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Letter to the editor  
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### **The Reality Gap: Subarea H “Interim” Downtown Sector Plan Framework Policy**

At the June 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, the aldermen voted on “Subarea H Interim Downtown Sector Plan Framework Policy” (a comprehensive plan for Block 300). The question was raised as to what voting on the “Interim Plan” actually meant for city planning. A great discussion ensued, including concerns about the Glos Mansion, (which is not actually part of Subarea H) but an essential point was not articulated: voting on the Interim Plan, by default, alters the city’s comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive plan is a road map for city planners. Calling the proposed plan of Subarea H “a framework” or “an interim policy” is a semantics game. The city comprehensive plan is being evaluated in subsections and the interim plan for each subsection is going to be shelved until all subareas are completed. When all interim plans are complete, there will be a public hearing to collectively present all interim plans to the public, with the intent of amending the comprehensive plan.

In reality, if the city receives a proposal for a subarea, like Morningside with Subarea H, they must decide whether to follow the existing comprehensive plan ordinances, or the “interim plan” which is supposed to be on the shelf until all subareas are evaluated. As indicated to the public when the Zoning and Planning Commission was evaluating Subarea H, the city intends to use the interim plan to evaluate proposals, effectively amending the city’s comprehensive plan by default, without a public hearing.

Another dichotomy is that the Morningside Case and the Subarea H interim plan are independent entities. If true, the concepts evaluated for Subarea H could have been more diverse, from primarily green space to low density development. In reality, the proposed Morningside development and the comprehensive plan for Subarea H are strikingly similar.