CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 13, 2017

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT	**STAFF PRESENT**
Joan Probala, Chair	Trish Heinonen, Long-Range Planning Manager
Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair	Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Ron Faul	Dave Favour, Project Manager
Jon Stob	Kurt Seemann, Transportation Manager

CALL TO ORDER
PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY STOB that minutes of the PPC meeting on March 9, 2017 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

PROBALA noted Commissioner LEWIS has requested by e-mail that a statement attributed to her on page 18 of 58 of the March 23, 2017 draft minutes ("LEWIS said that she is in favor of short buildings on Front Street") be struck as it is inaccurate. MOVED BY FAUL, SECONDED BY STOB that minutes of the PPC meeting on March 23, 2017 be approved with the correction noted. MOTION CARRIED BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL PPC MEMBERS PRESENT.

OLDE TOWN SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE: Goals and Policies
Favour said tonight is the second PPC meeting on the Olde Town Subarea Plan update; the first meeting was held March 23, 2017. He gave some background about the original Olde Town Subarea Plan. He gave a brief summary of the results from an extensive public outreach effort that began last May to hear from the public about their thoughts on Old Town. (Details of the public outreach effort are outlined in the agenda packet.) He also referred to the 79 responses that have been received to date to an online questionnaire about residents' thoughts about Old Town. He introduced the other staff members that are working on this effort (Leeson and Seemann).

Leeson continued staff's presentation on the results of open houses held in September and November of last year, and gave highlights from four general areas of most concern to residents, specifically Front Street character of height and building design; East Sunset Way character of height, building design and land uses; residential character of single family/duplex homes; and traffic calming of cut-through traffic. She noted that these broad areas of concern are marked in red where they are addressed by language in the draft document. She clarified how the Commission wants to proceed to review and discuss the policies.

Community
Leeson discussed the vision for Old Town Community (OTC) (page 2 of 38) and continued her presentation on the goals and policies to implement that vision, as follows:

- OTC Goal A: Create an attractive and inviting community; OTC Policy A1 to A7 (page 2-3 of 38).
- OTC Goal B: Green Necklace; OTC Policies B-1 to B5 (page 3 of 38).

- OTC Goal C: Maintain Old Town's character, scale, and historic integrity; OTC Policies C1 to C7 (page 3-4 of 38).
- OTC Goal D: Parking; OTC Policies D1 to D4 (page 4 of 38).

FAUL asked whether there should be a sub-policy on Goal C, Policy C3, with more specific details about materials. Leeson answered that information would be in the design standards. SWEDBERG, also a Development Commission member, gave information about how the Development Commission recently heard a presentation from the City's consultant who is working on design standards for the Central Issaquah Plan. He continued to say that the buildings in Old Town are all established buildings; surely the owners of buildings won't be interested in, say, changing to a different style of window. Leeson replied the policies would only apply to redevelopment or buildings that are being torn down and reconfigured. FAUL asked if a homeowner in Old Town wanted to change the siding on their house, would a permit be required under these new policies. Leeson replied that is still under discussion, but potentially, yes, if the Council feels strongly that the use of traditional materials and architecture be regulated.

PROBALA asked whether the City has a specific frame for developing the code that would implement these policies. Heinonen said due to staffing constraints, the code will not be drafted until sometime in 2018.

FAUL said these are really high-level policies that read almost more like suggestions. They don't seem to have any "teeth," he noted. Leeson replied the policies are intended to be high level and aspirational. If the policies are approved by PPC, then they will be sent to Council, then Council will refer them to committees for further review, then they will go back to Council for approval. They represent a vision rather than standards, she continued. Heinonen added the "teeth" is contained in the code, not the policy document. She continued our experience with the Central Issaquah Plan has been that the code didn't completely match up with the policy document, and we are working on that now. PROBALA said the code won't be done until next year, but at least the City is trying to do something now for Old Town by establishing clear policies.

Connectivity and Mobility (C&M)
Seemann continued staff's presentation with an explanation of the vision for connectivity and mobility (C&M) on page 5 of 38, and continued his remarks on the goals and policies to implement that vision, as follows:

- C&M Goal A: Improve the circulation system; C&M Policy A1 to A6 (page 5 of 38).

FAUL asked clarifying questions about C&M Policy A2.b, "Protected, designated and continuous bicycle facilities," and asked does the City plan to add bicycle lanes or add signage about sharing roadways. Seemann replied it will probably require a combination of methods, and gave examples. He described some of the methods such as improved on-street parking, the Complete Sidewalks program, putting cyclists one block north and/or south of Sunset, and using a dedicated bike lane where appropriate. The key is connectivity and safety, he continued, and the idea that cyclists must have a clear, safe route across town.

FAUL asked whether establishing a separate bike lane one block off Sunset could result in a liability issue if a bicyclist had an accident while using Sunset instead of the official bike lane. Seemann said he's not sure about the legal ramifications of that, and said overall the objective is to make Old Town more walkable and safe for both pedestrians and bicyclists. FAUL spoke again about the need for these policies to have teeth. Seemann said he understands the concern, and added the City will be developing a bike map that shows potential developers where bikes lanes will be located. FAUL said he is afraid that weak policy will create weak code. Leeson asked FAUL

to send staff examples of places in the document where FAUL would like to see more teeth, and staff will address it at the public hearing on April 27.

PROBALA noted some of these activities are very low cost. With so many comments received in public outreach about traffic concerns, why hasn't the City implemented more of the low-cost activities, specifically in Old Town. Seemann replied actually, the City has take a variety of steps to make traffic improvements in Old Town and elsewhere in the City, such as the Complete Streets program. PROBALA said looking at the list of transportation improvements projects in the TIP, all of the projects are multi-million dollar projects, but some of these, such as working with business owners to build private-public partnerships, would be low or no cost to the City. Leeson noted the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) has forwarded some recommendations for simple, low-cost improvements. She continued it is her understanding that those activities will pick up again once the DIA has its new economic development manager in place.

- C&M Goal B: Invest strategically in improvements that will moderate cut-through traffic; C&M Policy B1 to B2 (page 6 of 38).
- C&M Goal C: Increase the number of trips by pedestrians and bicyclists; C&M Policy C1 to C4 (page 6 of 38).
- C&M Goal D: Reduce SOV trips; C&M Policy D1 to D2 (page 7 of 38).

PROBALA said C&M Policy C4 refers to a Bike Share program, and asked will this be a bike share program something like Seattle's. Leeson said the state recently allocated some money to four cities, mostly on the Eastside, to create a bike-share system that would work in all four cities. The cities will receive $5 million to implement the program, she continued. As a group, we have been working slowly as we want to separate ourselves from Seattle's program and learn from their mistakes, and it is likely that the program for the four cities won't look much like Seattle's. PROBALA expressed her thought that the presence of hills prohibits biking as an option for many people. Leeson noted one option is to consider electric bikes.

STOB suggested striking the reference to a specific "Bike Share program" because doing so would open up the possibilities to include other options. He spoke in favor of having more all-encompassing language for solving the "Last Mile" problem (C&M Policy C4). FAUL said he favors the idea of keeping the reference to a Bike Share program as well as opening it up to others. He also suggested adding "weather protection" to the policies in Goal C that pertain to bike facilities. Staff will look into it.

- C&M Goal E: Increase share of trips by transit; C&M Policies E1 to E3 (page 7 of 38).

FAUL raised the possibility of requesting covered bus shelters for people waiting for public transit. Leeson noted Metro has traditionally taken responsibility for determining when a bus shelter qualifies to be a covered shelter, which is generally when the number of users reaches a certain level. They have also taken responsibility for maintaining them. Seemann added the City works with Metro to determine the location and characteristics of bus shelters, but they have given clear indications that they are interested in working with cities like Issaquah to promote transit ridership. FAUL spoke in favor of adding language that addresses seeking covered bus shelters, including the possibility that the City could pay for them. STOB added since the Plan pertains to Old Town, the language could also state some architectural characteristics that the City would want incorporated into any covered bus shelters, so we don't end up with some modern structure from Metro Transit that would be appropriate for downtown Seattle but not Old Town. Staff made a note of it.

Environment
Favour discussed the vision for the Environment (E) (page 8 of 38) and continued his presentation on the goals and policies to implement that vision, as follows:

- Environment Goal A: Improve stormwater management over current conditions; E Policy A1 to A4 (pages 8-9 of 38).
- Environment Goal B: Enhance riparian corridors; E Policy B1 to B6 (page 9 of 38).

Favour noted that Connie Marsh brought to staff's attention that E Policy B2 and B3 are already covered in the Comp Plan and do not need to be specific to the Old Town Plan, so they will be struck from future iterations of the proposed Plan update.

- Environment Goal C: Take steps unique to Old Town to create a sustainable community; E Policy C1 to C7 (page 9-11 of 38).
- Environment Goal D: Protect and contribute to enhancement of, and connections to, the wooded hillsides; E Policy D1 to D3 (page 11 of 38).

FAUL asked clarifying questions about preserving as much pervious surface as possible, and asked whether the Plan needs more focus on preserving pervious surface, adequate drainage, appropriate materials, restrictions on what can be built by lot size, and so on. Favour said we have heard recommendations to consider increasing impervious surfaces on Front Street and Sunset Way to promote economic vitality in Old Town, but we haven't heard a desire to increase impervious surfaces elsewhere in Old Town. He continued the code already has restrictions that are quite limiting as to what can be done that would decrease pervious surface on a given property. He gave examples of the percentage of surface that must remain green by code, which is between 40 and 50 percent in the residential areas of Old Town. Elsewhere in the City, he continued, the required percentage of pervious surface varies; it is 85 percent for Front Street in the central business district, for example. He said the City has had this ongoing conflict for years; parcels that are zoned for high-density housing are also challenging to develop because the code restricts development on some parcels to 50 percent. He also noted the City's stormwater code would apply to the impervious/pervious percentage on properties. STOB added that requiring low-impact development would also come into play.

Economic Vitality (EV)
Favour discussed the vision for Economic Vitality (page 12 of 38) and continued his presentation on the goals and policies to implement that vision, as follows:

- EV Goal A: Continue investing in Old Town; EV Policy A1 to A7 (page 12 of 38).
- EV Goal B: Ensure infrastructure meets current and future Old Town needs; EV Policy B1 to B6 (page 13 of 38).
- EV Goal C: Attract and leverage private investment; EV Policy C1 to C5 (page 13-14 of 38).

STOB asked for clarification of EV Policy B-2 ("Require conduit and/or fiber to be installed as part of all street and utility projects…:"). Heinonen said the policy is intended to be sure that the City is ready when new projects are proposed by requiring that the highest and most up-to-date infrastructure be installed for all street and utility projects.

PROBALA suggested adding the Arts Commission to the list of other stakeholders in EV Policy A1.

FAUL raised a concern that Goal B, which addresses future infrastructure needs, needs to specifically address the increasing reliance on wireless communications that will require more cell towers, including smaller mini-cell towers that connect with each other. Heinonen noted that is an issue the City is tracking now, and a policy on that would be citywide and not just confined to Old Town. FAUL said he was thinking specifically about the conflict that could arise from having

wireless carriers want to put infrastructure in Old Town that was not in keeping with the vision for community, specifically aesthetics. Seemann gave some background on the City's participation to clarify these kinds of issues on a statewide level. STOB said he, too, favored balancing the needs of businesses and residents in Old Town to have the best technology available with the desire to keep Old Town's character and not allow ugly infrastructure. FAUL agreed, and said one approach would be to have a policy that states what the City does not want to see. Staff agreed to discuss this issue and include some language in the draft to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Housing (H)
Leeson discussed the vision for Housing (page 15 of 38) and continued her presentation on the goals and policies to implement that vision, as follows:

- Housing Goal A: Preserve the scale and character of single family and duplex neighborhoods; H Policy A1 to A2 (page 15 of 38).

SWEDBERG asked what is the definition of cottage housing. Leeson replied cottage housing generally refers to a cluster of six to ten houses on one parcel that share a common outdoor space, normally in the middle. The houses can be small or can go up to about 2,000 square feet. STOB noted cottage housing normally shares a parking facility or a garage. Leeson replied that is correct; cottage houses do not have attached garages, although the units themselves are single-family, detached houses. SWEDBERG asked whether there are any cottage housing developments in Issaquah now. Leeson replied no, but there are examples in Kirkland, Seattle, and elsewhere. STOB said he likes the idea of cottage housing, and would like to ensure that a variety of cottage housing is available. What is to prevent developers from developing, say, only $1 million cottage houses, he continued, and suggested that language be included to ensure that a variety of cottage housing is encouraged. Staff made a note of it and said they would work on some language with STOB before the public hearing. PROBALA noted there is housing in the Highlands that has some of the same features as the cottage housing concept.

- Housing Goal B: Incent affordable housing for persons of low and moderate income; H Policy B1 to B6 (page 15-16 of 38).

FAUL raised the possibility of adding language that would discourage rentals and promote home ownership. He gave some of his reasons why home ownership offers advantages to a neighborhood such as Old Town. PROBALA said she didn't think it would be legal to keep home owners from renting their own properties. Favour agreed, and said he thought there would be legal considerations in doing so. Leeson agreed to research whether this option can be pursued.

- Housing Goal C: Incorporate amenities into both site and building design for livable and identifiable neighborhoods; H Policy C1 to C3 (page 16 of 38).

Leeson concluded staff's presentation by noting that the public hearing on the proposed Old Town Subarea Plan update will be at PPC's April 27 meeting. She referred to the remainder of the projected schedule to review the plan, leading to Council action on June 19.

PROBALA said all of the ideas and actions in the plan have value, and there is no way that all of them can get done in Old Town, but the plan is aspirational and serves as a goal. She said it is her hope that the City will put more teeth into making these policies stick so that the plan becomes more than just a wish list.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Connie Marsh, Issaquah business owner and resident who lives on Squak Mountain, said on the first set of policies discussed tonight (Old Town Community), staff referred to policies that would

address potentially increasing impervious surface and building height in Old Town. She continued that she did not see any support for either of those in the comments that residents made in the online survey or elsewhere, and said perhaps the comments came from groups convened to talk about economic vitality and not residents. She said there seems to be a contradiction there. She said she doubted if the Flintoff family [owners of a business at 540 East Sunset Way] is interested in having higher buildings along East Sunset. She continued perhaps a more modest increase in impervious surface would be acceptable, but not the 80 to 90 percent that staff referred to. She said she has a problem with the homogeneity of a single approach to Old Town because the area is actually split into distinct areas, and policies cannot be applied broadly to all areas. She described her perception of several different areas all within the area designated as Old Town. She said the previous Olde Town Subarea Plan included a map that differentiated the areas with overarching policies for the areas as a whole. She continued much of the proposed update contains redundant language, which will make it more confusing than necessary. The number of policies could be reduced, she continued. For example, it seems unnecessary to have six policies that say we need a safe, pleasant, efficient way to get around town.

Dave Kappler 255 SE Andrews Street, Issaquah, spoke of his disappointment with a recent condominium development in the 500 block of SE Andrews Street. He said the City needs to make sure that new development has some kind of design standards, and while he favors having a variety of housing options in Old Town, huge ugly box-type developments are not appropriate.

PROBALA asked for more details about the project to which Kappler referred. He described the project, which is just east of Andrews Street. PROBALA asked did the project get City approval. Favour replied yes, it meets all current City codes. PROBALA asked what would have to change in the code so that we would get a different outcome. Favour replied changes would have to be made in this plan update, then followed through in the code, and would include adopting design and development standards with specific requirements on shape, architectural style, building height, colors, and so on. PROBALA said there is a building moratorium at the moment, but is staff aware of any similar projects that are in the pipeline while the moratorium is effective, either in the Andrews Street area or elsewhere. Favour replied yes, he is aware of a few exemptions from the moratorium and/or projects that were approved before it became effective. He noted the current moratorium exempts residential projects of four units or less, for example. PROBALA said so none of the changes we are discussing would apply to those projects that are in the pipeline now. Favour replied that is correct.

FAUL asked for clarification of how the new language for the Old Town Subarea Plan is being displayed. Leeson noted the plan is 20 years old, and to show all the proposed changes as strike-out text and added language would result in a very lengthy, confusing document. So what is being presented here is the revised language as it would appear in the proposed plan update, plus completely new language for the housing section. Heinonen noted the packet sent for the March 23 meeting contains the proposed plan with links that can be used to compare the changes with the original plan.

OTHER/ADJOURN

Heinonen noted elections for PPC Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the April 27 meeting. New PPC members will begin their terms in May. With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe, Recording Secretary