



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, November 9, 2023

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Vice-Chair Bader, Commissioners Esemuede, Krass, Milligan, and Patterson

Excused Absence: Commissioners Kennedy and Altimore

Staff Present: Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner

2. Approval of Minutes

- a) Minutes of **October 18, 2023** – Vice Chair Bader stated being an excused absence at the meeting (not specified). With no other concerns, CHAIR VOISS stated that the Minutes were approved.
- b) Minutes of **October 26, 2023** – With no concerns, CHAIR VOISS stated that the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

4. Regular Business

- a) **Comprehensive Plan: Transportation Element, (D) (00:02)**
Presented by:
Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner

Valdriz gave the presentation.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if traffic congestion has been made a high-level goal. Valdriz replied that congestion is addressed in the automobile section, level of service, at signalized intersections. Congestion areas are measured on a scale and examined to stay within reasonable parameters. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that multi-modal transportation as a way to tackle congestion, providing more options, should be focused on.

CHAIR VOISS stated understanding that multi-modal systems are designed to alleviate congestion and asked how much of current traffic is single occupancy vehicles. Valdriz replied that the number would be brought back but was known to be high. CHAIR VOISS asked if G-2 implies that more congestion is acceptable in certain situations, and stated that traffic, relief at certain city choke points, is always the biggest concern of residents. Valdriz replied that the intent of G-2 is regarding balancing the needs of all, a broad statement. CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification regarding page 24, D-1, in example how more pedestrians can create congestion of other modes. Valdriz replied that land use context, for example next to a school, and safety improvements, will affect traffic, and all trade-offs are considered when improvements are made.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if e-bikes and bicycles are looked at differently by the city. Valdriz replied that there are provisions for long-term bike storage, and e-bikes are convenient for hills. A goal is for e-bike usage to filter into functional plans, with resources therefore allocated, and that the point of the general policy is to open the door to possibilities adding equity. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the public can be educated that e-bikes are an option.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if dedicated lanes for both bicycles and buses are being examined. Valdriz replied that these fall under the goal of Complete Streets. Bike facilities are mapped for the Transportation Element and Mobility Master Plan with the level of traffic stress as a metric. There are standards depending on the road that can be improved. Dedicated bus lanes can become a conversation for the overarching goal of connectivity. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that destinations that are choke points could incorporate more walkability to reduce automobile traffic.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if language could be added to distinguish the differences between e-bikes and motor bikes, and regarding e-bikes on pedestrian trails that do not allow motorized vehicles. A second question was if the city would pursue the issue of bike share littering and suggested an edit. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN cited a Nelson, British Columbia bike program and stated that the program, unlike a bike share program, gives ownership, pride, and the responsibility of care to individuals for a similar cost.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that e-bikes need places for drop off in hilly residential neighborhoods such as Talus. Valdriz replied that there are different models for e-bike programs and that drop off points will be a part of analysis.

CHAIR VOISS thanked COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN for the example given of Nelson, British Columbia.

Valdriz stated that Issaquah has purchased e-bikes for Park Operations staff.

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COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that a good pilot program will be important prior to a full commitment.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding traffic and level of service. Valdriz replied that concurrency and multi-modal options are being examined. Developers have options to mitigate transportation trips. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the goal of 50% or less single occupancy vehicles by 2030 is aspirational. Valdriz replied that the goal has not changed, but specificity has been added. Padua replied that all targets are aspirational, but strategies are created to achieve those targets.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what the baseline for single occupancy vehicles is now. Valdriz replied not having the figure on hand but easily found. In 2017, the figure was 65%. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that roads used for commutes might need to be treated differently.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that there was a difference between verbiage *reduce by 15%* and *achieve 50%*, celebrating the reduction and not the target.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN suggested replacing certain words in C-5 concerning parking.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked when the next opportunity will be to add light rail to plans and policies. Valdriz replied that in 2024, general guiding principles will be created with incremental actions to become reality, considering the process of Sound Transit as well. A series of outreach opportunities will be held for the community.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if there is an opportunity for discounts on parking for residents, and Valdriz replied that the idea has been mentioned. Sound Transit has parking policies for facilities and ways to manage parking are being examined. Other communities have not received parking passes for Sound Transit facilities. The idea would be investigated.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that how land will be used for parking needs to be addressed by Issaquah now, ahead of plans by a regional transportation body such as Sound Transit. Municipal, street parking can be controlled by Issaquah now.

b) **Comprehensive Plan: Utilities and Public Services Element, (D) (00:47)**

Presented by:

Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner

Valdriz gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is a policy or other element regarding making building easier in Issaquah while not reducing standards. Valdriz replied that redundancy is being eliminated in the document to be more concise. Updates are coming for building standards adopted through the state to improve clarity. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if internet and wi-fi are considered a utility. Valdriz replied that telecommunications are a part of utilities. The city is interested in equitable access to wi-fi. The city

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is responsible solely for wastewater, sewage and water service, and companies provide other services to the city. There are standards that Issaquah wants companies to follow.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if there is a Utility Master Plan integrated with the Capital Improvement Plan. Valdriz replied that there are different functional plans, with specifics of each service provided, integrated with other standards. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if proposed future development is factored in, and Valdriz replied all are coordinated.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there should be direct consideration for maintaining access to all utilities, and where this should be in plans. Valdriz replied that staff can examine.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that newer developed areas may be built with new forms of energy, and providing assistance for old transitioning to new technologies should be in policy, to align communities. Valdriz replied that the subject is touched on in the Utilities Functional Plan, but that the subject will be investigated further.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the staff has done a great job with consistent themes such as climate, the environment, and equity in each element, and asked how policy D-15, regarding restaurants and compostable elements, fits into utilities. Valdriz replied that the document includes other public services and refers to solid waste, an overarching goal of reducing the amount of waste to landfills. The policy can live in other elements also. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked if there would be an opportunity to broaden the policy beyond restaurants to any vendor. Valdriz replied that the point made was good.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that Policy D-15 should apply to more than restaurants, and that the policy does not infer support with the waste screen facilities.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated agreement with COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN and that the policy should not single out one industry.

CHAIR VOISS asked what entity would bare the cost of single-family septic system inspections and monitoring, F-4. Padua replied that the question would be examined.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if implementation goals will be added to all Elements, not in Transportation currently. Valdriz replied that there is a Mobility Master Plan but that implementation goals can be added.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if climate change is being looked at in tandem with the state, and Valdriz replied that all parties are considered. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked where direction comes from regarding land, impervious areas, flooding, and climate change and Valdriz replied that the Climate Vulnerability Assessment addresses the subject. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked how developers will be directed to implement. Valdriz replied that Functional Plan updates reflect latest design standards, service goals, and engineering Best Practices.

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c) **Comprehensive Plan: Capital Facilities Element, (D) (01:17)**

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the Element appears straightforward.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked where X-2 is located, and Padua replied the goal area for sustainability.

Padua asked if the Commission wants to keep new policies in the Capital Facilities Element to maintain coordination between Elements.

CHAIR VOISS replied that clarity is important.

VICE-CHAIR BADER replied that sustainability and environmental sustainability may not need to be called out separately.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if a developer involved with a Capital Facility project would be following sustainability or environmental codes. Padua replied both. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that consistency will be needed over the years in both areas.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that redundancy is helpful to both the user and the manager and may be helpful.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that F-2 and F-3 seem redundant, specifically sustainable building certification.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that sustainability policies specific to Capital Facilities should be addressed here.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated having sustainability in two places is good, but in the future, there may be an area missed. Padua replied that part of the review is to uncomplicate updates.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if the Element is used by the city for decision making or externally, a developer who may not be aware of other Elements to consider. Padua replied more internally, though external users may want to see justification for certain standards.

5. **Reports (01:31)**

a) **Council Update**

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

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Padua stated that the Planning, Development & Environment Council Committee reviewed the Housing Work Plan and Environmental Element on November 8, 2023 and provided recommendations. November 8, 2023 was World Town Planning Day and Issaquah developed a proclamation in recognition of Planners and Commissions.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Padua stated that there will be a Special Joint Meeting with the Economic Vitality Commission at Tibbets Creek Manor at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 15, 2023. Please let Padua know availability for the December 7, 2023 meeting.

7. Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary