



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Vancouver City Hall – Council Chambers – 415 W. Sixth Street
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www.cityofvancouver.us

Marjorie Ledell • Steve Schulte • Larry Blaufus • Zachary Pyle • Hannah Burak • Nena Cavel

February 22, 2022

REGULAR MEETING (Convened telephonically, no in person attendance)

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

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The February 22, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Larry Blaufus, Steve Schulte, Hannah Burak, and Nena Cavel

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle, second by Commissioner Cavel, to adopt the January 25, 2022 minutes as written.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

Chair Ledell provided a summary of the Planning Commission Annual Retreat, which took place on February 12, 2022.

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, noted the retreat materials are available to view on the [Retreat agenda page](#). The Commission adopted a new procedure for voting during meetings. The housing code update may require additional time either after the public hearing or at a future meeting. .

WORKSHOPS

5:13 P.M. HOUSING CODE UPDATES

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner; Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, introduced the workshop. Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, provided a summary of the goals and components of the project, the process to date, and the proposed new single-family R-17 zoning district standards.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Garage width limits and concerns from the building industry regarding the demand for larger garages. Staff responded the recommendation is the same as at previous workshops, with the width limited to half the distance of the front façade or 10 feet.
- If garage width restrictions apply to alley facing garages. Staff responded the restrictions do not apply if the garage faces the alley.
- Whether on street parking counts towards guest parking. Staff responded it does, and can be fulfilled either by on street or a small parking lot offsite within the development
- Standard lengths of garages. Staff responded they were unsure if there is a standard for length. There is a market for single car garages that are not alley loaded. Staff talked with Ridgefield officials regarding their standards, which allow for wider garages, but require design treatments of the front façade. This helps with the appearance but would limit the amount of street parking due to a larger curb cut for a wider garage. Staff noted there is existing housing stock with multi-car garages to meet the needs of homeowners who prefer a larger garage.
- If all the code updates were approved, would there be a large rush of applicants? Staff responded they didn't think so. With the large number of apartment construction in the last few years, there have only been a few requests for demolition of houses. Staff also outlined additional process for a rezone to R-17, which requires an application, neighborhood notice, site posting, and workshops and public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Council.

Staff continued the presentation, covering the proposed new multi-family R-50 zoning district and recommendations to address State mandated parking reductions near transit.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- For disabled housing, is the category for assisted living and senior living? Staff indicated it would include those categories and also include housing for non-seniors.
- Frequency of stops and discussion of a general push for more frequent transit in the City. Staff responded that C-TRAN controls the routes and frequency. Staff are working through the Transportation System Plan update with the Transportation and Mobility Commission, and is partnering with C-TRAN to identify enhanced transit corridors, where land use and development support more frequent service. This is an example of how the City can partner with C-TRAN to support enhancements to current service levels.
- If there is no parking at senior housing, is there a process to check for accessibility to transit? Staff responded the feedback is through people contacting staff, often after the development is completed. There is not currently a proactive process. For people who are transit dependent, and cannot walk to a stop, C-TRAN has implemented [The Current](#), an on demand transit service option.
- For very affordable housing, is there data to support less parking? Staff responded there is data that indicates people who reside in these types of housing have fewer cars. There is specific data from California and Oregon that supports this. In development review, typically developers know their tenant needs in terms of parking needs. If more than the minimum is needed, they can and often do provide it.

- When were the state mandates established? Staff responded the last change was to add Market Rate in 2020 or 2021. The others were added in 2019.

Staff continued presenting on the density bonus for affordable housing providers and cottage cluster housing.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- The restrictions described for cottage cluster housing may be too restrictive for builders. Staff responded the process for a developer would be a subdivision or site plan review. There have been a few of these developments in Clark County, and in other areas of the state. There's no requirement that parking spaces can't be provided in front of the house, in a garage, or in a parking lot.
- Affordability at 80% of AMI to address housing affordability. Staff responded there is not an affordability requirement for the cottage cluster houses, which is a strategy to support incremental increases in the types and sizes of housing options available in the community. The 80% requirement is a threshold specifically called out in state law related to the mandated density bonus for affordable housing near transit. Staff agreed that 80% is not typically included in what we think of as affordable housing, but that housing at this price range can help meet market housing needs more broadly.
- Development community feedback regarding cottage cluster housing. Staff responded the development community has been supportive and they seem interested, with some that have done similar developments in other towns and states. One piece of feedback was a request for bigger or taller houses, and flexibility for garages. One challenge is the garage area counts towards the overall square footage of the house. Staff found a compromise where a portion of the garage counts towards the size, but the rest does not. In other jurisdictions, they did not have as high of a density bonus as proposed here and required smaller sized houses. This is a niche form of housing with a specific market.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Glen Yung was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. He was supportive of many of the proposed changes. The 80% AMI is above market rate housing, and if the City is allowing density bonuses, it should not be above market rate. On the R-17 zone, he was concerned with splitting lots with this new zone and the process through Council and where the new zone will be allowed. On cottage housing, he asked if the houses will be rentals or sold individually, and indicated he is supportive of it being primarily an ownership rather than a rental product.

Christine Dickinsen was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. She expressed concern for unintended consequences with the changes, including the potential that new units would be used primarily or in high numbers for short term rentals. On affordable housing, she expressed concern that cottage houses that were as large as 2,000 square feet wouldn't address the issues of affordable or middle housing. She was also concerned regarding the trend of single family build to rent houses.

Don Steinke was present to provide comments on the Council goal to reduce greenhouse gases, and urged the Commission to consider that goal in all decisions made by the Commission. He urged the Commission to plan for future green building infrastructure, to avoid having to retrofit buildings in the future.

Monica Zazueta was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. She was supportive of affordable housing options and described the benefits of living in an affordable housing community. She was supportive of mixed age community and those that facilitate community interactions, as well as more accessible and frequent transit routes.

Margaret Milem was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. Regarding the proposed change the minimum setbacks between new apartments and existing homes, she suggested a sliding scale setback. For example, if the apartment is on a larger property, the setback would also be larger. Regarding daily trips and parking, she asked if the data discussed during the presentation is based on national, state, or local data.

Terence Ibert was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. He asked how the proposed changes are tied to concrete outcomes. He supported the increase of housing options, but argued it is important to understand the consequences of the suggested changes. He suggested holding on some of the changes now, to tie the affordable housing components with the changes to short term rentals.

Cathryn Chudy was present to provide comments on the housing code updates. She expressed support for the housing code updates to address housing affordability through increased housing density and adding lower-cost middle housing. Housing and climate should be urgent priorities for the City and the Planning Commission should move forward as soon as possible to address these priorities.

HEARING

6:39 P.M. HQ VANCOUVER/FISHERS QUARRY MASTER PLAN

Keith Jones, Senior Planner

Rebecca Kennedy introduced the hearing item. Keith Jones presented an overview of the Riverview Gateway Subarea Plan and Plan District requirements, the HQ Master Plan proposal, the approval process, and a summary of the findings and recommendations from the staff report.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topic, and staff provided the following responses:

- The proposal shows 1.5 parking spaces per unit, and if it's possible to change the parking requirement to 1 per unit to align with proposed changes for higher density housing outlined in the earlier workshop. Staff responded current City Code requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit, but there is no vesting, and it could be amended to 1 per unit if the code is changes following master plan adoption. At the site plan review stage, staff would review the planned parking and require alignment with the code in place at that time.
- The number of planned units for the site. Staff responded that approximately 1,950 units are planned. Earlier versions of the application had approximately 2,100, but this was later revised.
- If the units above commercial counted towards total number of units for the site. Staff responded they do. With the RGX zone, there is no minimum or maximum density. The zone has restrictions for its use allocation, height, floor area ratio, parking, etc. and the proposal must fit within those requirements.

- Phasing of the development. Staff responded there are not triggers for phasing this development. Public works typically does not allow phasing for infrastructure, but the developer could phase other aspects of the project.
- Who can change the design guidelines and the approval process. Staff responded that within the code there are triggers for reviews of the master plan. Changes to the design guidelines is a Type III change and would go to the hearing examiner for review.

The applicant, Ryan Hurley, Hurley Development, and land use planner and project manager, Li Alligood, Otak, were present. The provided testimony and a presentation that covered the project history, design considerations for the master plan, land use allocations, and addressed some public comments and concerns.

Commission Discussion

The Commission asked questions on the following topic, and staff provided the following response:

- Lots 1 – 8 do not include tree coverage. The applicant responded there will be street trees, and there will be building canopies, but it will mostly be urban style development. The developer noted they are making an effort to balance energy, water and health of those living in the space, including the goal to be carbon neutral.
- Will the bike lanes be protected? The applicant responded they will be protected from travel lanes by physical barriers such as curbs, and the walk and bikeways are separated by landscape and other low barriers. The west end transitions to an on-street painted bike lane as it leaves the project area.

Public Testimony

Gloria Quintana-Bennett was present to comment on the proposal. She lives adjacent to the development site and expressed concern for the area near her property which is sloped and unusable for development. She requested the Commission review all the privately owned land that borders the development site, as the parcels are unique to the development. She said the land should be gifted or sold to the property owners, and if not, the developer should be required to maintain the land.

Jayne Haygood was present to comment on the proposal. She argued the project falls short of meeting current master plan goals and policies. The subarea plan calls for diverse housing options, but primarily includes only high density housing. Related, she expressed concern for children living in the neighborhood possibly not being allowed to enroll in the neighborhood school. She expressed concern regarding the increase in traffic and subsequently, safety in neighboring communities. The planned park space is not large enough to support the number of residential units. She also urged further review of the proposed gondola before approving the plan.

The Chair closed public testimony.

Ryan Hurley responded to the public testimony, referring back to the Master Plan, which he argued supports the underlying zoning and requirements for the development. He noted the gondola is an idea that could be removed from the proposal. The feature was meant to be a unique aspect to the project to try to meet the territorial view requirements of the project.

Motion, by Commissioner Blaufus, seconded by Vice Chair Pyle, and passed unanimously to reopen public testimony.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

Patrick Lanagan was present to comment on the proposal. Regarding the proposed pedestrian path on what is currently called Haul Road, a section of the road crosses his property. The plan fails to address the impacts to his property. He raised concern for safety, liability, and environmental impacts from the proposal to his private property.

The Chair closed public comment for a second time.

Li Alligood continued the response to the public testimony. The master plan shows a connection to the trail, and an extension of a future trail from the quarry to a trail along Evergreen Highway. The developer was asked to show the connection, but the project does not extend onto Mr. Lanagan's property at this time. Regarding open space, there are 8 acres of open space provided on the site in the proposed plan. Regarding the schools, the school district noted students may not be able to attend the neighborhood school for a time. The mechanism to receive more funding is based on over capacity.

Commission Discussion and Deliberation

The Commission asked questions on the following topic, and staff and the applicant provided the following response:

- The proposed trail on the north end of the site and safety concerns (Condition 10). Ryan Lopossa, Public Works Streets and Transportation Manager, responded to the safety and planning of the trail. Staff are still determining how the ADA guidelines would apply to this trail. The trail needs to be protected from the slope and needs to be designed in a way to discourage biking on the trail and support safe use. There is not a final design for the trail at this point, but staff believe it can be designed to be safe. Condition 10 aims at the timing of finishing the trail, so the single family housing can access the other parts of the master plan site.
- Multimodal trail intersection with Brady Road, and a raised crosswalk. Staff described how raised crosswalks can slow traffic and may include beacons to accentuate the crossing to improve visibility and safety.
- Pedestrian crossing of SE 192nd Ave. Staff responded there is likely to be more traffic on the road and could possibly see a need for a pedestrian crossing to connect to the Columbia Palisades development across 192nd Avenue.
- Regarding land use and transportation, the site is currently not served by C-TRAN, and perhaps a joint letter of intent between the applicant and C-TRAN to serve the site could be developed. The applicant agreed that coordination with C-TRAN will be key to improve transit service to the site over time as development occurs that will support a greater transit investment. There will also be a robust bike and pedestrian network. They anticipated a C-TRAN stop at a minimum, and the applicant is committed to identifying future stops on the site. The infrastructure would need to be built before C-TRAN would develop any plans for the area. An option to ensure that the intent to provide transit service in the future is part of the record would be a Letter of Intent between the applicant and C-TRAN.

- Regarding sustainability, design guidelines are only aligned with the current building code, and support for more language to strengthen the stated sustainability goals of the applicant. The applicant responded the development intends to meet the standards of green building certification. They are committed to sustainability and the goal to be carbon neutral. The buildings are being prepared for rooftop solar. Some of the sustainability details will be determined at the planning and construction phase.
- When was the last traffic study conducted? Staff responded the original traffic study was conducted in June 2021 and revised in January 2022. The revision addressed concerns with trip generation assumptions and the amount of internal capture assumed in the development. Staff concur with the findings of the updated study. Each site plan within the master plan will need to update the study to analyze impacts to the transportation system and when improvements to intersections are needed.
- Chair Ledell was supportive of the staff recommendation and offered an option to amend the staff recommendation to add language regarding the statements during the hearing from the applicant on sustainability, trail safety, and working with C-TRAN.
- Commissioner Cavel was supportive of a commitment from the applicant to work with C-TRAN but wary of strengthening the sustainability language since emissions reduction is greater with fewer vehicle trips and increased density. Environmental certifications may just add cost to the project.
- Vice Chair Pyle noted the applicant's design guidelines don't require certification for green buildings, just that the site plans could meet the certification and was supportive of keeping the language as written.
- Vice Chair Pyle proposed the following amendments to the recommendation:
 1. Modify Condition 2 to state "The landscaping percentage for sites with a parking structure is 0% if rooftops are utilized for renewable energy generation. The remaining areas shall comply with the minimum landscape percentage"
 2. Within the Design Guidelines, Green Building Certifications commitments be strengthened.
 3. Development of a mutual letter of intent between the Applicant and C-Tran to serve the site as a key site within the transit network.
 4. The Design Guidelines name specific transit and multimodal design incentives, including bifurcation of rent and parking costs.
 5. Strengthen Condition 10 to include safety as a top priority within development of the trail.
- Ryan Hurley suggested removing "certifications" regarding green building in the design guidelines. On the trail, there are still questions of whether it can be done and suggested a stated commitment to work together with the City toward development of a safe trail facility.
- Vice Chair Pyle agreed with removing "certifications", and staff removed that term from the draft recommendations.
- Commissioner Burak requested clarification of "renewable energy generation" in the first condition. Vice Chair Pyle suggested it might mean solar, but it could be flexible to mean another type of energy generation.
- Commissioner Blaufus suggested requiring infrastructure for renewable energy, such as electric vehicle charging stations, rather than solar or green roofs. The cost of the condition as written may be prohibitive. Staff noted the building code currently requires a certain level of installation of infrastructure for vehicle charging.

- Commissioner Blaufus questioned whether the Commission can impose these conditions at this stage. Philip Gigler, Assistant City Attorney, noted some of the suggested additions are more specific than what is intended in the master plan process. Some of the suggested additions would typically be worked through during the site plan review process.
- Commissioner Burak was supportive of amendments 2, 3, 4 and 5. Commissioner Schulte was supportive of the five amendments. Commissioner Cavel was supportive of the staff recommendation and including amendment 3. Chair Ledell was supportive of amendments 2, 3 and 5.
- Commissioner Schulte asked the applicant to weigh in on the proposed amendments. Ryan Hurley responded, noting the amendments appear doable. He expressed concerns regarding the trail, given the steep slope, and if it were required to be ADA compliant. The developer is committed to work with the City to find a reasonable and safe trail solution.
- Rebecca Kennedy suggested leaving amendment 5 as written, and staff would work with the applicant team to clarify what the amendment means. Staff would bring forward a modified proposal to City Council that responds to what the Planning Commission directed. The developer agreed with that condition.
- Vice Chair Pyle suggested removing amendment 1. The Commission agreed to that change.
- The amendment regarding Condition 10 was revised: Staff and the applicant team work together to strengthen Condition 10 to include safety as a top priority within development of the trail, prior to taking an updated recommendation to Council.

Motion, by Commissioner Burak, seconded by Commissioner Cavel, and passed unanimously to forward to City Council a recommendation for approval of the HQ Master Plan, subject to the conditions detailed in the staff report and with the following amendments:

1. Within the Design Guidelines, Green Building commitments be strengthened.
2. Development of a mutual letter of intent between the Applicant and C-Tran to serve the site as a key site within the transit network.
3. The Design Guidelines name specific transit and multimodal design incentives, including bifurcation of rent and parking costs.
4. Staff and the applicant team work together to strengthen Condition 10 to include safety as a top priority within development of the trail, prior to taking an updated recommendation to Council.

Roll Call Vote

Larry Blaufus	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Hannah Burak	Yes
Nena Cavel	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

ADJOURNMENT 9:22 PM

Marjorie Ledell, Chair