

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 26, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

The September 26, 2023, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Acting Chair Cavel.

ROLL CALL

Present: Patrick Adigweme, Nena Cavel, Larry Blaufus, and Steve Schulte

Absent: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, and Melissa von Borstel

Motion by Commissioner Adigweme, second by Commissioner Schulte, and carried unanimously, to excuse the absences of Commissioners Ledell and Pyle.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Commissioner Adigweme, and carried unanimously to adopt the September 12, 2023, minutes.

WORKSHOP

URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Charles Ray, Urban Forester, Public Works Department

Charles Ray introduced the workshop and presented background information on the project, the policy documents that influenced the draft of the plan, scope and timeline, status of the urban forest, tree inventory, public benefits of the urban forest, City and external engagement in drafting the plan, results of the urban forestry audit, canopy goals for 2047, and areas to prioritize planting. The draft plan has three main goals, with many actions to achieve those goals in the short and long term. Rebecca Kennedy also provided context for this presentation, as this plan will likely lead to code changes in Title 20 that will come before the Planning Commission for formal action in the future.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- Define no-net-loss approach to tree canopy cover. Staff responded during the tree permit process, reviewing the types of trees and planning appropriate trees in locations to maximize the space. For example, if there is space for a large tree planting, replacing lost large trees with similar sized trees rather than a smaller ornamental tree.

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- From 2011 to 2019, were there changes in the Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA)? Staff responded there was one annexation during that time period- Van Mall North- and this area is likely more urbanized than other parts of the VUGA. Measurements of overall canopy change in the UFMP accounted for the boundary changes.
- Do the canopy goals for 2047 include land that will be annexed by that time? Staff responded the goals are based on the data from 2019 and the current and future canopy goals for each zoning designation. The goals do not take into account future annexation.
- Developing forestry standards with the increase in forest fires due to climate change. Staff responded they look to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) standards regarding ground cover, maintaining health trees, removing competing trees, and using less flammable building materials for a home or building to try to prevent fires near urban areas.
- Balance tree canopy coverage requirements with housing development.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN (TSP) OVERVIEW

Kate Drennan, Principal Transportation Planner, Community Development Department

Kate Drennan presented an overview of the Transportation System Plan, its influence on policy and projects in other framework plans, and the process of developing this TSP. The TSP has eight chapters, covering outcomes and stakeholders, community engagement and input, vision for the plan, the organizing framework for policies, programs and projects, modal networks throughout the City, a prioritized list of capital projects, implementing projects and programs, and innovation and trends for the future. The draft Plan was released in mid-September, with a 60-day comment period, and adoption is anticipated in early 2024.

Commission Questions and Discussion

- How is regional connectivity defined in the values that shaped the TSP goals? Staff responded in the community engagement phase I summary included in the plan appendix this is defined as "Vancouver's transportation system connects seamlessly with nearby communities."
- Balance equitable investment with preventing displacement in those areas. For all projects, including the TSP, staff uses the City's equity index and displacement risk assessment maps to understand how investments will impact nearby community and what mitigations might be required. Reside Vancouver addresses involuntary displacement risk citywide through a comprehensive Strategy that includes things like workforce training, building affordable housing, and rental protections.
- Examples of performance measures and metrics for projects. Staff responded performance measures include things like measuring reduction in crashes for vulnerable users and amount of investment in equity areas of the City. They align with each of the goals.
- Where is the City leading in terms of future technology and innovation? Staff responded Council has directed us to lead in certain areas such as the transition to an electric vehicle fleet, in policy areas such as utilizing curb space for delivery and pickup, updating the concurrency policy and improving system performance.
- Changes to how the City conducted outreach for this plan compared with prior similar policy plans. Staff responded they have expanded the ways we are communicating with the public about this plan and there is a short video to explain what is included in the TSP. Generally, there has been a shift in how the City engages the community on a variety of projects, with a focus on

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gathering information on values, aspirations for the future, and current challenges and applying these to all projects, while at the same time continuing to gather project or corridor specific information through more targeted outreach to community near the project area.

- Structures or triggers to make updates to the TSP. Staff responded that a minor update to the TSP will be updated after the Comprehensive Plan update is complete, to ensure they are aligned. Generally, most cities update a TSP with minor updates every 5 years, and broader updates every 10 years to align with GMA-required Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review, as the TSP serves as the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- How is safety defined for different users of the system? Staff responded they look to the NACTO standards to determine what types of facilities are appropriate based on volume and speed of traffic and adjacent land uses. There is also a perception of safety and comfort using different facilities. For pedestrians and small mobility users, there is a measure of stress for moving on a road. During a project, staff assess the current level of stress and determine what could change to lower the level, which is an important factor in attracting more users to non-drive alone modes.

COMMUNITY FORUM

No members of the public were present to speak during Community Forum.

PUBLIC HEARING

HEIGHTS HX PLAN DISTRICT CHANGES

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

Amy Zoltie presented a summary of the proposed HX code changes, including revision to the ground floor uses map and the definition of commercial frontage, increasing the maximum building height in the district gateway sub-district, minor code cleanup, and add a standard to regulate off-street parking access to limit conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists.

Public Testimony

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

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, seconded by Commissioner Adigweme, to recommend City Council approval of the modifications to the HX Plan District as outlined in the staff report.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Commissioner Blaufus	Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

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COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

There were no communications from the Chair or staff.

ADJOURNMENT 6:49 P.M.

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Nena Cavel, Acting Chair

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