

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH**  
**Planning Policy Commission**

6:30 PM  
 September 10, 2020

Virtual Meeting

**MINUTES**

**COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT**

*Commissioners Present:*

Joan Probala  
 Ron Faul  
 Janice Carle  
 Bill Rinehart  
 Jason Voiss  
 Robin Beukers, Alternate (voting)

*Administration/Staff:*

Christen Leeson, Senior Planner  
 Megan Curtis-Murphy, Sustain. Coord.  
 Stephen Padua, Sr. Transp. Planner  
 Doug Yormick, Assistant Planner  
 Keith Niven, CP&D Director  
 Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator

*Commissioners Not Present:*

Joy Lewis (Excused)

**CALL TO ORDER**

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM. She explained that, due to the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 prohibiting meetings that fall under the Open Public Meetings Act from being conducted in person, tonight's meeting will be held entirely remotely. She provided some guidelines for participants at tonight's virtual public hearing, including Commissioners and members of the public who wish to provide public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a) PROBALA asked for any objections to approving the minutes of the August 27, 2020 meeting, and there were none. Minutes are approved.

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

- a) **River & Streams Board and Environmental Board / Motion to Hold Public Hearing, (A)**

*Presented by:*

*Megan Curtis-Murphy, Sustainability Coordinator*

Curtis-Murphy explained that the Administration is incorporating comments received from PPC and the public to date into an updated proposal to repeal the Rivers & Streams Board and create a new Environmental Board. She continued to accommodate those changes and also receive additional feedback from PPC and the public, the Administration is requesting an additional public hearing be held.

MOVED BY VOISS, SECONDED BY CARLE that PPC hold an additional public hearing on repealing the Rivers & Streams Board and forming a new Environmental Board, to be held at 6:30 PM on Thursday, September 24, 2020. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, 5-0.

- b) **Mobility Master Plan (MMP) / Review and Update, (D)**

*Presented by:*

*Stephen Padua, Senior Transportation Planner*

[BEUKERS joined the meeting during this discussion.]

Padua made staff's presentation. He explained the purpose of tonight's discussion; background on the Mobility Master Plan (MMP); PPC's and other boards'/commissions' review of the MMP to date; and goal areas for discussion tonight (proactive safety, climate and quality of life, multimodal balanced system, walking, bicycling, transit, and auto travel). He referred to additional information in the MMP Executive Summary (pages 15-27 of 241).

### Proactive Safety

FAUL asked clarifying questions about Figure 5, Fatal and Severe Injury Collisions, on page 46 of 241. Padua explained what the figure reflects. FAUL asked what volumes are being shown here; for example, what is considered a “high density” of collisions. Padua said he can get more details that include that information. CARLE referred to Table 3 on Page 107 of 241 and said some of that information is provided there.

VOISS asked is the City thinking ahead to projections of more people choosing to move to the City for a variety of reasons, including social unrest, the pandemic, and so on. Padua replied yes, the City is looking at that, but it’s a bit early to see any real movement yet.

### Climate and Quality of Life

PROBALA asked what specific measures the City plans to take to achieve a “20 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled” (Policy MMP 2.2). Padua referred to a combination of measures, including meeting employers’ goals for housing located close to jobs, encouraging employers to offer telecommuting options, encouraging people to take transit, bicycle, and/or walk to work, improvements to travel modes and options, and so on.

VOISS noted once the MMP adopted, it will be reviewed annually for updates, but the pandemic is posing a new reality for all of us. For example, people may not be as comfortable sharing space with other people by using mass transit as they are using single-occupancy vehicles. So how valuable is this document in the near term, he asked. Padua replied the City Council directed staff to include an annual review of the MMP. He agreed that the pandemic is creating unpredictable situations. For example, the City did a financial assessment last year that no longer makes sense and will be conducting another financial assessment early next year. He continued we will also be collecting and analyzing new travel behavior data because people’s travel behavior is changing rapidly. CARLE said all the policies here seem to be driving toward greater density and more transit-oriented development. She continued the pandemic will continue to have a “hangover effect” on people’s transit behavior. Padua agreed.

BEUKERS noted the plan seems to be a high-level document but it also contains a great deal of detail, such as specific road development plans. He asked for clarification whether the document is an action plan or more of a framework. Padua replied the plan is more of a framework or a schematic within which the City can plan to make transportation and mobility improvements. He referred to the citywide strategic plan and the MPP’s relationship to that plan. He continued some of the detail included in the MMP is required by the State; in other cases, details are given to provide context of why the focus is on specific policies or why they are written as they are. FAUL added perhaps a specific policy on e-bikes should be added. Staff made a note of it.

### Multimodal Balanced System

PROBALA said the document states that the City is expecting to add about 50 percent more housing capacity, or about 8,000 more units than we have now, including 75,000 square feet of commercial space. She said she is concerned about bringing in more jobs and people before these transit policies and plans can be implemented. Padua replied the growth that the City is experiencing is the same as our adjacent and neighboring communities are experiencing. Periods of transition can be rough, but there isn’t much choice. We are running out of room, and resources are limited. That said, one strategy is to use all existing roadways as efficiently as possible, he continued. Some non-automotive improvements, for example, are less costly to implement than automotive-focused improvements, which are also important but use more resources.

BEUKERS asked for clarification of the concurrency information on page 44 of 241. Padua explained that Appendix F on page 192 of 241 contains both State and City concurrency requirements. He added the MMP does not include many changes in concurrency requirements; that will be an item for discussion with the Transportation Advisory Board, likely in 2022. He gave more details about how concurrency is calculated, how concurrency models work, and how impact fees are determined. He said the State requires that cities have concurrency programs; the City's concurrency regulations determine what developers have to pay and what levels of service are required.

PROBALA asked for clarification about the City's level of service at the intersections that are checkpoints for concurrency; the document indicates that the City is at Level D for all of them right now. Is that correct, she asked. Padua replied no; not all intersections are at Level D. He made a note to check the reference in the document. PROBALA said she assumes that new construction will be reviewed by the City to be sure that the multi-mobility policies are followed. Padua replied yes, that is the intention.

### Walking

FAUL said he has noticed that school buses consistently ride up the sidewalk at the corner of Sunset and Second Ave. Staff made a note of it. Padua said staff is in regular coordination with the Issaquah School District on issues such as this and described how to submit observations to City staff.

CARLE said one element that may be overlooked here is outreach to the community and explanation about why behavior has to change in order to accommodate the Issaquah of tomorrow. Padua agreed, and said the citywide strategic plan will include regular communication with the community, what will be necessary and why in order to reach a more multi-modal transit system.

BEUKERS suggested including a reference to safety to policies MMP 4.1 and 4.2. Padua explained why staff chose to separate out safety as the first three bullet points in the plan. Safety is seen as an overarching priority rather than embedded in individual policy items, he added.

VOISS said possibly using SCAN codes for projects in progress could be a good way to communicate directly with people about projects as they walk or drive by. It could be a good way to get information out to the community, he added. Padua made a note of the suggestion. FAUL commented that the City would benefit greatly from more engagement with residents living in public housing projects, who are often not present at the City's outreach events. Padua agreed, and said the City is actively trying to reach a wider range of residents.

### Bicycling

PROBALA asked does the bicycle network continue to the trails. Padua replied yes; the trails are considered part of the bicycle network.

VOISS asked whether e-bikes or e-skateboards have been discussed, particularly where they might be sharing a lane with walkers. Padua replied most of our discussions have been around safety issues. The State recently required that e-bikes be classified and regulated under a new classification system based on their speed capability and gave examples. The City will be looking more closely at the policies for the infrastructure to support e-bikes, particularly around the regional trail system. So yes, we are looking at it, but we have to tailor it based on the individual neighborhoods.

CARLE noted there is great synergy between the concentration of commercial and high-density development in some of the other policy goals and the investment in bike lanes, and

communication with residents in those high-density areas is critical. She continued the big hill at the entrance to Talus is an impediment to those of us who live there in terms of biking, and facilitating e-bikes could be a key opportunity to help those of us who live on the hills to get down the hills without cars. Padua agreed that communication to residents will be critical.

### Transit

FAUL expressed concern that momentum and opportunities may be lost if work with Metro Transit and Sound Transit is slowed due to the pandemic. Padua replied the City is not scaling back how it coordinates with Metro and Sound Transit, but those agencies are dealing with major cutbacks region wide. It's not clear right now, for example, what the basic transit system will look like as a result of the pandemic, he added. BEUKERS asked what is the City doing to accommodate potential for light rail and rapid transit. Padua replied the City is maintaining communications with Metro Transit and Sound Transit. We need them at the table to conduct a relevant analysis, he continued. The City is looking ahead at how to make progress prior to Sound Transit being ready to focus on the City, but they have already indicated they won't be reaching out to us until 2026, with build-out of ST-3 to the City projected for 2041. The City doesn't want to wait that long and intends to work on strategic plans that lay out how our whole transit system can connect to light rail in the future. But all parties have to get through the pandemic and its impacts on the community first, he concluded.

### Auto Travel

FAUL spoke to the "overflow" parking onto the Safeway lot from the Atlas Apartments. He noted if the City starts developing our core with the thought of pushing people to using public transit by restricting onsite parking, we will end up with parking issues. Padua replied the City is aware of that situation and referred again to the difficulties that cities experience during a transition period, which can be a decade or longer. He noted in the case of the Atlas and Vale apartments, the City doesn't yet have adequate transit to serve that area, or adequate connections to the Transit Center. In the meantime, the City's approach has been to more efficiently managing the parking we do have via a parking management program. FAUL spoke to getting guarantees for future service from transit agencies like Metro Transit so that the City can better plan for development. Padua said the City coordinates with Sound Transit and Metro Transit, but it is difficult to say what expansions are possible right now because of the pandemic. The transit agencies' long-range plans for services don't always match up perfectly with the City's plans for development, he continued, and that is true for our neighboring communities as well.

PROBALA noted people are not going to give up their cars, even if they use mass transit to get to work in the morning. People will still want cars for shopping or to go to the mountains and will still need parking. Padua agreed. He noted that community feedback indicates that many people are driving their cars not because they want to, but because they have to, and they want more options for getting around. He spoke of moving toward a system of ride-share vehicles, where people could have access to a car without having to own one. He agreed that cars are not going away soon but giving people more options will give them more choices. CARLE referred to PPC's prior conversations about Olde Town parking and giving neighborhood-oriented businesses special concessions for parking requirements.

Padua concluded his presentation with the next steps in reviewing the MMP (page 13 of 241).

- c) **Proposed Amendments to Comprehensive Plan: Land Use Element, Capital Facilities Element, and Olde Town Implementation Chart / Review and Discuss, (D)**

*Presented by:*

*Christen Leeson, Senior Planner*

Leeson reviewed the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan on pages 225-240 of 241, particularly where changes are proposed. During the discussion of the City's jobs target, PROBALA asked how many of the projected jobs are as a result of Costco. Leeson said she can get that information. Leeson concluded her presentation with a description of next steps in approving the Comprehensive Plan amendments, including public hearings on September 24 and October 8 at PPC and projected Council action on December 7, 2020.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Set Date for Joint Meeting of Planning Policy Commission and Development Commission

After a short discussion, PROBALA determined that PPC members are available Wednesday, October 7, 2020 for a joint meeting with the Development Commission on the issue of single-family architectural standards for Olde Town. Staff made a note of it.

#### **AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary

*NOTE: Due to the Governor's Proclamation 20-28 related to the COVID-19 emergency and open public meetings, this meeting was held remotely. Participation and listening options were provided in the meeting agenda.*