

Portland Planning Commission

March 28, 2023

Commissioners Present

Michael Alexander, Mary-Rain O'Meara, Nikesh Patel, Michael Pouncil, Steph Routh, Eli Spevak, Erica Thompson

Commissioners Absent

Wade Lange

City Staff

Patricia Diefenderfer, Sandra Wood, Barry Manning, Derek Miller, JP McNeil, Phil Nameny, Julie Ocken

[Documents and Presentations for today's meeting](#)

Patricia Diefenderfer called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and provided an overview of the agenda.

Items of Interest from Commissioners

none.

Director's Report

none.

Election of Officers

Decision

Patricia introduced the discussion of the election of officers. Because this is a new Commission, we don't have an existing Chair, who typically leads the meeting. The Zoning Code language that outlines the Planning Commission doesn't speak to the officers aside from saying the election of officers is held the first meeting of the calendar year. We will have more information in the Bylaws, but again, with a new Commission, we don't have Bylaws confirmed; we'll be working on those in our upcoming meetings.

We can use similar guidance from the previous PSC: one Chair and two Vice Chairs to ensure depth of leadership, sharing of duties of the officers, and a pipeline of leadership. The Chair presides over Commission meetings, guides deliberations, and establishes time limits. The Chair and Vice Chairs attend officer meetings to prepare for upcoming Commission meetings. They attend City Council meetings when a project that has come before the Commission is at Council. Vice Chairs serve as the Chair when the Chair is absent.

Patricia shared some additional guidelines and thoughts about officer roles and time commitment.

Discussion

Commissioner Spevak: I would love to hear a go-round to hear where people are and their level of excitement (or not). I like the idea of a Chair and two Vice Chairs. I have served in these roles and am now happy to have others do so.

Commissioner Pouncil: I am open to a role but question my capacity... but if no one else is willing, I can rise to the occasion.

Commissioner Thompson: I am interested in a Vice Chair position but am also interested in hearing others' interest. My experience as a Vice Chair on the PSC in terms of workload was varied depending on the work before the Commission. Officer meetings are open to commissioners if we're below quorum if others are interested in attending those without being in a full leadership role. I feel like the Chair is quite a bit of extra work, where the Vice Chair is a lesser lift.

Commissioner O'Meara: I have interest in the Chair and Vice Chair positions. I understand the Chair is a commitment; I have experience running public meetings, so I am familiar with similar roles. My workplace is also supportive of my participation on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Routh: I have served as Chair and Vice Chair on the PSC. The idea of "just" participating as a Commission member is welcome to me. I appreciate the overview *Commissioner Thompson* gave of the roles. One thing that has become a norm for the Chair is to say which commissioners are in the room physically and who is joining us virtually so members of the public are aware of the commissioners attending each meeting. The Vice Chair roles are also somewhat "building the bench" of leadership.

Commissioner Alexander: I am delighted to hear interest from various individuals. I feel like I would be "the blind leading the sighted" – I hope to learn more and bring a deeper, more knowledgeable lens going forward in a commissioner capacity.

Commissioner Patel: I echo the support and hearing from folks being interested in serving in officer positions. With limited bandwidth, I am not seeking an officer position at this time, but perhaps down the road. I'd like to get some exposure and experience in public meetings before looking to a leadership role.

Commissioner Routh moved the 2023 Planning Commission officer slate of *Commissioner O'Meara* for Chair and Commissioners *Pouncil* and *Thompson* or Vice Chairs. *Commissioner Alexander* seconded.

Y7 (Alexander, O'Meara, Patel, Pouncil, Routh, Spevak, Thompson)

The slate was adopted.

Commissioner Thompson noted in the Bylaws discussion we can talk about leadership roles and that it might not have to be purely the officers.

Consent Agenda

- Consideration of minutes from the March 14, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Routh moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner Thompson* seconded Y7 (Alexander, O’Meara, Patel, Pouncil, Routh, Spevak, Thompson)

The Consent Agenda was adopted.

Training

Nuts and Bolts, cont. (Sandra Wood and Julie Ocken)

[Presentation](#)

Sandra: This is a continuation of some basic training from our March 14 meeting. There is a flow of how legislative projects come through the Planning Commission and City Council (slide 5). We also have a typical project sequence (slide 6) as we reviewed and will start in on the Parking Project today.

