



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Amy Buckler
(360) 570-5847

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, February 11, 2013

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Paul Ingman, Commissioner Agnieszka Kiswa, Commissioner James Reddick, Commissioner Amy Tousley, Chair Jerome Parker, Vice Chair Judy Bardin, and Commissioner Larry Leveen

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Rob Richards

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Ingman requested to change the order of sponsor proposals so that Urban Green Space is first and Neighborhoods are discussed in advance of High Density Corridors.

Commissioner Leveen moved, seconded by Commissioner Tousley, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Parker highlighted several elements of the meeting packet, including a useful accounting of decisions made to date, detailed minutes from the last Leadership Team meeting, a draft transmittal process for Commissioners to review, a staff-prepared compilation of responses to information requests and memos on various topics of interest. He encouraged Commissioners to review the documents in full and to contact staff for assistance.

5. QUESTION TIME

Planning Manager Todd Stamm clarified that the Buildable Lands Report includes a detailed list of assumptions. He noted the data in the report relies on some analysis of trends and assumptions. Examples of assumptions include what is known about the location of critical areas and what is allowed under certain zoning designations.

Mr. Stamm clarified that, while not in the July Draft, the concept of "nodes" is an important outcome of the work of the Urban Corridor Task Force (UCTF). The inclusion of urban corridors in the July Draft was carried over from the existing 1994 Comprehensive Plan; however, the concept of nodes had not evolved yet out of the UCTF when the July Draft was released.

Mr. Stamm confirmed that an Urban Corridor Focus Area is virtually the same as an Urban Corridor. Focus areas are identifying areas for further study and focus; an area within a corridor that would have more planning work and analysis done on it.

Transportation Planner Sophie Stimson informed Commissioners that the Challenge Grant focus area for Olympia is Martin Way. Staff is currently working to understand barriers to redevelopment, including elements such as infrastructure, transportation, and stormwater. Ms. Stimson noted staff is still developing the scope of the project in partnership with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), and will likely have a product to share in March.

Mr. Stamm explained staff is not suggesting the zoning in the Capital District urban corridor should be changed at this time. There is a designated neighborhood center, which may include more housing in the future and currently allows for the existing commercial, but the center wouldn't necessarily require a rezone. He noted it is not a forgone conclusion that an "urban corridor" designation means the properties within will be rezoned to accommodate higher densities; that particular designation has been in place for over 18 years without a change in zoning.

Mr. Stamm clarified that if a parcel less than 5 acres is being developed, there is discretion in the granting of waivers in meeting a required minimum density. An Example cited is when a property owner has a 1/5-acre parcel in a zone that requires a minimum of 7 units per acre. Building a single-family home on the parcel that is 1/5-acre meets the intent of requiring density. Complete exemptions apply to parcels one acre or less.

Mr. Stamm noted that in urban corridors, the minimum density zoned is rarely reached through infill development on single-family parcels. Predominantly it is reached through large new developments. The 7 units per acre cited as a minimum density to support transit is more clearly applied to new, or "greenfield" developments.

Mr. Stamm clarified that in the Buildable Lands Report, a house sitting on one acre or less is considered developed, and there is not an expectation that there will be any additional density added to that lot.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

[13-0111](#) Final Deliberations on the Comprehensive Plan Update

Chair Parker described time limits for each of the topics to be deliberated on tonight: 30 minutes for Urban Green Space; 60 minutes for High Density Corridors; and 30 minutes for other Non-Consent items. He reiterated that if a decision cannot be reached, the item

will either move to the next meeting or be noted in the Commission's recommended Work Plan to be submitted to Council.

Topic - #B1 Urban Green Space

The sponsor, Vice Chair Bardin, described her proposal. The focus was on green spaces apart from parks and open space for health, psychological, and social justice benefits. Vice Chair Bardin noted the Commission had in front of them revised language from the last time this topic was discussed.

Commission Discussion:

- Policy #3 should be listed as the first policy under the goal language.
- The goals and policies would be new language and not replacing any existing language in the July Draft; possibly within a new section titled "Urban Green Space" in the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter.
- Concern expressed that the policies include performance measures and about how those measures would be achieved; in particular by what means would additional open space be dedicated or acquired?
- Key provisions within the policy language are accessibility and establishment of performance targets.
- Tree canopy may be better addressed through sub-area planning, as it can vary throughout the City. Can anticipate challenges in implementation of expansion in certain areas.
- Suggestion made that Commissioners present proposed language exactly as it would appear in the Draft, and within the proposed context.
- Population increases need to be met with a constant ratio of green space to people through planting of more trees and limiting the removal of trees.
- A clearer definition of "green space" is needed; clarify that this isn't the traditional definition of open space so that it is clear that implementation can and should happen in a variety of ways. Example cited: funding the street tree program.
- Concern about who is providing the green space to meet the policies; existing development, new development, or both? Sponsor noted it should be a combination and that a variety of tools should be used, such as acquiring land and requiring it be set aside through private development.
- Language has same meaning as "require," in that it states "provide."
- Requirement should apply to all new development, including infill in the downtown, like townhouses.
- Concern noted that the City has a fixed amount of space and an increasing population; at some point it becomes impossible to continue to expand open space.
- Concern expressed that much of the existing tree canopy and urban green space is on private property and would require more extensive restrictions on removal or development to retain. Sponsor noted the environmental benefits of retaining trees.
- Concern expressed for how to define a maximum walking time. Walk speeds differ widely among the population. Sponsor noted the policies also include a combination of visual distance and accessibility, and that the Commission may wish to establish an average walking time.
- Concern expressed for how this might apply to already-developed areas.

- Discussion on how widely the goal and policies apply to residential areas, but instead may be focused more on new development and downtown. There may be adequate green space in residential neighborhoods.
- Further definition needed as to whether green space must be public.
- Add to the goal language: "Urban green space is *available to the public and located* throughout the community..."
- Move policy #3 to position #1.
- Remove the word "current" from policy #4.
- Remove "and maintain" from policy #2. Sponsor noted that maintain is purposely included to ensure no net loss of walking time. Other policies fulfill this intent.
- Concern about focus on walking time; sponsor noted current literature cites walking as the most effective metric.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, that the proposed Urban Green Space goal and policy language reflect the following:

Urban Green Space is available to the public and located throughout the community and incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, which are easily accessible and viewable so that people can experience nature daily and nearby.

1. Provide urban green spaces in which to spend time. Include such elements as trees, garden spaces, variety of vegetation, water features, green walls and roofs, and seating.
2. Provide urban green spaces that are in people's immediate vicinity and can be enjoyed or viewed from a variety of perspectives.
3. Establish a maximum walking time to urban green space for all community members.
4. Increase the per capita area of urban green space and the tree canopy-to-area ratio within each neighborhood.
5. Establish urban green space between transportation corridors and adjacent areas.

Commissioner Leveen moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, to amend Policy #3 to remove the words "walking time" and replace with "distance."

The motion, with the proposed amendment, passed unanimously.

Topic - #A3 High Density Corridors

The sponsor, Commissioner Ingman, described his proposal. The intent is to create high density neighborhoods in three designated areas: downtown, Pacific/Martin Way, and the Capital Mall area. This will encourage and direct growth in those areas, and limit it elsewhere. He said he believes urban corridors encourage auto-dependence and does not believe existing residential areas should densify any more. The result would be beneficial environmentally and revitalizing for downtown. Denser areas would be designed and developed and "green cities."

Commission Discussion:

- Don't focus higher densities along the connections between focus areas, where there are existing low-density neighborhoods. Portland, Seattle, and Tacoma have destroyed their single-family residential areas by allowing density to occur in those areas.
- Proposed policy P4 doesn't reflect current best practices for establishing green bike lanes.
- Agreement expressed for concept of separate bike lanes from traffic with a physical barrier.
- Support expressed for prioritizing where growth occurs through phasing or establishing a sequence; but unsure about elimination of corridor concept.
- Concern expressed about residents being forced to live on corridors due to the negative health impacts.
- High Density Corridors conflict with neighborhoods that are walkable, bike-friendly, and without traffic. Concern that neighborhoods will become commercialized.
- Alternate wording proposed: direct growth and density into specific focus areas (i.e. the "node" approach).
- Concern that Urban Corridors promote strip development, encroach on neighborhoods, and contribute to the extinction of social and family structures in neighborhoods.
- Downtown should be recognized as having multiple distinct neighborhoods.
- Recollection noted that members of the public testifying were not in favor of high density corridors, particularly the Carlyon neighborhood.
- Request that the sponsor clarify what language in the July Draft should be proposed for removal; noted caution when potentially inserting contradictory policies in the plan.
- Literature on great streetscapes highlights examples of continuous high density development along streetscapes in Europe that are desirable; there is a difference between intense, positive development and strip malls with streetside parking.
- Concern that removing services from neighborhoods will create auto-dependence. Sufficient density and services are needed to make an area walkable.
- Dense vegetative buffers are contrary to walkable neighborhoods; they extend the distance that pedestrians need to travel and don't support walkability.
- Concern about the potential implication of adoption nodes, which may require down-zoning in areas where the existing zoning has been in place since 1994 or earlier. Sub-area planning may be better tool for addressing these issues.
- Clarification by the sponsor that the Pacific/Martin Way focus area would include the Lilly Road area.
- Discussion on how this proposal is a significant reversal from the work being done regionally by the Urban Corridors Task Force (UCTF).
- Concern about the proposal to wholly reconfigure the street standards for major arterials. Cost is a concern.
- Proposed 1/4 mile width of the existing High Density Corridors should be reduced. Doesn't make sense on a 20-year time frame; perhaps more appropriate for 50 years.
- There may be potential for other nodes than the three listed in the proposal; perhaps look at prioritizing those three. Can prioritize nodes, but don't make arterials unavailable to commercial development, and residential above commercial development.
- Mr. Stamm highlighted two documents as touchstones related to urban corridors: Regional Transportation Plan and the County-wide Planning Policies. The concept of urban corridors isn't so much formal agreement with other jurisdictions and planning entities, but reflects the work of the UCTF, which is composed of elected officials and has been moving towards

implementation of the corridors concept. A thorough explanation would be needed if Olympia were to change direction after the time and effort exerted on the UCTF regional planning process.

- Mr. Stamm highlighted that the July Draft focuses on the same three areas noted in the proposal. It acknowledges that the targets and goals for other areas are tempered a great deal by the fact that they are already developed. The substantial shift in the proposal before the Commission appears to be in how much growth would be accepted outside the focus areas; this is a significant shift in how we accommodate residential growth.

- Chair Parker noted there are details that remain to be addressed. There seems to be an overall consensus for language about prioritizing areas for density, and if language were to be added, it is clearly identified where in the July Draft and if changes are needed elsewhere to maintain consistency.

- Vice Chair Bardin made a motion to accept the proposed policy language with removal of policy #3 and the language "green bike lanes" to be substituted with "cycle tracks" or "greenways." The motion died for lack of a second.

- Recommendation was made to form a sub-committee to refine the proposal language. Sub-committee should focus on the two concepts of nodes and a phased approach to density along the corridors.

Chair Parker moved, seconded by Vice Chair Bardin, to establish a sub-committee to address high density corridors by encapsulating tonight's discussion and ensuring a good fit with what's in the July Draft.

The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Kizza, who was participating by phone, was no longer present at the meeting.

Chair Parker, Vice Chair Bardin, and Commissioners Ingman, Richards, and Leveen volunteered for the sub-committee. It was agreed that Chair Parker will make a determination on the final four sub-committee members.

Topic - #A3 Future Land Use Map

The sponsor, Commissioner Horn, explained his proposal regarding changes in the Future Land Use Map in the July Draft. He requested discussion on the potential loss of light industrial zoned areas, and specifically noted South Bay, Kaiser Road south of Highway 101, and near Watershed Park at the I-5 exit. He also requested discussion on the proposal to change the existing zoning of the capital campus to General Commercial and the existing LOTT designation from Industrial to Urban Waterfront.

Commissioner Horn agreed to return to the topic at a later date after he has drafted a specific proposal.

Topic - #A3 LU12.4: Plan for redevelopment of the Stoll Road areas and that area bounded by Lilly Road, Pacific Avenue and I-5 as 'focus areas' adjacent to the Pacific Avenue and Martin Way urban corridors to include retail, office, personal and professional services and high density housing with a minimum residential density of about 15 units per acre; planning

for these areas should encompass consideration of redevelopment and improvement of nearby portions of the urban corridor.

The sponsor, Commissioner Horn, explained his proposal. He wished to remove the language: "...with a minimum residential density of 15 units per acre" to allow for more flexibility. Density may be reached in a small area; including a threshold implies the entire area needs to meet 15 units per acre. He would like it to be less defined.

Commission Discussion:

- Concern expressed that there won't be a threshold to determine if density of 15 units per acre is being met.
- The proposed revision supports allowing clustering and corridor planning.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, to approve removal of the language: "...with a minimum residential density of 15 units per acre..." from LU12.4.

The motion passed unanimously.

Topic - #B2 Low Impact Development/Cluster Subdivision

The sponsor, Commissioner Tousley, described her proposal. She noted no proposed amendments, however, wanted to highlight for Commissioners having gone through the exercise of identifying what goals and policies in the July Draft support low impact development. Commissioners noted being pleased with the existing framework and feel implementation will be key.

Commission Discussion:

- Feels like the concept of "clustering" is an area that could have been better communicated to the public. The existing language may not best meet the intent, which is for areas where there is an environmental or low-impact development benefit. Agreement with the concept.
- Commissioner Tousley is commended for her thorough work.
- Highlighted the need for an index in the plan.
- Discussion about whether the July Draft adequately addresses the concerns of the Westbrook neighborhood. Sub-area planning will also be important in addressing concerns.
- Concern expressed that perhaps Commissioners are relying too greatly on the sub-area planning process.
- Only one policy, PL13.3, addresses clustering specifically.
- The term "clustering" can be easily misunderstood; recommend additional language that better describes the intent, such as: "...clustering that fits with the surrounding development," or "compatible with the surrounding neighborhood".
- Clustering, if allowed, needs to fit with the character of the surrounding community.
- Clustering should be allowed, not just encouraged.

Chair Parker moved, seconded by Commissioner Leveen, to approve the proposed language for PL13.3: Allow clustering of housing compatible with the adjacent community to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Commissioner Leveen moved to amend the motion to replace "community" with "neighborhood." Chair Parker accepted the amendment.

Chair Parker moved to approve the amended motion to approve PL13.3: Allow clustering of housing compatible with the adjacent neighborhood to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

The motion passed unanimously.

Topic - #9 Floodways

The sponsor, Chair Parker, described his proposal. PN6.5 in the Natural Environment Chapter should be revised so as not to give the impression that preserving floodways is solely to qualify for flood insurance.

Commission Discussion:

- Planning Manager Todd Stamm explained restoration can increase flooding ("friction"). The intent of the policy is to recognize that restoration is desirable; however, not so far that we endanger our ability to acquire flood insurance. In theory, we could do so much restoration in floodways that they are unable to accommodate anticipated water levels associated with flooding.
- Staff noted no concerns with the language proposed by Chair Parker.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, to approve the proposed revised language to PN6.5: Retain and restore floodways in a natural condition.

The motion passed 5-0. Chair Parker, Vice Chair Bardin, and Commissioners Tousley, Ingman, and Reddick voted in favor; Commissioners Horn and Leveen abstained. Commissioner Kizza was no longer present.

Topic - #B6 Public Participation

The sponsor, Commissioner Horn, noted that in some cases requiring applicants to meet with affected community members and organizations may be appropriate, and in other cases, just encouraging is appropriate. Staff should have the flexibility to make the appropriate choice.

Commission Discussion:

- Concern with including a policy with a split directive.
- Details can be further defined within how the policy is implemented; can establish a threshold or other criteria for requiring a meeting.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Chair Parker, to approve the revision as proposed by Commissioner Horn to PP3.3, inserting the language "or require" in the second sentence, so that the policy reads: Provide opportunities for citizens, neighborhoods, and other interested parties to get involved early and in the land use decision-making process. Encourage or require applicants to meet with affected community members and organizations.

The motion passed unanimously.

The recommendations were discussed and closed.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[13-0108](#) Approval of May 21, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Bardin asked that the third sentence in the first paragraph on page 5 of 10 be stricken: "Commissioner Bardin said she's somewhat confused based on advice from legal staff that the Commission should be rendering decisions based on public comments."

Commissioner Horn moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Horn, Commissioner Reddick, Chair Parker, Vice Chair Bardin and Commissioner Leveen

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Kisza

Abstained: 2 - Commissioner Ingman and Commissioner Tousley

[13-0082](#) Approval of December 17, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Strike the sentence that reads: "Move to release introduction to Comprehensive Plan and Vision and Values section to the public for comment" under item 12-0844 on page 3 of 5.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Vice Chair Bardin, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Commissioner Horn, Commissioner Ingman, Commissioner Reddick, Commissioner Tousley, Chair Parker, Vice Chair Bardin and Commissioner Leveen

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Kisza

[13-0109](#) Approval of January 14, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Correct the typo "buffeted" to read "buffered" on page 4. Correct the typo "Re-adjourned" to read "reconvened" on page 9. Under the section titled "Topic #B1 - Urban Green Space," add the header "Commission Discussion" after the first paragraph. Strike the second paragraph from the bottom of page 11.

Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Reddick, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Commissioner Horn, Commissioner Ingman, Commissioner Reddick, Commissioner Tousley, Chair Parker and Vice Chair Bardin

Excused: 1 - Commissioner Kisza

Abstained: 1 - Commissioner Leveen

8. REPORTS

Commissioner Reddick reported on recent activities by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC). He noted PRAC is exploring the development of a new skateboarding park, and is seeking input from local and regional skateboarders. The current skate park in Yauger Park, while modern at the time of construction, is aging, and the users are requesting something that adheres to current standards. PRAC has also been exploring new, temporary locations for the Sunrise Dog Park, and development of a downtown park at the Artesian Well. A design concept for the Artesian site is moving forward.

Commissioner Horn reported on recent and upcoming activities by the Planning Commission Finance Sub-Committee. He reminded Commissioners of an upcoming City Council Finance Committee meeting at which Commissioner Horn believes Council may provide additional guidance for the Sub-Committee. He would like to begin work on what the Sub-Committee will accomplish this year.

Commissioner Horn also expressed concern about Chair Parker's upcoming vacation, and the ability of the Planning Commission Vision and Values Sub-Committee to complete their work. He suggested two meetings; one during the current week, and one on Wednesday of the following week to wrap up. Associate Planner Amy Buckler noted staff will need to issue notice of the meeting five days in advance and requested that Commissioners plan accordingly.

Vice Chair Bardin reported she continues to keep the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) updated on the Commission's final deliberations. To assist the Vision and Values Sub-Committee, UAC staff suggested reviewing language in the July Draft, as well as existing master plans. Vice Chair Bardin highlighted that the UAC is seeking community members to adopt drains to prevent street flooding, and discussion continued on an update to the Solid Waste Plan.

Chair Parker provided an update on the activities of the Commission's Leadership Team; he noted minutes from the prior meeting are in the Commission's packet. The key issue being discussed currently is how to transmit the Commission's final recommendations to the City Council. He noted the Commission will have the opportunity to advise Council on work plan priorities; the preference is to have those prepared by July to fit within Council's budgeting process.

Chair Parker and Vice Chair Bardin continue to discuss and seek to understand the role of the Commission in development of the Action Plan. It is Chair Parker's understanding that the first phase of the Action Plan will primarily address actions from the existing plan; recommendations from Commissioners are to be incorporated in the future.

Lastly, Chair Parker is still seeking suggestions from Commissioners for how to move more rapidly through final deliberations; he suggested online submittals that are in keeping with the Open Public Meetings Act. The procedures are always up for discussion as needed. Ms. Buckler noted staff will continue to work with Chair Parker to help ensure all items pulled from the consent agenda are put before the Commission for a motion. Ms. Buckler also reminded Commissioners there will be an opportunity for a final motion and vote on all recommendations made to date at the last final deliberation meeting on March 18.

OTHER TOPICS/ INFORMATION

[13-0136](#) Leadership Team Notes from February 1, 2013

The report was received.

[13-0137](#) Memo RE: Planning Commission Recommendation 'Transmittal'
to City Council

The report was received.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.