



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

May 23, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

The May 23, 2023, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Patrick Adigweme, Larry Blaufus, Steve Schulte, and Melissa von Borstel

Absent: Nena Cavel

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

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Commissioner Blaufus, and carried unanimously to adopt the April 11, 2023, minutes.

WORKSHOP

CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Aaron Lande, Program and Policy Development Manager, City Manager's Office (CMO); Dom Martinelli, Senior Planner & Kate Drennan, Principal Transportation Planner, Community Development Department (CDD)

Aaron Lande introduced the workshop and presented an overview of the Climate Action Framework (CAF), the various sections included in it, the three primary strategies that focus on transportation and land use, and implementation through the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation System Plan. Dom Martinelli presented an overview of the Comprehensive Plan update, the relationship between the CAF strategy TLU-1 and the Comprehensive Plans goals for housing options, mixed use and transit-oriented development, and sustainable neighborhood scale development, as well as population growth in Vancouver and historic land use patterns. Kate Drennan presented an overview of the Transportation System Plan (TSP), its overall goals and primary organizing principals- called Big Ideas - and the relationships between overlapping policies and goals in the Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Framework, and the process to implement projects that meet those goals.

Commission Discussion

- Who will define place and space in redeveloped neighborhoods. Staff responded that this will be defined through the Comprehensive Plan update process and provided the concept of a building that was once a big box store being reconceived as a container for a variety of different land uses as an example of how we might rethink space. The Comprehensive Plan engagement plan will be co-created with community partners, so there will be significant community input in how this develops.
- How to codify the rehabilitation of spaces to new uses. Staff responded that a recent bill passed in the legislative session created more opportunities to convert existing buildings to multi-family housing. There will also be an assessment of zoning and existing buildings and then work with the building code staff to review and assess the limitations within the building code for these spaces to be redeveloped to housing.
- Efforts to mitigate the impacts of the change process to prevent displacement. Staff responded the City has an anti-displacement strategy called *Reside Vancouver* with a variety of mechanisms to help keep people in place and stably housed. There are workforce strategies to increase incomes, efforts to build more housing to address the current housing market, strategies to support small businesses to avoid displacement, and rental assistance programs.
- Climate corridors and greenways. Staff responded greenways in other cities are typically neighborhoods streets for people to walk, bike and play and there are goals for that in Vancouver. The climate corridors take this idea further to address the heat island effect to add plantings and tree canopies.
- How neighboring jurisdictions are involved in addressing climate change. Staff responded more cities and counties are joining this effort due to access to federal and state funding, and state legislation that impacts the built environment and other aspects related to climate.
- Will new buildings meet the goal to reduce emissions by 80% and how much of a reduction in emissions is associated with the current building code? Staff responded after the CAF is implemented, new buildings will meet the goal to reduce emission by 80%, but the current building code does not. There are efforts underway to develop a green building policy for new municipal and private sector buildings.
- Data available for the prioritization index and tracking progress towards stated goals. Staff responded for the identified transportation projects and program, the TSP has a set of performance measures to track investments and the collective outcomes of network improvements over time.
- Anticipated new goals in the Comprehensive Plan and how they will be prioritized. Staff responded there will be new goals as well as review of goals in the existing Comprehensive Plan. Early work in the Comprehensive Plan includes developing an equity framework that will lead into a prioritization framework that will be adopted as part of the Plan. Climate and safety will also be priorities in the framework. There is a requirement to check with the Department of Commerce on implementation every five years. There is periodic review of the Plan throughout the 20 year timeframe.
- City plans for city-owned assets and right of way that will inform the discussion about the Comprehensive Plan. Staff responded City investments in the right of way will respond to the growth centers identified in the Plan. The TSP will be completed first, but it will be reviewed and revised after the Comprehensive Plan is finalized to respond to additional areas identified as growth centers and to ensure overall alignment.

- Is there a mandate to create a tool kit when accepting federal or state funding? Staff responded it's not typical to receive federal or state funding for the planning process. The analysis is specific to Vancouver's built environment and regional context.

EXPANDED DOG KENNEL STANDARDS

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, CDD; Russ Onkka, Clark County Animal Control

Bryan Snodgrass introduced the workshop and presented the current requirements in Title 20 and VMC 8.24, background information on the applicant's request to expand dog kennel standards, and the proposed expanded standards. Russ Onkka discussed general issues that he sees with larger kennels such as parking concerns, more staff time to inspect a larger facility, and the appropriate level of staffing based on the number of dogs present.

Commission Discussion

- Staffing requirements for facilities that provide overnight care. Staff responded there is generally staff on call overnight, though there is not a requirement to have staff present overnight.
- Importance of screening dogs at facilities. Staff responded most reputable facilities do a screening prior to boarding an animal, including review of behavior, health, and medications.
- Proposal and recommendation is for 175 dog limit. Staff responded that's correct, there is not currently a limit.
- Traffic concerns with a larger facility. Staff responded the application would be reviewed by transportation staff during the site plan review process to assess impacts to traffic.
- Setting a limit of animals based on the size of the site. Staff indicated that the proposed changes allow Clark County animal control to do this at their discretion.
- Any plans to limit dog day care in addition to kennels and shelters? Staff responded this change is focused just on the kennels and shelters.
- Enforcement for Title 8. Staff responded there are restrictive guidelines for sanitation, cleanliness, and annual inspections as well as after a complaint is received.

