



16720 SE 271<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 100 • Covington, WA 98042 • (253) 480-2400 • Fax: (253) 480-2401

*The City of Covington is a destination community where citizens, businesses and civic leaders collaborate to preserve and foster a strong sense of unity.*

## **PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA**

**August 21, 2014**

**6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Chair Sean Smith, Vice Chair Paul Max, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Ed Holmes, Bill Judd, Alex White, & Jim Langehough.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

### 1. Planning Commission Minutes for July 17, 2014 (Attachment A)

**CITIZEN COMMENTS** - *Note: The Citizen Comment period is to provide the opportunity for members of the audience to address the Commission on items either not on the agenda or not listed as a Public Hearing. The Chair will open this portion of the meeting and ask for a show of hands of those persons wishing to address the Commission. When recognized, please approach the podium, give your name and city of residence, and state the matter of your interest. If your interest is an Agenda Item, the Chair may suggest that your comments wait until that time. Citizen comments will be limited to four minutes for Citizen Comments and four minutes for Unfinished Business. If you require more than the allotted time, your item will be placed on the next agenda. If you anticipate, in advance, your comments taking longer than the allotted time, you are encouraged to contact the Planning Department ten days in advance of the meeting so that your item may be placed on the next available agenda.*

NEW BUSINESS – No action required

### 2. 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update Joint Commission Workshop with Covington's Economic Development Committee, Arts Commission and Park and Recreation Commission (Attachment B: Staff Memo)

ATTENDANCE VOTE

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Same rules apply as stated in the 1<sup>st</sup> CITIZEN COMMENTS)

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

ADJOURN



**CITY OF COVINGTON  
Planning Commission Minutes**

**July 17, 2014**

**City Hall Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Smith called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ed Holmes, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Bill Judd, Paul Max, Sean Smith and Alex White

**MEMBERS ABSENT** – Jim Langehough

**STAFF PRESENT**

Angie Feser, Parks Planner  
Richard Hart, Community Development Director  
Ann Mueller, Senior Planner  
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

The record is noted to reflect that the June 19, 2014 meeting was not held due to lack of a quorum.

Commissioner Holmes requested a section of the minutes be restated to more accurately reflect his thoughts regarding the selection of the city's consultants.

- Ø **1. Vice Chair Max moved and Commissioner Holmes seconded to approve the corrected May 1, 2014 minutes and consent agenda. Motion carried 6-0.**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS** – None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**2. 2014 Docketed Comprehensive Plan Amendments for the Parks & Recreation Element and Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan**

Chair Smith opened the Public Hearing.

Parks Planner Angie Feser provided background information to the Planning Commission on the need for updates to the Park and Recreation Element and the Capital Facilities Plan Element. The memorandum labeled "Agenda Item 2" in the packet outlines the specific proposed changes and staff findings.

Chair Smith asked about some of the changes to the Park and Recreation Facilities map. Staff also discussed existing trails, bikeways, paths and the system gaps.

Chair Smith closed the Public Hearing.

Community Development Director Richard Hart explained the process of the six-year Capital Improvement Project plan including funding projects and how the document can change from year to year.

- Ø **Commissioner White moved and Commissioner Gilbert-Smith seconded to recommend to the City Council that the 2014 Docket of Comprehensive Plan amendments be adopted. Motion carried 6-0.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – No action required

### **3. Discussion of Council Policy Direction on Sign Code Amendments**

Mr. Hart explained the difficulty of sign code changes due to recent litigation. Staff is proceeding with proposed changes based on current law. The City Council had to decide how to address commercial, non-commercial, local government, on premises and off premises.

Commissioner Judd asked for examples of jurisdictions of where the sign code model is working. Mr. Hart responded that the landscape is constantly changing with case law. There are inconsistencies with local sign regulations that do not withstand the legal test. There is difficulty enforcing sign code regulations and managing sign clutter. Covington is seeing the use of illegal "A" frame signs and are awaiting the City Council's direction.

Chair Smith added that if this is done correctly, citizens will notice the difference in signage that makes the city stand out visually.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**4. Presentation on Town Center Project for Suwanee, Georgia**

Mr. Hart reminded the Planning Commission that Monday night from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., there is an opportunity to attend a video conference with staff from Suwanee, Georgia. Over the last 10 years, the city has developed a successful town center which includes a large community park. Suwanee is a suburban city with similar demographics, family oriented, and recreation and schools are very important.

**ATTENDANCE VOTE**

Jim Langehough was not in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – None**

**COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF**

Senior Planner Ann Mueller shared that the city's consultants would be conducting a storefront studio asking for feedback from the community from July 21<sup>st</sup> through July 24<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURN**

The July 17, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary





City of Covington  
16720 SE 271<sup>st</sup> St. Suite 100  
Covington, WA 98042

City Hall – 253.480.2400  
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# Memo

**To:** Planning Commission Members

**From:** Richard Hart, Community Development Director  
Ann Mueller, Senior Planner

**CC:** Salina Lyons, Principal Planner

**Date:** August 21, 2014

**Re:** 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update Joint Workshop

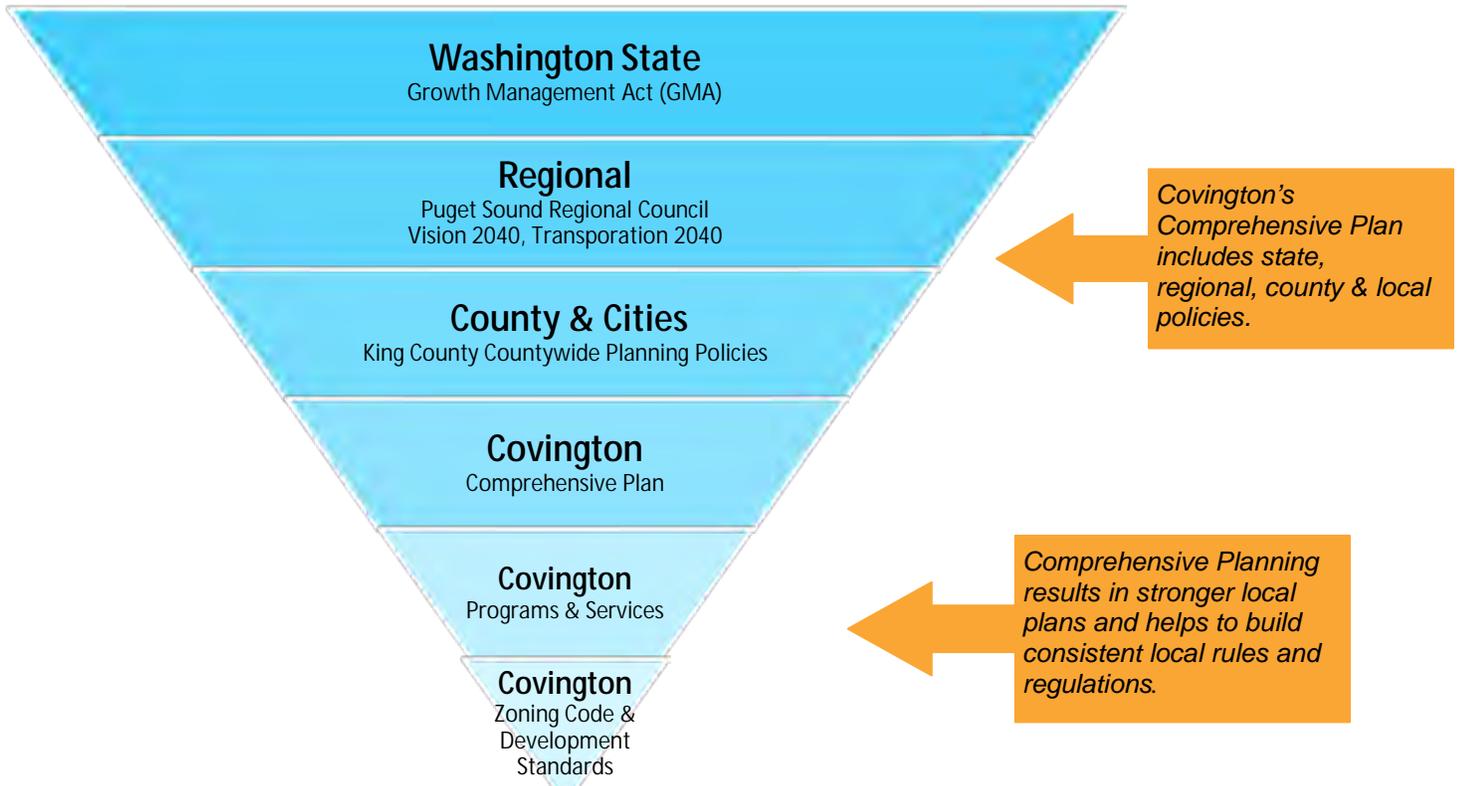
On behalf of the Planning Commission, city staff invited members of Covington's Economic Development Committee, the Arts Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission to attend tonight's Planning Commission workshop on the policy direction of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Covington to complete a periodic update to be review by the City Council in mid 2015. The comprehensive plan establishes policies directing growth and development in the city for the next twenty years. The Planning Commission is the lead advisory body, which includes receiving public comment on the proposed update and forwarding recommendations to the City Council. Earlier this year, Cascade Studio was hired to produce an updated, well organized, concise comprehensive plan that is user friendly and complies with all current requirements of the GMA and is consistent with state law, regional transportation planning and countywide planning policies.

As a starting point, GMA has 14 goals, in no particular priority, that are intended to guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations, as follows:

- **Urban Growth** - Encourage urban growth where facilities are adequate to meet service needs.
- **Reduce Sprawl** - Eliminate sprawling, low-density development that is expensive to deliver services to and is destructive to critical areas, rural areas, and resource values.
- **Transportation** - Encourage efficient, multi-modal transportation.
- **Housing** - Encourage a variety of affordable housing for all economic segments of the population.
- **Economic Development** - Encourage economic development consistent with resources and facilities throughout the state.
- **Property Rights** - Protect property from arbitrary decisions or discriminatory actions.
- **Permits** - Issue permits in a timely manner and administer them fairly.
- **Natural Resources Industries** - Maintain and enhance resource-based industries.
- **Open Space and Recreation** - Encourage retention of open space and recreational areas.
- **Environment** - Protect the environment and enhance the quality of life.
- **Citizen Participation** - Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process.
- **Public Facilities and Services** - Ensure that adequate public facilities and services are provided in a timely and affordable manner.
- **Historic Preservation** - Identify and encourage preservation of historic sites.
- **Shoreline Management** - The goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act are also one of the goals of GMA.

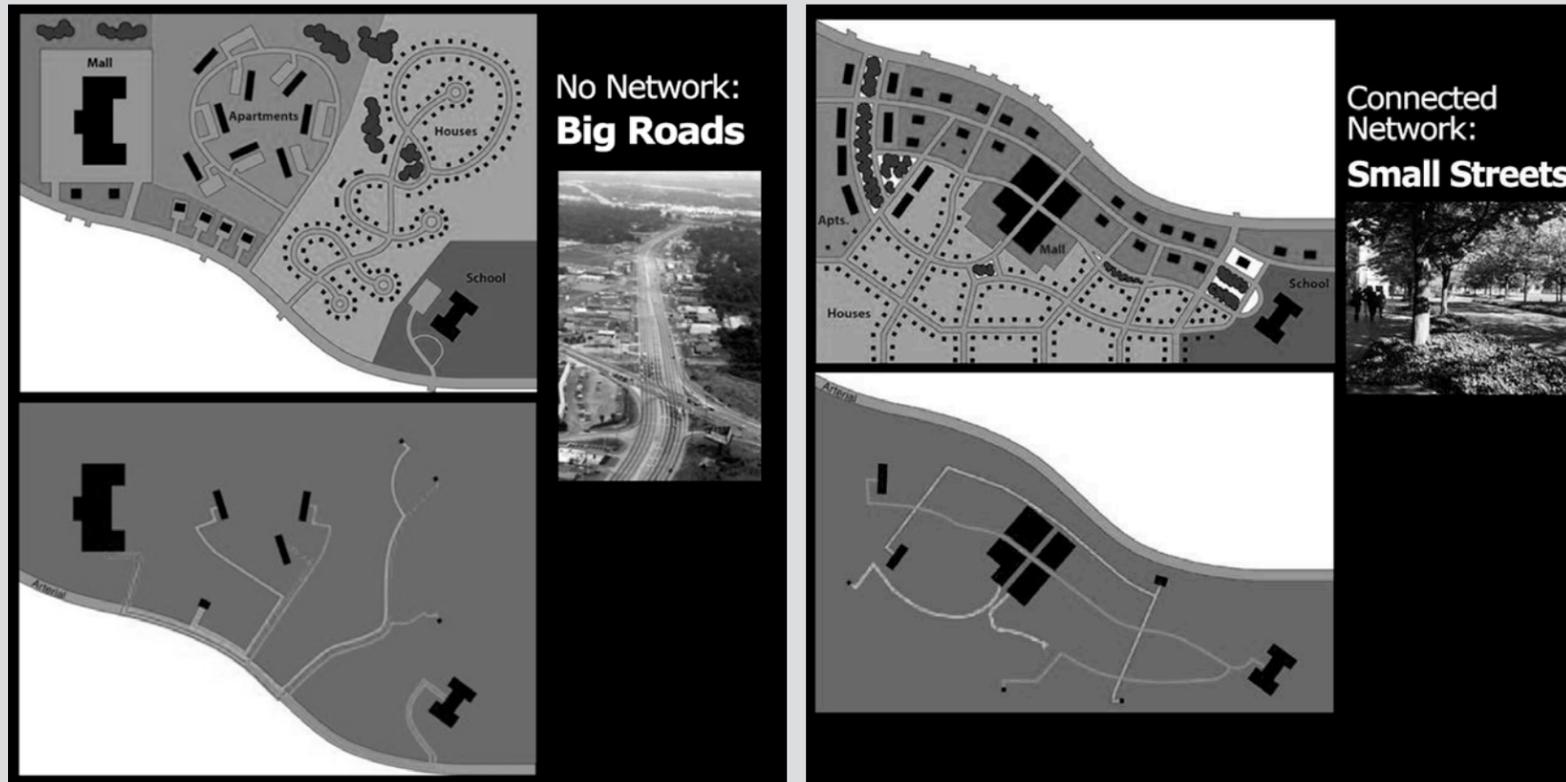
## Comprehensive Planning



At tonight's joint commission workshop we will discuss the approach to this periodic update and the existing comprehensive plan's structure and policies. The comprehensive plan is being updated to reflect the current conditions, as well as, the desired future of our community; resulting in a document that will provide guidance to staff and our elected officials looking forward 20 years. To do this we need to assess the existing goals & policies contained in the 12 elements of Covington's current comprehensive plan, and identify where there are redundant goals and policies, outdated information and data, and gaps in policy and legislative direction. This update includes identifying a new framework and defining what a goal, policy and program action is. As we evaluate where the city is currently and where we want to go as a community, we can identify what goals and policies to include in the updated comprehensive plan to direct the city's actions and identify funding sources to achieve our desired outcomes.

Attached is a copy of a worksheet that commission members will be asked to complete during tonight's workshop to provide feedback on policy direction [Exhibit 1].

1: Introduction



Policy Point "A"

Road connections and walkability

Covington's street system includes only a handful of continuous north/south and east/west routes. This type of system funnels traffic onto a few major arterials, boosting congestion and adding distance to what might otherwise be walkable trips. Alternatively, a more connected network of streets would offer a wider range of travel options, supporting better walkability, improved traffic dispersal and the ability for roadway types to be narrower and smaller in scale.

Covington's existing policies support improved walkability and connectivity, but does relatively little to retrofit existing patterns. Should new plan policy do more or less to help improve connectivity and walkability? How do road networks support or conflict with Covington's vision for a "strong sense of community" and "rural character?"

Please complete the following exercises to help guide Covington policies on this topic. **Thanks!**

2: Gap & Energy

**Instructions, 2a:** Extending results from the June Vision Workshop, the following exercise asks you to compare Covington in terms of today's conditions versus how the community ought to be within the next twenty years. Place an X or a circle along the "Existing" number scale to indicate current performance, and another mark along the "Envisioned" scale to indicate your hoped-for conditions. Calculate the absolute difference between the two and write that number in the "Gap" box ("-4" and "+4" scores would equate to a gap of "8" for example). Finally, circle either the ">" or the "<" symbol to indicate whether your desired direction of change is either more or less than things are today.

	Lowest	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	Neutral	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	Highest	+5	Gap
Existing															>
Envisioned															<

2a.

A community that is known for being **Interconnected / walkable**

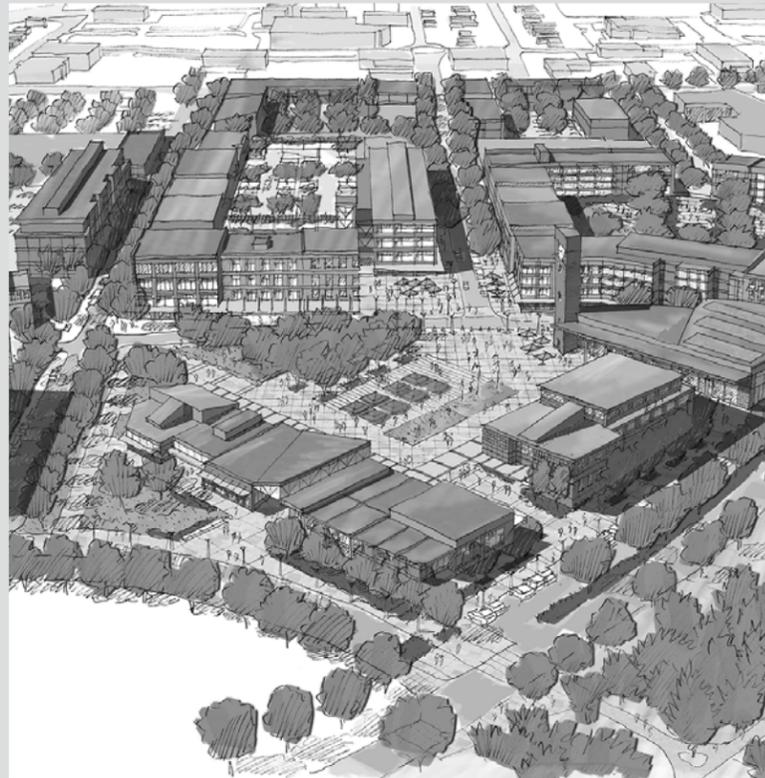
2b.

**Instructions, 2b:** Thinking of each X or circle as a portion of the total resources (including public and/or private time and money) you'd dedicate to this policy point, "spend" a **10-mark resource budget** at right, allocating between this and the three other other policy point topics that follow.

## Resource budget



1: Introduction



## Policy Point "B"

### Town Center & Downtown

Since it first incorporated in 1997, Covington has been working toward creating a walkable, full-featured town center and downtown. The concept enjoys strong support developed through extensive public input - and reflected in a town center plan, the comprehensive plan and the City's overall economic development strategy.

Despite great strides made to plan for and establish a policy framework for a new town center, realizing a vibrant downtown will present challenges - requiring substantial public and private investment, work with potential developers, marketplace risk and even business recruitment. In short, bringing a town center to Covington will take a great deal of energy, with the question of "how soon" largely a function of how much energy residents are willing to direct the City to dedicate.

Please complete the following exercises to help guide Covington policies on this topic. **Thanks!**

2: Gap & Energy

**Instructions, 2a:** Extending results from the June Vision Workshop, the following exercise asks you to compare Covington in terms of today's conditions versus how the community ought to be within the next twenty years. Place an X or a circle along the "Existing" number scale to indicate current performance, and another mark along the "Envisioned" scale to indicate your hoped-for conditions. Calculate the absolute difference between the two and write that number in the "Gap" box ("-4" and "+4" scores would equate to a gap of "8" for example). Finally, circle either the ">" or the "<" symbol to indicate whether your desired direction of change is either more or less than things are today.

	Lowest					Neutral						Highest	Gap
Scoring	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5		
Existing													>
Envisioned													<

A community that has a great **Town Center & Downtown**

**2b.** **Instructions, 2b:** Thinking of each **green dot** as a portion of the total resources (including public and/or private time and money) you'd dedicate to this policy point, "spend" your 10-dot resource budget at right, allocating between this and the three other other policy point topics.

## Resource budget



1: Introduction



## Policy Point "C"

### Local, living-wage jobs

By most measures, Covington is what's known as a "bedroom community." A majority of working residents (8,644 persons) work outside the city, while most that work here earn relatively low wages (just 55% of the County average). In fact, figures show that just 182 people live and work in Covington. Most folks leave Covington for work - and it seems most that work here can't afford to live here.

Addressing this issue is important to other Council goals, such as reducing congestion, keeping services affordable, improving housing diversity and creating a viable town center/downtown. But bringing more local, living-wage jobs here will take long-term commitment, including attracting employment that isn't already well-covered elsewhere and that suits Covington's desired future.

Please complete the following exercises to help guide Covington policies on this topic. **Thanks!**

2: Gap & Energy

**Instructions, 2a:** Extending results from the June Vision Workshop, the following exercise asks you to compare Covington in terms of today's conditions versus how the community ought to be within the next twenty years. Place an X or a circle along the "Existing" number scale to indicate current performance, and another mark along the "Envisioned" scale to indicate your hoped-for conditions. Calculate the absolute difference between the two and write that number in the "Gap" box ("-4" and "+4" scores would equate to a gap of "8" for example). Finally, circle either the ">" or the "<" symbol to indicate whether your desired direction of change is either more or less than things are today.

	Lowest					Neutral					Highest	Gap
Scoring	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
Existing												>
Envisioned												<

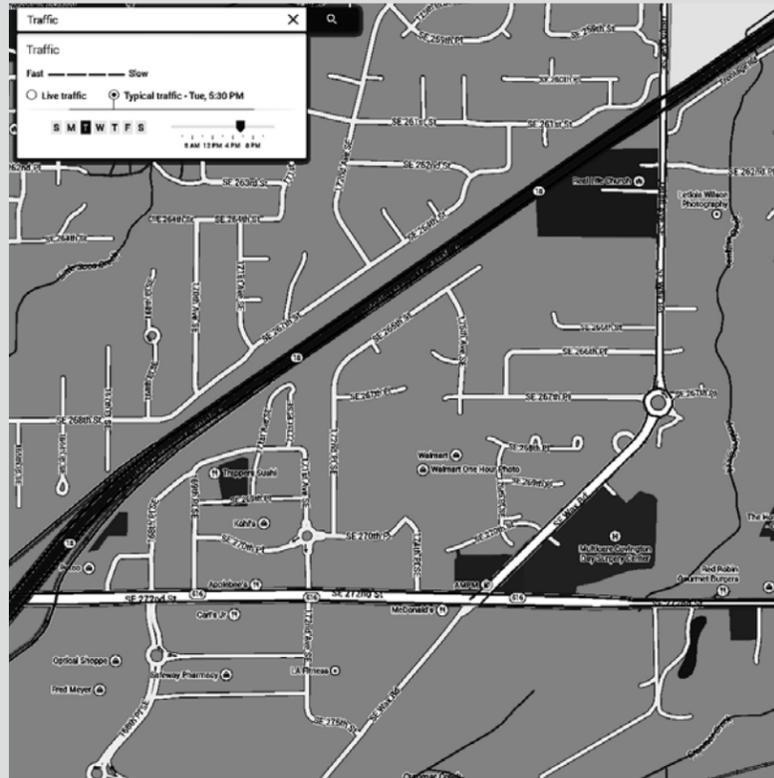
Local, living-wage jobs

**2b. Instructions, 2b:** Thinking of each X or circle as a portion of the total resources (including public and/or private time and money) you'd dedicate to this policy point, "spend" a **10-mark resource budget** at right, allocating between this and the three other other policy point topics that follow.

## Resource budget



1: Introduction



## Policy Point "D"

### Addressing traffic congestion

Covington residents drive farther and more frequently than most in King County, and the majority of all those trips involve a relatively few number of highways, corridors and collector streets. It's a simple system, but its also prone to peak-hour overloads - making even cross-town errands a chore. Future development could even be hindered if it's shown such projects would worsen traffic conditions.

Covington's existing transportation and Capital Improvement plans acknowledges this issue, establishing a set of projects to be tackled as quickly as resources allow. Given limited resources, how far should the City go to address corridor congestion? Should reducing traffic delays trump opportunities for the town center and investments in other things (like parks, trails and sidewalks) that make Covington special?

Please complete the following exercises to help guide Covington policies on this topic. **Thanks!**

2: Gap & Energy

**Instructions, 2a:** Extending results from the June Vision Workshop, the following exercise asks you to compare Covington in terms of today's conditions versus how the community ought to be within the next twenty years. Place an X or a circle along the "Existing" number scale to indicate current performance, and another mark along the "Envisioned" scale to indicate your hoped-for conditions. Calculate the absolute difference between the two and write that number in the "Gap" box ("-4" and "+4" scores would equate to a gap of "8" for example). Finally, circle either the ">" or the "<" symbol to indicate whether your desired direction of change is either more or less than things are today.

	Lowest					Neutral					Highest	Gap
Scoring	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
Existing												>
Envisioned												<

Auto mobility

**2b.** **Instructions, 2b:** Thinking of each X or circle as a portion of the total resources (including public and/or private time and money) you'd dedicate to this policy point, "spend" a **10-mark resource budget** at right, allocating between this and the three other other policy point topics that follow.

Resource budget

