

Report to Commissioner Carmen Rubio – As Delivered, April 19, 2022
Prepared by Julia Thompson (she/her)
Insight Organizational Development

Re: Stakeholder Interview Summary re: Planning and Sustainability Commission

Commissioner Rubio,

Thank you for the opportunity to thoroughly explore the history and dynamics of Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission. The research included 30 interviews with nearly 40 stakeholders to gather their diverse perspectives on what's working well and desired areas for change. Interviewees included current PSC Commissioners as well as two past Chairs, current and former BPS staff and leadership, and numerous City Bureau directors, staff, and City Attorneys.

The report includes a vast amount of input on an expanse of topics that will be valuable over a longer-term change process. The report is organized by theme, with supporting quotes, and framing questions.

I have distilled themes and questions that will help you hone in on the most pressing areas to address first:

1. Understanding the history and evolution of the PSC

Strategic question: *How did we get here and how does this inform how we move ahead?*

Summary: Climate was slotted into the scope of the PSC's work at a time when political interest was less prominent compared to land use. Recently, as the bandwidth of the commission has opened up, the demand to work on climate and sustainability issues has grown. The bureau has evolved other community-based forums to guide climate work.

Quotes on:

- Providing context on the history of PSC.

2. The need for clarity from leadership including BPS, City Council, and the Commissioner in Charge.

Strategic questions: *What is the role of city leadership to ensure PSC is effectively contributing to its required responsibilities? What does City Council most need from the PSC and how can we improve this dynamic?*

Summary: Strong political vision and leadership has been a primary indicator of the Commission's past success, as has alignment with the political priorities of City Council. These close relationships and communications have lent value and credibility to both bodies. This should be a priority to build back. Decisive vision and direction from the Commissioner on PSC scope and function will also be the most effective way to create broad alignment and buy-in.

Quotes on:

- Political leadership
- PSC's influence and their relationship with Council

3. The need to alleviate tensions between Commissioners and Staff by resetting the scope, purview, and expectations.

Strategic questions: *What is the necessary structural improvement to ensure there is clarity and directive among Council, BPS, and the Commission?*

Summary: Commissioners, especially newer ones are confused about their power and the expectations for their role. Other commissioners have a desire to have more input and earlier input on the agenda and topics they weigh in on.

Quotes on:

- The need for clear expectations and roles
- PSC's desire to influence the agenda and work plan
- The perception of commissioner activism

4. The massive breadth of the Commission's scope as a threat to their efficacy.

Strategic questions: *What is the optimal purview of the PSC? How to fulfill the City's requirement for competent land use oversight? What scope sets the commission up to be successful and provide clear value?*

Summary: The scope of the Commission's work is widely viewed as too broad, putting their efficacy and the quality of the required land use work at risk. However, many of the commissioners, especially newer members, are deeply invested in advancing the City's climate agenda. There are many critical opportunities for land use decisions to advance climate action and racial justice, but these require a more sophisticated analysis and approach.

Quotes on:

- The importance of code / land use
- Climate action & sustainability work

5. The future of community engagement and oversight for sustainability and climate.

Strategic questions: *How to satisfy the desire to guide the City's climate action work and the perceived lack of opportunity for community input?*

Summary: All stakeholders are frustrated by the lack of clarity and open question about the City's community engagement on non-land use-related climate action. BPS currently has other, less-formal, spaces to engage with community on sustainability issues.

Quotes on:

- Considerations & recommendations on future climate work

6. How PSC interfaces with other bureaus and the lack of clarity around its "citywide" status

Strategic questions: *How can the PSC be better positioned to collaborate and provide value to City bureaus? Does it make sense for PSC to be city-wide, and if so, what guidelines will improve this dynamic?*

Summary: Bureaus express a lot of frustration about the direction they receive from PSC and how it oversteps guidance they have received in their own community engagement, or from other, more specialized commissions. There are real concerns about the consequence of the PSC's input on policy implementation. Newer commissioners also express worry that they are overstepping their roles and impacting relationships between BPS and other bureaus. BPS

leadership could play a role on improving this dynamic and relationships between the PSC and other bureaus. The PSC's identity as a citywide commission that does not serve under the mayor is not well understood or executed, causing additional angst.

Quotes on:

- Coordinating with other bureaus
- PSC's role as city-wide committee

7. Evaluate the optimal function and makeup of the commission—from technical advisors to facilitators of community engagement—there's no consensus for how the Commission should influence policy and code, and the requisite skillsets and attributes of its membership.

Strategic questions: *What should the PSC's focus be, and how does City leadership respond to ensure membership is capable of addressing that focus in an equitable manner? What level of technical and professional sophistication sets Commissioners up to be successful? How do we effectively create space for community engagement while advancing extremely technical policy and code? How can leadership create clarity about the role of the PSC in community engagement for land use projects?*

Summary: Commissioners say the perceived level of requisite technical expertise to provide meaningful input on code and policy creates an inaccessible experience and a skewed sense for what constitutes valuable input. Bureau directors are concerned that the Commission fails to appreciate all the consequences of the policies decision on infrastructure bureaus. Past commissioners and other bureau directors share ideas and best practices for how to onboard and prepare commissioners for successful contributions.

Quotes on:

- The need for technical expertise
- PSC's community engagement function
- Optimal board composition
- How to effectively prepare commissioners for the job
- Examples from other bureaus/commissions/boards on supporting a commission

8. ADDENDUM: Themes related to commissioner experience, commission culture, diversity, protocols, and processes.

Quotes on:

- Commissioner experience
- Commission culture & protocols
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Working with BPS staff
- Suggestions for changes to the commission process

SUMMARY of INTERVIEWS

Re: Planning & Sustainability Commission

Organized by theme, from Nov 2021- Jan 2022

THEME 1: UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE PSC

Strategic question: *How did we get here and how does this inform how we move ahead?*

Summary: Climate was slotted into the scope of the PSC's work at a time when political interest was less prominent compared to land use. Recently, as the bandwidth of the commission has opened up, the demand to work on climate and sustainability issues has grown. The bureau has evolved other community-based forums to guide climate work.

Past BPS Staff

- Times are different than when we started the PSC. When I go back 20 years to the merge of Planning and Sustainable Development Commission, no one cared when we merged those two commissions. We tried to work with every Bureau a lot about green jobs, water, air quality, and recycling. But no one on the council cared enough about climate work to make real regulation. Merging the commissions gave climate a huge step up in importance because it was now part of the Planning Commission.
- Before Office of Sustainable Development (OSD) and the Planning Bureau merged, the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) was a long-standing community advisory committee. The SDC's usefulness had sunsetted but it still required care and feeding with no end point in sight and a lot of work for staff. The SDC would dream things up for staff to implement and it was more of a distraction than a value add. When the two bureaus gave us the opportunity to merge commissions it was an awesome chance to sunset the SDC. So we added a couple of lines to the charter so they would oversee the Climate Action Plan (CAP). At that time the CAP was something that other bureaus did not care much about.
- For years the PSC was neck deep in the Portland Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, the Central City Plan. There was no time on the agenda for sustainability, so we headed off in our own direction, and never built relationships with them. By the time they were ready for sustainability work, we had two climate action plans under our belt, and we had evolved our thinking about equity and who should provide guidance on this work, both the demographics and the expertise. The CAP is full of discrete things that went to the PSC for review, but the overall oversight of the plan all had its own advisory committees that guided that work.
- A few years back, they started demanding we put our work on the table, but their input was less relevant to us because we had shifted to elevating the voice of community in a different way. When sustainability staff did bring content to PSC, they didn't know how to advise us and their feedback was sometimes detrimental to the work, and so they would send us to do something random.

THEME 2: THE NEED FOR CLARITY FROM LEADERSHIP INCLUDING BPS, CITY COUNCIL, AND THE COMMISSIONER IN CHARGE.

Strategic questions: *What is the role of city leadership to ensure PSC is effectively contributing to its required responsibilities? What does City Council most need from the PSC and how can we improve this dynamic?*

Summary: Strong political vision and leadership has been a primary indicator of the Commission's past success, as has alignment with the political priorities of City Council. These close relationships and communications have lent value and credibility to both bodies. This should be a priority to build back. Decisive vision and direction from the Commissioner on PSC scope and function will also be the most effective way to create broad alignment and buy-in.

QUOTES ON POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Commissioners

- I would like for officers to have a quarterly check in with the commissioner and their staff to share what they are seeing and what tensions the commissioner is hearing from other commissioners so we can move forward in a more productive way. Not being with the mayor, how does that impact how we move? How we can be of service?
- Vera Katz and Charlie Hales had a vision for how they wanted to use their Commission. The chair and the directors knew what the boss wanted. There needs to be guidance and leadership from somebody in charge. The burden falls on the commissioner in charge to have a vision that she wants and is comfortable with.
- Rubio needs to be more engaged if she wants a desired outcome. I don't think the Commission is very autonomous. We are spoon fed by staff in the Bureau.
- Planning Commission is so important which is why it has always reported to the mayor. I would like to have commissioner Rubio be more present and engaged on a regular basis. She could come to a work session for a two way dialogue.
- We need a commissioner who loves and champions us. Rubio is getting more excited about us.

Current & Past BPS Staff

- Who is accountable for the PSC's actions and behaviors? When they are out of line who holds them accountable? It is hard when we are the ones and not the mayor or the commissioner. Other committees are run differently in the city.
- Things have changed since not being in the mayor's portfolio. Right now Rubio is doing those tasks. The only task for the commissioner is formally confirming appointments. The mayor gave the commissioner all other responsibilities like informal conversations and have staff will come to meetings to observe.

Past Commissioners

- The mayor and Commissioner Rubio should share their vision and marching orders to go do something. Maybe there are too new, and they don't know how to give direction to the Bureau. Right now, there is no why. We need the passion, the commissioner or someone at Council must be solving a problem. During the good years there was strong leadership under all four of the mayors, until the very end. They wanted to get things done, whatever the mission was, they had an idea, a vision. I don't see a vision today. This trickles down to staff who have to have a direction and marching orders. I don't see the leadership there.

- Rubio needs to build a relationship and say we're going to do some work. She's got to dedicate staff to do that. When we had an active staff from the mayor most of the time we got done what they wanted. We built that relationship out of trust with the elected officials and the director, and we knew what was political to our commissioners. They were calling me on the weekend because they knew we had power. That's been lost but that can be built back.
- The new leadership was not at all of our meetings which makes a statement, just not as present. To me that was noticeable on the politics side because you have to understand the implications and the politics of it. Ted Wheeler has been more hands off. But a leader needs to be more in tune with our work, this could be the chief planner as long as they have the elected open channel. During Charlie's time other electeds would have us come in and meet with them and staff were there but they elected was there too.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- I would like to see more assertiveness from the chief planner to explore with them the potential consequences. They need more considerations for going that route and not taking a hands-off approach when PSC members don't understand the problems they're creating and the consequences.

QUOTES ON THE PSC'S INFLUENCE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNCIL

Commissioners

- I want clarity around our mission and vision and the opportunity to support City Council. You should interview members of City Council and ask if they are receiving what they need from the Commission. Now we have more council members who come from community-based organizations who may have a different vision and we need to have that conversation.

Past Commissioners

- Council lately is having these blowups. We didn't have that because we were vetting things, maybe too much? Your work is to get it about 85 to 90% when you send it to Council. By the time it got to council they had already weighed in, this minimized people yelling at them because the sausage had already been made.
- Are there things that electeds are hearing that would affect our deliberations? Susan's leadership meant that when she could see us veering into muddy waters, she would give us food for thought. We needed the opportunity to hear what electeds are going to hear and get pissed off about, and test the waters. For example, on Hayden Island, so that council could watch and learn. Council needs to learn the value to them where the community is at, so we could both work together better and that's what we did well with Charlie.
- Because someone had a vision, we became a voice. The vision drew people to us from every Bureau, Prosper, Housing, downtown community, businesses. We were poking our nose in it and that's why people wanted to be on the Commission, there was a demand from the legal community and the development community to be involved because we were impacting them.
- The Commission has an amazing amount of power, and they should use it. With such broad views you can look across the city, you can bring bureaus in. Citizens trusted us because we listened and we changed on their advice, gave them a platform so people could influence us. We

were listening and we would advocate for businesses and citizens. Neighborhood groups appreciated that. What worked is we were very strong chairs. We would go to talk to the mayor and staff and we were willing to push. My predecessor's advice was you can't just show up to the meeting. The chair and vice chair have to be willing to go out on a limb, be willing to listen to people, appreciate all of the voices.

- It's really clear that the new Commission doesn't think they have any power. We delayed something one time, and after that we had everyone's attention. It's just a recommendation, but so much has to go through them and you can delay your vote – then they will respond. Counsel will be upset, that's part of the power you must be making sure you use that, but don't abuse it. You can reach out and ask for other bureaus or other groups.
- We did some very controversial things. If you want power you have to be prepared for the repercussions. People will call you names, you must have thick skin and be able to withstand that if you want to do some things and have power. It is rewarding. Some things I can see in the city are different because of what we did. The things that go in front of the council now should be vetted so they're not just trying to solve major problems. Right now they appear ineffective. They appear to be just working through problems but not solving them.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- They need clarity on what does it mean to advise City Council, what that relationship is. Do they annually check in? That would be a good idea to have a direct engagement opportunity. Are there other outlets for their time investment besides a letter to Council?
- Council needs to understand the role of PSC and their power and take better advantage of it. For example, new City Council members could more effectively address code and policy inefficiencies if they set clearer expectations and offered political strategy to the PSC.

THEME 3: THE NEED TO ALLEVIATE TENSIONS BETWEEN COMMISSIONERS AND BPS STAFF BY RESETTING THE SCOPE, PURVIEW, AND EXPECTATIONS.

Strategic questions: *What is the necessary structural improvement to ensure there is clarity and directive among Council, BPS, and the Commission?*

Summary: Commissioners, especially newer ones feel confused about their power, and the expectations for their role. Many other commissioners have a desire to have more input and earlier input on the agenda and topics they weigh in on.

QUOTES ON THE NEED FOR CLEAR EXPECTATIONS & ROLES

Commissioners

- I want more clarity on who are the decision makers of projects. Is PSC one of those decision makers? Are we endorsing versus writing a letter of support to City Council to fund this? I would like to see the toolbox of influence as to what we can do so we can have more meaningful participation with government.
- I wonder where am I allowed to exert influence? What can and can't I do as a commissioner? In the application it said we are stewards of the comprehensive plan, but in action we do less of

those things. What do PSC commissioners do? It is a bigger conversation about what the governance structure should look like? What the role is and who decides that role should be a PSC-led conversation between 11 individuals.

- The mission is kind of loosey goosey now. We have a constitutional duty to vet plans and the bedrock is our work is the code. But anything that comes out of planning and sustainability? It's fuzzy around sustainability a lot doesn't have anything to do with code, it's an afterthought to send it to us. Not sure who decides what we look at.
- I signed up for something I didn't quite know what it was, and I think that is true for others too. By looking at the bylaws and charter I don't know if we are actually doing those things. We want PSC involvement but we need to put guardrails around that.
- For volunteers it is a lot of red tape and filler. Staff tries to give the back story with briefings on how things came together. When we respond we hear, "thank you for sharing" and it goes in the notes. But what do they really mean, I don't know. Is there legislation or policy change tied to any of it? Is it box checking? How our recommendations are taken? I don't know. I want more clarity on how issues come to us, our roles, and are we a democratic voting board? An Advisory Board? Do we listen in order to do good decision making, is our time being valued?
- Procedurally we need to have a very firm definition in the bylaws about what needs to be done. The bylaws should be clear about our purview -- we need clear guidelines about what we can have input into. I would like to have something to point to that gives us this clarity.
- My overall sense is that we have a continuous identity crisis at PSC, what can we have an impact on? Am I stepping out of line if I invite someone to testify, is that OK for my role?
- Our functional role is to present stuff by a non-political entity that council doesn't have time for, so the city ends up with better policy. For the planning work: we review, take comment, amend, and make final recommendations with a sustainability and equity lens. For sustainability work we are briefed, but it is fuzzy the way that we should provide input. There is no precedent and there has never been an opportunity for public testimony on a sustainability project except garbage.
- It has been hard to understand when things come to us what is our level of decision making that we should provide and which other decision makers get to weigh in from other commissions. Sometimes we get briefings and I wonder do they want a comment? In reality what is our ability to make an impact? An endorsement? A stamp of approval? How helpful is that? It is clear that we should be amending code.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- How can staff help them to be more effective with what their roles are and steer them to have the greatest impact. They can be critical but it won't change the course of things until staff feels more comfortable pushing back so they know they can be most powerful.
- The mission of the PSC to provide advice to City Council about land use policy and comprehensive plan implementation. This is a pretty robust set of planning functions. If they can fulfill that core work and the community involvement directive and Goal One then we could have a very functioning Planning Commission fulfilling a critical focus within state law. Their mission should be providing policy advice around key policy moves to function at the highest level of policy goals helping to advise on the next level of implementation as it relates to the

comprehensive plan. It is less clear how the climate action plan, which is not state mandated, relates to their work.

QUOTES ON PSC'S DESIRE TO INFLUENCE THE AGENDA & WORK PLAN

Commissioners

- I have some interest in having more input on what we take on. There are tensions because we want to set our agenda, and sometimes staff influences how we spend our time. PSC is a well established and responsive body. The comp plan is so broad we can point to it to do more than 100 projects. Now there is discretion for how the city spends its time related to climate and racial justice. Outside of land use the city doesn't have the ability to hear testimony on those topics. Who decides what the city focuses on? BPS staff could consult us on what we work on. By the time they consulted us on their strategic plan, it was done. But staff maybe are afraid that would cause more work?
- There is a lot of tension with BPS. Commissioners who want to direct BPS work, but that is not within our mission. We need clarity and to hold that strongly. We need to know our lane and stay in it. BPS staff can remind us you're moving out of your lane, is that a choice you want to make?
- We are not in a policy setting role, we are reactive to whatever staff feeds us. We have no role in setting the agenda and zero input into their three-year strategic plan. We got to see it after it was published with no involvement from the Commission. We are spoon fed discreet tasks and a few things that are legally required but we have no role in developing a strategic plan for the Bureau. We need to address some issues of clarity, leadership, and management with the Bureau. We have been floundering for a while. The proof is in the outcomes.
- The planning side is working well though the function has been somewhat truncated. It is challenging that they come to us so late it is hard to change the plans. We don't have much impact in asking for plans, it doesn't seem like that's our role?
- The inflexibility of the current system does not allow us to focus on hotspots. We have gotten so focused on the comprehensive plan but we have to be nimble enough to respond to new dollars coming out of Biden and Harris administration. What is the role of Planning Commission to think about investments and reimagine 82nd? With a focus on BIPOC populations. Who is on 1st and how are priorities set? We have a lack of bold vision in this city and I don't see anyone connecting the dots. I don't see people talking about this stuff. There is so much happening in the next four years and we are not ready.
- Some commissioners have an idea of what they want to focus on. But staff doesn't much like it. There are different visions between us and staff on our role. We have officer meetings to plan our meetings with staff... in theory we have control over our agendas, but in practice we don't. For example on the housing summit, whenever PSC stepped out of the lane, staff makes it hard and pushes back, making it less likely for us to do again. Staff have the power, unless PSC has a direct relationship with Rubio. When there is discretion, staff makes the call. When we have agenda ideas it better be what they have in mind, or the staff support doesn't show up. It's not sustainable to keep pushing, we don't always have a choice, but we're willing to go head to head. But it wears me down. Rubio needs to clarify because it's murky and we want to be on the same team with our staff.

Past Commissioners

- You've got to go upstream and tell the commissioner here is what we're working on this year. You have to look at the mayor's budget. Here's what I'm thinking, what do your members think we would say, why do you want to do this? Having that communication about political direction is how you have power. This allowed Planning Commission to have input on what came across their desks. We met with the director once a week, at least once a month. Susan helped us understand and see what council was funding. She would show us this is what the mayor's budget is looking to fund and the chair and vice chair would weigh in. Kat was very influential, she would knock on the mayor's door and say we've got to tackle this. We were out in the community, involved in the flow before it got to Commission. Hearing what they were talking about, getting ahead of issues. If you don't get involved and you don't chime in, then you can't get upstream.
- I understood that to influence what the PSC was working on, we had to influence the elected officials who set the budget and directed BPS. That was how the work load came to the PSC. We had so little influence on what the projects were. But as a zoning nerd I accepted that. What the Bureau is doing is a product of what's going on at the moment with our community and we needed to be flexible to let that be and evolve. Others wanted more of a say on the agenda but that is all set by City Council. I came in at the end of the comprehensive plan which was a lot of zoning work.

QUOTES ON THE PERCEPTION OF COMMISSIONER ACTIVISM

Commissioners

- Some members take an approach that is very activist in nature. They use this as a way to accomplish political ends instead of the best possible end. The focus should be less politically driven and more about making sure it is complete and good, and no voices were left out.
- We are strong in people who are able to be thoughtful, that don't have an axe to grind unless they're passionate. They're not pushing an agenda, it's great to see people be selfless and interested.
- Some commissioners bring in stakeholder positions that are already well represented positions. They are not always bringing a dispassionate lens but instead a stakeholder agenda that is not appropriate. We are a volunteer body, not elected. Stakeholders who lobby this body in a way that assumes more power than we have. We make recommendations to influence council, sometimes from a place with more ego and unbalanced with than with what makes the best possible policy.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- The Commission tends to be individual activists. It is hard to get them to make a collective decision. We want people who look at it from all angles parks and transportation. We are not getting that from the current Commission. They are always interested to know our purview and they do listen but they are so focused on their individual advocacy. I want to see a more global view, not be so laser focused and narrow viewed. Having such a sharp point of view and not listening to other points of view that come before them makes it hard to look at the bigger picture.

- [On the Prosper Board] We do not have people who would take an activist bent, and if it's a conflict of interest in meetings it becomes pretty clear about what the issue is. When commissioners are thinking about joining, I try to be very clear about their lanes. When the board became obsessed with housing because the community keeps asking for it, I said "Here is the plan, and here is who is responsible for that and it is not you. There are other bodies that do that, we do not do that." By being aware of what they're curious about then we can explain to them who is leading on that issue.
- It is not working when PSC members use the Commission to work out a personal agenda. Some stakeholders are reaching out to them and it becomes a strange televised agenda. The way the Commission is assembled is like Noah's ark, one person does this, one person does that, so when they deliberate they defer to one member in their segmented Commission make up. What that leads to is one person drilling down with an axe to grind on a perceived area of expertise. Versus raising the vision for everyone and caring and not just your individual constituencies. This is an understandable compulsion but it is not what they are chartered to do.

Current & Past BPS Staff

- They are advocates and activists they may not be showing up in their actual roles. They can share their opinions but it diminishes their credibility and influence. We would like to see them do their role and do it excellently so when they present it has strength and credibility.
- Some members try to advance their agenda which is very narrow and they don't want to listen to other voices they like to exert their influence and don't like being told that there are other people who are given power to guide the city's work. Even though there has been a shift in the demographic makeup of the commission, there is still a very white dominant patriarchal vibe.

THEME 4: THE MASSIVE BREADTH OF THE COMMISSION'S SCOPE AS A THREAT TO THEIR EFFICACY.

Strategic questions: *What is the optimal purview of the PSC? How to fulfill the City's requirement for competent land use oversight? What scope sets the commission up to be successful and provide clear value?*

Summary: The scope of the Commission's work is widely viewed as too broad, putting their efficacy and the quality of the required land use work at risk. However, many of the commissioners, especially newer members, are deeply invested in advancing the City's climate agenda. There are many critical opportunities for land use decisions to advance climate action and racial justice, but these require a more sophisticated analysis and approach.

QUOTES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CODE / LAND USE

Commissioners

- Land use decisions are inherently contentious. Land use is the mechanism for building multi-generational wealth and there is a limited quantity. We are on stolen land and contending with the racist history of planning. Our best role is to be able to have nuanced, honest conversations

and make decisions for recommendations to council. PSC can be a container for those conversations that wouldn't survive any council environment.

