

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
Planning Commission Minutes**

**February 5, 2015**

**City Hall Council Chambers**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Judd called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT - None**

**STAFF PRESENT**

Richard Hart, Community Development Director  
Salina Lyons, Principal Planner  
Ann Mueller, Senior Planner  
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary  
Don Vondran, Public Works Director

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- **1. Commissioner White moved and Vice-Chair Max seconded to approve the January 15, 2015 minutes and consent agenda. Motion carried 6-0.**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS – None**

**PUBLIC HEARING - None**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

2. Presentation and Discussion on Transportation Concurrency by Public Works and Community Development Department Staff

Principal Planner Salina Lyons began by introducing a memo to give an overview of Traffic Concurrency. As growth occurs, traffic infrastructure needs to grow concurrently. The City of Covington is established at service level D, which is a designation of the amount of congestion allowed before certain traffic mitigation is required by private development.

In 2012 the city went through a process of calibrating the traffic model to determine what traffic is really like in the city. Attachment 2 gives a snapshot that the city is already operating below the service level D. Staff anticipates updating this information as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

When a developer proposes a project, the city's traffic consultant enters the data into a traffic model. Projects are evaluated by a set of standards adopted by King County. Staff explained how the city is divided into zones and evaluated on the level of congestion in each zone. Ms. Lyons explained that SE 272<sup>nd</sup> is identified as a critical link. As such, it fails to meet our level of service D standards for congestion, and until certain improvements are made on that corridor, no new development can be approved or occur east of the Jenkins Creek bridge.

The example provided showed intersections that are operating below a level of service standard D. Ms. Lyons explained how each intersection is evaluated and a determination is made whether to mitigate the impacts through a traffic mitigation fee. The developer can only be held responsible for the added traffic impact to an intersection. They are not responsible for the existing failing level of service and there is a lot of competition for funding for traffic improvements through the State Legislature.

Staff discussed that it is unlikely that the city would be able to build ourselves out of the traffic problems. Community Development Director Richard Hart shared that changes to signals need to be reviewed at a regional level as the impacts are far reaching. Public Works Director Don Vondran explained several factors to be considered when adjusting signal timing and concurred that there is a ripple effect created by changing a single signal.

Chair Judd asked if there is a way to slow down the traffic impacts from outside the city. Projects in Maple Valley and Black Diamond impact the City of Covington streets and intersections. Staff responded that the city has been very successful in participating in the SEPA process and the EIS process for developments outside the city and will receive mitigation fees to put toward future infrastructure and improvements.

Staff reviewed the questions related to concurrency outlined in the memo and talked about how they relate to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Vondran and Ms. Lyons explained how staff is working with developers to mitigate impacts. If the city changes the level of service to an E or F rating, all developments could be approved for traffic concurrency which could result in unhappy citizens because of increased traffic congestion. If there is too much traffic congestion, developers may not want to develop here.

**ATTENDANCE VOTE - None**

**PUBLIC COMMENT – None**

**COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF**

Mr. Vondran shared that the widening of SR 516 from Jenkins Creek Bridge to 185<sup>th</sup> Ave SE creates an environmental impact crossing at Jenkins Creek. Once the environmental impact review process is complete later this year, staff anticipates moving into the ROW acquisition phase and will be lobbying for construction funds. Mr. Vondran anticipates it will be closer to 2017 before construction begins on this segment of SR 516.

Ms. Lyons distributed the updated Development Activity Report and corresponding map which will be on the city's website next week.

Mr. Hart shared that there will be no Planning Commission meeting on February 19, 2015. The next regularly scheduled meeting is March 5, 2015 and Park Impact Fees will be discussed. The City Council will be appointing the new Planning Commission Member on February 10, 2015.

Senior Planner Ann Mueller shared that Colin Lund from Oakpointe Development will be at the City Council meeting on February 10, 2015 to share the latest information on the Hawk property.

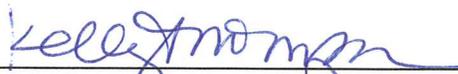
Commissioner Gilbert-Smith will be out of town for the March 5, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Max shared his concerns about traffic blocking the intersection at 168<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and SE 272<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**ADJOURN**

The February 5, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

