



MINUTES

PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION 6:30 p.m. – Thursday, June 25, 2026

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 Patterson, Commissioners Adair, Krass, Matthews, and Zakharoff
Absent:	Commissioners Millender-Irwin (Unexcused) and Oliner (Excused)
Staff Present:	Andrew Bjorn, Senior Planner, A Regional Coalition of Housing (ARCH) Minnie Dahliwal, CP&D Director Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner Christen Leeson, Planning Manager Emily Medina, Senior Planner

2. Approval of Minutes

With no comments or corrections, the Minutes from May 28, 2026 were approved.

With no comments or corrections, the Minutes from June 11, 2026 were approved.

3. Public Comments (General)

- **Carl Shorett**, AvalonBay Communities, stated that current regulatory framework is not producing housing at the pace needed, documented in the EcoNorthwest report. The current inclusionary program needs recalibration for market conditions of today. The suggestion for staff was a recalibrated Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program more broadly applicable with 10% set aside at 80% Average Median Income (AMI) and without permanent affordability. The density bonus program needs recalibration so that incentives are real.
- **Kristi Tripple**, Rowley Properties, stated support for the comments of Carl Shorett, and expressed interest in the broader future of Issaquah housing. Rowley Properties had agreed with EcoNorthwest findings, were disappointed that recommended additional

analysis was not pursued, and stated that policies and incentives are common sense tools to achieve housing goals and send the right message to the development community. Regarding Urban Village land use designation purpose language edits, Rowley Properties is not aligned with the proposed change and are requesting that language remain the same as in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan for legal Development Agreement reasons.

4. Regular Business

a) Comprehensive Plan Amendment Proposal Review (D) (00:12)

1) Land Use Designations Descriptions

2) Residential Designation/Zone Name Clarifications

Presented by:

Kate Kaehny, Principal Planner

Emily Medina, Senior Planner

Kaehny began the presentation with Land Use Designation Descriptions.

COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF asked for clarification regarding the public comment concerning 2021 Comprehensive Plan language changing. Kaehny replied that according to her understanding there had not been a 2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment but perhaps another type of ordinance. COMMISSIONER ZAKHAROFF stated understanding concern by developers regarding the Urban Village description, and that previous language was clearer. Kaehny replied that the Commissioners can provide input and will have more time to consider. Leeson replied that all Land Use designation descriptions were removed from in the 2015 version of the Comprehensive Plan. COMMISSIONER ZAKAROFF asked about specific information that may have been removed and Kaehny replied that information attributed to 2021 in the public comment is exactly the same as 2014 Comprehensive Plan language however the difference is that the same language raised in public comment is provided as information and not provided as part of the Urban Village land use designation intent statement, and that staff is open to any suggestions.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if Highlands and Talus are no longer Urban Villages or part of a development agreement. Leeson replied that the Development Agreements ended in 2018, becoming part of regular Land Use code, not zoned Urban Village but as Issaquah Highlands and Talus. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked if the names need to be called out in language, and Leeson replied that they are neighborhoods on the neighborhood map now. VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that Highlands and Talus are mentioned in a left side column and could be removed and Kaehny replied yes, to bring up to date.

Medina continued the presentation with Residential Designation/Zone Name Clarifications.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked if there were an overlay map and Medina replied no.

CHAIR VOISS stated that the proposals are straightforward.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that calling out the Regional Core Urban Growth centers would make sense, but also adding *and other neighborhoods* as presented. Kaehny asked if

these should be discussed as centers, and VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON stated that more wordsmithing would be helpful.

Kaehny gave next steps.

b) **Promoting Building Investment Code Amendments (D)
Introduction to Floor Area Ratios (FAR), Inclusionary Zoning, and
Development Bonus Program (00:49)**

Presented by:

Christen Leeson, Planning Manager

Andrew Bjorn, Senior Planner, ARCH

Leeson began the presentation.

Bjorn continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS asked if 30% is a typical percentage across the country for housing at 100% AMI. Bjorn replied that the desirable amount for housing is 30% including rent or mortgages, utilities; above 30%, households are considered to be cost-burdened and 50% is considered severely cost-burdened. Leeson stated that there is a housing analysis in the Comprehensive Plan Appendix with the information and also stated that Bjorn is now in the position that Mike Stanger retired from.

Leeson continued with FAR.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked for clarification regarding percentages and fee-in-lieu. Leeson replied with examples.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what percent of developments across the region stay at the base requirement versus going higher and if complicated incentives are necessary. Leeson replied that most ARCH jurisdiction cities have the program and the incentives have been taken advantage of, but the question being asked with this presentation for Commissioners is if the incentives should remain in place after analysis. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked what has actually been done with existing data and Leeson replied that Bjorn would be addressing the question later in the presentation and that costs have changed since it was last addressed.

Leeson continued with Inclusionary Zoning and the Pioneer Program.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there are any projects currently being developed in the situation described and Leeson replied no. COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if there is an understanding of why there has been no participation in the last three years and Leeson replied that the question will be part of the conversation.

CHAIR VOISS asked for clarification that the Pioneer Program expires after two projects and Leeson replied correct.

Leeson continued the presentation.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR asked if fee waiving is on specific units only and Leeson replied correct, and that fee waivers for MFTE are for all residential units, market rate and affordable.

Leeson and Bjorn continued regarding the 2023 EcoNorthwest report.

Leeson stated that the subject would come back to the Commission at the end of August.

CHAIR VOISS stated that policy is not being discussed but only clarifying questions being asked at this point.

COMMISSIONER KRASS asked if existing rental unit stock could become affordable housing, a broader picture instead of only looking at new development. Leeson replied that in 2021 an inventory of rental units was conducted to bring to agencies to purchase to preserve existing affordable housing units, but funding and property owners willing to not sell to a developer for more money have been an issue. COMMISSIONER KRASS stated that new development may make existing development less expensive. Bjorn replied that targets can feel impossible, that filtering is a trend, but that more needs to be done to promote conditions necessary for development to occur.

CHAIR VOISS asked if ARCH had purchased an Issaquah property in the past and Leeson replied yes, funded in part by ARCH but also the General Fund.

COMMISSIONER ADAIR stated that all economic levers should be kept in mind, and that conglomerates own several buildings across regions creating monopolies. Bjorn replied that there will not only be a housing strategy but an economic development strategy.

COMMISSIONER MATTHEWS asked why townhouses are being built when condominiums are prohibitive by state law, the difference. Bjorn replied that there have been recent changes allowing unit lot subdivisions to replace condominium style ownership models, profitable to build and liability not as severe for townhomes. CHAIR VOISS replied that a developer had reported that renting multi-family units was preferred while townhomes are sellable.

VICE-CHAIR PATTERSON asked for clarification that AMI is considered market-rate housing. Bjorn replied no, based on median family income and not individuals and that homeowners typically are higher AMI than renters, an arbitrary number for studies and limits and projected from previous years data.

5. Reports

a) Council Update (01:47)

Dhaliwal detailed items to be brought to Council on Monday, June 29, 2026, and current construction projects.

6 Other Business/Announcements

a) Upcoming Schedule

06-25-26 Planning Policy Commission Meeting Minutes

Leeson stated that Trailhead is about to break ground, and a ceremony will be held on July 30, 2026.

Leeson stated that Commissioners can communicate regarding "Excused Absence" labels. CHAIR VOISS stated that staff needs notice of five days in order to ensure a quorum.

7. Adjournment

CHAIR VOISS adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary