

Planning Policy Commission  
2-22-18

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

February 22, 2018

City Hall South  
Council Chambers

135 Sunset Way  
Issaquah, WA 98027

<b>PPC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>
Joan Probala, Chair	Keith Niven, Econ Dev & Planning Director
Ron Faul, Vice Chair	Trish Heinonen, Long Range Planning Mgr.
A.J. McGauley, Alt.	
Jon Stob	<b>OTHERS/TASK FORCE PRESENT</b>
Lindsey Walsh	Mary Lynch
	Kari Rowley Magill
<b>PPC MEMBERS ABSENT (EXCUSED)</b>	Connie Marsh
Joy Lewis	Mel Morgan, Jr.
Troy Rahmig	Steve Pereira
Carl Swedberg	

**CALL TO ORDER**

PROBALA called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

**DISCUSSION: CENTRAL ISSAQUAH DISTRICT VISIONS (I)**

PROBALA said as mentioned at the last meeting, PPC will spend some time at tonight's meeting reviewing the Commission's work to date on the West Newport, Regional Growth Center, Pickering, and Gilman district visions before moving on to Eastlake and Confluence.

**West Newport.** Niven made staff's presentation, beginning with edits made to the West Newport description (page 7 of 18 of Attachment A-2) since the Commission last reviewed it. He noted that Commissioners' comments that were submitted to staff after this version went out for review will be incorporated into the next version. Lynch said core views from I-90 are not included here, and asked whether the only view corridors to be referenced here are views from Newport Way. WALSH said her understanding is that because we are trying to make central Issaquah denser, protecting views from Newport is where we need to focus, not on protecting views from I-90. She continued we probably need a conversation about the City's policy on protecting views from I-90 versus views from the perspective of someone in town. Others agreed. Magill added that buildings near I-90 can help protect buildings further into the core from noise.

McGAULEY asked staff to talk about how this vision document would function as pseudo-code, and gave an example of how someone might assert that their view was not being retained as described here. Niven gave his perception that the City has not identified specific view corridors down particular streets as the primary view corridors for the City. He gave examples of how taller buildings have changed views over time. We want to maintain views, he continued, but they are likely to be less absolute with increased density. McGAULEY said he is struggling to find an example of how this aspirational sentence would make anything happen. It seems meaningless, he continued, and doesn't seem to drive any changes. Heinonen noted that the Central Issaquah Standards were amended so that views were defined as from public corridors and places. Morgan gave his perception that views from resident-based locations are far more important than views for motorists passing by on I-90. Niven said staff will check on what exactly is in the Central Issaquah Standards regarding views. He said he understands McGAULEY's point, and gave several options

Planning Policy Commission  
2-22-18

for how to proceed. McGAULEY said his problem is with the statement, "Increase public access to natural areas and views of Squak, Tiger and Cougar remain." He suggested PPC schedule a discussion of this policy question.

PROBALA suggested adding a reference to "views" in the Future section for the West Newport vision. Commissioners offered wording suggestions. McGAULEY said the idea of preserving views seems to mean different things to different people. Commissioners gave their interpretations. Staff will work on the wording. PROBALA said we will look at PPC's schedule and see whether a discussion on views is appropriate to take on in 2018. Marsh said that discussion should be a citywide implementation project with a community process, not just a casual discussion at a PPC meeting. She described other references and language to views in the Central Issaquah Plan and elsewhere. Morgan added it would be helpful to the Development Commission for PPC to initiate that discussion.

Niven continued his presentation on other changes to the West Newport language (page 8 of 18). Magill suggested flooding issues be addressed in "measures of success." Marsh said safety is also not addressed here.

**Regional Growth Center.** Niven continued with changes and edits made to the Regional Growth Center description (page 9 of 18). McGAULEY offered suggestions and asked clarifying questions about some of the changes. Pereira said he likes the specificity of the language here and would like to see some of this specific language moved to other portions of the document.

**Pickering.** Niven continued with an explanation of relatively minor edits to the Pickering description (page 11 of 18). He gave a brief update on the status of seeking legislative changes to make condo development more likely. FAUL suggested adding a reference to creating vibrancy "for all ages." WALSH suggested adding something about Pickering Park. Marsh questioned whether referring to the Green Necklace here but not in other vision descriptions makes sense. FAUL continued that a reference to "leisure opportunities" should be included as well. Marsh said she would be more satisfied with a better description here of the Green Necklace and not call out each item individually. Others agreed. The Commissioners made additional suggestions for wording changes, particularly for adding references to Pickering Barn, Pickering Farm, Costco's Corporate Headquarters, connectivity to Lake Sammamish State Park and SR 900, and the Green Necklace. Staff will rework those references as appropriate.

Niven continued his presentation of the Pickering "livable/distinctive/connected/sustainable" matrix (pages 12-13). Commissioners asked questions about the City and developer's obligations in the sustainable column, especially to comply with the City's green building initiative. Niven said staff will cross-reference these references with the City's initiative. Participants discussed items that refer to SR 900, 56th and I-90. In response, staff suggested adding an item to the City's implementing actions that "Crossing SR 900 is less of a barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists." Niven explained ways that access could be facilitated, particularly at 56th. Magill suggested removing a reference to Mall Street under "measures of success." McGAULEY noted in the connectivity column, the "measure of success" items could reference the future Sound Transit station.

The participants discussed potential improvements to pedestrian and bicycle crossings at 56th and whether improvements should be more specifically addressed in this document. They expressed particular concern about how future development could change the nature of 56th and its relationship to the state park. Niven said if the group thinks there should be more crossings at 56th, then that should be added to the document. Marsh spoke in favor of language that would create a

Planning Policy Commission  
2-22-18

more porous 56th for pedestrians and bicyclists. PROBALA said the City will review developments as they come in to see whether they can include provisions for safe crossings, and spoke in favor of making sure the crossings that are already there are made safe. WALSH suggested using “enhanced crossings” rather than “lessen barriers” in the City implementing action items in the livable column (“Enhanced crossings... for pedestrians and bicyclists”).

**Gilman.** Magill suggested removing “small town” in the Gilman “Today” section (page 14 of 18). Participants offered other minor changes to the livable/distinctive/connected/sustainable matrix for Gilman (pages 15-16 of 18). Participants discussed whether “enhanced crossings” was encompassing enough of safety concerns, including the possibility of lowering speed limits. Pereira said he would like to see the responsibility for maintaining the natural, green beauty of the whole area more clearly spelled out as a City responsibility.

**Eastlake.** Niven presented new information on the vision for the Eastlake district (page 6 of 22). FAUL spoke in favor of including Gilman Village as part of the Confluence district, not Eastlake. Others agreed. Staff made a note to make the appropriate changes.

FAUL questioned whether referring to a “mixed-use neighborhood” is appropriate here. Niven said the concept is to retain its role as a less dense, smaller-scale neighborhood within Central Issaquah and to include some low-density retail and office space. Magill referred to the map of the Eastlake area, and questioned the placement of the southern border. Niven explained why staff felt those parcels would more appropriately be part of Confluence than Eastlake. PROBALA asked for more clarification of the boundary lines on the map. Niven explained what the boundary lines would include and exclude, and why staff chose those boundary lines. He also explained WSDOT’s and other transportation redesign plans for that area, and referred to the earlier decision to remove the Service District from the Central Issaquah boundary. The Commission asked staff to check the boundary lines and report back to the Commission with a justification for why some parcels, particularly on the eastern edge and on the northeastern portion, were included and/or excluded. Staff made a note of it.

The Commission reviewed the livable/distinctive/connected/sustainable matrix for Eastlake (page 8 of 22). Marsh suggested adding “North Fork.” WALSH suggested moving the “Gilman Village” item to Confluence. WALSH asked what is the intent of Distinctive 2.2, “Provide an eclectic image in architecture.” Niven explained that the new design guidelines for Central Issaquah allow for six architectural style options for this area. WALSH suggested the wording “architectural diversity.” Morgan asked if a developer wanted to use the approved “lodge” style for a new building in Eastlake, and there were already three lodge-style buildings nearby, would the City require the developer to choose another style. Niven replied with this wording in place, yes.

Niven said there are several proposed code edits from the Administration that will affect land use. He continued one concern expressed is that the zoning for the Central area is quite broad, which allows the market to determine what will be built. We don’t necessarily want mini-storage facilities and hotels everywhere in our central core, he continued, so a proposal being considered now is to limit hotels to the Pickering district and storage facilities to 224th or Lake Sammamish. He said that is a proposed code amendment that will be discussed at the PPC meeting on February 28.

FAUL spoke in favor of adding a reference here to a City obligation to make crossing improvements over East Lake Sammamish Parkway to the Lake Sammamish Trail. Participants discussed potential improvements the City could undertake, including a 25-mile-an-hour speed limit. WALSH asked whether looking at speed limits and pedestrian-friendly measures the City could undertake could be part of PPC’s purview. Niven said that would more appropriately be

Planning Policy Commission  
2-22-18

something the new Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) would take on. The Commission could make a recommendation to the Council that the new TAB tackle some of the transportation items that have come up in these district vision discussions, he added. Another large policy issue is how do we turn streets that function more for regional transportation movement more toward streets that serve the City. PROBALA said PPC could possibly schedule a discussion on that issue after looking at other priorities for PPC in 2018.

The Commissioners continued to offer minor changes to the matrix, including adding “transform East Lake Sammamish Parkway into a more pedestrian and safety-aware corridor” in the City’s obligations column.

Marsh asked whether “wayfinding” for streets as well as trails could be addressed in all of these visions. Niven said that issue may not be specific to Central Issaquah, and referred to how it was handled in the Highlands. He said the City needs to update its sign code, so it could be incorporated into that effort.

Morgan asked for clarification of Distinctive 2.2, “Develop horizontal and vertical mixed uses which provide housing and employment opportunities.” Niven said it would mean both, and referred to the “no loss of square footage or jobs” question that was debated at the last PPC meeting. One option, he continued, is to have that policy apply to Eastlake as well. Staff made a note to look at whether this item should be added to the “measures of success” column.

Morgan noted the references to “small town charm of Issaquah’s past should be retained,” “Gilman Village is preserved as a City Treasure,” and so on, could sound very limiting to a developer. Niven explained that as the City goes through its strategic planning process, Gilman Village may be discussed as something the City should take over/purchase or buy the development rights. Hopefully if someone wanted to completely redo Gilman Village, there would be a community conversation about keeping what people like about Gilman Village. This language would help ensure some of the qualities referenced here would be brought into a new project, he clarified.

Pereira spoke in favor of not just being concerned about losing jobs and commercial area when properties are redeveloped, but also being concerned about losing character. He also said the City’s obligation to “Offer technical assistance for green building efforts” should be in every district vision matrix.

**Confluence.** Niven continued his presentation on the Confluence vision (page 9 of 22). WALSH noted all references in the Eastlake vision language to Gilman Village should be migrated over to Confluence. Marsh spoke in favor of not including Gilman Village in any district vision. Morgan said one option is to bifurcate this neighborhood at Juniper, and explained how that would work. Niven said we will have a separate conversation about zoning standards for this neighborhood later this year. The Commissioners generally agreed to keep Gilman Village within Central Issaquah and Confluence boundary.

Niven initiated a discussion of school walking routes and locations in the Confluence neighborhood. Lynch said she would like to see urban schools considered wherever there is density, including something in the Gilman district vision. WALSH suggested adding a reference under the City’s obligations to “work with the Issaquah School District to develop school locations” and add it to each district vision. Staff will work on language that addresses schools for more than just the Confluence district vision.

Planning Policy Commission  
2-22-18

Marsh suggested adding the ability to “meet daily needs of residents” under the sustainability column for all district visions. STOB added that might also fall under the “livable” column.

**Format.** Niven presented a formatting option, shown on page 17 of 18 as applied to the West Newport language, that has been suggested by WALSH. WALSH explained her thinking in developing the format. She said her primary motivator was to break down the narrative so a reader can clearly see the proposed scale of these neighborhoods in a clearer way. In creating the example shown, she continued, she did not rewrite the information so much as break it down into distinct areas (“character/scale,” “housing/residential,” “business/economy,” “mobility/connectivity,” and “parks/natural environment”). She explained more about her thinking in developing the categories.

STOB and PROBALA expressed positive reactions to the proposed format. FAUL suggested indentation changes might help readability, but agreed it was an improvement. Marsh gave her reasons why she prefers the paragraph format over breaking down the narrative into yet another structure. She noted that the original district visions had similar categories and deemed “not favorable” by PPC at a previous vision meeting last fall. WALSH said she thinks Marsh’s point is a good one.

The Commission continued to discuss the option proposed by WALSH. It was the general consensus to ask staff to see whether the proposed structure could be tweaked to more closely align with the “livable/distinctive/connected/sustainable” structure of the matrix used elsewhere in the document. Staff made a note of it and will present the results in the next iteration of the vision document.

#### **AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

None.

#### **OTHER/ADJOURNMENT**

Niven explained what will be presented to the Commission at PPC’s special meeting on Wednesday, February 28, 2018, and what will be sent to the Commissioners on Monday in advance of the meeting (the “new story,” updated versions of the district visions, and proposed code amendments for siting future hotels and mini-storage facilities in Central Issaquah).

PROBALA asked whether any of the moratorium work items, such as housing, will appear in these visions. Niven replied no; the results of those work items will be reflected in the City’s code.

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary