

Comprehensive Plan Design Subcommittees
November 4, 2011, 12-1:30 p.m.
1900 Building, Suite 7100, CR 7A
Meeting Minutes

Welcome and introduction

Marty Stockton began by informing the CIC that their help is needed with the Comp Plan process.

Our challenges

Sandra Wood went over the Comp Plan timeline, and summarized what the Comp Plan was, as well as how it differed from the Portland Plan. Sandra explained that the Comp Plan is primarily about the physical development of the City, while many aspects of Portland Plan are non-physical. Background reports and other system plans are adopted as supporting documents for the Comp Plan. Some things are required by State mandate, while, for example, Parks is included as a public facility by the choice of the City. The City wants to exceed State requirements. At this point, Sandra continued, we are not sure whether it is worth calling out with the public about what is required and what is not.

Paul Leistner with Office of Neighborhood Involvement responded that the most important thing is simply showing the scope of the work.

Stanley Penkin asked how existing plans, such as the Climate Action Plan, will fit into the new Comp Plan. It is important for public to understand how these various plans mesh. Sandra replied that many of these plans are adopted by resolution, and are changeable. The Comp Plan serves to get us on the same page. The Streetcar and Bicycle plans were never looked at side-by-side, thus situations like a bike not traveling well on a streetcar track will need to be considered. The Comp Plan will help optimize the relationship between disparate projects. The Portland Plan is bigger than just a City plan, and many public agency partners are included in the scope. There will be strategic use of resources and defining and ranking objectives. The equity framework is followed by the three strategies of Economic Opportunity and Affordability, Healthy Connected City (HCC) and Thriving Educated Youth.

Deborah Stein stated that the Portland Plan is composed of guiding policies as well as 5-year action plans. There are lots of policy goals. The Comp Plan will help implement some things, but there are other paths to implement Portland Plan goals, such as intergovernmental agreements, budget instructions and partners.

Marty pointed out that the Portland Plan will be adopted by resolution, while the Comp Plan will be adopted by ordinance. Many directions from the Portland Plan will integrate into the Comp Plan.

Deborah mentioned that HCC's hubs and greenways are the clearest Comp Plan implementation. A lot of people in the community are interested in Comp Plan details.

Paul said that the Comp Plan has legal weight. The Comp Plan will have the most staying power amongst planning documents over administration changes.

Sandra noted that they are creating the Comp Plan for 2035. It is unrealistic to think that it will be perfect as is, and will be updated as things change, just as the Zoning Code gets updated over time. They are not envisioning crossing out one policy in favor of another. A new yet-to-be-developed structure might work better to handle amendments.

Stanley asked if there is a sense as to the public's reaction to proposed draft of the Portland Plan. Marty answered that there has been very little public testimony so far. Many groups will be testifying at the Planning and Sustainability Commission hearing at Jefferson High School. We know the content of some of their comments now, based on Marty's recent Portland Plan presentation to the Human Rights Commission. There was a little panic expressed as to the density of the document, and to their ability to provide quick, comprehensive and organized feedback. They, and others, may push back as to extending deadlines for testimony. Debbie Bischoff added that she has received feedback stating that there is not enough focus on small local businesses.

Paul asked about the implications of hubs; are they good for individual neighborhoods?

Ryan Schera wondered if the economic development section was too general. He suggested pointing folks toward PDC projects. Just because it is not in the Plan doesn't mean there aren't efforts to help them. Debbie said there is a big focus on large industry and traded sector; we may need to look at HCC more.

Stanley asked what would happen with the Comp Plan if there is significant pushback on the Portland Plan. Sandra responded that the PSC will evaluate testimony to see if there is heat or weight to a particular area. Deborah said that the biggest challenge with the Comp Plan is the timeline, which is constricted due to the Portland Plan going over its own timeline. The public has waited for the Comp Plan for quite a while, and some are frustrated with the delays. We have asked for and received extensions, but the deadline of 18 months for completion of the Comp Plan is looking pretty firm.

Sandra said that the community and planners are both looking forward to action. It is a big deadline, but it might have the positive impact of moving us forward. We are not starting from scratch; we have at least 20% to start with.

Deborah said that the District Liaisons are prime content developers. They have been in the community for years, dealing with zoning mismatches, etc. We need to collect this info and carry it forward into the Comp Plan. Deborah agreed with Sandra's statement that they are not starting from scratch. It is also good to get a fresh look at these topics and update them based on current conditions.

Ryan asked if the Comp Plan team was anticipating lots of rezoning. Deborah responded that there won't be much rezoning that takes place in the 18 month process, but they will revisit it later. Public expectations are big; some neighborhoods feel that they've been on the list for years for projects large and small. The Portland Plan has led to bigger expectations; unless expectations are properly set, there will likely be internal and external disappointment because of the realities of what we can achieve in 18 months. Paul mentioned that it would be good to explain that the 18th month is not a cliff. Change will continue after the Comp Plan gets published.

Deborah stated that another challenge concerns geographic and topic issues. How do we bring them together into a coherent format that is easy to communicate? As we think of advisory groups, public events etc, we have to decide how to address them. An example is shortage of industrial land. Some people consider it a citywide issue, while others consider it just a Columbia Corridor issue. In terms of nonconforming use, neighbors may only care about what is on their street, while the problem might be happening throughout the city.

Ryan asked how zone changes would affect property owners. Paul cautioned the group about addressing geographic issues. Messaging is important that we are only doing citywide zoning changes, and not focusing on a particular property or neighborhood.

Linda Nettekoven asked if parts of the Comp Plan involve changes in process. Sandra replied that the first question we are asking staff is "what is in the Comp Plan that keeps you or them from doing this now?" Often the answer is nothing. When talking about the Comp Plan, it is more often about policies, as opposed to implementation measures. We could spend a lot of time working on implementation, but we need to carefully pick and choose what we attack.

Deborah informed the group that they will triage updates to implementation tools, and delineate which changes will be within the 18 months, and which ones will go beyond the deadline. This is a big deal. Community arguments are usually not about policy, but how policies are implemented. The City of Portland and school intergovernmental agreement is how we'll approach the education piece. Sandra added that triggers might not change for when land use reviews are required.

Deborah said that community fatigue and lack of staff resources have been discussed.

Overview of Proposed Approach / Discussion and CIC Feedback

Questions for CIC

1. Questions about the proposed approach
2. Working groups: e.g., formal v. informal; topic-focused v. geographic; etc.
3. Involving non-geographic communities in a process that is inherently geographic

Sandra said that they don't know who is going to do what yet, but they can talk about the "how." She showed everyone the current Comp Plan timeline, starting on Jan 2012 and finishing on June 2013. She explained that the state deadline is Oct 2013, but they need everything in place by June for the timeline to work.

Paul said that quickly selecting the advisory groups, aka the "who," will be important.

Sandra said that the public is their main client, and they want to keep them involved so that they generate positive testimony to the PSC. In background reports, they looked at capacity to accommodate growth, both jobs and residential. Planning for 130,000 new households in next 25 years will necessitate the creation of 150,000 more jobs. However, we currently lack the land to allow it. How do we solve this problem? If we decide that we need to rezone a bunch of land to industrial, we need implementation measures (official rezoning) to accomplish that. That list would happen in Oct 2012.

Deborah asked how they would get groups formed and up-to-speed quickly, and how they would be comprised.

Sandra mentioned that with code amendment projects before, it was sort of unorganized. Mayor Katz set up RICAP to normalize the process, utilizing an online database for recommendations. The criteria were normalized, including determinants like how many properties were affected, which stakeholders were affected etc. They can do something similar with the Comp Plan.

Lois Cohen said that accommodating formal as well as informal groups will create better info. The District Liaisons know that there are people who are interested but not attached to a particular group. You can filter level of responsibility based on District Liaisons feedback. It would be good to have a variety of options for input. Providing multiple options helps make people feel more comfortable about participating in the process. It would be good to keep non-geographic communities involved in the Comp Plan process.

Deborah agreed with Lois that having dynamic working groups is important. Today they are gathering ideas, and during the next couple meetings they will dive into them for specifics.

Marty said that if they set up a geographic basis, then expectations will rise. If they instead talk about topics and policy, it might make conversations easier. Jason opined that the geographic portion should be dealt with during implementation. The first part should be policy only; it should be made clear that geographic issues will be talked about later. Debbie said that the District Liaisons to help liaison with their constituents between policy and geography as a way to make policy more relevant and accessible to the public. Deborah and Paul agreed that the District Liaisons can take policy to constituencies in a geographic way they can relate to.

Stanley expressed that it is crucial for the public to express geographic concerns and know that their concerns are heard. The District Liaison level is the best place to voice concerns about “my street, my neighborhood.”

Paul said that 18 months is just one part of a larger strategic process.

Joan Frederiksen said she feels a sense of relief on both sides that they can focus on just the policy, and deal with the geographic part later.

Linda noted that consistent messaging is critical, and there is also the ONI infrastructure that can help communicate this, if they are properly informed.

Deborah suggested possibly organizing by the “5 Portlands”: West, Inner East to North, East, Central City and Industrial Corridor, instead of the current District Liaison territories.

Joan asked about the mapping component.

Sandra asked the group that when the public hears “Comp Plan,” won’t their first thought be about their neighborhood? All the projects like the Bicycle and Streetcar Plans will have to be updated as part of the Comp Plan. Federal transportation dollars come through Metro, thus Transportation is separate from other projects. There are over 300 promises made through the Portland Plan and its constituent projects. The Multnomah County Drainage District is mentioned, while others aren’t mentioned. What are Tier 1, 2 and 3 issues?

Next steps

The group had several quick comments that are summarized here:

- The charge or purpose of the group needs to be defined.
- Frequency of subcommittee meetings needs to be determined, in relation to regular CIC meetings.
- Communication between the CIC and the subcommittee needs to be established, understood and accepted by both entities.
- It is important to figure out what role the subcommittee will play, and get commitment from the smaller group that they can meet en masse more often.
- There is a need to highlight future refinement plans in the timeline, focus on topical issues and stay away from geography. Look at hubs and greenways, map, policy, and capital improvements at the policy level.
- The decision needs to be made as to what the top tier issues are.
- How would the hubs manifest themselves in the map?
- What implementation tools will be used, and will they only be used in policies? Will they only result in adding a sentence in the book? What does “doing” mean?
- These workshops should happen in December. They need to make sure the tier list is vetted. When the top tier list is produced in draft form, they need to show

them to the PSC. They can then get their marching orders on how to proceed with the Comp Plan. PSC wants to be involved in the scoping process.

- The next CIC meeting is November 16th. There will be another subcommittee meeting in early December, before the December CIC meeting. A 5:00pm start time for this subcommittee meeting is preferred.

Adjourn