



City Neighborhood Council

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DISTRICT COUNCILS:

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Mayor Mike McGinn
PO Box 94749
Seattle, WA 98124

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Re: Actions during slow down of Comprehensive Plan 7-Year Update

The Council action to slow down the preparation of the so called 7-year update to Seattle's Comprehensive Plan by limiting the funding to \$150,000 for 2012 recently came to the attention of the City Neighborhood Council (CNC). The proviso limiting the funds required that DPD prepare a work plan by the end of March 2012 identifying an "incremental approach" to the update that could stretch the effort out over several more years. The proviso did not provide any further guidance to DPD on

what actions should be taken in 2012; however, the CNC has discussed this matter and requests consideration of the following items as DPD develops the revised work plan. Some of our suggestions will require Council action and we would like to discuss those further with the next chair of the COBE committee.

1. Update the Buildable Lands Report as soon as possible and make it available. The CNC Neighborhood Planning Committee met recently with Tom Hauger, DPD's lead planner for the Comp. Plan, who said this work could be done in a few weeks time and that the city has better data and models available for this work. Knowing the development capacity of the city is essential before contemplating any future rezone policies, specific zoning changes or future land use map changes.

2. Make an attempt to count ADUs and DADUs in the development capacity. We have learned that accessory dwelling units and detached accessory dwelling units are not currently counted when determining residential capacity. The given reason for this anomaly is that DPD can't predict the likelihood of their occurrence. However, the Council had taken several actions in recent years to promote ADUs and DADUs and DPD should develop some method of anticipating their usage and growth at the neighborhood or District level.

3. Verify the assumptions about household and job growth in Seattle. The 2010 census reports that Seattle's population is 608,660. PSRC uses 612,100 (2011). At a recent CNC NPC meeting, Tom Hauger explained that in 2006 the Puget Sound Regional Council anticipated adding another 70,000 households (140,000 people) and 115,000 jobs in Seattle by 2031. However, the PSRC web site today issues warnings about the accuracy of these forecasts made as they were before the recession of 2007. <http://psrc.org/data/forecasts/land-use-forecasts-update/>

We request that DPD prepare an accessible report verifying the population and job growth trends being relied upon by DPD or other city departments. We understand that City Light is preparing a 50-year look ahead for its service area. What assumptions will be used in that analysis? What assumptions are being

used in the current development of urban design policies, a joint AIA/DPD initiative mentioned by Mr. Hauger at the CNC NPC meeting of November 14, 2011? Is there a uniform set of assumptions being used citywide and where are they documented?

4. Establish a SEPA policy that major updates to the Seattle Comprehensive Plan will not be granted the perfunctory "Determination of Non-Significance." The tendency to treat any planning level action as free of any environmental impact or beyond analysis misses an opportunity to identify "unintended consequences." DPD should be able to identify the potential impacts on quality of life and quality of the environment under different growth alternative scenarios. This is a fundamental purpose and benefit of conducting environmental reviews before taking actions which includes adopting new policies.

We were disappointed to learn that earlier proposals to identify metrics by which the effectiveness of our myriad Comprehensive Plan policies can be judged had fallen by the wayside. We urge a re-evaluation of this concept and offer as an example a simple metric: how many commuters will have to stand on overcrowded buses (or trains) for their regular commute to work or school under different growth scenarios?

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to discuss these requests with you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Chas Redmond, Chair
CNC