



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, July 25, 2024

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

Commissioners Present: Chair Voiss, Commissioners Kennedy, Krass (Alt), Milligan (Virtual), Patterson, and Zakharoff (Alt)

Absent: Vice-Chair Bader and Commissioner Altimore (Excused)

Staff Present: Amanda Jackson, Meeting & Records Assistant
Madeline Nelson, Planning Intern (Virtual)
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Valerie Porter, Associate Planner (Virtual)
Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner (Virtual)

CHAIR VOISS stated that COMMISSIONER ESEMUEDE has resigned from the Planning Policy Commission.

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes of June 20, 2024

There were no comments or corrections and the Minutes were approved.

b) Minutes of June 27, 2024

There were no comments or corrections and the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comments (General) (00:02)

- **Connie Marsh**, (Virtual) Squak Mountain, stated that the recommendation on Pre-Application Neighborhood Meetings was discussed but overturned by Council. While the Neighborhood Meetings memo does not address concerns, the draft plan for public engagement does, and asked why there was a discrepancy. Regarding Comprehensive Plan One, it is difficult for the community to provide input as formed and should be broken down. Wildlife interaction is of concern. Chapters written by different people are discordant and language could be

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reduced by half. Language is technical and there is no particular sense of residents living together in a city; in example, the introductory chapter shows no passion for Issaquah.

4. Regular Business (00:08)

a) Neighborhood Planning (D)

Presented by Valerie Porter, Associate Planner

Porter gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the process Owner Approver Reviewer Participant Informed (OARPI) could add clarity to the role of each group.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked several questions; first, for clarification regarding a definition of Who Should Participate in Neighborhood Planning, packet page 22, with the concern that the process could be commandeered by someone not in the community, The next question was who the city is accountable to in a neighborhood. The next question, regarding task number six, Neighborhood Assessment Survey, how are neighborhood surveys managed to truly measure voices of the community members. Regarding task number seven, the term *vibrant*, not all neighborhoods desire to be vibrant, meaning lively, active, and bright. Also in task number seven, verbiage should specify that common ground and not conformity will be worked toward. In task number 12, *interested parties* is vague and should specify the particular stakeholders being reached out to.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the points of COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN are good, and that the definition of who should participate in neighborhood planning should be reviewed, in example, should a visitor to Meydenbauer Park in Bellevue have a part in that neighborhood plan. People who live and work in a neighborhood should be included, but people who *play and pray* are stakeholders who should be listened to and informed only. The definition should be clear before implementing.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON asked what potential outcomes of a neighborhood plan would be, such as guiding changes to land use and zoning or allocation of city resources. Porter replied that currently there are two neighborhood plans, the Central Issaquah and Olde Town. Both documents are extensions of the Comprehensive Plan, outlining the vision and goals for the neighborhood, helping to inform land use decisions. In the Central Issaquah Plan, a policy states that development should be walkable, and so in the land use code there is a regulation requiring through-block passages.

CHAIR VOISS stated that having a liaison who works with communities regarding neighborhood visions could prevent clashes over different views. The question about who makes up a neighborhood is interesting. An institution should have a say in neighborhood planning, but not, in example, a worshiper from outside Issaquah. Clarification regarding homeless people in neighborhood planning is needed, stakeholders who are families who

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have fallen on hard times versus transient. Olde Town is a good example of varied stakeholders.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN thanked the Commissioners and suggested district City Council representation.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY asked who comes to neighborhood meetings, and stated being in support of limiting who can participate in permanent aspects of a given neighborhood. Padua replied that in Olde Town meetings, there has been direct communication with Olde Town residents including in design regulations. Who can attend Public Meetings is not a control, but who is invited is. Surveys ask where the responder lives. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that language may be needed to avoid a large group having more consideration than residents, most impacted.

CHAIR VOISS stated that surveys go to residents with registered addresses but Open Houses are public.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that there could be wrong expectations if verbiage is broad in the written document.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that when working on the Central Issaquah Plan, there were people at public meetings who had commercial interest in Issaquah but did not reside, with an outsized voice to the resident trying to simply be involved in the community. Another situation was on Mercer Island during a revision of the residential design guidelines, Developers from the entire Puget Sound were present when the intention was for neighbors to shape their neighborhoods.

CHAIR VOISS stated agreement, and that the Olde Town Plan development included businesses but that commercial interests in Central Issaquah could have come with lawyers to the Open Houses.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated that residents need to be communicated with more effectively and that while businesses with interest are very conscious of when and where meetings will occur, individual residents sometimes are not as aware.

- b) **Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Draft Review (D) (00:37)**
Presented by Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua presented the Draft.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN, regarding the Housing Element, stated experiencing difficulty matching the memo section with the Comprehensive Plan section, and stated that a part of previous Commissioner discussion did not appear to be included in Policy C-11, packet page 31, regarding surplus land. Another concern was regarding what entity defines Best Practices.

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Padua continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY, regarding the Transportation Element, asked if the verbiage *increased use* of electric pedal assisted bicycles is also supporting the use of the items. Padua replied that the intent is to support rising demand. Implementation would include changing regulations to require, in example, wall outlets in bicycle parking facilities for recharging. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that *support* would be more appropriate than *increased*. Padua replied that *support* has been removed from many elements as a result of previous Commission discussions, favoring verbiage showing how support will be given, and the word *increased* came from a discussion by the Transportation Advisory Board. If the Commission would like to consider a different term, staff is open for that discussion.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that consistency regarding the role of government is important, the same language used throughout.

CHAIR VOISS stated that action verbs can be misleading to the public and asked if the verbiage is appropriate for a Comprehensive Plan.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if replacing *increase* with *support* the development of infrastructure for electric pedal assisted bicycles relays the intent. C-4 explicitly refers to scooter share and bike share, the Lime Bike program, and could be replaced with *increase access to micromobility options* without detail. E-2 should be looked at together.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that the Lime bike programs are convenient and annoying at once, and that the correct descriptive words need to be used.

Padua stated that both E-2 and C-4 policies can be broadened while meeting the same intent. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the term *micromobility* is not common and may need different language for understanding. CHAIR VOISS stated that in summary, the terms *micromobility* and *increase* should be re-addressed. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked to add into these policies or an additional policy, that the city will pursue the infrastructure that provides for the use of these and where. Padua asked COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN for clarification that the comment was regarding policy E-2 and COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN replied yes, but also related to C-4.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the addition of a Housing policy in the Transportation element seems misplaced. Padua replied that Housing will be discussed towards the end of the presentation.

CHAIR VOISS asked if the Green Necklace term is still being used. Padua stated that discussion can occur after the Parks element.

Padua continued the presentation.

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CHAIR VOISS, regarding the Parks element, asked if there is still a focus on the Central Issaquah area. Padua replied yes, the idea of connectivity within Central Issaquah remains the same, and the idea has now expanded city-wide.

Padua continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN, regarding Economic Vitality Policies A-1 and A-3, stated that there is redundancy and asked where *underserved communities* is defined; and in Policy D-2, where *historically underrepresented communities* is defined. Increased access implies decreased access somewhere else, and a possible change would be using the verbiage *make additional investments in career pathways for historically underrepresented communities*.

CHAIR VOISS stated that Policy A-1, *efficient and predictable for all businesses, especially* requires wordsmithing

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that a response from Padua to an email makes sense but there is still redundancy.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that the common thread appears to be related to Vision 2050 from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and why parts were added based on the document could be added. Padua replied that Policy A-1 specifically addresses customer service and Policy A-3 addresses economic trends, and while there is language redundancy, different concepts for supporting businesses are the difference, recommended by regional staff. Language will still be reviewed, however. The same response applies to Policy D-2.

CHAIR VOISS stated that if the Policies are confusing for the Commissioners to understand, the public may need more clarity. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated a concern is regarding using terms that are difficult to implement, and that the language *especially* in A-1 needs to be changed to emphasize all businesses but with a focus on other types of businesses.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY suggested the language, *for all businesses with intentional focus on businesses that are*.

Padua concluded the presentation. Next steps are the draft plan out for public review, a Planning Policy Commission Public Hearing at the second meeting in August, 2024, to Council Committee for review, Committee of the Whole, and City Council adoption in December, 2024. Padua asked if there were additional questions or information requests.

COMMISSIONER KRASS, regarding question one, stated again that the language of consistency expressing what the city will and will not pursue will simplify. Regarding question two, showing what is different from the previous version is helpful.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that in Economic Vitality, A-1, small businesses such as in Olde Town and large employers such as Costco both need high quality customer service and asked for the opinion of the Economic Vitality Commission.

CHAIR VOISS stated that most comments were captured during the presentation.

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Padua asked for input to question three.

COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that language is important, and that to *meet housing needs* is something that will never be achieved; *meet* could be replaced with *prioritize*. Padua replied that the recommendation from the Affordable Housing Committee staff is represented in draft language to fully comply with the King County Planning Policies, and the intent is to prioritize 0 to 30% Average Median Income (AMI) housing needs. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the percentage is not the issue but rather the word *meet*. Padua replied that the word can be changed to *prioritize* if the Commission agrees. The Commission nodded heads in approval. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that some redundancy remains in the draft, in example listing 0 to 30% AMI. Padua replied that the primary reason for the recommendation from the Affordable Housing Committee staff was specifically because 0 to 30% AMI had not been called out before, a King County Planning Policy requirement.

Padua asked if the Commission is supportive of the new policy.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated being in support of COMMISSIONER KRASS and COMMISSIONER PATTERSON that prioritizing 0 to 30% AMI is addressed in other policy and stating that 0 to 30% is prioritized will mean that other percentages will be unprioritized; recognizing that 0 to 30% AMI could be recognized in the policy as having needs that need to be addressed. CHAIR VOISS asked if language could be revisited and Padua replied yes.

Padua asked for input to the next question regarding coordination with Sound Transit regarding connectivity and affordable housing.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if something can be learned from how other cities have implemented light rail stations. Padua replied that Sound Transit has a specific policy that requires that development around light rail stations include affordable housing. Council adopted a Light Rail Planning document early this year outlining everything in the Sound Transit process. CHAIR VOISS asked if looking at regional sister cities now implementing Sound Transit to modify data would be helpful to add. Padua replied that the idea is already included in the Planning Guide. CHAIR VOISS asked if the idea should be a policy goal in the Comprehensive Plan and Padua replied that the idea can, but staff will learn from other cities regardless. CHAIR VOISS stated that it may be important for the public to see in the Plan.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that Housing does not belong in the Transportation element, and that the location of light rail has already been planned for in the Central Issaquah Plan and the Urban Growth Center with mixed-use and high density, inclusionary housing. The city has already been upzoned to accommodate needs, and stated not believing the addition suggested is necessary. Language should revert back to the existing policy. Padua stated that the Central Issaquah Plan and city planning documents have not identified officially where a light rail station will be located. What has been learned from other cities is that when the planning effort for location begins, prior to Sound Transit starting, enforces community support.

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CHAIR VOISS stated that wording regarding research could be created as an addition to the Comprehensive Plan for review at the next presentation. Padua asked for feedback on potential placement in the Plan. COMMISSIONER KRASS replied that there are three placement options: to remain in Housing, in Transit, or remaining in Housing with a reference in Transit. Padua stated that a fourth option is if the Commission would like to make the change to the Policy as recommended by staff. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated agreement with keeping the original in Transportation with a separate mention in Housing. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that if the wording is that Issaquah will partner with Sound Transit regarding affordable housing, the implication is that Issaquah is going to allow Sound Transit to influence how land use is planned. To defer work to a transportation agency does not seem appropriate, and the work has already been done. Land use currently supports mass transit that serves the needs of affordability, mixed-use, and high density in the Urban Growth Center. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that the partnership allows time to develop the desired uses near the station. CHAIR VOISS stated that the addition would be regarding research and not for Sound Transit to dictate policy.

5. Reports

a) **Council Update (01:58)**

Padua stated that earlier this week, Council adopted the annual code amendments. There were two changes, one to the Heat Pump amendment and one to Pre-application Meetings.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) **Upcoming Schedule**

Padua stated that a new Planning intern, Madeline Nelson, was on the WebX call. The draft plan discussion would continue on August 8, 2024.

7. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary