



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, December 7, 2023

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

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

Absent: Commissioner Altimore (Excused)

Staff Present: Sara Diekroeger, Planning Consultant
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner
Robin Spear, Parks Planning and Development Manager

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes of 11-09-23

Commissioner Milligan stated that a typing error would be brought to the attention of Padua. With no other comments or concerns, the Minutes were approved.

b) Minutes of 11-15-23

With no comments or concerns, the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

There were no requests to speak.

4. Regular Business

a) Comprehensive Plan: SEPA Analysis Scope (D) (00:03)

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Sara Diekroeger, Planning Consultant

Diekroeger gave the presentation.

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COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification regarding Issaquah employment numbers and remote workers. Padua replied that there is not a clear answer from the region of how remote workers are being counted, either by where the employee lives or where the employer is located. Clarification is hoped for during the process.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked for clarification regarding employment targets, and Padua replied that the intent was to have targets within the city of Issaquah, people both living and working in the city.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that an Example Growth Alternatives chart had not been included in packets. Padua replied that only a hypothetical example would be discussed. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if new units after 2018 could be a part of 3,500 slated for 2044, and Diekroeger replied yes.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if underserved communities in Issaquah would fall underneath Public Services in analysis. Padua replied that the level of services could be under other categories such as Transportation or Parks and Recreation for accessibility.

CHAIR VOISS asked if the Planning Policy Commission will be addressing all areas in 2024 or only the usual areas of focus, Land Use, Housing, Utilities, and Capital Facilities. Padua replied that the Planning Policy Commission responsibility will be to review all elements, but other Commissions will be working on these also and the hope is to start the discussion with recommendations from those Commissions.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan have been included and staff answered no. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated not knowing what has not been included and asked what should be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Diekroeger replied that other elements are Arts & Culture and Human Services. Padua replied that the two elements are missing because they are not required and are analyzed differently, from the access and services side and not necessarily from growth. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding Environmental Impact. Diekroeger replied number of impervious surfaces, water quality, stormwater run-off, climate change, and resilience, a broad concept. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the human environment such as human culture and society is also considered in an EIS, and Padua replied not typically, analysis is based on data available compared with growth alternatives.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that 2044 would be a time of changes such as light rail, and asked if there are lessons from, in example, Bellevue, which has already experienced processes with Sound Transit. Padua replied that the experiences of other cities will be examined, and next steps determined. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked where light and noise pollution from transit centers will fall. Diekroeger replied that noise will be considered in terms of pollution and if specifically related to Sound Transit, the element will be under Transportation, considered in the EIS. Padua replied that Sound Transit will be conducting a SEPA process also and will provide mitigation for that part of the project. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if pollution in general should be considered at a higher level than other pieces.

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VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that there are topics that should also be addressed such as where impacts will be most felt. Padua replied that the issue would be examined. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that the bucket would be Environmental Justice.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE stated that Environmental Justice is a new term but should be brought to the forefront.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked for clarification regarding Displacement Analysis in EIS context. Padua replied primarily housing and jobs. CHAIR VOISS stated that an example is the Hobby Lobby property becoming an apartment building with smaller retail. Padua replied that discussions regarding minimizing or preventing displacement with policies or mitigation will occur.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked for clarification regarding the difference between Human and natural environment impacts. Padua replied that what will be analyzed is a broad spectrum, where negative impacts will occur assuming different growth in different areas.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked what will be next after the EIS is completed. Diekroeger replied that the EIS will inform the Comprehensive Plan Update, and that choosing Growth Alternative will be important. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked for clarification that the EIS is not meant to stop growth but to help to move forward and Diekroeger replied yes. Padua replied that the EIS will also help with new policies to address issues not discovered until after analysis.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there is a body that will hold Issaquah accountable, and Padua replied accountability will be the responsibility of the city.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated having understood that all elements would be analyzed with an EIS lense, but understanding now that growth is the focus. Padua replied the impacts of growth, looking at all elements. Diekroeger replied analysis will determine what elements will be impacted by hypothetical growth and therefore impacting the environment; not as elements are in existing conditions but how they would be with future growth.

CHAIR VOISS asked how often the EIS is updated and Padua replied that the next EIS update, either full or supplemental, will be determined over time.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document with growth as an element, but that standards, values, and strategies are needed in addition to growth considerations. Diekroeger replied that there is always a *No Action* alternative in the EIS, and alternatives being decided are *Action* alternatives. Padua replied that multiple alternatives will be looked at with all feedback, narrowed, and then presented to Council in January 2024.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that density, the nature of work, demographics, and transportation will change in the next 20 years, and asked if there are other key themes besides housing units and jobs. Padua replied yes and added that schools are analyzed as part of the EIS but that schools also conduct analysis, meaning less city control.

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COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked for clarification that if a significant impact is anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan an EIS is a legal requirement. Diekroeger replied yes.

Padua replied to the earlier comment by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN that an EIS can look at more than growth, also vision. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked what the environmental impacts of a policy change to Land Use sustainability or Climate Resilience would be. Padua replied that the EIS is not the only environmental analysis done. The EIS focuses on growth impact because the Comprehensive Plan focuses on growth.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if Functional Plans go through an environmental assessment. Padua replied yes, either a full EIS or smaller.

Diekroeger asked if there were any further comments regarding what should be prioritized in the EIS analysis and there were none. Diekroeger asked the Commission what would be important to consider if a growth alternative is higher than the growth target.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if Issaquah boundaries are anticipated to be the same in 2044 as currently or if acquisition of other parts of King County are being considered for growth. Padua replied that boundaries should stay as they are.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked that remote jobs not necessarily be considered stable.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if an alternative would be to change growth targets to larger numbers and Diekroeger replied that growth targets will not be changed, but that an EIS alternative could be that higher numbers could be considered; targets are not determined by the city. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the analysis would be an exercise to envision growing more than target and Diekroeger replied correct. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the alternative would be helpful for preparation because growth targets have not been accurate in the past. CHAIR VOISS suggested that previous targets be looked at for historical accuracy.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what the Housing Unit numbers look like today, and Padua replied that an answer would need to be brought back. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that an understanding of a higher number, particularly in Housing Units and variability, would be helpful. CHAIR VOISS stated agreement, more helpful than looking backwards.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked how job growth is measured, having never seen a remote survey. Padua replied that major employers report, but assumptions are also made. Padua replied that how industries are situated in other cities are also looked at.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if Issaquah employers provide the city with a breakdown of remote workers and Padua replied correct, and that the Census is used also.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked how regional changes in growth will affect an Issaquah EIS. Padua replied that the EIS includes a traffic analysis model both regionally and locally.

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COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that growth of Costco alone would be interesting to add and in response to the question by COMMISSIONER KRASS regarding housing units, approximately 17,000 is in the 2022 Housing Report.

CHAIR VOISS stated that further comments or questions can be sent to Padua.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if an alternative presented regarding where growth would occur would be discussed, and Padua replied that the example in the presentation was to explain the types of alternatives that would be examined for the EIS only. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked when other alternatives would be discussed, and Padua replied that the purpose of the presentation was to introduce the process and not to immerse in details yet, and that the Commission would see the subject again.

b) **Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Spaces (D)**
 (00:56)

*Presented by:
 Valerie Porter, Associate Planner*

Porter gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if Parks are looked at regionally or locally for economic vitality. Robin Spear, Park Planning & Development Manager, replied that the Parks system is meant for Issaquah residents, representing community values and needs primarily, but also regionally as a thorough way and surrounded by State Parks. The economic impact is tourism supplementing the Downtown area.

COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked where maintenance and play equipment life cycles are found in text. Porter replied not addressed in goals and policies but in the Parks Strategic Plan. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE asked if an asset renewal period for planning purposes is addressed in policy. Spear replied that the Park System Plan is looking at gaps overall and Park Operations is following more closely. Usage of equipment is being tracked to be incorporated into the Central Issaquah Plan (CIP).

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding a conflict between a goal and policy, in example, considering artificial turf for regional visitors. Spear replied that while tournaments are considered, the needs of residents are primary, and the policy verbiage can be adjusted. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that priority numbers could be assigned for clarity. COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE added examples of economic benefit from regional visitors and agreed that priorities could be listed in text.

CHAIR VOISS asked staff if stewardship and maintenance for safety is addressed enough, F-7 and F-8. Diekroeger replied that the issue can be discussed with staff further and mentioned a program called Crime and Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) that is integrated, and that the Police Chief, a Ranger, and maintenance staff also examine design and incidences. CHAIR VOISS asked to hear more from the Parks Board, due to trends in larger cities, and referenced the Rainier Trail as an example.

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Porter stated having received the feedback needed.

c) **Planning Policy Commission 2024 Draft Work Plan (D) (01:18)**

Presented by:

Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua gave the presentation.

CHAIR VOISS asked if meetings missed for cultural holidays will be rescheduled. Padua replied that the need will be assessed for rescheduling, and that the Commissioners can assume that a scheduled meeting that falls on a cultural holiday is cancelled.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if the docket will be different in 2024, and Padua replied that the docket will primarily be the Comprehensive Plan proposals. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification that individual items will not be included and Padua replied that there are no proposed zoning changes from external parties at this time. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked when Notice of the proposed docket will be published, and Padua replied two weeks prior.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if the Planning Policy Commission would be seeing any Functional Plans under development in 2024 and Padua replied yes, if the Comprehensive Plan is impacted or if there is a Land Use or housing component impacted by any changes.

5. Reports

a) **Council Update (01:26)**

Presented by Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua stated that there will be continued discussion with the Planning Policy Commission in January 2024 regarding the Pioneer Project program. Council discussed the program at the last meeting with the feedback given.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Padua stated that Commissioners were emailed invitations to the End of Year party held by the Economic Vitality Commission. The email will be resent, and Padua asked that he be contacted with interest in attending.

Padua stated appreciation for the Planning Policy Commission for work on the comprehensive plan in 2023.

CHAIR VOISS thanked staff and Commissioners for time and dedication.

7. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary