous decisions were made.

**Mr. Jackson** referred to Page 4 of the Staff Report, which outlines the vision and guidance framework for the subarea. He said staff reviewed this framework to make sure the proposed changes were in sync. He looks forward to demonstrating for the Commission how the vision and guidance framework interacts with the proposed changes. He also looks forward to providing a greater explanation of how the proposed changes sync with the review process. For example, the proposed 80-foot height limit is consistent with the Building Code, which permits a concrete podium for parking, with five levels of wood framing above. The fire and building standards are much more stringent for buildings taller than 80 feet, making them more costly to build. It is more economical to construct buildings at 80 feet or less, and increasing the height limit would make projects more economically viable.

**APPROVED**

**Mr. Jackson** requested feedback on whether the public outreach he described earlier would be sufficient. He would also like feedback about whether or not staff could start the environmental review for the proposed changes. **Chair Tift** responded that the Commission is comfortable with the proposed outreach, which includes notice to residents and property owners within 300 feet and discussions with stakeholders from the previous subarea planning process. With the exception of Commissioner Mosiman, the remainder of the Commissioners agreed that staff could initiate environmental review for the proposed changes.

**Mr. Jackson** advised that staff is proposing to retain the small sliver of Center Residential Low Zoning in the northeastern portion of the subarea. Currently, single-family homes are prohibited in this zone, but the minimum density is 6 DUA. The minimum density promotes single-family homes, but they are prohibited in the zone. If single-family homes are prohibited, it doesn't make sense for the minimum density be 6 DUA. If they want to permit single-family homes in this area, the minimum density of 6 DUA makes sense.

**Commissioner Wofford** recalled that the Commission previously looked at the area to the east, which is developed primarily as single-family homes. If that's the case, he would like to continue to allow single-family residential development in the Center Residential Low Zone. It wouldn't be appropriate to allow very tall buildings to be constructed adjacent to a single-family neighborhood. **Commissioner Pedersen** agreed that was the reasoning behind the separate zone. The Commissioners supported more density and flexibility in the subarea, but they agreed there needed to be some type of buffer for the single-family neighborhood. He said he would be opposed to prohibiting single-family development in that one zone. **Chair Tift** concurred and suggested that position could be confirmed via a review of the record. **Commissioner Mosiman** concurred that the Commission's recommendation was and will continue to be impacted by how the adjacent properties are zoned and developed. **Vice Chair Rich** said she would also support allowing single-family development in the Center Residential Low Zone if the adjacent zoning is confirmed to be single-family residential.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

**Chair Report**

**Chair Tift** thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to lead them in 2022.

**Director Report**

**Mr. Jackson** announced that the Commission's next meeting will be a special meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> due to the holiday on February 21<sup>st</sup>. He invited interested applicants for the vacant Planning Commission position to either email him or fill out an application on the City's website.

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

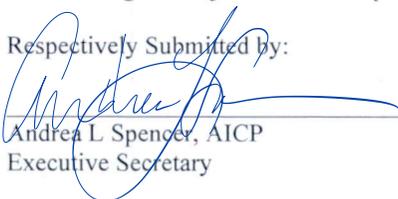
**New Business**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea L. Spencer, AICP  
Executive Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Tift, Chair  
Planning Commission

**APPROVED**