

TO: Plan Commission  
FROM: Lauren Cnare, Alder D3 and Plan Commission member  
RE: Discussion on Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process  
February 7, 2011

Dear Commissioners and Staff:

Tonight, I am parenting as the mom of a soon-to-be high school freshman, but can't resist planning with you, thus a short memo to share my thoughts about this important new procedure we are examining tonight.

First, thank you to Michael Waidelich for not only helping us get our arms around this topic, but spending time with me to discuss the possible approaches and invite my thoughts. As an alder with a controversial proposal that would indeed require an amendment to the Comp. Plan, I have some unique perspective I would like to share with you on behalf of residents of District 3 to assure that not only this proposal but others that generate significantly differing points of view are treated with the utmost care and concern for not just for the plan and the future of development, but for the neighbors.

Based on the Draft for Plan Commission Discussion Rev. 2-1-11, I wholeheartedly support the "Two Track" method of amending our plan. As Track 1 makes perfect sense (to me!), I shall address only Track 2: the not recommended or developer-driven changes.

First, I applaud the tack of having the developer (or other) make a formal request for a change to the Comprehensive Plan. It think it lends an air of formality to the request, and reminds all of us that we have a *plan* for our city. May I ask if there is a definition of who else might make a request for a change? I assume a landowner, but could a neighborhood association, neighbor or alder do so?

I would like to request that this notice is then distributed to the affected alder(s), neighborhood associations and other interested parties, just as we do now with our notification process. I think it's important that we "notice" and use a familiar process to remove any undue burden of staff and it builds on a routine for neighbors and alders.

I also support the notion of a thorough evaluation that requires all requestors parties to explain why a proposed project's benefits or *raison d'être* trumps the Comprehensive Plan and the underlying plans. And, it provides a standard review for Plan Commissioners to use in making decisions.

Finally, the notion of trying to combine amendments – from the Comprehensive Plan to the neighborhood plan – is also beneficial if it does not shortchange public input. I hope that everyone involved – from neighbors to developers to staff – may approach the changes holistically and without multiple, seemingly redundant meetings to fully understand the projects, the ramifications and the ultimate decision. It's a busy world out there taking up lives! That being said, it will be important that clear explanation of the multi-layered process is made so everyone understands what's being denied or approved.

In the case of Track 2 amendments, I do recommend that the Planning Division staff encourage and support alders, who ultimately should manage the process on the home front, to be sure the meetings are suitable in number and content to bring neighbors along with these proposed changes. While the Web site and regular city meetings are the backbone of our decision-making process, neighborhood meetings are the face of our decisions. Here is where people share the very personal feelings about a proposed change and here, is where we, as city decision-makers, learn the details of life after amendment. All projects and all plans deserve and need this input. Thus, on Page 6, bullet Potential Neighborhood Meetings should be revised to remove the "Potential." Let's assume that a neighborhood meeting *must* be held unless there is an exception.

Lastly, the schedule for both tracks is suitable – now that we've almost finished the new Zoning Code!