Commissioner von Borstel left the meeting.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Don Steinke was present to comment on the Climate Action Framework. The local Sierra Club Fossil Fuels Task Force advocated for the Community Solar Project being built at the Port of Camas Washougal and electric buses be used in places with the highest health disparities. When attending Planning Commission meetings in the late 90s, the most frequent question asked was, "does this project comply with the Puget Sound Stormwater Manual?" Today it should be, "will this project increase emissions or per capita vehicle miles traveled?" He also supported the comment by Peter Fels regarding interim ordinances or additional moratoria.

Michael Langsdorf was present to request printed materials available at the Planning Commission meetings.

URBAN FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Charles Ray, Urban Forester, PW; Melissa Johnston, Urban Forestry Commission Chair;
Chris Peiffer, Project Manager, PlanIT Geo

Charles Ray introduced the workshop and presented an overview of urban forestry and plan updates, including: data inputs informing the updated Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) and the community engagement timeline for the project; current urban forest status, including an audit of the forestry program, and the ecosystem benefits urban forests provide; external stakeholder and public engagement conducted to date; key strategies identified in the updated plan, including new canopy goals and priority planting areas; the concept of tree equity; and the long term framework to implement the objectives and strategies.

Commission Discussion

- Regional challenges in external stakeholder outreach. Staff responded there are different codes throughout the jurisdictions in the region, as well as invasive species that do not follow jurisdictional lines. To address these challenges, staff work with regional partners and state agencies, and utilize extension services.
- The extent of the issue with Emerald Ash Borer. Staff responded it was identified in Oregon in June 2022. There is an inventory of most of the park trees and some street trees. There is not inventory for natural areas. Of the existing inventory, there are approximately 500 ash trees. The strategy is to identify ash trees that are declining or in poor locations and working to remove those. The high quality ash trees are being treated.
- From the urban forestry audit, defining category 5, inventories. Staff responded this refers to the management of urban forest trees and conducting a canopy assessment on a regular cycle.
- What was the percentage coverage 5 or 10 years ago? Staff responded the tree canopy in 2011 was 16%, with a 3% increase from 2011 to 2021.
- Ways to increase tree canopy over time while also recognizing the urban growth and development happening simultaneously. Staff responded there was an assessment of ordinances for trees and landscaping in Vancouver and other jurisdictions. It showed that updating Vancouver's ordinances to reflect industry best practices would increase the tree canopy.
- Was the growth in tree canopy from trees planted or maintained? Staff responded it's not clear, but there was tree canopy increase across all zoning designations.
- Offset program for developments. Staff responded in the tree conservation ordinance, there are three priorities. The first is to replant on-site, second is replant offsite, and last to pay into the tree fund to plant elsewhere in Vancouver.
- Neighborhood program to plant trees. Staff responded they work with the transportation staff on the traffic calming projects, as well as with neighborhoods directly through several different types of programs.
- Percentage of total tree canopy that is public (not on private property). Staff responded approximately 67% of the tree canopy is on private property.
- Tools to improve tree canopy on higher density lots. Staff responded increasing density and setting aside common space for trees. There is also an effort to look at developments holistically and provide high quality landscaped common space.
- Tree maintenance. Staff responded the management plan includes a systemic risk assessment.

- Forestry review of development proposals and updating the system-wide approach to review. Staff responded forestry reviews each proposal as they are submitted and attempt to build the canopy from property to property. The evaluation looks at the quality of the trees on site and how to retain those quality trees. The City could play a bigger coordination role between multiple developments to build contiguous canopy.
- Varying goals for different zones. Staff responded it's a data driven process to review the averages of each zone, and then using that data to develop the goals.

RECUSAL

Vice Chair Pyle recused himself from the Downtown Building Footprints public hearing and left the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

REMOVAL OF DOWNTOWN BUILDING FOOTPRINT TAPERING REQUIREMENTS

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, CDD

Bryan Snodgrass presented an overview of the current requirements for downtown building footprint tapering requirements and the rationale for changing these to address downtown activation, commercial activities, and to add housing in an area well-served by infrastructure and intended for higher density development and the staff recommendation.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present to provide public testimony.

Commission Discussion

- Reasoning for the staff recommendation to make this change. Staff responded there has been recent developer interest in utilizing additional building footprint space within existing height limits in the downtown, which is well served by infrastructure. There is also a city desire to fully activate downtown, and accommodate housing demand.

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, seconded by Commissioner Adigweme to recommend to City Council an approval of the proposed elimination of VMC 20.630.050.C.2.c and 20.630.050.D.2 limitations on downtown building footprint sizes, based on the staff report and Commission deliberation of the May 23, 2023 public hearing.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Blaufus	Yes
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

No communications from the Chair or staff.

ADJOURNMENT 7:39 P.M.

Marjorie Ledell, Chair

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