



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

MEMO

DATE: May 21, 2015
TO: Planning and Sustainability Commission
FROM: Eric Engstrom, Principal Planner
CC: Susan Anderson, Director; Joe Zehnder, Chief Planner
SUBJECT: Verbs

Over the past several months the PSC has discussed a variety of policies where verb choice has an impact on meaning. In January, the staff recommended to the PSC the following approach to how the verbs used in Comprehensive Plan policies would be used in decision making:

1. City Council has the clear authority to make decisions by balancing applicable policies.
2. In the context of decisions based on Comprehensive Plan policies, this means that City Council will weigh the whole of the intent of all relevant policies on balance.
3. Regardless of the verb used, no goals or policies are truly mandatory, and policies should not be considered akin to approval criteria.
4. If City Council wants a policy to be mandatory it needs to adopt a binding regulations, such as a provision in the Zoning Code. In such cases, making decisions that run contrary to a binding regulation would require an amendment to the regulation itself.

In recent work sessions you requested a more focused discussion of common verbs. Below is a list of current definitions, which will be included in the Draft Recommended Plan to be published in June. We will discuss these definitions on May 26.



City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | www.portlandoregon.gov/bps
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100, Portland, OR 97201 | phone: 503-823-7700 | fax: 503-823-7800 | tty: 503-823-6868

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

Consider: Take into account when planning or making decisions.

Discourage: To try to deter or prevent from happening.

Encourage: Promote or foster something using some combination of voluntary approaches, regulations, or incentives.

Ensure: To make something certain; to make sure that something will happen or be available.

Evaluate: Assess the range of outcomes, and identify costs and benefits.

Facilitate: To make something easier; to help bring about or make run more smoothly.

Limit: Minimize or reduce something or the effects of something relative to the current situation or to a potential future situation.

Maintain: Keep what you have; conserve; preserve; continue.

Prevent: Proactively avoid or hinder adverse impacts or outcomes.

Prohibit: Don't allow at all; stop from happening.

Protect: To defend or guard against loss, injury, or destruction. Policies calling for protection apply to multiple topic areas and can be accomplished or supported using various tools, such as regulations to prohibit or limit an action, investments such as land acquisition, agreements, and community partnerships.

Require: Compel; demand something.

