Final Deliberations

Having started the Comprehensive Plan Update process in 2009, members of the Planning Commission (OPC) are now preparing to enter the final stage of their role in the Comprehensive Plan Update: determining final recommendations for the City Council.

As agreed upon in the Comprehensive Plan Update Charter (Charter), Commissioners opted to conduct a review and deliberation process with two phases:
- A. Initial deliberations; and
- B. Final deliberations

The Final Deliberations are noted in the Charter as the time when the public record closes, Commissioners consider the public input from throughout the process, and conduct final votes on recommendations for Council.

The Charter notes that this process will finish in time to allow for staff to prepare the Commission's recommendations for delivery to Council in January 2013. This means that the Commission has limited time for the Final Deliberations, and that determining priorities for this review period are essential to ensuring the most critical issues are discussed and forwarded to Council for consideration.

Establishing Priorities

The Planning Commission Leadership Team discussed and determined with staff a list of known "inputs" to the Final Deliberation process. "Inputs" can be considered sources of issues for consideration, or frameworks upon which to determine how critical an issue is to address.

The Leadership Team recommends the list be prioritized as follows:

1. **The July Draft Substantive Change List.** The Substantive Change (Attachment 2) list highlights those goals and policies that are substantively different from the existing (1994) Comprehensive Plan. Staff defined "substantive changes" as those changes that would result in the City doing business in a new or different way; a change in direction.

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2. **Trends or Highlights from the Public Comments.** These are issues or topics that have clearly risen to the top of the public's concern and interest throughout the public comment period. Examples of these items include:
   a. Views
   b. Downtown planning
   c. The designation of Carlyon, Wildwood, and Governor Stevens neighborhoods as within an Urban Corridor
   d. Street connectivity (Decatur Street and Fern Street)
   e. Earthquake preparedness and emergency response

3. **The Scope of the Comprehensive Plan Update.** The Scope was recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by Council in 2010. Staff used the Scope to determine what to update in the existing Plan. If OPC wishes to expand the Scope of the Update and discuss new topics, a formal request will need to be approved by Council.

4. **New Draft Language Request by Commissioners from Staff or Individual Commissioners.** Throughout the Initial Deliberations, Commissioners have requested that staff provide for the Final Deliberations draft language for a list of topics. Also, individual Commissioners have expressed a desire to put forward for discussion their own draft language or substantive goal or policy revisions.

5. **Non-Substantive Text Edits.** Commissioners have expressed a desire to compile or submit to fellow Commissioners for review and discussion individually drafted text edits. (Note: these are defined here as more "editorial" in nature. Suggested edits that are substantive, or directly change the outcome of goal or policy language are included in #4.)

Final Deliberation Meetings

Four meetings in November and December (November 5, 12, 19, and December 3 are dedicated to Final Deliberations. The Comprehensive Plan Update Sub-Committee (CPU) has been identified in the Charter as the appropriate body to provide leadership to OPC on the deliberation process, including the Final Deliberations.

CPU's role now is to determine a method for using the four Final Deliberation meetings in an efficient manner, but one which also facilitates robust discussion and will result in a recommendation for Council that is clear and representative of the community's best interests.

Staff's discussion with the Leadership Team on priorities resulted in the following two options for CPU as a starting point for determining an effective meeting framework:

Option A	Priorities #1-5 are addressed in order over the course of the four meetings.
Option B	The four meetings are each assigned a chapter or topic, and priorities #1-5 are addressed by topic at each meeting.

With both options, the purpose of starting with beginning with priority #1 is because the Commission may run out of time. Both options ensure that the most important issues and topics are discussed first. If time allows and Commissioners efficiently move through the top priorities, staff will continue to work with the Leadership Team and CPU to determine how to best support discussion on lower priority items, such as non-substantive text edits (Priority #5).

Consent Agenda

Staff and the Leadership Team recommend CPU consider incorporating a Consent Agenda format, such as the City Council uses, for the Final Deliberations. This can be a tool for identifying items that need or don't need further discussion by Commissioners during Final Deliberations.

To save time and make meetings more efficient, the City Council will often review and approve a Consent Agenda. Any items that Councilmembers wish to discuss at a meeting may be "pulled" from the Consent Agenda; however, this is generally reserved for items where the decision is not readily apparent from the background materials and analysis provided in advance by staff.

More specifically, staff recommends that CPU review the July Draft Substantive Change List (noted as priority #1 above) and sort items into the following categories:

Tier 1: Items that are guaranteed to need discussion by a majority of Commissioners.
Tier 2: Items that a minority of the Commission wishes to discuss.
Tier 3: Items that do not need discussion; the staff recommendation is fine.

CPU may also wish to add items identified through public comments (Priority #2 noted above) into the tiers. It is likely that most, if not all, of those items will fall into Tier 1; however, CPU can help determine a draft list.

Tiers 2 and 3 may be added to a Consent Agenda, and individual Commissioners would need to make a motion and provide justification for pulling an item from Tiers 2 or 3 for discussion.

This method would be a tool for identifying those topics that don't need discussion, and distill clearly those items that are of the highest interest and importance to the Commission.

Motion and Voting Process

A critical element of determining the Final Deliberation process is establishing an effective and efficient voting process. OPC has some experience in this, having determined a voting process for the Shoreline Master Program (SMP).

While perhaps a useful tool for the SMP process, the Final Deliberations will need a process that is focused on goals and policies, easy-to-use, and efficient. Staff has determined a basic framework, with key decision points identified for CPU to consider when crafting a process.

Proposed Voting Framework

This framework is to be applied to individual items as they are brought forward for deliberation. It assumes the use of a Consent Agenda as a starting point.

Example policy: PN5.3 Retrofit existing infrastructure for stormwater treatment in areas of the City with little or no treatment.

1. Commissioner A makes a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner B seconds the motion. The motion is open for discussion.

2. Commissioners discuss whether any items need to be pulled off of the Consent Agenda. Commissioner C says, "I'd like to pull PN5.3 from the Consent Agenda for discussion."

   Decision Point: Does OPC need a majority to vote in favor of an item being pulled from the Consent Agenda?

Decision Point: <u>Does OPC want to be clear that for items to be pulled from Consent, the discussion needs to be about revising the policy in way that changes the substantive implication of the policy—not changes to the language or word usage?</u>

3. Six Commissioners agree. The motion is amended to reflect that all items are approved, except PN5.3 is pulled for further discussion. Motion passes with a majority.

4. Commissioner A makes a motion to approve the policy language as noted in PN5.3. Commissioner B seconds the motion. The motion is open for discussion.

5. The Chair asks that each Commissioner states their position on the policy language. Commissioner E notes that they'd like the policy removed; states their reasoning. Commissioners briefly discuss two options.

6. Commissioner A makes a motion to approve the removal of the policy from the Plan. Commissioner E seconds the motion.

7. The Chair calls for a vote. Six Commissioners vote to remove the policy.

   Decision Point: <u>How do you address when a motion can't achieve a majority vote?</u>

8. Commissioner F believes the policy should remain in the Plan and disagrees with the final vote.

   Decision Point: <u>Do you wish to entertain requests for reconsiderations?</u>

9. The decision stands, and Commissioner F is invited to include their opinion in a Minority Report for Council.

10. The Chair directs Commissioners to the next goal or policy item. Commissioner A makes a motion….

The process repeats as many times as needed.