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City Council

Recommendation on 2014 Planning Commission Work Plan

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Title

Recommendation on 2014 Planning Commission Work Plan

Recommended Action

Move to recommend the final proposed 2014 OPC Work Plan to the City Council.

Report

Issue:

Review and approve changes made by staff to the proposed 2014 OPC work program in response to Planning Commission direction at the January 27, 2014 meeting.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Chair Brown
Amy Buckler

Background and Analysis:

Since the January 27, 2014 Meeting:

On January 31, 2014, the OPC Leadership Team discussed how to establish a scope for the Climate Change item proposed on the work program. The Commission is being asked to consider the following for this work item:

Later in the spring (i.e., May) the Planning Commission will be briefed by City staff regarding community actions proposed as part of Sustainable Thurston, the City's current efforts and best practices from other communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The outcome of this item in 2014 would be an OPC recommendation to the City Council for specific actions that could be plugged into the City's implementation strategy (i.e., partnerships, code changes, internal operations, community outreach, etc.)

Previously provided Background:

Two work items proposed at the last meeting were removed because they are expected to be complete prior to March 31, 2014. These are consideration of the following two development code updates for consistency with the Comp Plan: 1) Remove scenic view protection from all public streets, and 2) Amend the threshold for multi-family projects to mix housing types from 10 to 5 acres.

On January 11, 2014 the City Council approved a Work Plan for the Department of Community Planning & Development through 2016 (attached.) New items may arise based on adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update later this year (i.e., site-based scenic views identification and code amendment; stricter tree canopy requirements.)

Although some discretionary items on the approved CPD Work Plan may change over time based on Council direction, the focus is on having a Department work plan that is tied to realistic and available resources. Accordingly, Council has provided that if they refer a new work item, another item may need to be delayed or removed, or more resources provided.

On December 30, 2013, Mayor Buxbaum sent a letter to the Planning Commission in response to the OPC recommendation on the 2014-2019 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP.) The letter is attached. Finance Subcommittee Chair Horn would like to discuss the letter with OPC during this work item. In addition, he has asked staff to set up a meeting within the next few weeks with the Council's Finance Committee and key staff to discuss a scope for the Subcommittee and Commission's work on the CFP.

At the request of City Council, each City advisory board forwards a recommended Work Plan to the Council's General Government Committee (GG) for review. This year, GG is expected to meet with advisory board chairs on March 18, although the Committee has not yet confirmed the date. GG sometimes makes changes to suggested work plans, and then forwards a recommendation to the full Council for approval (typically by the end of March.)

Last year, the Commission and Council delayed discussion and approval of the Planning Commission's Work Plan until June due to a need to complete the draft comprehensive plan update; however, this year, we are back on track with our regular schedule.

According to the City's Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure, the full Commission recommends the work plan; then the Chair and staff coordinate to plug work items into the calendar and agenda. Thus, the Commission does not need to attempt to schedule each work item on the agenda at this time.

Procedures and Assumptions that influence the Work Plan:

According to the City Council, 2014 advisory board work plans will be in effect between April 1, 2014-

March 31, 2015.

Under the guidance of the City Manager, the Community Planning & Development Department's budget assumes the Planning Commission will meet 22 times this year. While, the Commission's 2014 regular meeting schedule shows the Commission meeting twice per month, the Department anticipates two of the meetings will be cancelled unless they are absolutely needed (i.e., December 16.)

In addition to regular meeting business (approval of agenda, minutes, etc.) the Commission typically has time at each meeting for 2 work items, plus 1 extra item that is less time-intensive (visit from a Councilmember, ½ hour educational briefing, etc.)

On August 24, 2013, the Commission decided, whenever possible, to combine briefings and public hearings for code amendments rather than hold three separate meetings for 1) briefing, 2) public hearing and 3) deliberation). (An alternative would be to hold the briefing or the deliberation on the same evening as the public hearing; however, in the past, the Commission has preferred more time to digest the issues.)

New work items often present themselves mid-year through Council referrals or applicant initiated code amendments. Thus, when anticipating how many work items can realistically be addressed within the work Plan, the Commission typically assumes room for extra work items. This year, staff already knows of 4 or 5 anticipated referrals or private-applicant driven work items, thus recommends holding 8 slots (4 issues x 2 meetings each.)

Where do the work items come from?

Items on the work Plan may derive from a variety of sources, including:

- Council referrals (i.e., 2013 High Density Corridor step backs and setbacks code amendment; code amendments for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan - also a legal requirement.)
- Legal requirements (i.e., the statutory requirement to review the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) each year)
- Applicant initiated (i.e., rezones, code changes)

- Department initiated (often based on a need to fix outdated or confusing regulations)
- Planning Commission initiated (i.e., Recent request to change public hearing body on rezones from Hearing Examiner to Planning Commission)

How many work items can the Commission address within this work Plan?

Over the past few years, the Commission's work load has been unusually heavy as the City worked concurrently on two major plan updates and other required work items. Commissioners have expressed the need for Council to establish a realistic work Plan that does not result in an exhaustive schedule. In addition, the City's resources are limited, and the department budget and work plan is balanced to support about 22 Planning Commission meetings.

The number of work items the Commission can address within this work plan will be limited. Assuming the above, there will be 22 meetings between April 2014 and March 31, 2015. Thus, there are approximately 44 work item slots, plus extra time at some meetings for less time-intensive things. As most work items will require at least 2 work item slots, the Commission has time for approximately 22 work items. This is an approximate number, and could be less if any work items will take more time.

There are several Council referrals and legal requirements that must be met within this time frame. It is also important for the Commission's highest priorities to be included in the recommended work plan. Items that are of lower priority to the Commission and staff may be captured for consideration within the 2015 Work Plan.

Despite the volume of anticipated work, the Commission should still identify and prioritize potential work items of interest to the full Commission, so that all needs can be taken into account when preparing the draft work Plan for OPC review tonight and the General Government Committee to review in March.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Many of the items on the proposed work plan result from proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, which were developed based on public input in *Imagine Olympia*.

Options:

Move to recommend the final proposed 2014 OPC Work Plan to the City Council.

Financial Impact:

Included in base budget.

