

Planning Commission Votes to Forward the Lower Southeast Rising Plan to City Council

On November 14, Portland's Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the Lower Southeast Rising Area Plan to City Council for consideration. The plan – two years in the making – addresses long-standing needs for transportation improvements, affordable housing and business development in the Brentwood-Darlington neighborhood and portions of Mt Scott-Arleta, Woodstock and Lents.

Prior to voting on the plan, [commissioners heard public testimony from community members on October 10](#). Testifiers supporting the plan said it would bring much needed attention and transportation improvements to a long neglected area of Portland. Others testified with concerns that zone changes could destabilize the neighborhood and negatively impact affordability.

At [a work session on November 14](#), the Planning Commission considered the testimony as they focused discussion on community stability and proposed transportation projects. In the end, Commissioners felt that the plan struck a good balance between expanding opportunities for neighborhood businesses and housing, while retaining existing affordable housing and homeownership opportunities.

The proposed zone changes avoid existing unregulated low-cost apartments and manufactured home parks to minimize redevelopment pressure, as well as retains most single-dwelling zoning in the area. Zone changes to allow multi-dwelling housing are strategically focused in the proposed neighborhood center (around SE 72nd and SE Flavel) and along transit corridors, where residents will be close to services and transit.

Commissioners appreciated how the plan addressed long-standing deficiencies in the area and that the proposed transportation projects were coordinated with the land use approaches. The most significant change the Commission made to the plan was to add two properties, located along Johnson Creek at SE 45th Place, to the Open Space zone. These properties, along with others owned by the Bureau of Environmental Services near Johnson Creek, will be used for floodplain and habitat restoration.

In voting to forward the Lower Southeast Rising Area Plan to City Council, the Planning Commissioners said that the plan is an important step toward addressing the area's longstanding lack of commercial services and gaps in transportation infrastructure, helping to realize the community's vision of becoming a "complete neighborhood" where people can afford to live and safely meet their daily needs locally.

The plan now heads to City Council for a public hearing in February or March 2024. After considering public testimony, City Council will deliberate and potentially make changes, then vote to adopt the plan.

Stay tuned for updates on when the Recommended Draft Plan will be available and for the City Council hearing date.

Watch the October 10 Planning Commission hearing (starts at 1:42:15, with testimony at 2:18:45): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x68voaTwJU&t=8326s>

Watch the November 14 Planning Commission work session (starts at 13:55): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xesoCYe4SZ4&t=4377s>