



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

October 24, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

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

CALL TO ORDER

The October 24, 2023, meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

ROLL CALL

Present: Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Patrick Adigweme, Larry Blaufus (virtual, joined at 6:35 pm), Nena Cavel, Steve Schulte, and Melissa von Borstel (joined at 6:40 pm)

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, second by Commissioner Adigweme, and carried unanimously to adopt the September 26, 2023, minutes.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Don Steinke was present to speak regarding the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the proposed warehouse code changes. He suggested adding stipulations to the recommendations to meet the City's stated climate goals. New construction should be all-electric ready, solar ready, and EV ready.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

Bryan Snodgrass presented the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zone change located at the intersection of SE 192nd Avenue and SE 15th Street, zoning in the region, the conceptual site plan, and an analysis of the proposal.

Commission Questions

- Status of recent State laws related to housing. Staff responded the State laws mentioned in the presentation have all passed into law. Staff are anticipating further clarification and rulemaking from the state Department of Commerce on HB1110, which requires impacted cities to allow for 4 or 6 units on all single family lots.
- Status and details of the development agreement between the developer and the City. Staff responded some aspects of the development agreement have been worked out. The City is working on the language to implement the interim green building policy. The conceptual site plan

will be used as the template for development during the site plan review. The agreement will also include the buffer, building heights, and pledge for affordable units.

The applicant, represented by Jessica Herseg of Dowl, presented on the proposals consistency with the Revised Code of Washington, Washington Administrative Code, state legislation and the City's policies for housing and climate, and the Vancouver Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan.

Public Testimony

Alicia Barron opposed the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue, citing issues with housing affordability, and suggested other methods to reduce the cost of housing.

Kevin Barron was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue due to incompatibility of the proposal with the surrounding neighborhood. He also expressed concerns with the ability of existing infrastructure to support the new development.

Mary Tsang was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue due to the increase in traffic on SE 15th Street and impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods.

Jacob Billingsly was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue and proposed an alternative for development of the lot with single family houses and smaller multi-unit plexes.

Leah Perkel was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue due to the addition of apartments in the neighborhood.

David Rehmann was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue due to existing issues with cut-through traffic in the neighborhood, and concerns that this would get worse if the rezone is approved.

Layne Berg was opposed to the proposed rezone on 192nd Avenue due to increased traffic on SE 15th Street, an insufficient amount of affordable housing included in the proposal, and incompatibility of the R-22 zone with adjacent neighborhoods.

Norman Newkirk expressed concern for pedestrian safety in the area of the proposed rezone. He walks on SE 15th Street, but no longer walks on SE 192nd Avenue because it is not safe. He questioned whether pedestrian safety would get worse with the addition of higher density housing in the area.

Commission Questions

- Impacts to traffic from the proposed development. Staff responded there would be an incremental increase in traffic from the project but noted that it would also provide sidewalk infill on the north side of SE 15th Street as part of required frontage improvements. Eric Hahn, Senior Civil Engineer, Public Works, responded there is adequate capacity on both streets based on the proposed rezone. There is an existing need to extend the eastbound turn lane at 15th and 192nd. There is concern for speed and pedestrian safety on 15th Street, but it is unrelated to the proposed rezone.
- Compatibility of the proposed rezone and the surrounding neighborhood. Staff responded there are policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to compatibility. There would be an incremental change to traffic volumes and the visual appearance would change with the development of apartments on the site. The proposal includes enhanced buffering around the site, two story buildings next to the existing homes, and retaining street trees on 15th and 192nd.

The applicant, represented by Kristine Connolly of Kittelson & Associates, presented on the traffic study for the site, showing an increase in trips due to the rezone, the capacity for 15th Street, and crash analysis.

