



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, September 12, 2024

1. Call to Order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by CHAIR VOISS.

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

Absent:

Staff Present: Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D
Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
Madeline Nelson, Planning Intern
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager
Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner

2. Approval of Minutes

a) Minutes of August 22, 2024

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

3. Public Comments (General)

- **Ann Fletcher** was called but declined to speak.
- **Connie Marsh**, Squak Mountain, stated that current zoning does not allow for new housing ideas into place, and with that knowledge asked to know how the changes are going to occur.

4. Public Hearing (00:04)

a) **2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (A)**

Presented by Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

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CHAIR VOISS stated that there would not be deliberations or a recommendation at this time and that the purpose of the Public Hearing was to obtain public comment and to ask questions.

Padua presented the DEIS. A longer presentation had been given with the Consultant in August 2024.

CHAIR VOISS asked for questions from the Commissioners.

VICE-CHAIR BADER asked why Alternative Two is worded with most development occurring outside of Central Issaquah. Padua replied that a difference is that Alternative Two assumes that all Development Agreements are fully built out, while Alternative One only assumes partial build out. A vast number of Development Agreements are locating developments outside of Central Issaquah. Much additional growth is not anticipated between Alternatives One and Two in Central Issaquah.

CHAIR VOISS asked if capacity already exists for city targets, and Padua replied that the assumption in Alternative Three is within zones.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if any zoning will need to change or if zoning is in place, and Padua replied that all zoning is already in place and why there is no preferred alternative.

CHAIR VOISS opened the Public Hearing. (00:15)

- **Ann Fletcher**, 255 Southeast Andrew Street, stated that answers to Commissioner questions were helpful. The third growth option seems to be favored in the DEIS, and there may be another preferable alternative in between. Alternative Three comes with the highest amount of road improvement projects, a dollar amount seemingly unachievable for the Issaquah budget. More analysis regarding how walking, biking, and transit projects will reduce cars and emissions is needed. The City could augment Municipal Transit to fill any gap, possibly a better investment than additional road projects. Continued funding for Metro Flex would be another wise investment for neighborhoods to decrease vehicle miles traveled. The DEIS could further discuss the three alternatives regarding achieving transportation goals. The DEIS could make a better connection between growth variables and changes to reach greenhouse goals. The DEIS is reassuring but could also include how to mitigate challenges. A written comment had been submitted to staff regarding typographical errors.
- **Connie Marsh**, Squak Mountain, stated that there is zoning for buildable land, and also zoning for what is allowed in particular areas on the zoning map, both a part of the process. Developable units need to change in zoning use maps. Proposed transportation projects to mitigate impacts from alternative three are not realistic. The DEIS examples need to reflect reality in implementation, cost, and transportation. The focus of the DEIS should be what is wanted and realistically include climate, the

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environment, and the Mobility Master Plan, a functioning plan and not without direction.

CHAIR VOISS closed the Public Hearing.

5. Regular Business (00:26)

- a) Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Draft Deliberation (A)
Presented by Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

Padua gave the presentation. The Commission had voted to postpone deliberation at the last meeting until this meeting with more Commissioners in attendance.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification that staff is asking for other considerations as the draft introduction is prepared and stated that what is important to Issaquah citizens for the future should be included.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding the Agenda and Padua replied that the time for a main Motion prior to discussion will be indicated, and that each element of the Plan will be examined.

Leeson continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if budget concerns are a part of buying and planting trees, and Leeson replied that budget concerns are not a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Leeson and Padua concluded the presentation.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER PATTERSON to recommend approval of the proposed periodic amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as presented. MOTION seconded by VICE-CHAIR BADER.

Regarding the Introduction, CHAIR VOISS stated interest in how 1993 values will be worked in, helpful as a back story. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated being in favor of the approach of celebrating Issaquah past and future.

Regarding Land Use and Sustainability, VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that a minor language change could occur in policy B6, adding words *identify, protect, and* to the sentence *plant trees where they can thrive*. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated liking discussion items in other Elements under each header, but the Land Use Element does not include and would be helpful.

CHAIR VOISS asked Padua if an amendment would be needed for the Commission to recommend an addition such as the idea by VICE-CHAIR BADER, and Padua replied yes. CHAIR VOISS asked if the amendment should be made at the end and Padua replied no, amendments should be made as they come up.

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MOTION by VICE-CHAIR BADER to amend the Land Use Element to include discussion sections under each header. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification that formatting would be standardized to match other Elements and VICE-CHAIR BADER replied yes. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that the additions would be helpful context for users. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Pauda stated that VICE-CHAIR BADER had also suggested a change to Policy B-6 that would require an amendment.

MOTION by VICE-CHAIR BADER to amend Policy B6 of the Land Use Element to read *identify and protect trees within urban environments whose health is threatened by conditions such as limited root and canopy space, poor soil quality, inconsistent water, and various types of pollution and plant new trees where they can thrive*. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Regarding Housing, COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that on the first page, the third paragraph starting with the language *Unfortunately* does not add to objectives and is inconsistent with the rest of the document.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN to amend the Housing Element, removing the third paragraph starting with *Unfortunately* but maintaining the last sentence beginning with *Detailed analysis of historical inequities*. MOTION did not receive a second. The MOTION failed.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked for clarification that feedback has been given on the entire draft in past discussions and CHAIR VOISS replied yes, in different iterations, and the overall work of staff is what is being discussed at this point after the Public Hearing. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated agreement, but that the Commission deliberations have been focused on policy and policy changes and Introductions are new to the Commission. CHAIR VOISS replied that Motions, amendments, and deliberation can occur on any part. Padua replied that the full draft was released in July 2024, and that the conversation can continue but a final recommendation is hoped for at this meeting.

Regarding Transportation, there were no comments.

Regarding Environment and Climate Stewardship, CHAIR VOISS thanked the Environmental Board for thorough work on the Comprehensive Plan section. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked that the Public Comment regarding the DEIS be highlighted for Council. VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that there is not a specific Environmental Justice policy and asked if the Results and Accountability section is where the policy could be located, as all of the Elements could use the equity lens. Padua replied that staff can review, and that the lens of equity has been used to examine the Plan but not an Environmental Justice lens. CHAIR VOISS stated that the public is to have the benefit of hearing Commissioner questions.

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MOTION by VICE-CHAIR BADER to amend the Environmental Element to include an Environmental Justice policy in the Results and Accountability section. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER PATTERSON.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that leaving out a policy could potentially cause harm and gave an example of the previous amendment made to Land Use policy B6.

The MOTION passed unanimously.

MOTION by VICE-CHAIR BADER to amend all Elements to include a policy of Equity and Justice as a lens for success. MOTION did not receive a second. The MOTION failed.

Regarding Arts and Culture, CHAIR VOISS thanked the Cultural Board for great work. There were no comments.

Regarding Economic Vitality, CHAIR VOISS thanked the Economic Vitality Commission.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN to amend the Economic Vitality Element policy A1 to end at *efficient and predictable for all businesses*, and to add an additional policy A2, *cherish businesses that are small, local, historically lack capital, represent underserved communities, and are at the risk of displacement*. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER KENNEDY.

Padua stated that the last part of the policy was recommended by King County Planning staff to comply with King County Planning policy specific to the first and second parts fitting together and splitting the policy into two would change compliance.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the word *cherish* used in the amendment Motion can be changed, but that the policy should still be saturated with Comprehensive Plan goals, and asked Padua for clarification if the two are required to be together in a policy for a certified Plan. Padua replied that Issaquah would need to show how the King County Planning policies are being complied with, and if split apart, compliance would no longer exist.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked for clarification regarding why both need to be together. Padua replied to show that King County policy is being complied with, a requirement for Comprehensive Plan certification. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that a Comprehensive Plan should reflect community values such as small businesses described, and updates have been coming from other jurisdictions, County, State, and regional. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated agreement but that the Planning Policy Commission does not have the power to change the situation at this time, therefore not being in support of the amendment. COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated agreement with both Commissioners. Padua stated that the Planning Policy Commission can make a recommendation to split the policy in two, but staff will have to continue the conversation regarding how Issaquah will be compliant with King County policy. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that the concern is that wording may have unintended consequences in the future as VICE-CHAIR BADER mentioned earlier and amended the amendment Motion.

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MOTION by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN to request further consideration by City Council for policy A1 remaining combined. Padua replied that the suggestion does not require an amendment, and that the comment can be relayed by staff to City Council. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN revoked the previous amendment to the Motion, to be replaced by a request for staff to highlight policy A1 to City Council.

VICE-CHAIR BADER stated not being in support of separating policy A1, having worked in equity space, and huge employers have the power to not be pushed out as opposed to small businesses.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN thanked VICE-CHAIR BADER and stated trying to avoid consequences for the entire community.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification for staff that COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN was not asking for removal of the second portion but rather to break up as not dependent on each other.

Padua stated that because there is not a consensus on the Motion to request further consideration by City Council, a Motion is now needed to request. CHAIR VOISS asked for an informal show of hands and a majority was achieved.

Regarding Human Services, there were no comments.

Regarding Parks, CHAIR VOISS asked why the term *Green Necklace* is no longer used. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that intent is good but unrealistic in regard to connecting all parks together, the vision losing credibility. Padua replied that the intent of the Park System Plan is to figure out how the vision will become reality. COMMISSIONER KRASS and CHAIR VOISS stated being skeptical but hopeful.

Regarding Utilities, Public Services, and Capital Facilities, there were no comments.

CHAIR VOISS asked for any remaining comments regarding any Element. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated appreciation to staff for work and the manner of presentations showing updates and keeping focus and organization, as well as to Boards, Commissions, and the voices of the community. The Commissioners stated agreement.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked if Element introductions have been deliberated enough. VICE-CHAIR BADER asked if there was more extensive consideration by Boards or Commissions to certain elements not reviewed thoroughly by the Planning Policy Commission. Padua replied that the Utilities element was brought to the Planning Policy Commission in 2023 regarding vision goals and policies. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN stated that pieces were examined but the introduction paragraphs may not have been as thoroughly reviewed. COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that in summary, introductions were not formally reviewed as a Commission in a meeting, in packets but not in open comments, and that a recommendation to City Council to formally review the introductions as part of the full

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review could be made. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what the level of importance of introductions is, possibly lower priority.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN that City Council give Element introductions a formal review deeper than the Planning Policy Commission has in deliberations. MOTION seconded by COMMISSIONER KRASS. The MOTION passed unanimously.

CHAIR VOISS asked for any additional comments and there were none. Padua confirmed that three amendments had been approved.

CHAIR VOISS asked for a vote to recommend the approval of the proposed periodic Comprehensive Plan with three approved amendments. The MOTION passed unanimously.

Padua stated appreciation to Commissioners for dedicating free time to the work.

- b) **Light Rail Visioning (D) (01:39)**
Presented by Thomas Valdriz, Senior Transportation Planner

Valdriz gave the presentation.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if the idea of vibrant housing nearby was not mentioned in the vision by design, and that a guiding principle could be leveraging Best Practices from other communities. Valdriz replied that Housing was not intentionally left out of the vision statement but can be added, and that Best Practices will be looked into.

COMMISSIONER PATTERSON stated that vision and principles are well defined and comprehensive, and suggested ensuring specific focus on sustainability and environmental impacts in the guiding principles and not only vision, such as sustainable infrastructure and green spaces.

COMMISSIONER KENNEDY stated that parking will be a huge aspect, Issaquah being at the start and end of the line for surrounding areas to commute to Seattle.

COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN asked where right-size parking is in the document. Valdriz replied that balancing needs is mentioned in the document and right-size parking is a part of this equation. A parking study will be conducted shortly and other creative resolutions such as better transit connections are also being considered. COMMISSIONER MILLIGAN suggested that parking could be not at the station but on the other side of an economic center such as the San Francisco Ferry Station and Grand Central Station, the transportation there but also a place for economic vitality and community building.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked for the approximate completion date and Valdriz replied that based on information to date, that light rail is expected as early as 2041 or 2044. Discussions will begin in approximately two years.

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VICE-CHAIR BADER stated that Talus and Squak will not have easy access without a car to the light rail station and asked how car trips can be reduced, and stated liking language used in the vision and guiding principles but not liking the phrase *community connections*.

Dhaliwal made a comment not captured in audio, but Valdriz clarified that the comment was regarding Metro Flex, and stated that there should be better bus connections to serve the station.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if Issaquah will be the end of the line always or if there are plans to extend further east in the future. Valdriz replied that the latest planning documents show Issaquah as the end of the line.

CHAIR VOISS stated that Issaquah will be in the unique position of being at the end of the line and with different challenges than other stations and asked what could make the Issaquah station stand out. Companies such as Amazon and Microsoft could be leveraged to make the Issaquah station the highest tech and the most sustainable. CHAIR VOISS asked about safety and maintenance with Issaquah becoming a major hub.

5. Reports

a) Council Update (2:04)

Padua stated that Culture Fest was well attended, and thanked Madeline Nelson, Planning Intern, for helping to organize the booth.

Padua stated that Council will be given a presentation on September 16, 2024 regarding the ARCH Work Plan and Budget.

6. Other Business/Announcements

a) Upcoming Schedule

Padua stated that the next meeting in September, 2024 has been cancelled.

CHAIR VOISS stated that interviews for Commission seats will be conducted in the next month.

7. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary