

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: A-2

DATE: September 30, 2010

SUBJECT: 2011 Comprehensive Plan – Guiding Principles

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

ISSUE:

The issue before the city council is to review the council recommended changes to the Guiding Principles discussed at the September 16, 2010 special meeting.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

The planning board recommends the city council adopt the proposed amendments to the guiding principles.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Review the proposed guiding principles, make recommended changes and prepare to recommend approval of the guiding principles for inclusion in the 2011 comprehensive plan update.

SUMMARY:

The planning board and city council have expressed an interest in developing a set of guiding principles as a part of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update. This agenda cover presents a set of proposed guiding principles for inclusion in the 2011 comprehensive plan.

The proposed guiding principles are drawn from the mission statement (Attachment A) developed during the small group meeting in 2009 and 2010. The concept is to summarize in the introduction to the 2011 comprehensive plan the overarching values that have guided the city's efforts since 2009 to update the comprehensive plan goals and policies.

The city worked with community members, starting with the first small group meeting in September 2009, to develop a mission statement that would guide the work to update the goals and policies in the 2008 Revisions to the 2004 comprehensive plan.

The mission statement (Attachment A) was discussed and refined during the small group meetings between October 2009 and April 2010. City staff recommend using mission statement as the framework for the guiding principles.

Recommended Guiding Principles

Below are the changes to the guiding principles recommended by the city council on September 16, 2010.

GP-1 **Consider the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the state of Washington before making policy decisions.**

*Community planning must balance many issues and countervailing forces while creating an outline or model for growth. A framework of rules and regulations, designed to limit and shape the authority of the planning process, covers constitutional rights, duties and obligations of municipalities and property owners and citizens directly involved in the planning process. Constitutional rights and responsibilities must be met and balanced in the planning process.*¹

Councilmember Comments

Councilmember Pinson requested the Guiding Principles begin with support of the Constitution of the United States. City staff recommend including the Constitution and laws of the state of Washington.

The planning board discussed the issue at its September 21, 2010 meeting. The board was neutral on the proposal with a general consensus the proposed goal neither added nor detracted from the comprehensive plan.

GP-1-2 **Wisely use public funds to care for the city's public places and meet the city's future needs and enhance quality of life.**

Fiscal responsibility is the cornerstone of an effective and sustainable long-range plan. The city is committed to carefully managing its public funds for the benefit of the entire community.

GP-2-3 **Attract businesses to create family wage jobs that can support families employment opportunities.**

Combine public and private resources to increase economic diversity and attract businesses supporting family wage jobs.

¹ **CTED Constitutional Rights and Responsibilities in Planning.**
<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/DesktopModules/CTEDPublications/CTEDPublicationsView.aspx?tabID=0&ItemID=7552&Mid=944&wversion=Staging>

Planning Board Comments

Board member Bob Knuckey expressed concern regarding the use of the term “family wage”. The planning board reviewed the proposed guiding principles and recommended replacing the term “family wage” with the phrase, “jobs that support families”:

City Council Comments

Similar to the comments from planning board member Bob Knucky, councilmember Slawson recommend replacing “jobs that can support families” with “employment opportunities”.

The planning board reviewed the proposed change at its September 21, 2010 meeting and unanimously supported Mr. Slawson’s proposed change.

City Staff Comments

For a wage to qualify as a "living or family wage", it should provide enough money to at least cover basic expenses like food, housing, and utilities. Earning a "family wage" means that a person has sufficient income for his or her basic necessities and for the basic needs of children and/or a spouse.

The proposed phrasing of “family wage” came out of the mission statement developed during the small group meetings in late 2009 and early 2010.

GP-34 Preserve, promote and protect our natural resources.

Sultan’s unique natural location at the confluence of the Sultan and Skykomish Rivers at the foot of the Cascades provides an opportunity to attract residents, businesses and visitors to our community. Protecting natural areas preserves these resources for future generations to use and enjoy.

GP-45 Promote quality housing to meet the community’s needs.

~~The entire community benefits when everyone has a quality home they can afford near employment opportunities. Shortened commute times enhances quality of life and saves time and money that can be dedicated to family, friends and community betterment.~~

Housing is a basic need for every individual. The city will consider development standards to preserve, improve, and expand Sultan’s housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices.

City Council Comments

Councilmember Joe Neigel noted the description didn't fit the policy statement and requested clarification from staff.

City Staff Comments

The revised policy statement summarizes the overarching policy goal in the housing section of the Puget Sound Regional Council's multi-county planning policies (MPP):

Housing MPP: The region will preserve, improve, and expand its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident.

GP-5-6 Enhance how citizens, business and visitors move about the community and the region.

