



City of Portland
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services Division

1900 SW Fourth Ave., Suite 5000
Portland, Oregon 97201
Telephone: (503) 823-7300
TDD: (503) 823-6868
FAX: (503) 823-5630
www.bds.ci.portland.or.us

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 25, 2013
To: Bill Cunningham, Tom Armstrong, Lora Lillard, Mark Raggett - Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
From: Chris Caruso, Land Use Review
503-823-5747
Re: Briefing on the Comprehensive Plan Working Draft Chapter 5 and Urban Planning Framework

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to present the Comprehensive Plan Working Draft to the Design Commission. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Attached is a summary of the comments provided by the Design Commission at the March 14th meeting. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting, a subsequent review of the public meeting recording, and a final review by the Design Commissioners. To review the meeting recordings, please visit:

http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/webdrawer.dll/webdrawer/search/rec&sm_clastext=historic%20landmarks%20commission&sm_recnbr=*/eb/*&bool=and&sort1=rs_datecreated&count&rows=50

These Design Commission comments are intended to guide you in further development of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related documents. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on March 14, 2013. As the document evolves, the comments may also evolve or may no longer be pertinent.

Please continue to coordinate with me as you refine the Comprehensive Plan so that additional briefings can be presented to the Design Commission as appropriate.

Encl: Summary Memo

cc: Design Commission

This memo summarizes the direction of the Design Commission provided at the March 14, 2013 meeting:

General Comments:

- There were questions about why the language used in the document was so very broad and not specific toward actions.
- There were questions about the timeline for how this document leads to actual changes to the zoning code and design guidelines.
- There were questions about how economic development informs the Policy language, specifically whether or not the disparity in development costs and paybacks between the Central City and places in east Portland such as Gateway were being addressed.
- There were questions about how Urban Renewal Areas are designated and that some of the existing ones seem to no longer be relevant to their areas.
- The overhead wires should be removed as part of development requirements. While these are controlled by two power companies, they should be required to underground the wires as new development happens. This is the elephant in the room. The cluttered and unattractive views shown in BPS's own photos make it clear that removing overhead lines will dramatically improve neighborhoods.
- Parking counts in new apartment buildings has become the hot topic at Commission hearings. When these Policies are adopted, they should be very clear and take a strong stand about what we want to see as a City. The danger is that if neighborhoods are required to have infill that is contextual, the current context is that everyone can currently park in front of their own house. Is that what we want to protect as context? Or do we want a Policy about protecting the desired ways of life within neighborhoods, and what are those?
- Need options for parking solutions around the City, such as permitted zones.
- If we can keep the core affordable, we will have to spend less on building new infrastructure in the outer areas as we do now when people are priced out of inner neighborhoods. Make sure we are not creating a new problem while trying to solve another one.
- 20 minute neighborhoods seemed to exist more around the city when Portland was a rougher place, not so pristine and precious.
- How do we design mid-rise buildings with transitions and setbacks at inner lot lines or light wells that create livable spaces? Do we codify solar access setbacks in all areas?
- The Design Commission often sees the clash between goals and policies and implementation. There is nothing about the intentions of these Policies. What is the overall desire of these Policies? Are changes to the City staged over time, incremental, or is it all at once in areas?
- Design guidelines and zoning target are not linked now. They often contradict each other with the guidelines asking for infill that matches the current neighborhood while the zoning allows for a much bigger development. Zoning needs to make sense and work with the design guidelines or the guidelines need to be revised to reflect desired zoning potential.
- There needs to be much more outreach about the possible outcomes of various zoning designations. Compatibility is a very troublesome issue when it runs up against the Policy aspirations for density.
- What is the Policy about maintaining quality of life?
- "Character" and "compatibility" must be clearly defined.
- This would be a much clearer document if the Policies were broken into 2 parts – the aspirational part and the "what it really means on the ground" part. Images and models would help explain zoning potential.
- Really need a Policy that explains the City's desired density.
- This needs a more realistic, centralized message about why these Policies are important to everyone. Must have community buy-in or we will still battle over things like parking and infill.

Policy 5.1 Design for People.

- Why do we say this and what does it really mean? The supporting statement does not seem to be tied to the Policy title. "Design for People" is not that useful of a phrase. This effort seems to be more about designing for context and may not be humanistic enough.

- What does this percentage mean? What infrastructure are we providing to achieve this? The Commission is not confident that Tri-Met will be able to keep up with development transit demands so the City needs to make sure things are in place to support this Policy.
- Create a Policy that requires integration of housing, transit, and public outreach, and that zoning potential should be required to be divulged when people are buying houses.

Policy 5.20c

- This Policy seems contradictory between wanting taller buildings along wider streets vs. protecting privacy and solar access through setbacks and building height transitions.
- How are these buildings “local” or responding to the existing context if you want taller things where they are currently not the norm?
- This language and the actual Policy desire needs to be clarified here.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will coordinate additional briefings with BDS staff as the Comprehensive Plan is further developed.

Exhibit List

- A. Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Submittals
 1. Comprehensive Plan Date Summary
 2. Comprehensive Plan Update: Working Draft Chapter 5: Urban Design and Development, January 2013
 3. Section II - Urban Design Framework Draft, January 2013
- B. Other
 1. Memo to Commission with BPS introduction, March 4, 2013
 2. Chapter 2: Housing Draft, January 2013