



# Planning Commission

## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024**

**4:30 p.m.**

**City Hall**

**Council Chambers**

**415 W 6<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Vancouver, WA**

**Commission Members Present:**

Patrick Adigweme, Sandra Beck, Nena Cavel, Marjorie Ledell, Zach Pyle, Jeff Prussack

**Commission Members Absent:**

None

**Staff Present:** Rebecca Kennedy, staff liaison, Julie Nischik, staff liaison, Becky Rude, staff attorney

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Chair Adigweme.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel, seconded by Commissioner Ledell, and carried unanimously to approve the July 23, 2024 minutes.

**2024 Code Cleanup**

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented three proposed updates, including updates to application processing timelines to comply with [HB 5290](#), new application notification requirements, and adoption into the Comprehensive Plan the project list for a new capital facility for the purposes of grant funding.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- What is the typical cost of notification for new applications? Staff responded they don't have a specific cost estimate, but a recent application required sending out 200 notices. The cost for this is

## Members

**Patrick Adigweme**

*Chair*

**Zach Pyle**

*Vice Chair*

Sandra Beck

Nena Cavel

Marjorie Ledell

Jeff Prussack

## Community Development Department

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comprised of supplies (envelopes, postage) and staff time. State statute requires the City to send out notices and the City has established the boundary to send notices to all occupants within a 500-foot radius.

- For Type III permit reviews, the rationale for 170 days to process the application. Staff responded currently the City typically processes these applications within 90 days but there are often complex projects that require more time for review and 170 days provides this buffer and aligns the City with the state maximum.
- Why did the requirements for application processing timelines change at the state level? Staff responded it was part of a package of housing changes intended to facilitate development.
- Support for keeping the type III permit review timeline at 120 days. Staff responded it may be useful to have a little extra time when the new code is implemented but will continue to use the 120-day timeline as a target.

### **Heights District Plan Implementation Update**

Amy Zoltie, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity and Housing

Staff presented on the Heights equitable development strategic framework, tools used in inclusive redevelopment, an update on the infrastructure design, parcel development in Phase 1 of the project, the work of the Heights Community Investment Committee (HCIC), evaluation criteria for the Requests for Proposal (RFP) for the parcels in Phase 1, the RFP process and timeline, the proposed housing affordability, unit mix and commercial space for each parcel in Phase 1, details on the lead developers for each site, the temporary activation of the empty parking lot on the site to a bike garden, and next steps in the development process.

Commission discussion and questions.

- Lessons learned from the Heights that can be applied to other projects. Staff responded the equitable development plan for the Heights is being integrated into a broader, citywide equitable development strategy for the City that will inform the equity chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.
- What was the level of interest in applicants for the RFP? Staff responded there was a high level of interest in applying for the RFP. Staff held an applicant briefing session and the advertisement of the procurement was a wider campaign than is typical for an RFP.
- Will there be retail facing Mill Plain? Staff responded the proposals do not include retail on Mill Plain. The retail faces Divine and the Grand Loop, which was intentional to activate those interior spaces. There are opportunities at the Divine and Mill Plain intersection to extend the reach of this development to Mill Plain and the area around it.
- How have State level changes to building code requirements (single stair) affected the mix of units in these developments? Staff responded that the City is working on adopting those changes into the building code, so they did not affect these proposals.
- The size of developing parcels in the Heights and applying those principals through the Comprehensive Plan's mixed use neighborhoods zone. Staff appreciated the comment and also noted that development as part of the Comprehensive Plan is largely driven by private investment over a longer period of time. In situations where the City has an ownership stake and is investing in infrastructure, the Heights is a great example to pull ideas and best practices from.
- Consideration for leveraging the quantity and timing of construction of these parcels to find efficiencies.

## **Community Forum**

Carmen De Leon was present to comment on displacement in the Mill Plain, climate resilient buildings, and support for local economy.

## **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development Department; Nicole McDermott, Project Manager, WSP

Staff reviewed guiding policies and recent State laws applicable to the plan, the process for developing the land use possibilities, the seven place types and mix of residential and commercial uses, development of the focus areas and digitization of the community maps, themes gathered from the community mapping activities conducted in spring 2024, and development of growth nodes. Staff went into detail in comparing possibilities A and B to be studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), showing maps, percentages of place types citywide and in the growth nodes, and general differences between the two possibilities.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- To what extent will the EIS assess development outside of Vancouver and impacts of urban sprawl? Staff responded the EIS does not evaluate anything outside the city boundaries. Staff communicate with the County about suggestions for what should be analyzed outside the city boundaries. The EIS will provide data on things like vehicle emissions and active trip potential for each possibility.
- Do both possibilities meet the housing and jobs goals? Staff responded there is a range of combinations between both possibilities that would meet the goals. The two possibilities represent options we should measure to understand what will meet our other goals to understand tradeoffs.
- Support for a larger scale of place types in possibility B along main corridors.
- Request for analysis of the previous comprehensive plan and particularly what worked well and didn't along Fourth Plain. Staff responded they're working on a memo regarding this and plan to have it available shortly.
- What were the deficiencies in the land use maps from the previous comprehensive plan? Staff responded the previous map did certain things well and was deficient in other areas. One thing that didn't work well was not differentiating between different types of corridors. The maps staff are working on now will address types of corridors differently and will have overlays to address more specific requirements for the area.
- Potential for schools to change zoning over the long term. Staff responded that the current draft maps don't assign a zone to schools but staff will apply the base underlying zone to the school properties in the parcel level maps (the same practice as currently done). The school districts recognize that there is a more urban model of schools that they will work towards in the future.
- Is displacement part of the environmental impact statement? Staff responded the displacement risk tool will be applied to the maps to identify potential impacts and policies that can address these while still investing in areas that are at risk for displacement. It will likely be on a broader scale than at the node level, as the impact of investment in a specific area or corridor has a wider impact than just that area.
- Step down of intensity from mixed use to low scale residential and how that transition might look? Staff responded the rate of change is important to consider because change will depend on private individuals making the choice to redevelop. Likely, only a few lots will change to match the new zoning code. There is also a range of scale within each place type.
- How likely is middle housing infill to be developed across wide parts of the city? Staff responded they will get that information from the DEIS market capacity analysis. The zoned capacity will be much greater than what will be achieved.

- With possibility B, which relies more on medium scale and mixed use place types, how will that affect the rate of development? Staff responded with possibility B, you would likely see more apartment buildings and new development at a larger scale in the medium scale place type than you would see in possibility A with infill middle housing.
- Concern for commercial displacement with redevelopment.
- Maintaining character in neighborhoods. Staff noted that the discussion of character will come later in the process when discussing code, policy, and subarea plans.
- Support for increasing intensity in the lower range, possibility A.
- Medium scale character appropriate for large areas of the city.

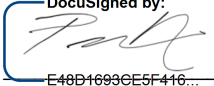
**Communication from the Chair**

None.

**Communication from Staff**

Staff noted that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program was published on September 20<sup>th</sup> for public comments. Staff reviewed the memo on public facility use restrictions for political activities in light of the upcoming election in November.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm

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Patrick Adigweme, Chair