



Planning Commission

Transmittal Letters to City Council (regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update)

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Transmittal Letters to City Council (regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update)

Issue:

Discussion of the Commission's letters to City Council regarding their recommendation on the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Commission has decided to include both a Cover Letter drafted by the Chair, and individual letters by each Commissioner.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Chair Parker

Background and Analysis:

The Planning Commission completed their recommendation on the Comprehensive Plan Update on March 18, 2013. On May 20, the City will launch the Planning Commission's recommended draft, along with the Commission's transmittal letters and other tools to help the public understand the changes.

The City's Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure provide some guidance for transmittal of committee recommendations:

3.f ... The Chair shall determine whether the committee's recommendation and opinion is to be stated solely within the body of the staff transmittal memorandum to City Council or as a separate memorandum approved by the Chair. The memorandum shall indicate the committee vote on the item. The Chair shall determine who will present the committee's recommendation to the City Council in public meeting.

3.g ... A minority report may accompany any voted decision. Majority and minority opinions will be stated in the committee's minutes. When a recommendation from the committee is forwarded to the City Council, the vote tally and majority and minority opinions will be disclosed.

3.h ... The committee shall act as a body. A member, when representing the committee, may speak or act for the committee in accordance with action previously taken by the committee. The Chair, or Chair's designee, shall serve as official spokesperson of the committee.

Chair's Cover Letter:

At a minimum, the Chair's Cover letter should include a statement that all Commissioner's present on March 18 passed the final recommendation vote*. Other elements that may be helpful to the Council include:

- Summary of the Commission's major recommendations
- List of concepts recommended by the full body as of March 18
- List of future work items recommended by the full body as of March 18

The Chair's Cover letter does not need to summarize every recommendation by the body. This will be captured within the Planning Commission's recommended draft and supporting documents. It also should not include minority opinions, as these do not reflect the action of the body. Minority opinions may be included in individual letters.

Individual Letters:

Generally, the purpose of these letters is to allow individual Commissioners an opportunity to express their personal rationales, or ideas that may not be represented by the majority (final recommendation.) Individuals can include whatever they want in their letters, whether it relates to a majority, minority or personal opinion.*

** Vote tallies on each individual topic are reflected in the meeting minutes, which will be forwarded to City Council. The audio tapes are considered a part of the minutes, which capture all majority and minority opinions stated at the meetings.*

Future Work Items:

There is a distinction between:

- work plan items that the Commission recommended as part of their final vote on March 18,
- work items they will recommend for their 2013 Work Program, and
- future work items that have been suggested but have not obtained a majority vote.

Since the Chair's Cover letter is intended to pertain only to the Commission's recommendation on the Comprehensive Plan Update, it should only include work items recommended by the Commission as part of that work. A separate process is developing a recommended Work Program for 2013, during which the Commission may vote to recommend additional work items. These will be communicated to the City Council via a separate process involving the General Government Committee.

Deadline for Transmittal Letters:

Previously, staff asked the Commission to submit letters no later than May 3. Some Commissioners have asked for extra time for the Chair's Cover letter, so that it can be approved by the Commission on May 6. It is the discretion of the Chair whether the cover letter will receive final review and approval by the full Commission. If so, staff agrees to push the deadline to Wednesday, May 8 for submission of letters. Staff respectfully requests the deadline not be pushed out further, as there are several technical tasks and deadlines involving other work groups within the last 3 weeks prior to the May 20 release.

Options:

Have a discussion about the transmittal letters.

Financial Impact:

Included in base budget.