

## Comprehensive Plan Draft Edits

In June, 2010, the City Council approved a Scope for the Comprehensive Plan Update. Included in the approved scope was direction to “Improve public access to the [Comprehensive] Plan by eliminating redundancy, editing for readability and reorganizing the document to improve accessibility and ensure that it is adapted to internet searching and display.”

### *Plaintalk Training*

Several steps have been taken throughout the *Imagine Olympia* update process to ensure the final adopted Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is clear, concise, simple to navigate, and easy to read. The first was to use a style of writing for the Plan called ‘Plaintalk.’

Plaintalk has been adopted by the State of Washington, and is widely recognized as producing documents that are very readable for a diverse audience. City staff members who were going to participate in drafting the Plan attended state-hosted trainings to learn how to write using Plaintalk guidelines.

Staff also met with consulting editor Dana Botka of Plainpoint Communications, an expert in Plaintalk. Ms. Botka provided a personalized training for staff writers. Based on the training, staff then developed an internal Style Guide to capture the Plaintalk writing principles and use as a reference during the writing process.

### *Technical Review*

Prior to issuing the first draft of the Plan in April, staff hired Joy Michaud of Herrera Environmental Consultants to complete a technical review. Ms. Michaud’s review focused on the organization of the document, confirming factual information, eliminating redundancy, and ensuring a consistent writing ‘voice’ throughout the Plan.

### *Plaintalk Review*

After the Planning Commission completed their initial recommendations, Council confirmed staff’s recommendation to retain the services of a third-party consultant to review the Plan for a second time. Ms. Botka was hired to make recommended edits consistent with Plaintalk guidelines.

Ms. Botka's edits focus on the following three main goals:

- Establish an obvious and consistent structure;
- Keep the Plan's content as concise as possible out of respect for the reader's time and practical purposes; and
- Choose terms that should be understandable to the layperson.

To achieve those goals, Ms. Botka's recommended edits do the following:

- Highlight words that are 'jargon' for a replacement term or a definition;
- Eliminate redundancy;
- Eliminate words that aren't needed to express a concept;
- Ensure one written 'voice' throughout the document;
- Maintain a consistent tense; and
- Replace, remove, or add headings to help a reader navigate the Plan.

### *Other Fixes*

Since issuing the Planning Commission Draft in December, staff has also found other minor errors that should be corrected prior to issuing the City Council Public Hearing Draft. Examples of minor edits include:

- Correcting punctuation;
- Correcting minor grammar mistakes;
- Rewriting photo captions for ADA accessibility; and
- Adding hyperlinks between sections in the Plan that are closely related.