ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Barry, Bassett, Carlson, Lillquist, Niner, Perrie, and Mayor O'Brien.

Others present were City Manager Barkley; Community Development Director Witkowski; Public Works Director Akers; Energy Services Director Titus; City Attorney Pidduck; Associate Planner Eyerly; Planning/Permit Technician Johnson; Deputy Clerk Keno; Bill Grimes of Studio Cascade, Inc.; and 50 plus members of the audience.

The purpose of the special meeting is to give Council members an opportunity to review and discuss the content of the draft comprehensive plan chapters and receive public comments on those draft chapters.

The draft chapters scheduled for review at this meeting are Chapter 4 Land Use; Chapter 5 Transportation and Chapter 2 Community Profile.

Bill Grimes of Studio Cascade, Inc. presented an overview of the comprehensive plan review process being utilized by the City. The Comprehensive Plan has two purposes: 1) to comply with the State Growth Management Act and the requirement for the City to keep its plan current; and 2) the City’s Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by December 1, 2006. The Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations need to be clear in order to assist the City with pressing community issues such as downtown preservation and neighborhoods, the connection between the City and CWU, more job opportunities/income, and housing.

Mr. Grimes outlined the four land use scenarios in draft Chapter 4 as follows:

**Scenario 1: Downtown Retail Growth**

This alternative has the closest resemblance to the 1995 Comprehensive Plan. It retains and enhances the comprehensive plan’s policies regarding commercial land use and would permit continued growth of retail, even to the extent of big-box or regional retail, if it were to locate in the central commercial area. Those policies would call for increased public action to facilitate regional retail growth, with the City or some other agent acquiring parcels, improving roads, upgrading utility systems as necessary and finding solutions to increased parking demand. The key reasoning behind this alternative is to attempt to allow Ellensburg residents to have an opportunity to shop locally, while still concentrating retail activity downtown.

This scenario requires the successful intermingling of the CBD and the new regional retail uses
expected to develop to the south and west of the CBD. Traffic would increase, and parking would be in high demand. That would mean providing for strong and clear pedestrian linkages and the preserving of interconnectedness between the two districts. They must work together as one.

This alternative calls for overlay districts or subarea plans for the CBD, the west interchange, Dolarway Road, Cascade Way, and the south interchange. The CBD overlay would provide for the combining of smaller parcels, the vacation of certain rights of way, and other measures to make land in or near the CBD more attractive for large-scale retail development. The two corridors leading from the west interchange to the CBD would be emphasized, one as a commercial connector to the downtown and the other as an industrial corridor. The Cascade Way corridor would emphasize its heritage as an early-era highway. The Dolarway industrial corridor would emphasize the need for increased truck traffic and access to industrial land. An overlay for the south interchange would establish a master development pattern for the mostly-vacant land there, ensuring its compatibility with the residential areas to the north and the commercial uses bounding it on the west.

Scenario 2: Limited Retail Growth

This alternative draws a line in the sand, calling for an end to retail expansion and declaring that the community needs no more retail land, particularly in a condition that would attract regional retailers. This alternative would call for policies to restrict any redesignation of land to a category that would permit regional retail and modify those policies in the current comprehensive plan that would now allow it to develop near the downtown core. The key reasoning behind this alternative is to retain the small-scale, specialized retail character the community has developed, keeping Ellensburg's downtown as the undisputed center for local shopping...even though an increasing amount of shopping may be conducted out of town or over the Internet.

In this alternative, all must work in concert to maintain the integrity and charm of Ellensburg's core. The land to its immediate west and south would be redefined in a support role, providing the parking that might otherwise consume CBD land. Neighborhoods on the CBD's periphery would gradually intensify, and CWU could locate housing within the core, enhancing its level of activity.

This alternative calls for overlay districts or subarea plans for the CBD, the west interchange and the south interchange. The major objectives here would be to increase the developability of the CBD for more small-scale retail while providing direction on how the interchange areas should develop. It also results in the resdesignation of land around the west interchange that is now residential as light industrial, providing for an increased supply of industrial land.

Scenario 3: West Interchange Development

This third set of goals presents a strategy set that permits increased regional retail and industrial development at the west interchange in response to requests by the Lamb Family Trust and Stephen Hayden. Its assigns land use designations that are generally consistent with those comprehensive
plan amendment requests and provides policies and programs designed to make this alternative work as well as it can. These policies and programs include measures to mitigate direct environmental impact from the development of the interchange, as well as measures to help connect this project to the CBD, to minimize reliance on the automobile, to revitalize the CBD and create an appropriate and attractive community entry at its western end.

This alternative responds to the comprehensive plan amendment request made by the Lamb family to redesignate approximately 70 acres of now vacant land for regional retail development. This alternative would lead to policies facilitating development of this property for regional, big-box retail, including requirements designed to minimize any negative impacts the downtown might experience through increased local retail competition or the community might experience because of the dispersion of local retail activity. The key reasoning behind this alternative is to offer land for regional retail development where land is under a single ownership, where freeway access is convenient, and where barriers to a large-parcel regional center are few.

Scenario 3 provides overlay districts similar to those described in Scenario 1. The CBD district would be formed to differentiate the core commercial from the corridor commercial land uses leading to it. The CBD in this scenario would need to emerge as a very special place, targeting land uses that will not necessarily need to compete with retail development at the west I-90 interchange. It would need to focus, instead, on a transition to a specialty retail, housing, and entertainment hub, offering boutique shopping, museums, dining, theaters, and other similar uses to ensure its vitality. The overlay for the west interchange would need to direct master planning for the entire regional retail/industrial area, designing a circulation, land use and services scheme that makes the area work as well as possible. As in Scenario 1, the two corridors leading east to the CBD will increase in importance, providing commercial and industrial routes toward the town’s center. The south interchange area would also be subject to an overlay district to guide development of the vacant land there to ensure its compatibility with surrounding land uses.

This project will change Ellensburg’s appearance and function. When developed, it would double the community’s supply of retail square footage. It is crucial that it be designed and built in a way that preserves the community’s identity and does not detract from the CBD’s vitality. This will present a unique and tricky challenge.

Scenario 4: South Interchange Development

This fourth set of goals addresses increased development of land at the south interchange. It responds to the Sorenson request for increased development opportunity of the area north of I-90 and east of Canyon Road, assigning land use designations that would permit a range of regional retail, open space, and residential land uses. This alternative also includes policies and programs that would attempt to link this area more closely to the CBD and encourage increased economic activity in the CBD. This alternative suggests another option for locating regional retail, putting it at the interchange with Canyon Road on the City’s southern edge. This alternative would include policies to facilitate that
type of development, while also striving to emphasize the Canyon Road area’s connection to the CBD and the rest of the community.

The key reasoning behind this alternative is to provide land for increased regional retail activity where freeway visibility and land ownership are favorable, while also providing it at a location that could energize the community’s urban design within “walkable” proximity to central Ellensburg.

Scenario 4 slices off the southern lobe, concentrating industrial development within a smaller service area. It also includes the same range of overlay districts as shown in Scenario 3, but with a different twist. The west interchange subarea would be master planned to ensure its success as a tourist commercial and industrial hub, with the two primary corridors of Cascade Way and Dolarway Road leading eastward to the CBD. The CBD’s overlay district would concentrate on a land use scheme and development standards that increase its ability to complement, and function as a counterpole to, retail development at the south interchange. The south interchange overlay would put in place special land use districts and development regulations to control its development as a regional retail center, ensuring compatibility with neighboring land uses and emphasizing non-automotive linkages to the CBD.

While this alternative still provides for retail development away from the CBD, it is close enough to invite attempts to integrate the two commercial nodes. Its success would depend on the strength of their connectedness and complementary natures. This is also a unique and difficult challenge, demanding careful planning of the Canyon Road corridor and design of the entire sub area.

Transportation

Chapter 5 Transportation outlines how the City’s transportation system can help achieve the plan’s goals.

The community originally developed along the Canyon Road and University Way/Cascade Way corridors and the railroad, establishing a grid system of streets. The grid continued to spread outward, with municipal plat additions emulating the original street patterns. That street system is characterized by relatively wide road rights of way with alleys serving the rear lots.

The ability to extend the grid further is now hindered by the subdivision and roadway patterns established in the sparsely settled areas surrounding the community. While Ellensburg’s growth continued to push the city limits outward, the street system needed to change to reflect the developing conditions beyond the traditional plats. Incremental conversion of rural land surrounding Ellensburg into suburban residential development has prevented extension of the grid. These early failures to project and protect necessary rights of way for future road extensions is now causing problems for Ellensburg’s transportation system as it continues to grow outward.

Areas within Ellensburg’s UGA that will warrant special transportation consideration as the community evolves include 1) North Ellensburg; 2) CBD; 3) Canyon Road; 4) West Interchange; 5)
University Way; 6) Dolarway Road; 7) Bowers Field; 8) Rail Corridor; and 9) Third Interchange. The intent behind the various transportation scenarios proposed is to explore conceptual strategies that are consistent with and complement the four land use scenarios discussed in Chapter 4. Council reviewed arterial road plans to serve each of the scenarios.

Council questioned when a transportation consultant report would be received and what transportation projects would be included in each scenario.

The public comment cards distributed to and collected from the audience during the meeting were reviewed. Due to time constraints Council discussed continuing the special meeting to Wednesday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m. to allow members of the audience who had signed up to speak to have the opportunity to do so.

Continue special meeting to February 15, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. Carlson

Affirmed

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 9:25 p.m. Carlson

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: ___________________________ City Clerk