Commission Questions

- Scope of the capacity analysis in the traffic study. The applicant responded the traffic study analyzed 15th Street from 164th to 192nd, as well as 192nd to Mill Plain and 20th Street.
- Non-vehicular mobility and trips. Staff responded the City doesn't currently require or measure non-vehicular trips through the development review process, though this will change when the updated Transportation System Plan is adopted and implemented.
- Distribution trend of crash data during the last 10-year period. The applicant did not have that information available. The pedestrian and bicycle crashes occurred prior to the installation of the bike lanes on 15th Street.
- Project impacts on cut-through traffic. Staff responded it is a concern and will work with traffic operations to review the cut-through patterns regardless of the type of development. There would be an incremental increase in vehicle volumes associated with the rezone and proposed development, but nothing the system cannot accommodate. Staff encouraged the neighborhood to continue to work with City staff to address the issue through other programs and projects.

Gary Vance, Vance Developments, was present to respond to public testimony and Commission questions. Traffic and safety on 15th Street are a concern and the developer is supportive of filling the existing sidewalk gaps. The developer has conducted neighborhood outreach starting in May 2023. The site plan was amended from the proposed R-30 zoning to R-22 to address neighbor concerns and improve perceived compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

Commission Questions

- How long will rent caps be in place for the 5% of units with rents restricted to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)? Staff responded that is being negotiated and will be finalized as part of the development agreement, but the current agreement is for 25-30 years.
- Incorporating the public testimony as part of the development agreement. The applicant responded community engagement will continue with this project and plan to work with the community as the project proceeds.
- City's support for homeownership. Staff responded the City prioritizes homeownership through lobbying the state legislature for ongoing condominium reforms to allow for multifamily homeownership and works with non-profits and affordable housing developers to support homeownership through land banking and other mechanisms.

Deliberation

Vice Chair Pyle noted that the concerns and details of the site will be worked through at the site plan review stage of this development, including analysis of infrastructure, transportation, sewer, etc. Given the housing need and proximity to infrastructure on 192nd, he was supportive of the staff recommendation that this is a suitable site for multifamily housing. He was supportive of including all discussion points related to the forthcoming the Development Agreement in the Planning Commission's recommendation to Council.

Commissioner Schulte agreed with some of the concerns raised but was ultimately supportive of the staff recommendation as it will address the broader housing needs of the community.

Commissioner Adigweme agreed the concerns raised should be incorporated in the Development Agreement. The housing crisis requires increasing housing production, and this proposal brings a diversity of housing options to the area.

Commissioner von Borstel agreed with concerns for safety and also acknowledged this proposal can help address the housing crisis in the community. She was also in favor of including the items discussed as part of the Development Agreement.

Commissioner Cavel was supportive of increasing the housing supply to address the housing crisis and supported the staff recommendation.

Chair Ledell indicated her support for the staff recommendation based on the established review criteria, and encouraged City staff and leadership to be proactive in addressing traffic issues as it adds more developments, including the safety concerns community members identified on 15th Street.

Commissioner Blaufus appreciated the developer outreach with the public for this project. Based on the criteria, and with the adjustments to the proposal from the developer, he was in favor of the staff recommendation.

Motion by Vice Chair Pyle, seconded by Commissioner Cavel, based on the October 24, 2023 public hearing discussion, staff reporting findings, and development agreement points made during this meeting, the Planning Commission recommends to City Council approval of the 192nd Avenue Comprehensive Plan zoning map designation change as described, from urban low density R-6 to urban high density R-22.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner von Borstel	Yes
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Blaufus	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

The proposed Wood Duck Springs Comprehensive Plan and zoning map change was postponed to a future meeting due to incomplete materials supporting a recent change to the proposal.

Motion by Commissioner Schulte, seconded by Commissioner Cavel, and carried unanimously to adjourn that portion of the 2023 Annual Review Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Map and Text Change Public Hearing relating to the Wood Duck Springs proposed Comp Plan and Zoning Map changes and continue the matter to a subsequent public hearing at the Planning Commission meeting on November 14, 2023.

In accordance with Sections 42.30.100 and 42.30.090 of the Revised Code of Washington, that portion of the City of Vancouver’s Planning Commission 2023 Annual Review Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Map and Text Change Public Hearing relating to the proposed Wood Duck Springs Urban Low/R-9 to Urban High/R-22 and Commercial/General Commercial Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Changes was adjourned and will continue at a subsequent public hearing at the Planning Commission meeting on

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 6:30pm in the Vancouver City Council Chambers located at 415 W. 6th Street, Vancouver, WA.