Draft Bylaws – as Patricia mentioned, this will be one of the Commission’s first tasks. These typically include codified language as well as operations for the Commission (e.g. who is the spokesperson for the Commission; dissenting opinions; meeting schedule). This will be a conversation over the next few meetings.

Commissioner Spevak: We are currently following the PSC Bylaws in many ways. Does it make sense to have some resolution that we’ll follow some items in the PSC Bylaws as an interim process?

Sandra: We’ll have the start of the conversation at the next meeting, and we can go from there with a working draft.

Logistics: accessing information. Commissioners should bookmark these pages for information and updates:

- [Tentative Agenda](#)
- [Map App](#)
- [BPS Long-Range Planning Projects website](#)

Funnel information through Julie, and she will be the main point of contact for sharing information with Planning Commission members.

Our current meeting schedule is second Tuesdays at 12:30-3:30 p.m. and fourth Tuesdays at 5-8 p.m.

Quorum is vital: we cannot conduct a meeting with fewer than a quorum of Planning Commission members. Five commissioners is a quorum – but it is the majority of the positions filled generally. So if only 7 positions were filled, 4 would be a quorum. We know you’re all volunteers, but please keep your lines of communication with Julie open as soon as you know you may have to miss a meeting.

Commissioner Pouncil: Is there still space to bring in an additional commissioner?

- Sandra: Yes, the plan is to fill this vacant position relatively soon.
- Patricia: We really wanted to get you all off to a good start and be able to conduct the City's business. We will certainly provide updates to you all as we begin this process.

Map App training (Derek Miller)

Derek provided an overview of the [Map App / testimony reader](#). This is a repository for testimony and projects that come before both the Planning Commission and City Council. Testimony comes in various forms: online, via mail, and oral testimony provided to the Planning Commission. Testimony is listed in the order it was received, and there are filters on the left side of the screen to filter the testimony by project.

If you sign in with a portlandoregon.gov account, you have some extra tracking tools that may be helpful in filtering testimony as a known user:

- Download PDFs that testifiers have submitted.
- You can make notes (for yourself, though they are potentially open to public records requests).
- Add testimony to "lists" which is like a folder that you can create within the app. This is a way to categorize testimony, but it's only viewable to you when you're logged in.

Projects that have a spatial component may be tagged by location by selecting a tax lot. You will see the map of where the testimony came from as well as other testimony within 1/8th of a mile if it is tagged spatially.

Planning Commission videos where public testimony is taken will be linked in the Map App, so again, all testimony received will be in the Map App.

Chair O'Meara: Is it filtering for Planning Commission?

- Derek: The simple answer is no – not by default... but you can do so. Projects will be at the Planning Commission before Council of course, so you can use the Sort By feature and sort for the Proposed Draft, since that is what the Planning Commission sees and reviews.

Commissioner Routh: Is there any convention by which we need to use (when signed in) our City email accounts?

- Derek: When you create a portlandoregon.gov account, you can use any email account. So if you have a portlandoregon.gov account, you can create your account using that email account. So then we could link any lists you create back to your City email account.
- Sandra: When Derek was developing the Map App, there were all sorts of tool to use. We did get a bit concerned about what was part of the public record, so we haven't been using some of those tools since anything you put in writing is public record. I would hate for it to be seen that some testimony had/hadn't been read.
- Derek: If you are any user, the system does keep track of what you do read. In the unknown user form, it is stored in your browser session. If I'm signed in, it does get assigned to the user name / account. So do consider this when you're reading as an unknown or known user.

- Patricia: I would encourage you to keep these things in mind. Generally speaking, it's easy to read testimony not signed in; it's a very useful tool just in that sense.

Oregon Statewide Planning Goals / Metro Functional Plan / Comp Plan (Barry Manning)

[Presentation](#)

Barry provided an overview of Comprehensive Planning to ground the Commission in fundamentals of planning. In general, Portland's Comprehensive Plan is a plan for Portland, but it is also a plan that needs to be consistent with Oregon's statewide planning program. It also needs to be coordinated with Metro – the Portland regional government – planning program. The State of Oregon planning program was created in the early 1970s to manage growth and preserve farmland, forest land and other valued resources. Oregon's statewide planning program requires jurisdictions throughout the state to adopt and periodically update Comprehensive Plans.

Oregon Land Use Planning Goals are listed on slide 6. Some of the goals, such as Goal 3, 4, 16, 17, 18, and 19, do not apply to Portland. When plans are developed and amended, they need to be found consistent with these applicable goals.

Metro is the Portland Region's metropolitan planning organization and regional government. Among other functions Metro plays a key role in shaping the region's development through regional land use and transportation planning. Metro sets and periodically adjusts the urban growth boundary which identifies land for urban development.

In the mid-1990s, Metro adopted the 2040 Growth Concept which established the basic framework for regional growth through development in centers, main streets, corridor, light rail stations, and other typologies.

The Centers concept established a hierarchy of centers.

- Downtown Portland is identified as the main center in the region.
- The 2040 concept also identifies smaller "regional centers" - Gateway in Portland.
- Also established town centers – Hollywood, Hillsdale, St Johns, Lents, West Portland.
- Portland has furthered this concept locally.

Metro also established a regional framework plan and functional plan to provide the region with a coordinated growth management plan and regional urban form. Cities in the region must be consistent with the plan, however the plans to not dictate how cities accommodate growth and development, and it is Portland's responsibility to plan to accommodate growth.

The RTP which is coordinated through Metro guides and coordinates investments in the regional transport system, and is informed by Portland's TSP.

Moving to Portland's Comprehensive Plan, slide 9 shows the components within Portland's Comprehensive Plan. These include Vision and Guiding Principles, Goals and Policies, Comp Plan map, etc. Supporting Documents are inventories, analysis, etc. that help set the foundation and inform the plan. Supporting documents also include other related plans such as the TSP and school facilities plans. Key Implementing tools – the most commonly used tools include zoning code and zoning maps.

Patricia will talk further about the key implementing tools in a following presentation.

The 2035 Portland Comp Plan begins with a vision statement. In addition to the Vision, the Plan includes five Guiding Principles: Economic Prosperity, Human Health, Environmental Health, Equity, and Resilience. The Guiding Principles are included to recognize that the plan must be balanced, integrated and multi-disciplinary. The influence of the Guiding Principles is seen throughout the plan and help shape policies and projects. They may also be useful to inform decision-making when competing or conflicting policies are being considered. In addition to the Vision, the Plan includes five Guiding Principles: Economic Prosperity, Human Health, Environmental Health, Equity, and Resilience. The Guiding Principles are included to recognize that the plan must be balanced, integrated and multi-disciplinary.

A concept underlying some elements of the Comp Plan is the idea of creating more complete neighborhoods throughout the city. This will allow people to access goods, service and community amenities more easily and without the need to rely on autos. The 20-minute neighborhood index shown on the map on slide 13, measured access to community amenities and services. Areas shown in yellow have higher access to services while areas shown in purple have the lowest access. A concept in the plan is to make planning decisions about land uses and investments, such as infrastructure, that can improve access to a broader array of Portlanders. This is implemented in various ways including through the centers and corridor concept.

The plan contains 10 Goal and Policy Chapters addressing a variety of topics. A key Component of the Comp Plan is community involvement as outlined in the Goals of Chapter 2: Community Involvement. The 2035 Comp Plan emphasizes deep and inclusive community involvement in planning and investment decisions. In addition to many established organizations the plan calls for broadening the base of community involvement to increase participation of under-served and under-represented communities.

Along with the Goals and Policies of the plan, the Urban Design Framework also provides the long-range planning framework for the development and redevelopment of the city. Slide 17 includes information about centers and corridors, city greenways and urban habitat corridors, and the different “pattern areas” within Portland that influence elements of urban development based on different geographies.

One of the ideas embedded in the UDF is focusing housing and job growth in centers and corridors.

Portland is expected to add approximately 260K new residents and 140K new jobs over the next 20 years. The Centers and Corridors growth strategy furthers the Metro 2040 centers framework in Portland and helps focus where growth may occur. The concept includes the Central City, and Gateway regional center. It also expands on the number of town centers in Portland and augments the strategy with a number of smaller neighborhood centers distributed throughout the city. These smaller neighborhoods centers serve as smaller hubs for community to access goods and services at a local level. Centers are connected by civic and neighborhood corridors where future growth can be directed. The corridors are places that are well served by transit and other transportation modes, and where services exist and can directed in the future. From a resilience perspective, focusing growth in centers helps minimize carbon emissions, in part because people can better get daily needs met without the use of automobiles.

In terms of growth, the Central City is expected to accommodate about 30% of growth. The Centers and Corridors are expected to accommodate about 50% of growth over the next 20 years.

Another key Comp Plan element is the Comprehensive Plan map. It is the long-range land use plan for the city and is one of the Comprehensive Plan's main implementation tools. It identifies land use designations for all parts of the city and helps to implement the land use and growth concepts of the plan.

The Citywide System Plan (CSP) is a related supporting document. It details the projects of infrastructure bureaus over a long-range horizon. The Comprehensive Plan also includes a List of Significant Projects, which is intended as a long-term plan for meeting the infrastructure needs of residential and employment growth allowed and planned for by a city's land use designations. The List of Significant Projects includes a subset of projects included in the Citywide System Plan's Investment Strategy. The List of Significant Projects for transportation, water, sewer, and stormwater is included as a separate component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Thompson: How do projects that originate in the community fit on the List?

- Barry: If there is a need in the community, it can be elevated into one of the plans, for example in the Transportation System Plan. The issues will get embedded into area or neighborhood plans.
- Patricia: An example is the West Portland Town Center Plan – it is geographically-specific, and it amended the Comp Plan. It had some TSP amendments as well, so these components are updated when area plans are discussed and implemented to support the growth and development of specific areas. The example of Albina Vision is a process/concept that will likely necessitate changes to bring them (e.g. Zoning Code and Comp Plan) into greater alignment.

Commissioner Alexander: If we look at the scope and intentionality of the Comp Plan, how does it govern the actions of entities outside of the city?

- Patricia: This speaks to the iterative nature of planning. The Comp Plan is a framework for the 20-year(ish) timeframe. It is a vision for the city in a specific time, but there are things that occur of course – opportunities, funding, etc.

Chair O'Meara: For the housing production units – were those part of the 2035 plan projections by how much each center could accommodate (versus current units)? And is the purpose of the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) to review this work and give us a progress chart?

- Barry: The diagrams are estimates that each center **could** accommodate – they are idealized numbers, not necessarily targets or current conditions.
- Patricia: Those are meant to communicate what we mean by the scale of the centers, so it's not an exact number or population. They are types/hierarchy relative to each other. The HNA is required by the state (as well as the Economic Opportunities Analysis) to make sure the Comp Plan continues to be tracking what the forecasted needs are for jobs and housing so we can show we have the land base and zoning to accommodate.

Commissioner Pouncil: Is there anything that deals with making sure housing affordability is locked in or that there is community housing built in certain areas?

- Patricia: As Barry mentioned, we will be providing more details on big topics – including housing and economic development – in upcoming meetings. There are a number of policies that deal

with affordability and the need for affordable housing, which is implemented in the city in a number of ways.

Zoning Code Overview (Sandra)

[Presentation](#)

Longevity of the code is very important. Sandra provided an overview of what matters and our values and how they get translated into regulations that end up in the Zoning Code (slide 2).

Planning projects are often instigated by changes in the world and changes in community perceptions. In addition to thinking about rules and regulations, you'll think about where these regulations apply. Some changes are just about mapping. Some amend the zoning code or other City titles.

The City organizes its rules by title. Some but not all regulate development in the city. Title 33 is the Zoning Code (Planning and Zoning). Sandra shared the basic structure of the Zoning Code:

- 100s – Base Zones
- 200s – Additional Use and Development Regulations
- 400s – Overlays
- 500s – Plan Districts
- 600s – Land Divisions and Planned Development
- 700s – Administration and Procedures
- 800s – Land Use Reviews
- 900s – General Terms

“Prohibited” versus “not allowed” is key – prohibited means you can't ask for a modification. Discretionary decisions are done through a land-use review.

Commissioner Patel: Thank you for this summary. Often the Zoning Code can be intimidating and extensive, so thank you for this.

Sandra: A reminder that this is really a reference document... like a dictionary. No need to try to memorize it.

Parking Compliance Amendments Project

Briefing: JP McNeil, Phil Nameny

[Presentation](#)

This is a Zoning Code project to comply with state rules that the Climate Friendly Equitable Communities rulemaking updated.

This project proposes to:

- Remove minimum parking requirements citywide
- Update and simplify parking maximums
- Add new development standards for large parking lots

Parking requirements and development include both minimum and maximum parking requirements and parking lot development standards.

JP provided background on the Climate Friendly Equitable Communities rulemaking. They were adopted by the state in July 2022 and include:

1. Requirements for communities to update land use and transportation plans to so more Oregonians have more safe, comfortable ways to get around, and don't have to drive long distances just to meet their daily needs.
2. Rules to support the state policy and goal to reduce Oregon's climate pollution by 75% by 2050
3. Pollution from transportation makes up 38% of Oregon's climate pollution
4. For parking, the state wants to address the negative impacts that excess parking has on housing costs and on land uses that support alternative ways to get around

Climate Friend rules components are shown on slide 6. The implementation of the parking rules are phased, with Phase 1 being implemented last December. Today we're talking about Phase 2, effective June 30, 2023.

The work we're doing now has two implementation options for minimum parking requirements (slide 8). We are proposing Option 1. Removal of minimum parking requirements are in alignment with the City's current plans and direction. Impacts are minimal because of areas where it is impacted.

JP provided details about each component of the proposal (slides 13-17). Removing parking minimums and references to minimums are the major components of the project. We are mostly in compliance with the parking maximums in the Zoning Code, so we are making just minor tweaks and simplifying parking ratios. And large parking development standards will limit the size of parking lots for buildings over 65,000 square feet and add green feature requirements for parking lots over ¼ acre (~ 35 parking spaces +).

The project will return to the Planning Commission for a hearing on April 11 and recommendation on April 25. We'll go to City Council tentatively slated for June 7 so the plan is in compliance with the required effective date of June 30, 2023.

Commissioner Spevak: Remembering back to the affordable housing project and conditional use approvals, I want to confirm that the state doesn't make parking requirement for conditional uses enforceable? And how big is the conditional use permit universe? I hope there is a plan to wind down these uses.

- JP: There is nothing in the Climate Friendly rules that talks about conditional use rules. We didn't touch this as part of this project because of the limited scope and timeline requirement. We'd have to do plenty of research and outreach, so it's larger than the resources and timeline for this project.

Commissioner Thompson: I'm a fan of Option 1 for parking minimums. I do have questions about maximums that I can follow up with via email. There are two tables, and I couldn't figure out if there were substantive changes, but I also couldn't figure out what standard you were in for each residential

category. I also see the Transportation Demand Management is required for 10+ units. That shouldn't be necessary if they are not providing parking – that seems circular if there is this a requirement for TDM.

- JP: We are not making substantive changes to the maximum since we're already in compliance – we're basically simplifying here.
- Phil: The Residential Infill Project removed minimums for single-family, but it didn't address maximums. It can be difficult to analyze and address maximums for single-family because of property ownership and how much social engineering we want to do. The idea was to keep this as simple as possible.
- Re: TDM is coordinated with PBOT. Currently if you're far from transit you don't have to do a TDM. But PBOT has a basic check-sheet program now that I'd compare to erosion control and managing that. They are looking at the TDM program and potentially looking to update that in the next couple years, but we didn't want to deal with that in this project. It was only about 8-10% of projects that might be affected.

Michael Alexander: For the large parking lot provisions, is that for housing and building development (not someone wanting to develop a commercial parking lot)?

- Phil: We will have to look into this. If someone were to propose just a parking lot over ¼ acre, they would have to meet the requirements, but it's not something we really see.
- Sandra: Those words "primary" and "accessory" use are defined in the Zoning Code. Commercial parking is not allowed in many zones as a primary use, but many times it is accessory to other uses.

Commissioner Routh: Are the tree canopy requirements just for new parking?

- JP: For new and/or adding ¼ acre of more.
- Phil: A caveat is that the standards we're putting in place are adding a layer to some things we already have. Existing lots that are already park of a complex that is doing an upgrade project have to spend 10% of project costs to bring standards to compliance or as close to that standard would bring it up to.

Commissioner Patel: I remembered that sometime last year there was a lawsuit filed by several jurisdictions to Oregon Court of Appeals. Are we tracking that?

- JP: We are tracking it but are also moving forward. The changes we're making are in alignment with our larger goals anyway, and we have to move ahead since we don't know what will happen with the lawsuit.

Commissioner Pouncil: Has anyone looked at how people are commenting on the proposal? Are people in the community understanding this and how the City is going about dealing with parking?

- JP: We have been meeting with neighborhoods and district coalitions. There is some misunderstanding but the comments and concerns about this project are a little off – we aren't making changes in most places.

Sandra: You're right to point out that parking is touchy, which we might expect to hear about at the hearing on April 11. This is a quicker project than what we would usually do in terms of outreach, but we have the state-mandated timeline.

Commissioner Routh: I appreciate the analysis of removal of parking minimums to support more affordable housing.

Adjourn

Chair O'Meara adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.