

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
PO Box 1995 – Vancouver, Washington 98668-1995
www.cityofvancouver.us

Marjorie Ledell • Steve Schulte • Larry Blaufus • Zachary Pyle
Nena Cavel • Patrick Adigweme • Melissa von Borstel

September 12, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

Vancouver City Hall - 415 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver WA

CALL TO ORDER

The September 12, 2023, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Patrick Adigweme, Nena Cavel, Steve Schulte, and Melissa von Borstel

Absent: Larry Blaufus

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle, second by Commissioner Cavel, and carried unanimously, to excuse the absence of Commissioner Blaufus.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Vice Chair Pyle, and carried unanimously to adopt the July 25, 2023, minutes.

WORKSHOP

WAREHOUSE CODE CHANGES

Chad Eiken, Director, Community Development Department

Chad Eiken introduced the workshop and presented the proposed amendments to VMC Title 20, including making warehouses greater than or equal to 250,000 square feet a limited use in Heavy Industrial (IH) District, reducing parking space requirements, decreasing maximum lot coverage, adding limited use/development standards for large warehouses, and adding climate action measures for large warehouses. Community outreach and engagement is ongoing, and the City will issue a SEPA determination and receive additional comments through that process.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Impacts of the prohibition of freight traffic on Fruit Valley Road and access to the Port. Staff responded the limitation of freight traffic only applies to large warehouses. Smaller trucks are still allowed to use Fruit Valley Road.

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- Option for a tree bank to make the most use of street tree requirements. Staff agreed it was a good idea and could be included in the code language.
- Are all the measures listed to address climate action required. Staff confirmed they are.
- Feedback from the Port on this proposal. Staff responded they expect the Port to weigh in through this process. The Port expressed concern with the initially proposed conditional use permit for large warehouses and supports the limited use as currently proposed.
- Support for adding language in the code regarding limiting campus style development of multiple smaller warehouses on a site.

2023 ANNUAL REVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING CODE MAP AND TEXT CHANGES

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Bryan Snodgrass presented four proposed site-specific Comprehensive Plan and Zone changes. The first is located at the intersection of SE 192nd and SE 15th Street, the second (called Wood Duck Springs) is located on NE 63rd Street, the third (called Miller) is located at NE 63rd Street and NE 72nd Avenue, and the fourth (called Date Park) is located on E 18th Street.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Does the Interim Green Building Policy apply to residential developments? Staff responded it applies to residential developments if there is a development agreement.
- Are the school districts aware of the City's philosophy and residential density? Staff responded this will be addressed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, though they are likely aware of the broad trends and housing crisis.
- Consider a higher density for the Wood Duck Springs property.
- Traffic impacts from increased housing density on County owned roads. Staff responded there is coordination with the County on development applications, including housing. The City builds infrastructure to urban standards to meet its needs and level of development.
- Does the proposed zone change for Wood Duck Springs allow for a commercial component? Staff responded mixed use developments are allowed in multi-family zones.
- Consider commercial component for the development on 192nd Avenue. Staff responded in this case there is existing commercial nearby.
- Community outreach for the development on 192nd Avenue. Staff responded the developer has been in contact with neighboring properties to the north and west of the site and has organized two meetings in the neighborhood.

The presentation summarized proposed text changes, including a Comprehensive Plan text change in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), an update related to parks in the Comprehensive Plan, and twelve text changes in the zoning code, which is [Title 20](#) of the Vancouver Municipal Code.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Define "regular" mail and further clarify what is mailed and sent via email. Staff responded this means mail sent through the postal service and will allow development review staff to respond via email. Notices of application will still be sent via regular mail. With this change, the final decision staff reports can be sent via email to those who commented on the application, particularly if their comments came in via email.

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- Do the Flood Insurance Rate Maps affect code requirements? Staff responded they do not, but the City will provide courtesy notice to properties affected by changes to floodplain.
- Clarify the changes to cottage clusters. Staff responded the change clarifies the definition of the density bonus and the common area. It also clarifies if there is an existing house on the property that is larger than the typical cottage can be included in the development.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Monica Zazueta was present to provide comments on the warehouse code changes. She was supportive of regulations for large warehouses to limit building more warehouses in the City.

Teresa Hardy was present to provide comments on the Vancouver Innovation Center. She encouraged the City to preserve the forested areas of the property.

WORKSHOP

VANCOUVER INNOVATION CENTER PROPOSED REVISED MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Joana Filgueiras, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity and Housing; Mark Person, Senior Planner, Community Development Department

Mark Person introduced the workshop and presented a brief history of the site, including the rezone and Comprehensive Plan changes in 2021, the approved land use allocations, open space provisions, and use/expansion of the exiting industrial building within the approved master plan. Staff presented the proposed revisions to the land use allocation, open space, and transportation network, details of the revisions to the master plan, and the approval criteria for changes to the master plan.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Challenges the developer sees in developing this project. Staff responded that they cannot speak for the developer, but they understand the current low demand for office is one challenge.
- In the approval criteria, what is considered a “change in circumstances”? Staff responded when the site went through the rezone process in 2021, it was an underutilized site and there is now a market for more housing and mixed-use development. A change of circumstances is not a particularly high bar because market forces and trends shift over time.
- Status of negotiations between the developer and the City regarding the open space. Staff responded the applicant is negotiating the sale of the 13.7 acres of forested tract to the City to be used as a City owned and maintained park.
- Motivations for changes to the master plan. Staff responded the change is in part due to market demand and alignment with City goals of increasing housing density and employment land.
- Public access to the site. Staff responded the public will have more access to the site than it currently does, especially the forested tract that will become a City-owned park. There will be commercial properties on the site to serve residential within the site but also accessible by those outside the development.
- Changes to the town center from the original master plan. Staff responded the new proposal includes a walkable commercial corridor, rather than a town center. Its really a change in how the buildings and open spaces are arranged vis a vis each other.
- Proposed and likely circulation of traffic via all modes through the site.

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- Minimum and maximum density of the proposed residential zones. Staff responded the existing Development Agreement does not have a minimum density, but this will be amended through this process. On average, the developer is looking for around 20 units per acre and will bring more details on this at the next workshop.
- Alignment with LEED neighborhood development goals.
- Green building components proposed by the applicant. Staff responded the developer is looking to exceed the required reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and plans to include buildings that are solar panel ready, will include EV chargers, an increase proposed amount of green space from previous master plan, electrification all the residential buildings, among others measures.
- Management of shared parking.
- Public engagement and outreach with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Existing and anticipated number of jobs on the site.

PUBLIC HEARING

BURNT BRIDGE CREEK WEST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING MAP CHANGE

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Bryan Snodgrass presented an overview of the proposed zone change, the anticipated development on the site, information related to the critical lands on the property and the criteria for critical areas review, approval criteria for this rezone request, and the case for consistency and inconsistency with approval criteria. Peter Condyles, representing the applicant, indicated the issues presented, and especially the criteria for critical areas, will be addressed in the development review process. He indicated the provided site plan is an example of a potential building on the site but is not intended to be final.

Public Testimony

There were no members of the public present to provide public testimony.

Commission Discussion

- Offsite mitigation. Amaia Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, responded that her understanding is that the applicant is planning to do 12 acres of offsite mitigation in Clark County. That area will be protected in a conservation covenant. Based on the preliminary design, they also need 48 acres of enhancements. The consultant is working with WDFW to potentially purchase banking credits in Ridgefield. On the development site, remaining critical areas are protected in a conservation covenant.
- If the zone change occurs, does the criteria of the review for avoidance of critical areas change? Staff responded it does not. The review is the same for both OCI and IL zones.
- Timeline for warehouse code changes. Staff responded the current warehouse moratorium is scheduled to expire in December 2023 and plan to have permanent standards approved prior to the expiration of the moratorium. For this application, it will likely go to City Council at the end of 2023. It's likely that a site plan application would be submitted after the new warehouse standards have been established.
- Timing of development related to whether or not this application is approved. Staff indicated if the rezone is approved, development of the site would likely be similar to the conceptual site plan already prepared by the applicant. If the rezone is not approved, development is less likely in the near term.

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- Development of the site aligning with the City’s policy goals as stated in the Comprehensive Plan and Green Building Policy. In response to Staff responded it’s too early to say, as those documents are still in progress.

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle, seconded by Commissioner Cavel, to recommend approval of the proposed Burnt Bridge Creek rezone proposal from OCI to IL at 6103 NE 152nd Avenue, based on the staff report and discussion at the September 12, 2023 public hearing.

Deliberation

Vice Chair Pyle was in favor of approval due to similar levels of impact in development under OCI and IL, and that development under either zoning designation will be reviewed through the critical areas ordinance. The infrastructure, surrounding zones, and likely use indicates approval.

Commissioner Cavel concurred; this development should occur where there are strong mitigation efforts in place.

Commissioner Schulte was supportive of the motion.

Commissioner Adigweme was not supportive of the motion, to allow for more time to establish city Comprehensive Plan, Green Building Policy and warehouse guidance which would impact likely development of the site.

Chair Ledell indicated it was premature to develop the site given the plans for updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner von Borstel agreed with statements of Commissioner Adigweme and Chair Ledell and did not support the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Adigweme	No
Commissioner von Borstel	No
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

The motion carried 4-2.

EVERGREEN & GRAND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner, Community Development Department; Jamin Kimmel, Cascadia Partners

Commissioner von Borstel recused from this public hearing and left the meeting.

Becky Coutinho presented an overview of the strategy implementation process. Jamin Kimmel presented an overview of the overlay zone addressing uses and density, requirements for ground floor commercial, building orientation and setbacks, maximum building height, building height step down adjacent to high and low density zones, maximum building length, minimum parking requirements, design standards for buildings in general, commercial spaces and residential buildings.

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Public Testimony

Daniel Harrison had further questions regarding enhancements to walkability along the corridor.

Staff responded walkability of the area is addressed in the Transportation System Plan (TSP) via street improvements. The recommendations in the commercial corridors strategy have been integrated into the TSP. When the street is repaved, it will be redesigned as a Complete Street in alignment with that strategy.

Commission Discussion

- Reasoning behind different setback and stepdown requirements when adjacent to single family and multi-family residential. Staff responded Council expressed concern with the transition from, for example, a five story building to a single family home. With the recent House Bills related to housing, staff anticipate more ADUs and middle housing, but these will likely have similar urban form to existing single family development and the proposed revised step downs address potential impacts where higher density housing abuts smaller single family development.
- Would the stepdown requirements change with the update to the Comprehensive Plan? The update to the Comprehensive Plan provides opportunities to review and revisit development standards for this area as well as others, although staff anticipate new standards would mostly align with the commercial corridor strategy given the timing of adoption. The Comprehensive Plan update provides an opportunity to review and update development standards for every zone across the City.
- Define an overlay district and its merit in this case. Staff responded an overlay district is used to implement standards in more than one place in the City and is used as a template in areas like a neighborhood serving business district.
- Anti-displacement tools. Staff responded the City has a displacement risk assessment tool that factors in the equity index with housing market data. In this neighborhood, it's in the early stages of displacement, but does not have a high equity score. The City's anti-displacement strategy, Reside Vancouver, includes recommended actions for preventing displacement citywide and staff are developing a workplan to advance these.
- Would setback and stepdown requirements for a property change if an adjacent property was rezoned to multi-family? Staff responded it would.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel, seconded by Commissioner Adigweme, to recommend adoption of the Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Overlay District, based on the findings and recommendation contained in the staff report and the Commission deliberation at the September 12 public hearing.

Deliberation

Commissioner Cavel supported the proposal as it addresses adding housing and a walkable mixed use community.

Commissioner Adigweme agreed with Commissioner Cavel.

Vice Chair Pyle did not support the change to the step back requirements because he indicated it inappropriately required more protection of adjacent single family homes than multi-family development but was supportive of the other elements of the proposal.

Commissioner Schulte and Chair Ledell supported the proposal.

Roll Call Vote

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Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	No
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

The motion carried 4-1.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

Rebecca Kennedy notified the Commission that Becky Coutinho is leaving the City for a new job opportunity and thanked her for her work with the City.

ADJOURNMENT 8:30 P.M.

DocuSigned by:

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Marjorie Ledell, Chair

To request other formats, contact Julie Nischik, Community Development Department | 360-487-7813. WA Relay: 711 | julie.nischik@cityofvancouver.us