Bryan Snodgrass presented the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zone change located at the intersection of 63rd Street and 72nd Avenue (Miller), zoning in the region, the conceptual layout, and an analysis of the proposal.

The applicant, represented by Jayson Taylor of PLS Engineering, presented an overview of the proposal, the applicant's work with a biologist to understand the wetland area on the site, positioning of the apartment buildings on the site, the applicants work to include the corner parcels as part of the development, and consistency with the approval criteria.

Public Testimony

Alison Kannisto was concerned for development on this site as it floods annually, which she attributed to dense development in the floodplain. She expressed concerns for the surrounding homes and the ability to obtain flood insurance for those who currently live in the area if the rezone moves forward, and development is constructed on the site.

Jeff Prussack testified regarding the reasoning for the proposed R-30 zoning district and the number and size of the units, as the developer's original request was for R-22 and City staffs suggested for R-30 to add more units to address the housing crisis and statewide housing legislation.

Ellena Buck opposed the proposal due to the increase in parked cars and vehicle traffic at the intersection and expressed concern for impacts to the school district.

David Larson was opposed to the proposed rezone to R-30 and articulated his feeling that R-18 or R-22 would be more appropriate. He is also worried about an increase in street parking in the surrounding neighborhood resulting from the development.

Derek Lindeman was concerned for development on the site due to flooding and would like to see biological and environmental studies of the area. He was also concerned for the safety of students crossing 63rd Street to access the elementary school.

Commission Questions

- The floodplain and wetlands issues. Staff responded the site has wetlands value, and a more detailed study will be done at the site plan review stage. There aren't any wildlife parameters visible. Staff expect much of the site will not be developable and therefore suggested allowing for a higher yield on the developable parts of the site to address area housing needs.
- Reasoning by staff for R-30. Staff responded the applicant originally proposed R-22 but given the developable land area and if they are able to acquire the corner properties, R-30 may be more appropriate to address housing needs.

The applicant responded to the public testimony and acknowledged the wetland area. In the site plan review process, the applicant intends to show there will be no net loss in habitat function through wetland mitigation banking or other onsite mitigation. The floodplain is also an issue to work through, and the applicant will work with a floodplain consultant and FEMA to ascertain the floodplain elevation and show no net loss of flood storage, which may affect the developable area on the site. The applicant noted they may not be able to utilize the full allowed density of R-30 given the conditions of the site.

Commission Questions

- Benefits of the R-30 designation, including more flexibility in development due to site mitigation, space for flood storage and profitability. The applicant agreed with that statement.
- Applicant's plan to incorporate feedback into the proposed development. The applicant responded it's unlikely the site is developed to the full density allowed under R-30, and will likely be closer to the density allowed in R-22 with units similar to those across the street. Assuming the rezone is approved, there are further opportunities for the City and public to weigh in during the site plan review stage. The applicant will address the flooding concerns and ensure there is no net loss of habitat function or flood storage.
- Status of the western parcels. The applicant responded the owners of the smaller corner parcels are in contact with the developer. There is not currently a contract to purchase the smaller of the two parcels. The larger corner parcel previously owned the large parcel, so it's possible they will also sell that parcel to the developer. Like the development to the south, the developer would like to develop the full lot including the corner if they are able to acquire the properties.
- Has the developer conducted any critical areas research or studies? The applicant responded they have consulted with a biologist who conducted a basic rating of the wetland. The wetland as shown on Clark County's GIS is fairly accurate.
- In other applications, the Commission has considered critical areas in determining whether or not to make a recommendation for approval. How is this application different? Staff responded the Commission recently considered an application for rezone of Burnt Bridge Creek West. That site was much larger, and included Oregon white oak woodlands, which is more unique and as a critical area habitat holds significant value both for the trees and the habitat it provides. In this application, there is wetland with less evidence of habitat value.

Deliberation

Commissioner Blaufus indicated the application may not be ready for consideration due to the status of the smaller corner parcels. Given the flooding status of the site and the applicant's initial request for R-22, he was in favor of a recommendation for R-22 rather than R-30.

Commissioner Cavel was in support of the recommendation. City staff will work with the developer to address the flooding and wetland issues. She was in favor of recommending R-30, as it provides more flexibility to the developer even if it is not utilized to the full extent.

Commissioner von Borstel agreed with Commissioner Blaufus and was supportive of a recommendation for rezone at R-18 rather than R-30.

Commissioner Adigweme agreed with both Commissioners Blaufus and Cavel. The option for higher density on the site doesn't necessarily mean that will occur. There will be further review in the process to address the critical areas. He was in favor of supporting the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Schulte supported the staff recommendation. The applicant appears to understand the property and its challenges and will size the development appropriately.

Vice Chair Pyle supported the staff recommendation, considering the surrounding area and existing infrastructure and neighboring commercial amenities. He also agreed with Commissioner Blaufus' assessment that the application seems somewhat incomplete.

Chair Ledell agreed with Commissioners Blaufus and Pyle and supported the staff recommendation.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel and seconded by Commissioner Schulte based on the October 24, 2023 public hearing discussion and staff report findings, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Miller Comprehensive Plan and zoning map designation change as described from Urban Low Density/R-9 to Urban High Density/R-30.

Roll Call Vote

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

Motion carried 5-2.

Bryan Snodgrass presented the proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zone change located on E 18th Street (Datepark), zoning in the region, the conceptual site plan, and an analysis of the proposal.

The applicant, represented by Danielle Lewis, presented an overview of the proposal, planned development of the site, rehoming existing tenants, housing needs in the community, and community partners.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present to provide testimony.

Commission Questions

- Benefits to reduce the parking ratio. The applicant responded it would be beneficial to require less parking and would allow for more green space. Staff also responded there are provisions in the code to reduce parking for affordable housing that will be considered during site plan review.
- Makeup of unit sizes in the existing structures. The applicant responded currently there are 12 two-bedroom townhomes, one studio, and two single family residences.
- Will there be units available between 50% and 80% AMI? The applicant responded the goal is to have more units close to 50% AMI, and they are currently applying for grants to lower the cost of more units.
- Differences between permanently supportive housing and very low-income housing. Staff responded the Datepark proposal is in the range of 50% to 80% AMI, as compared with very low income housing in the range of 0% to 30% AMI that often includes permanent supportive services.
- The City’s AMI requirements for the City to co-sponsor an application. Staff responded the City requires at least 40% of the units to be affordable to people earning 60% AMI or below.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel and seconded by Vice Chair Pyle based on the October 24, 2023 public hearing discussion and staff report findings, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Datepark zoning map designation change as described from Urban High Density/R-18 to Urban High Density/R-30.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner von Borstel	Yes
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes

Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Blaufus	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

Bryan Snodgrass presented the 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.

Public Testimony

No members of the public were present to provide testimony. The City previously received comments from the Fircrest Neighborhood Association opposing the increased SEPA exemption threshold.

Commission Questions

- Regarding the changes to SEPA requirements, the difference between mid and large apartments. Staff responded for apartments, the existing exemption threshold is 20 units, and the proposed exemption threshold is 200 units, following state enabling legislation allowing for this change. For small single-family developments (lots smaller than 1500 square feet), it's a much smaller range (details in the staff report). Most apartment proposals in the City are smaller than 200 units, which means if the change is adopted most new multifamily developments would not be subject to SEPA review unless there are critical lands present. All development proposals are still subject to City standards regarding critical lands, archeology, etc.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel and seconded by Vice Chair Pyle based on the October 24, 2023 public hearing discussion and staff report findings, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Comprehensive Plan and zoning map designation change as described.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner von Borstel	Yes
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Blaufus	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

WAREHOUSE CODE CHANGES

Chad Eiken, Director, Community Development Department

Chad Eiken 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 included online information and meetings with interested stakeholders. The City issued a SEPA determination and has not receive any additional comments through that process. Council provided feedback during the October workshop and that feedback has been incorporated.

Public Testimony

Heidi Cody, representing Alliance for Community Engagement, expressed concern that the warehouse code changes are a missed opportunity to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions in keeping with the ambitious Climate Action Framework goals. The threshold of 250,000 square feet for considering warehouse code changes has had a determinative effect for all warehouses under that threshold. We find it problematic that a 249,999 square foot warehouse or smaller simply has no climate expectations to meet, considering that the City has a city-wide carbon-neutrality goal by 2040. We understand the Green Building/Policies Standards don't yet exist. But delaying climate measures for all warehouses under 250,000 sq. ft. until the Green Buildings Standards are established creates a policy gap that misses a decisive moment to curb greenhouse gas emissions. ACE suggests that the Planning Commission recommend that new buildings should NOT generate greenhouse gas emissions. ACE also recommends that the Planning Commission revise the warehouse size threshold and apply it to *groups of buildings that exceed 250,000 sq. ft. in a single development application*. Otherwise warehouse developers are likely to use this loophole to avoid climate measures the City should implement.

Michael Chen, representing Mackenzie Architecture, provided comments on the proposed changes. The architectural elements and design standards for industrial buildings are vague and will lead to confusion for developers and staff. The 60 foot high landscape buffer will have adverse impacts to the goal of highlighting the architectural elements of the buildings. Regarding the climate elements, they should be included as amendments to the IBC rather than in the zoning code.

Monica Zazueta advocated for meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet, with a focus on balancing these needs. The proposal is a missed opportunity to meet the needs of all of the community.

Eric Olmstead spoke regarding safety concerns with truck traffic accessing warehouses on 162nd Avenue through residential areas. He requested adding requirements for freight access from warehouses to highways.

Staff responded to public testimony, agreeing that smaller warehouses are not impacted by the climate measures in the proposal. It is possible to have multiple buildings on a site that exceed 250,000 square feet and not trigger the requirements. The Port and business community are in favor of the single building policy as it is currently proposed. The architectural elements were left intentionally vague to allow for some flexibility in design. Regarding the concern for warehouses located adjacent to residential properties, this issue was one reason for the moratorium and, going forward, large warehouses would not be allowed in Light Industrial zones, which are typically located in closer proximity to housing and commercial services (than Heavy Industrial districts).

Commission Questions

- Impact of the Green Building Standards legislation. Staff responded these proposed standards won't apply to smaller warehouses, but the City is working to develop a green building policy that will likely apply to all new buildings in the City.
- Has staff considered a standard for contiguous properties with multiple smaller warehouses that would be subject to these standards?

- When the green building policy is adopted, is it likely these larger warehouse standards will be modified? Staff responded that there could be new or different green building standards that affect warehouses, but the proposed climate action development standards have a high likelihood of being included in the forthcoming green building standards.
- Freight traffic on Fruit Valley Road. Staff responded to the Port’s suggestion that the ordinance not include the name of a specific road, but instead call out all “non-truck routes.” Staff confirmed Fruit Valley Road is a designated freight route, and it is not the intent to prohibit all truck traffic on Fruit Valley Road, just truck traffic from any new warehouse larger than 250,000 square feet. Staff also stated that truck traffic is not the only impact that is intended to be mitigated by the proposed standards. A longer term plan could include a bypass to the west, and safety improvements to Fruit Valley Road.
- Timeline for the green building standards? Staff responded it will take about 18 months and will be reviewed and approved through the Building and Fire Commission and City Council.
- Will the new green building policies be more stringent than these interim standards for warehouses? Staff responded they will likely be more detailed and stringent. The current proposed standards for warehouses are intended to require certain features that make it easier for warehouses to adapt to green building technology and infrastructure.

Motion by Commissioner Cavel, seconded by Vice Chair Pyle, based on the October 24, 2023 public hearing discussion, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the warehouse code changes as described in the staff report and Exhibit B.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner von Borstel	Yes
Commissioner Adigweme	Yes
Commissioner Cavel	Yes
Commissioner Blaufus	Yes
Commissioner Schulte	Yes
Vice Chair Pyle	Yes
Chair Ledell	Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CHAIR AND STAFF

There were no communication items from the Chair or staff.

ADJOURNMENT 11:02 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