Development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit through incentives and zoning regulations allow people to live within walking distance of shopping and employment. These ~~provisions~~ regulations may reduce congestion and encourage healthy lifestyles.

GP-6-7 Create quality parks, open spaces, and public places for everyone to enjoy.

Developed parks and trails are integrated into the City's open space system. Acquisition and development of park sites that adequately serve both existing and newly developing neighborhoods provides outdoor amenities to all citizens, sustains environmental systems, and contributes to the city's visual identity.

GP-7-8 Streamline and simplify regulations to support economic growth.

~~Continual-On-going~~ review of regulatory and building permit processes and the cost of infrastructure improvements support economic development and minimize the costs for new development and redevelopment.

GP-8-9 Reinforce transparency and accountability in civic decision making

Public participation builds community confidence through open debate of alternatives and complete transparency in how decisions are considered and made. Considering diverse points of view ensures local commitment to implementation.

DISCUSSION:

Adopting a set of guiding principles or "framework" policies is not a requirement of the Growth Management Act. Rather, the guiding principles identified in the plan must be translated into policies and actions.

The proposed guiding principles are the overarching statements that express the core concepts on which this comprehensive plan is based. Together with the policies in the individual chapters, the guiding principles set the direction for how the plan should be implemented. The difference is that the policies in the various chapters of the plan are more detailed, specifically describing potential methods of accomplishing the vision.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Review the proposed guiding principles, make recommended changes and prepare to adopt the guiding principles. This alternative implies the city council supports the concept of adopting guiding principles. Although the council may want to make specific recommended changes before approving the guiding principles.
2. Review the proposed guiding principles and provide direction to staff. This alternative implies the city supports the concept of guiding principles but has further questions or proposed changes before making a recommendation.
3. Review the proposed guiding principles. Make a recommendation not to adopt guiding principles at this time or postpone discussion until a later date.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Review the proposed guiding principles, make recommended changes and prepare to recommend approval of the guiding principles for inclusion in the 2011 comprehensive plan update.

ATTACHMENTS

- A- Draft mission statement recommended by small group participants.
- B – Proposed Guiding Principles (clean version)

Draft Mission Statement
Developed by Comprehensive Plan Small Groups

We are a community of people dedicated to working together to:

- Streamline and simplify regulations to support economic growth
- Preserve, promote and protect our natural resources
- Promote quality housing to meet the community's needs
- Enhance how we move about the community and the region
- Create and encourage quality parks, open spaces, and public places for everyone to enjoy
- Wisely use public funds to care for our public places, meet our future needs, and enhance quality of life
- Attract businesses to create family wage jobs.

**2011 Comprehensive Plan
Proposed Guiding Principles**

GP-1 Consider the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the state of Washington before making policy decisions.

Community planning must balance many issues and countervailing forces while creating an outline or model for growth. A framework of rules and regulations, designed to limit and shape the authority of the planning process, covers constitutional rights, duties and obligations of municipalities and property owners and citizens directly involved in the planning process. Constitutional rights and responsibilities must be met and balanced in the planning process.

GP-2 Wisely use public funds to care for the city's public places and meet the city's future needs and enhance quality of life.

Fiscal responsibility is the cornerstone of an effective and sustainable long-range plan. The city is committed to carefully managing its public funds for the benefit of the entire community.

GP-3 Attract businesses to create employment opportunities.

Combine public and private resources to increase economic diversity and attract businesses supporting family wage jobs.

GP-4 Preserve, promote and protect our natural resources.

Sultan's unique natural location at the confluence of the Sultan and Skykomish Rivers at the foot of the Cascades provides an opportunity to attract residents, businesses and visitors to our community. Protecting natural areas preserves these resources for future generations to use and enjoy.

GP-5 Promote quality housing to meet the community's needs.

Housing is a basic need for every individual. The city will consider development standards to preserve, improve, and expand Sultan's housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices.

GP-6 Enhance how citizens, business and visitors move about the community and the region.

Development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit through incentives and zoning regulations allow people to live within walking distance of shopping and employment. These regulations may reduce congestion and encourage healthy lifestyles.

GP-7 Create quality parks, open spaces, and public places for everyone to enjoy.

Developed parks and trails are integrated into the City's open space system. Acquisition and development of park sites that adequately serve both existing and newly developing neighborhoods provides outdoor amenities to all citizens, sustains environmental systems, and contributes to the city's visual identity.

GP-8 Streamline and simplify regulations to support economic growth.

On-going review of regulatory and building permit processes and the cost of infrastructure improvements support economic development and minimize the costs for new development and redevelopment.

GP-9 Reinforce transparency and accountability in civic decision making

Public participation builds community confidence through open debate of alternatives and complete transparency in how decisions are considered and made. Considering diverse points of view ensures local commitment to implementation.