Current & Past BPS Staff

- The PSC has so much authority to influence land use with a climate lens. If they can create their lane focused on land use and development they can be so powerful. For example, the oil trains were a perfect opportunity as well as West Hayden island and fossil fuel infrastructure. These are clear examples of how they can be really effective and useful.
- There is value if they can bring a climate lens to planning work, for example to DOZA. Can they make zoning requirements resilient to the impacts of climate change like extreme rain and extreme heat? We have a huge asset that we are under utilizing.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- There is incredible power and so much work to be done in the nexus of land use, climate action, and racial equity. But we need to be clear that while all land use decisions have racial justice and climate action implications, not all climate action and racial justice work has land use implications. The PSC will be most effective and essential if they focus on centering our critical land use needs.
- We don't talk with them about how important it is to create good code. We hear regularly from applicants how complicated and layered of a crazy quilt it is because we are trying to address every scenario you can imagine. It used to be that we used the 70 slash 30 rule to leave flexibility for interpretation it feels like they are aiming for the 99 slash one rule. This is a strategic discussion to have with the PSC. The goal around levels of complexity and evaluating or considering your proposal and the flexibility has been taken away. Adjustments have been prohibited and we've gone in a direction trying to address every situation but the code needs to be more simple and streamlined. Do they feel they are doing a good job if they anticipate every conceivable option in the code to avoid a land use review?

QUOTES ON CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY WORK

Commissioners

- I found out about being on the PSC as a public avenue for testimony around sustainability issues. It gives me a dedicated way to stay active and keep learning. But it has been more focused on planning. I watched a few prior meetings and there were a lot of briefings about sustainability issues, and the nature of the bylaws gives the impression that we would focus on sustainability - like heat islands and tree canopy. This creates accountability issues for the government. Should we change the name? Should we change the bylaws? People are aware of this purview.
- I want to look at sustainability issues, give a set of eyes to look at policy to make sure nothing is missed, no one is excluded, and to meet the priorities of the climate action plan and the comprehensive plan. But that's not the way it acts now. From a zoning and planning perspective you have looked at this work before it goes to council, but many commissioners are drawn to these sustainability topics. As a PSC commissioner we also want to look at this sustainability issues related to the built environment, above what is legally required for zoning and planning issues.

- The ROI of being on the PSC is because I care about the city's future and I have a lot to contribute. As a lifelong indigenous Portlander I am deeply concerned about our city and the people and our growth-- whether it will be sustainable. The process is unique because so much relates to sustainability than what we have the power to do. The comp plan covers equity, houselessness, gentrification, climate, east Portland, access to greenspace, health care, and childcare. Our role should be anything that threatens long-term sustainability, environmentally, ecologically, but it's a linear government committee. We need to think outside the box a little.
- I am passionate about the city's progress on its climate commitments and I am not seeing the kind of change that needs to happen to meet our goals to avert catastrophe. I'm pretty concerned about where we're at and we need to drive action and accountability around climate work. The sustainability work feels very fragmented and confusing. How do we understand the CAP over the next few years and how does that relate to the climate emergency, why is there a separate plan? That is confusing.
- I don't have a strong sense of sustainability work that doesn't already have an external facing community engagement model -- like PCEF already has a governing body. If it has an oversight body then we should back off.
- We have failed miserably on the sustainability side. They should be split in two. I am fully convinced that needs to happen. As a citizen advisory group we don't have the bandwidth to also do sustainability. It has been offloaded to other places, maybe they are having it covered in other ways. Andrea has a sustainability work group but it is vague. Planning and sustainability is no longer a workable structure. The commissioner can't get the most value. Many of our new commissioners are more focused on the sustainability side but there is no clarity as to the work plan.
- How does the city get the best guidance it can on policy input on climate and racial justice? I am not assuming the PSC has the bandwidth to focus on all of that; it doesn't have to be us. A lot of people are passionate about climate and planning issues and are fired up about heat islands, mobility, so many issues that deserve public input that don't get to go to council. As the stewards of the Climate Action Plan, we haven't had much role. Now with the climate emergency, the PSC doesn't have as much education but we feel ownership, and we have hit some walls. From the staff's perspective there is no precedent and not nearly enough time.

Current & Past BPS Staff

- BPS has all these semi formal spaces that we interact with community leaders for climate and sust work whether its PCEF, Build Shift, the Third Space Climate Justice Initiative, the Waste Equity Advisory Groups, Pricing Options for Mobility Task Force, etc. We have these spaces to tackle sustainability and climate issues so we're frequently engaged with community already. What it's not satisfying is the perceived lack of control over the whole vision. Its as if there is lack of trust in city leadership so we're hearing people pining for a space to do that.
- The relationship with climate action has been repetitive conversations and confusing. In the code it says their scope of work and responsibility and it names the climate action plan. The climate work outreach is very community-led. Bringing it to a formal body undermines the community focus. Advocacy made it more problematic and complicated because they were the exception. On the planning side our values are really transparent. But on the climate side, for

example, they made home energy score more difficult with another set of hoops to navigate and it became more contentious.

- The PSC's insinuation is if there is no public body then there is no public involvement. But some of this work is being done in the third rail, We know we have to become more transparent about public engagement because this is not the right body for that work to get done. The commissioners are upset that they are not involved in their passion issues. In our community engagement for climate, we are flipping the script. We are not driving. In the absence of good climate communications and a strong presence online – people say where is it happening?

Past Commissioners

- We got a lot into sustainability, but it was about land use. A change in the code, the code has every bit of sustainability, it's just what do you want it to be? In the initial climate action plan, for example we wrote about diesel trucks. ... Look at the code, how is it impacting people? There is a code for electric vehicles, they could update that. Is it sufficient? There is a lot in the code that needs updating. There is a ton of connections in the code today about climate action. The PSC gives climate action folks a chance to merge climate action and land use to work together and you're here for the code. That's 65% of the job.
- When I joined I had a traditional notion of what a Planning Commission did. But we do so much more and it is more rewarding. There is broader thinking about equity, community, and climate. The Commission wanted to tackle big issues like gentrification. As I was coming off the Commission there was more flexibility and the workload changed so climate came on as a new opportunity. There is so much that happens at the intersection of zoning code and you can dive into that passion. Climate change and zoning overlap that's the work, it has a logical connection.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- There is a real lack of clarity around sustainability -- I see commissioners and staff struggling with how the two sides meet. They could provide value but our priorities are unclear and they are not set up to do that. If PSC is ever going to be more rooted in the dynamics of natural and built environment they need to see the linkages with people and economy that sustainability is not just about carbon reduction.
- Broadening overtime by Adams the scope of the Commission to include sustainability was not the best decision in retrospect. It becomes clunky and they lose their focus and familiarity with the issues. Planning Commission used to be much more familiar with regulation and code, they understood the impacts. That has been diluted overtime. We need to be getting back to having a functional Planning Commission whose job is looking at planning regulations. If they didn't have so much on their plate, they'd have a better time understanding code and land use regulation.
- Sustainability has been a focus of our work with BPS but not any interaction with PSC. It seems to confuse their purpose. I understood the intention and it sounded right but it has been a challenging marriage of focus. It's an example of widening the area of concern to absolutely everything and that hinders them and is diluting their influence and focus.
- These sustainability part of their work does not have a clear definition. Transportation is a noun but sustainability is an adjective, healthy is an adjective. They don't have responsibility for an individual agency, but it is an advisor to many -- but they don't have the department with the

deliverables. They are given the responsibility, but they don't have control of what works. We need sustainability advocates, but they don't have the steps and functions we have to go through.

THEME 5: THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE.

Strategic questions: *How to satisfy the perceived lack of opportunity for community's investment and the desire to guide the City's climate action work?*

Summary: All stakeholders are frustrated by the lack of clarity and open question about the City's community engagement on non-land use-related climate action. BPS currently has other, less-formal, spaces to engage with community on sustainability issues.

QUOTES ON CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE CLIMATE WORK

Current & Past BPS Staff

- BPS has all these semi formal spaces that we interact with community leaders for climate and sustainability work -- whether its PCEF, build shift, the third space climate justice initiative, the waste equity advisory groups, Pricing options for mobility task force, etc. We have these spaces to tackle sustainability and climate issues so we're frequently engaged with community already. What it's not satisfying is the perceived lack of control over the whole vision. It's as if there is lack of trust in city leadership so we're hearing people pining for a space to do that.
- Desiree Williams-Rajee worked to create a third space and to make community and the County equal partners to guide the climate work. The PSC is not the place for that. I am interested in creating the most authentic approach to co-creating accountability around climate action with the community and the county. I think that is the future, not to use community as an advisor but as a model to share power as equal partners.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- As you look at how you might structure community input or a Commission on climate action, decide what you are trying to get done in the next five years and set this up to help you do that. It seems Ted doesn't really care because there is no space left on his plate.
- Climate is as much of a lens and an approach -- because it is so cross cutting. What about having a steering committee that works with the whole city to do an update to the Climate Action Plan for the city? Is it an ongoing body or do we empanel a group that comes up with the plan? For example OEHR does not have a sitting body. We need to make the most of the investments -- like with PCEF, perhaps there is a co-sponsor for an advising body to set priorities but not duplicate.
- If you take climate and sustainability out of the PSC make sure you don't lose climate and go backwards. Go forward.
- A Commission is harder to set up than a committee. There are legal implications statewide. The governor's climate group put out a statewide climate plan. We want that to be connected... it could be a subcommittee of the Planning Commission so the mayor's decision can still go back

to them. If you pull climate out of the PSC it becomes like every other Planning Commission in the country and looks at climate as much as other issues but now climate has a bigger emphasis.

- There are so many bodies that are already stressed, why add another? But I understand why you have to. There was hostility from sustainability at having a Commission where they needed to get their work reconciled.
- Do your staff have the bandwidth to staff another Commission? Planning work requires decision makers that parse issues across which constituents which means it's been vetted and thought through before it goes to City Council. That gives legitimacy even if you disagree and that is what delivers value to council. What is the sustainability corollary to that? Design it to be successful to that purpose.
- Remember that the community gets exhausted too. The demands that come out are well intentioned and may add benefit, but they don't share the administrative burden.
- The PSC has so much authority to influence land use and climate within that. If they can create their lane focused on land use and development they can be so powerful-- like with the oil trains was a perfect opportunity.
- What would be the most authentic approach to Co creating accountability with community? That's where I would put the resources.
- Don't create a Sustainability Commission until you've clearly established what are the products and outcomes you want -- as the hallmarks of a successful committee. Think about a functioning body, not just a committee who is going to be the thought leader for that work. If you can't do that then don't do it. You can choose not to do something that won't succeed. What will it do to improve outcomes for people? Somebody has to do the relationship work and we have laid people off for a decade. Because community centered decision making must be done right.

THEME 6: HOW PSC INTERFACES WITH OTHER BUREAUS AND THE LACK OF CLARITY AROUND ITS “CITYWIDE” STATUS

Strategic questions: *How can the PSC be better positioned to collaborate and provide value to City bureaus? Does it make sense for PSC to be city-wide, and if so, what guidelines will improve this dynamic?*

Summary: Bureaus express a lot of frustration about the direction they receive from PSC and how it oversteps guidance they have received in their own community engagement, or from other, more specialized commissions. There are real concerns about the consequence of the PSC's input on policy implementation. Newer commissioners also express worry that they are overstepping their roles and impacting relationships between BPS and other bureaus. BPS leadership could play a role on improving this dynamic and relationships between the PSC and other bureaus. The PSC's identity as a citywide commission that does not serve under the mayor is not well understood or executed, causing additional angst.

QUOTES ON COORDINATING WITH OTHER BUREAUS

Commissioners

- How do we create a space of collaboration with other bureaus said they talked to us without them feeling like we are overstepping.
- Commissioners ask for inappropriate opportunities to weigh in on things that have already originated from community. They make amendments on things that don't need them and other bureaus are not always prepared for that we are infringing on their territory. PSC is not always aware of what the ecosystem is so we should map that out to see how the commissions of other bureaus and what are their jurisdictions so we can focus on our own corner of the ecosystem. The body is not as well respected as we think we are because we can make recommendations to City Council -- but territorialness can come up.
- We are associated with BPS really strongly which makes sense from the planning side, but sustainability belongs to every Bureau like PBOT for example. I don't really know what other bureaus are doing and that silo-ing and lack of alignment is a systems level issue We are not clear what is off limits and where our input is not helpful. Who should decide that? People feel different ways about our scope our input is not well received by the implementing bureaus. Was this a breach of protocols because we did not have a frame of reference?
- Where can I be active without providing more harm? How can I contribute? I don't want to make more difficulties for staff or other bureaus. For example with Zenith in the Comprehensive plan we weighed in on changes to the plan, which created tension between BDS and BPS to stay in our lane. What is our lane? Was that a political faux pas? We would like to continue to do that but we want what's going to be best for everyone.
- I don't have a good understanding of the other City boards and commissions and what is in their purview. I would like to have joint sessions with PCEF to leverage the investments they're making.
- We need increased communication between PSC and other bureaus. We need informal or a collaboration on issues. For example food and agricultural projects that BDS is starting to undertake. We have a hard time reading the room and I don't want to step outside of institutional boundaries. Staff seem unwilling to answer the question for political pressures. I want them to be clear and forthcoming about these issues. How do they operate? Can I reach out and talk to them? We need to talk with other bureaus, like housing regarding the West Portland Town Center where planning and housing issues overlap. It would be helpful to have Portland housing bureau's funds aligned with BPS mission so that things could be planned well.
- The PSC members see things happening in other city bureaus that don't align with the comp plan. Who is going to raise their hand on this? Sometimes the PSC raises our hand and in our form of government it creates tension between our director and the other director. We see ourselves as stewards, when we point something out it makes things difficult for staff. If we don't say something because of our former form of government it doesn't work out that well. With other bureaus we have a reputation that's not always good. At housing we got a bad reputation around inclusionary zoning. Commissioners have to build relationships to cut through the assumptions. Things will get better when we figure out the job description stuff.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- My overarching observation for a long time is that they sometimes fancy themselves the co-equivalent of City Council. They are policymakers on a very broad range of things -- the Portland Plan is so broad. So it means is the question in front of them must be pretty tailored. Does this

plan align with land use? Are there blight findings in the technical analysis? But instead we have gotten broader questions -- which ends up being a Community Board rather than technical advisors. But we already have that on our five-person Community Board... Joe [Zehnder] was pretty expert at trying to help us and the Commission find where that sweet spot was, it took a lot of time and effort. Otherwise there are very significant consequences. Prosper receives 55% of TIF and Housing receives 45%. We both have experts advising on how to do this work. Without their understanding what the funds can be used for and understanding what the Black community and North and Northeast Portland has been asking for -- the possibility to say yes or say no can really undercut the community process that has already taken place. We need to be able to ask for a narrow view from experts. ...In these cases, Kat was able to field things that came out of left field and we were savvy enough to bring in community members to speak to this. But had it just been staff speaking, they would have directed us to do things counter to what we had already heard from the community.

- Those who administer the zoning code are brought before the PSC, providing input on legislative projects that BPS is moving forward. This allows [BDS] to put our testifying in writing but I don't know if they read our stuff. I haven't felt like we were afforded the acknowledgement that we are the implementing Bureau and we have expertise on implementing what comes before them.
- It's not clear what's supposed to be focused on and what is off limits. The internal processes at BDS like our fees, our technology, whose job is it to rein them in if it feels like they're allowed to stray more than we would like them to. They recommended technology for a neighborhood contract requirements and now we're stuck with it because it is in the code. Technology solutions shouldn't be in the code, they should let us figure that out. ...Similar to having to making recommendations about fees. Having them weigh in is outside their scope on another bureau's financial situation. They can consider it but within the context of the regulation, just a factor that you're weighing in on. But they do not have the understanding the more complicated it is to make the regulation. They don't understand that when you make the regulation more complicated and as they're making amendments it drives costs up.
- We're trying to be a good faith participant in a city conversation about development. It needs to be contextualized. PSC is trying; Our interests are one of many to consider and how the community will grow overtime. We were more advocates, trying harder now to be partners with a give and take but still we have interests of our own rooted in federal and state regulations so we can't run in an open field. ...The biggest challenges are the complicated nature of our work related to land use and transportation with stormwater management. Why do we beat the storm water drums so hard? Because people don't understand the basics of hydrology. We have systems that are really old. If BPS decides that is an area for growth it puts us in a difficult situation. Do we have to rearrange our priorities? Are we being a difficult partner? We try to say yes as much as possible. But budget and timeline limitations are major for us. We have mostly invisible infrastructure, and it makes us a wet blanket. There is a tight relationship between stormwater and transportation. There is significant financial pressure in developments that contradicts the equity goals. The tip of the spear of complicated community development challenges -- where the outcomes, the geography, and the history of development and growth present real challenges for a group of volunteers. These are questions we have full time staff to try to figure out.

- PSC is more visionary than advisory. Is that what the Bureau needs? To advise on the priorities? On the budget? And on partnerships? If their charge is not a value add, it needs to be redirected. With shelter to housing which is the most recent (and the most raw) they were talking about housing for a long time period then a month before it went to council we got a tap on the shoulder four weeks before they were headed to Council so we had to scramble before the work session. Shouldn't it be *nothing about us without us*? ...This is challenging for staff, but the Commission doesn't serve to advocate or support the bureau's work.
- I would like to make sure their work is defined, how they interact with us and the work we are trying to do. PSC needs to remain at a high level because we are the implementer. Sometimes when we present to PSC it feels like we are being called to the mat and I need to defend myself.

...We need clarity about the interrelationship of Bureau work. The Planning Bureau and its mission is overlapping with planning functions in other bureaus and the PSC gets used as a tool to force collaboration. When they staff doesn't like the answer they escalate it to the PSC to resolve. ... Because they are so connected to high level policy goals, and connecting the dots between policy adjustments and a coordinated vision, they can give useful advice to strengthen our resolve to do hard things, and push us to be more comprehensive about the goals as expressed in the comprehensive plan. When they can help us with consistency to the Comprehensive Plan, that is appropriate and fine. They need to focus on those higher level policy discussions. ... We do parts of our TSP and comprehensive plan work and view the PSC as the governing body of those pieces of the comprehensive plan.

QUOTES ON PSC'S ROLE AS CITY-WIDE COMMITTEE

Commissioners

- This conflation that we are a BPS Commission creates tension between other bureaus and interpersonal conflict that can exacerbate some tensions in policy put forward by the PSC. With "Portland Nice" the passive aggressive ego wins. PSC exacerbates it through our work. We don't know those landmines that we set up. For example a letter to BDS ended up in the Willamette week.
- In a Commission form of government our city is already pretty siloed. Land use doesn't stop at the border of BPS's work. We do this integration by design, we are going to be more messy than commissions like historic landmarks and forestry. But we should be OK with being messy but be clear about what we are going to mess with.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- I question why the Commission serves the entire city. Because it functions that way it is challenging for other bureaus. We want planning and sustainability staff to be the liaisons, but they really aren't. They are just staffing. The Bureau and the Commission are not in alignment and there is a lot of identity crisis. If this is an advisory committee to the city we only learn about the commission's agenda if there is a synergy. If it remains a citywide advisory committee we need to find a way to communicate as such. So you can experience it as such and not only when you're pulled in.
- My recommendation is that PSC should not be a citywide Commission because they're not doing a good job bringing in the rest of us. It needs a serious culture change to be on board with that.

- Bureaus see PSC as a BPS committee, not a city-wide committee, but the planning staff don't perceive them to be as much as they may see themselves as that. A lot of their work product is directed to that Bureau and that commissioner in charge of BPS.

THEME 7: EVALUATE THE OPTIMAL FUNCTION AND MAKEUP OF THE COMMISSION —FROM TECHNICAL ADVISORS TO FACILITATORS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT —THERE'S NO CONSENSUS FOR HOW THE COMMISSION SHOULD INFLUENCE POLICY AND CODE, AND THE REQUISITE SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES OF ITS MEMBERSHIP.

Strategic questions: *What should the PSC's focus, and how does City leadership respond to ensure membership is capable of addressing that focus in an equitable manner? What level of technical and professional sophistication sets Commissioners up to be successful? How do we effectively create space for community engagement while advancing extremely technical policy and code? How can leadership create clarity about the role of the PSC in community engagement for land use projects?*

Summary: Commissioners say the perceived level of requisite technical expertise to provide meaningful input on code and policy creates an inaccessible experience and a skewed sense for what constitutes valuable input. Bureau directors are concerned that the Commission fails to appreciate all the consequences of the policies decision on infrastructure bureaus. Past commissioners and other bureau directors share ideas and best practices for how to onboard and prepare commissioners for successful contributions.

QUOTES ON THE NEED FOR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Commissioners

- If you need an understanding of land use law to navigate this system, it seems it is designed for those who can live as an attorney and argue the minutiae of land use law which makes it inaccessible at its core. These conversations need to be relevant to the people. My fear is we are only relevant to developers. How can we make code more accessible because you shouldn't have to be a land use attorney to understand. This creates haves and have nots when it is not accessible to a common person.
- There are different levels of expertise that some have and listening to how technical people can get can be intimidating to find out what I am bringing if I am not that technical There are certain people who dominate conversations on the Commission. I am realizing that they have 30 years on me. Personally I have not gotten the sense that lived experience matters as much in this Commission as technical expertise. Feels like it could be out of place.
- I wonder if there is a higher and better use of volunteers time and leave the nitty gritty to the planners who do this. This is not as inclusive or broad as the model required requires it requires technocrats and land use attorneys so people with an understanding of the process. If that is the goal, fine, but we need to restructure.

Current & Past BPS Staff

- It is unrealistic to suggest that commissioners on the PSC have the expertise or knowledge of the city's top planners. What is realistic, however, is to bring commissioners onto this body that are capable of understanding clearly defined objectives and relevant background laid out by city staff so that those commissioners can make informed decisions that are council ready.

Past Commissioners

- The people that are on there, they're not industry leaders. They are all high standards people now, but they have more philosophy than an understanding. They have to understand the nuances, and the nooks and crannies of how sausage is made in order to figure out how to do it.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- PSC has the worst job in all of government and it's done by volunteers. They have the most complicated questions that a municipality runs into, it is an almost impossible situation. Probably this Commission has the highest workload and the most significant commitment as volunteers-- and they don't have the background. Even as a master's in urban and regional planning alum, they don't have the foundation they need to participate in a confident way. The new members are understandably quiet with the onslaught of very complicated projects. There have been heartening changes like the diversifying of racial identity and professional experience in the makeup of the Commission. But it is so technical, no wonder they used to all be planners, developers, and architects because the learning curve for these issues is so steep. Even our environmental planners don't completely understand these challenges. And City Council has much less expertise, God help them if they try to do it. If they pull a thread, they unknit the whole sweater.
- They are making really important major policy decisions with direct land use implications with a lot of ramifications, and in Portland that is hard. People with very different backgrounds can have a sophisticated conversation, but that happens best when you have clear lanes and a clear sphere of influence and you get that right. PSC must have people with sophisticated professional backgrounds who can engage on par with staff about land use so they can push them. Developing really good policy is hard and you're going to piss people off if the underlying economics don't work. The PSC could be a very helpful place to have hard conversations if they reflect market forces, economic conditions, and technical realities. When Kat was on the Commission and there was a surcharge proposed, for example, having a non-staff member say it won't work because it will reduce market development was very effective
- We don't prepare them for the complexity of questions that are before them. We are the West Coast distributors of great plans but we are in credibly challenged by execution. If you want them to make these decisions you need to help them understand the implications.
- They know almost nothing about Title 11 but they are in charge of making decisions, so a lot of upfront education takes a lot of time. Do they have enough information to make a good recommendation?
- Their scope is so broad, they lack expertise because they are so broad and high level to understand the real technical aspects. This is great for high level concepts and policies but the technical details of the code and to make appropriate amendments. ...When it was just the Planning Commission, we had more regular interaction with implementation, so they had a foundation of understanding. We are not getting the best recommendations because they are

not understanding the consequences of those decisions. There was more capacity to do trainings and a work session. That capacity isn't there now and the code is incredibly complicated.

- Now that we don't have a green space advocate we spend a lot of time walking them through and explaining, without that knowledge base there. In the housing work they are so focused on the homeless perspective but no knowledge of the implications in an established park in a neighborhood.

QUOTES ON PSC'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FUNCTION

Commissioners

- This body is not a community engagement body. It fits for those older white folks who are already enmeshed in the land use system but it is not accessible or comfortable for indigenous, black and brown, people in poverty. I don't feel like we can play a community engagement role.
- PSC should have a community focus to it, PSC should be responsible for recommendations that represent the broad set of portlanders who are most impacted by the balance of power. It should be a check and balance for outreach work and provide recommendation for each project. Did you account for who has more power? Did you effectively balance for that power? It should be rigorous. Was there a community perspective taken into account and due diligence done? If not it needs to be adjusted.
- A plan can be transformative, not just for the neighborhood but for the people. We want a more robust planning process that involves metro, the county, so we can go to those partners and ask them to fulfill their promises. Community groups have to work so hard on implementation.
- We should have a critical role in community engagement -- more now than ever -- to go after diverse community engagement. But we need to have the function in mind when we are inviting citizens to spend energy on concerns and ideas without a framework. What are we asking the question for. The tendency is to think engagement is the purpose. They spoke to us but there was no follow up there needs to be a clear structure and outcome if we seek engagement on something.
- PSC does not feel approachable. The hearings are long and exhausting and it is not always transparent how much time people have to testify. How could we do creative things to meet the community where they're at and not just a body for people who are already really wonky. Like a quarterly listening session to say what's on your mind and access points that are not testimony period like open houses to meet the commissioners and create access for people who don't already have access so we don't exacerbate existing power disparities. Can we make it food oriented and make childcare available and make all our hearings more accessible by finding ways to be out in the community.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- You cannot try to do both technical expertise and advisement, and community engagement. Community engagement needs to happen along the way and decision makers need to vet to see if your community engagement was legitimate. But if you're trying to do both, then it falls on staff to be technical experts all the time. If PSC is sometimes advising Andrea and sometimes

they're a decision maker -- it's weird for them to also be a community engagement vehicle. It needs to be very clear who is making the decisions.

- When we get into other geographic based plans, [PBOT is] doing lots and lots of other engagement and then PSC tries to weigh in on implementation.

QUOTES ON OPTIMAL BOARD COMPOSITION

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- The board chair helps to manage the board. They must be even keel. He informs and is accountable to the dynamics we need to address, and it is easier for him to do it. The chair can lead the herd and influence them with the most gravitas. These are fairly frequent conversations so there are no surprises. For all of our members this is not their first board or public body they are pretty experienced in their jobs. Having only five people on the Commission allows it to feel pretty intimate and there are no factions.
- I think they would do better with fewer members. It seems big and unwieldy and it takes more time to get an understanding of everything because they are bigger and clunky.
- They should have subcommittees to deal with specific issues and gain the familiarity with the code so they can crank things through faster because the Commission is so large.
- If you are ever going to get the diversity of thought you're going to have to pay people something or you are going to get an upper-class commission because they can afford to be there. To overcome that you have to pay people a stipend.

Past Commissioners

- Our group dynamic worked because we had a diverse group of backgrounds and passions. We did not have enough people of a similar focus to create factions. There were really different professions and passions and so we were able to challenge each other versus having two sides arguing. We were all very liberal and there wasn't much of a conservative voice we were missing that chunk.

QUOTES ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PREPARE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE JOB

Commissioners

- I would like broad overviews of these issues and have more input on the initial aspects of what could go further. A good example we got staff briefings on the West Portland Town Center from multiple bureaus. Our ultimate goal would be spending more time on one project instead of so many projects. I don't want to give quick input on five different projects at the very end.
- I would like a handbook for behavior. When I was new, I made mistakes and I didn't know how to move an amendment. If something comes up in a workshop, how do you handle it? As a new person it is confusing to figure out the rules. Are there rules for talking to commissioners outside of meetings can people talk through strategy outside, what kind of transparency is required. We should build a guidebook of what does it mean to be a commissioner. So we don't make

mistakes with media. We can all sign what we agreed to do in our work and our practices including evaluation rubrics of community engagement so we can use a common analysis.

- We should develop a buddy system not just for commissioners but with staff to develop informal relationships and rapport. Give me someone who could answer my questions and a thought partner to work through challenges and build that better sense of connection.

Past Commissioners

- It took me two or three years to understand the workflow of BPS and thus the Commission. There is so much you're trying to catch up on and understand. This project has been in the process already for three years, but you don't understand the timeline of projects and how the Commission can influence them, that this project has been set in motion years ago it was helpful to ask about the scope and why are we working on this thing and to get that background.
- Have they had a retreat what do they want to achieve as a group? We used to have a retreat to understand what was coming up, big and little, people had views about how to tackle these things. For example let's get a subcommittee set up, let's get the ball rolling and get talking about what's upcoming so staff can get out to bureaus in advance. If they're not understanding where they are going this is a big issue. ...As a commissioner you can ask any question you want. There is no dumb question, they need to first onboard you about what your responsibility is. When I came on board I spent two days going through the cook code. They gave me 3 ring binders of all the sections. If you can't look up something where you could find it.
- When you sit down and only two of the 11 have read 100% of the book and the rest have only read sections then you're looking at it only an inch deep you have 1000 pages and 30 minutes to vote yes or no. I really couldn't understand it all and some never did... They need help distinguishing, giving them tools of how to understand what they're getting. They aren't getting tools beyond reading all the documents. How do they know what's relevant? What do I need to know to make a decision? How does that one little section of code connect and fit in with the bigger code? I want to be briefed as an executive. The commissioners need to understand how all this is connected. ... Staff can try to understand what's important to each of the members we were always going to bring up certain questions and they can make sure those certain questions are answered in our briefing packets, that our concerns that will always have will be answered.
- Everyone on the Commission needs to understand the broader view then just their own discipline, not just showing up and letting them vote. I pushed staff to get more stuff to all the members, get them more involved in the briefings, give us more so there are less questions left open. Maybe no one is asking questions? When you sit down and only two of the 11 have read 100% of the book and the rest have only read sections then you're looking at it only an inch deep you have 1000 pages and 30 minutes to vote yes or no. I really couldn't understand it all and some never did.
- My frustrations were that some of the folks did not do the homework and instead gave an emotional gut reaction, which is important. But when you're trying to make big decisions, you need to dig into the brass tacks and do the homework, and some folks were more committed to that. I weighed in less on things I had less of an understanding and passion for, which is natural and OK. If you don't do your homework those individuals are less likely to be taken seriously.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- We need more rigorous onboarding of new members including visits to sites and a rudimentary understanding of financing. We are making decisions with outcomes that are decades out. Those outcomes are a couple of cycles of redevelopment out to actually get to the good part... that is hard to understand and tolerate. The economics are not there. There is a lack of sophistication. They need an onboarding training that is rooted in the realities of community development. Every few years train on the basic issues of stormwater and transportation and land use and the understanding of how infrastructure planning happens. We are lacking some basic infrastructure management tools like funding, asset management, and taking care of old things.

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER BUREAUS/COMMISSIONS/BOARDS ON SUPPORTING A COMMISSION

- On [the Prosper] Commission a thorough orientation and onboarding process really matters. We need to take them around the city to see the sights and help them understand our strategic plan and TIF 101. We do a board briefing before every meeting to discuss potential considerations to what they will hear and I talked with the board chair who talks proactively with the Commission.
- The Parks Board serves as an advisory committee; sometimes they disagree, sometimes we take their views into consideration, and sometimes it's a hard stop. Our current parks board is very vocal, but they want to be a value add they do not want to be a burden or more work. All of my senior division managers staff every board meeting and my exec assistant Staffs it too. We encourage the staff to reach out to board members. It takes a lot of work on the part of the Bureau. We are very aware of the time we are investing and we believe it is a good investment. We do a social activity at every parks meeting and get members to attend all parks events as new board members. They are all assigned a board buddy and they couple up with someone to bring them up to speed. Senior managers come through and do a dog and pony show about their divisions and projects and challenges. They also get racial equity 101 through BHR and our sustainable future talking about our financial stability. ...We have many advisory committees and boards; the Parks Board is the overarching board plus other commissions like the Urban Forestry Commission is even more specific as well as the ADA committee, the budget advisory committee, and the Native American advisory group -- all made up of subject matter experts. Our board has a lot of working groups like finance and community engagement, they are doing a lot of work between meetings. They hone in on specific things, which takes the pressure off the Parks Board to go into that minutiae. Like funding for ADA compliance requires familiarity with federal requirements on accessibility. People know this work and they have real-world experience and that reminds us of who we're doing our work for. In forestry we have arborists, urban planners, academics, and climate change experts on our board of contractors. This is their work – and they are living working praying exercising and raising kids in Portland.
- PBOT has as many as 30 advisory bodies and specific stakeholder committees -- on bikes, peds, and freight -- we have modal committees. PSC ventures into implementation world which is the work of the modal committees. They need to be aware of their modal bothers and sisters.

ADDENDUM: THEMES RELATED TO COMMISSIONER EXPERIENCE, COMMISSION CULTURE, DIVERSITY, PROTOCOLS, AND PROCESSES.

QUOTES ON COMMISSIONER EXPERIENCE

Commissioners

- I am frustrated in my ability to contribute, I am mostly listening. I have only been on the Commission for a few months and it is unclear if we are a check mark to make a recommendation or if we are the ultimate body can we still make changes? I think we are a check on power to make sure policy reflects community values. I was told one thing about the functional role but I'm not sure I'm clear.
- I love working with commissioners staff and BPS staff, it is refreshing to spend time with people who care. A lot of things are working well and I appreciate opportunities that come before us. When community is leading and integrally involved it makes it more meaningful.
- I am not satisfied and am disappointed in the drift and the lack of clarity. There is no policy direction in our efforts as a Commission. We are ineffectual as policy makers.
- I want to be a conduit to engagement for those who have not been traditionally served well, a strong voice of equity and justice about who is being benefited and burdened. I want to help provide space and opportunity because there is someone there to hear them and center the needs that come up for communities.
- I am very satisfied as a commissioner. I have other friends who are volunteers on commissions and we have one of the best supported commissions in terms of staff support. We are respected by council and it is a great group of people. Is this body functional? Yes it is.
- It has helped to get validation from other commissioners or staff about my opinions and that I am on the right track understanding what they need from me and what opinions are helpful. I want more opportunity for personal relationship building with other commissioners. I would be more comfortable if I had a buddy that I can relate to, a POC.
- I'm now missing my reason to be here. I can still be effective, I've been on it for a while and there's all these new members, with only a few longer term members. It used to be a higher quality Commission. It's a meta job you have to live into it. You start out watching you make mistakes and to grow the confidence takes a while. The new members all seem like great people. But some of the modeling I got was in person, it's a whole thing going downtown sitting at the semicircle set up and feeling important. We are missing that on zoom we are less engaged it is harder for the new members with only three long term members. For the new members it is important for them to see how the older members act, sometimes you ask questions sometimes you make a fuss.
- We need to think about succession planning and recruitment. Who is coming next? We requested PSC members have a role in interviews and to keep this tradition. Commissioners have insights on what our gaps are. For a while we didn't have a bench but I am really happy with the group we found.
- I have been actively looking for future leadership opportunities to help people learn how to run the meetings. I have looked at the CIC, DRAC, airport and other groups to see if there are future roles for the PSC. I have reached out to Gabe and John Nell to ask how is it going. We need to support commissioners with less experience to grow in the job but mentorship is hard to do with half new people.

QUOTES ON COMMISSION CULTURE & PROTOCOLS

Commissioners

- There are occasions when things have happened in the meeting and staff should have stepped in but a commissioner had to step in. What is the protocol? Should we be addressing group agreements?
- I feel pretty unsatisfied, I am beat up a lot and it is pretty challenging for someone coming from a community, neighborhood, CIC perspective. There is personal blame and attack and I am misrepresented as to what I said at meetings. This is not the first time I have been kicked by the crowd and have this experience. Others who have taken a stance have had negative experiences too. It's not a body for those who want to make change.
- I would like to have a better facilitated experience and given a chance to speak. Not just listening to the loudest voices. Anytime in these meetings it is the same voices, and the facilitation style leads us to a decision that can be made -- while acknowledging that culturally that could look a lot different. Not everyone wants to scream their piece to be heard. How can we define functional roles and clarity in the relationship to BPS?
- In these sessions we are making decisions about land use, but we have not made land acknowledgements. Has someone already brought that up that we are talking about stolen land?
- For people who are young like me, POC, the way the Commission is set up with Roberts rules and that dynamic is a very white thing. I have wondered how we can make the meeting structure less intimidating as a power dynamic. When my friends watch it feels so intense both the experience for community members and for commissioners. Some community members spent the first minute apologizing and saying it was so intimidating and you're all such important people. How accessible are we and how are we perceived? How do we shift that so more people who are interested but who feel it is too formal can speak to the PSC? Especially people where English is not their first language. You are being recorded and everything has to be so polished, so well spoken. It is hard to want to be yourself and to be candid.
- The level of formality and process can be counterproductive to generating solutions in the moment. It is very formal with very limited time on the agenda and not enough staff says "we'll follow up with a memo" but it is not a discussion. I would be interested in a discussion to lead to better understanding. I don't want to dominate, and I have to urgently get my question out. They say "we hear you" but can we talk about it?

QUOTES ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Commissioners

- I want to see PSC become so much more equity focused and to be at the forefront of that. Thinking about racial equity and challenging our traditional ways of thinking about zoning so that PSC continues to be a body that is nationally recognized as it works on changes to the city.
- We need to continue to intentionally diversify the PSC, taking a hard look at the way the Commission is run and making these spaces more accessible. I haven't heard from a single member of the Latin community and there is something very powerful about coming and speaking up, but we also need to meet people where they are at.

- We need to look at requirements in terms of representation like gender, age, racial diversity, we need younger folks who will live here these and live geographies with different lived experiences. These staff are phenomenal, I could not think more highly of our colleagues they ask really good questions and bring multiple perspectives.

QUOTES ON WORKING WITH BPS STAFF

Commissioners

- I am impressed with Staff's ability to be thorough and respond to our comments. The structure of meetings are well done. The BPS relationship is going great in terms of a working relationship. They are performing beyond what I would expect but I want more bluntness about capacity and political pressures.
- Staff do a good job organizing and the calendar of our work period they are super on top of materials, what is coming, and I get enough time to prepare. I have no complaints and working with BPS they show kindness, support, they are caring and thoughtful. I would not change a thing. They are responsive, organized, open to questions and they truly care about the work. This does not go unnoticed. Their values are aligned with mine.
- BPS staff are great supports so I don't have to take my own minutes and get transcripts and they broadcast our meetings and I don't take that for granted.
- With so many big staffing gaps like chief planner and CSO it is harder for us to collaborate. We are perceived as creating more work but there is not capacity.
- BPS created a great onboarding process, and we get good support and communication that is genuine and open minded and very positive. BPS is doing their very best to react to comments and provide detailed responses to commissioners with a lot of follow up.

Past Commissioners

- It's phenomenal the work the Bureau does. I came to respect BPS so much in my time. The capacity of what they accomplish is under recognized by elected leaders.
- The staffing of PSC is exceptional. Their organization around officers' meetings feels very supported, on schedule, and on track. They have a super hard job, they are staffing and they have to take the recommendations forward which makes it hard to speak up when things go sideways and their ability to flag issues. It is a dance for the new chief planner versus the project planner.

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- I question the staff who have been staffing the PSC? Do they feel like it is their responsibility to bridge the divides between bureaus? Perhaps they know it's not their responsibility perhaps they resent that assumption. More time and more responsibility.
- I really appreciated when BPS looked at the racist history of land use, that is such important work. How do you stand up to Laurelhurst and Irvington as they try to calcify our racist past.
- The last interactions with BPS staff have been very helpful and we have good relationships. They are helpful in making the timing work. Dust ups happened more during the comprehensive plan.

- We want to create rich powerful plans, but BPS is so stretched so many people have quit and there's been budget cuts so we're only as good as the plans that come through BPS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE COMMISSION PROCESS

Other Bureaus Directors & Staff

- I would like the PSC to reconsider how they conduct their hearings. Public comment will close and they'll work on proposed amendments -- but there is no way to testify on the amendments. BPS tries to coordinate with us but it doesn't give us the chance to go back to PSC on the amendments. It is beneficial to hear from us, but our only way is to contest with counsel which makes it harder for them to pull it back. So we are stuck. They should allow comment on proposed amendments. Are you really implementing it in a way that addresses our issues and other bureaus may want to provide comment on the amendments too. It will draw things out, but we are having to testify to Council and they say why is this Bureau coming to us now?
- I would like the PSC to revisit how long the process is. Sometimes it is totally appropriate to be this long, like an RIP. But it could be different for a simple and smaller discrete legislative project. The number of hearings and briefings so the standard is you have a briefing and two hearings as a minimum but that could be more than half of the overall project timeline. If projects could be categorized by simplicity maybe there could only be one hearing for the simpler projects.
- An improvement could be if different commissions held a joint meeting. Like if the PSC met with the parks board to do cross education about what they don't understand about land use.