



Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

5:00 p.m.

City Hall

Council Chambers

415 W 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commission Members Present:

Patrick Adigweme, Sandra Beck, Marjorie Ledell, Zach Pyle, Jeff Prussack

Commission Members Absent:

Nena Cavel

Staff Present: Rebecca Kennedy, staff liaison, Julie Nischik, staff liaison, Becky Rude, staff attorney

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Chair Adigweme.

Motion by Commissioner Ledell, seconded by Commissioner Prussack, and carried unanimously to excuse the absence of Commissioner Cavel.

Motion by Commissioner Ledell, seconded by Commissioner Beck, and carried unanimously to approve the September 10, 2024 minutes.

Downtown Design Guidelines

Jason Nortz, Development Review Division Manager, Community Development Department; Chris Sensenig, Associate Principal, Raimi + Associates

Staff presented on the organization of the draft design guidelines, goals of the design guidelines, and design elements including façade design, high-rise massing, materials selection, window design, active ground floors in residential and commercial buildings and signage.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

Members

Patrick Adigweme

Chair

Zach Pyle

Vice Chair

Sandra Beck

Nena Cavel

Marjorie Ledell

Jeff Prussack

Community Development Department

415 W 6th Street

P.O. Box 1995

Vancouver, WA 98668

360-487-7800

TTY: 711

cityofvancouver.us

To request accommodation or other formats, please contact:

Community Development Department | 360-487-7813 | TTY: 711 | PlanningCommission@cityofvancouver.us

- Do these guidelines affect existing buildings downtown? Staff responded these guidelines won't affect existing buildings. The new guidelines build off existing guidelines and will modernize the document as well as respond to the ways development has changed in the area.
- Is the character of downtown representative of the mixed use place type as part of the Comprehensive Plan? Staff responded these guidelines relate to the design of the building, not the mix of uses that will be present in a mixed use place type.
- Will these guidelines affect the types of uses allowed in downtown or a similar place type? Staff responded the mixed use and regional activity place types will allow many types of uses, and don't anticipate these design guidelines to affect allowed uses.
- Is there an analysis of the impacts of the design guidelines and the cost to build as well as how this might affect housing production. Staff responded that analysis has not been done yet. As part of public outreach, staff anticipate getting feedback from the development community on these guidelines.
- Do you intend to amend the sign code? Staff responded the work on the design guidelines is not intended to include an update to the sign code.
- Streamlining of the permitting process. Staff responded that work is being done as part of the housing action plan to reduce the overall timeframe of review.
- Are these guidelines oriented towards people and users or developers, or both? Staff responded the intent is to orient towards both with a strong Vancouver identity with a great public space. The guidelines have multiple ways to implement the designs to respond to the changing costs in development.
- Disagree with limiting the materials pallet and design guidelines that are occasionally too specific.
- Do the guidelines address exterior building lighting? Staff responded there are sections that address lighting on buildings and along sight lines, dark sky guidelines, and restrictions on rooftop lighting.
- How does the manual address roof lines and forms? Staff responded the guidelines address sculpting for high rise buildings. The modulation guidelines also affect roof lines.
- How are other exterior materials addressed? Staff responded other exterior materials are included in the non-primary materials.
- Do the guidelines address PV panels or other technology for sustainability? Staff responded those will be addressed in the green building code, which is also in development.
- How did you determine the 25 foot setback for parking and why is ground floor parking limited? Staff responded the overall guidance is to create active ground floors. Ground floor park is not an active use and is not very pedestrian friendly. The 25 foot setback is the minimum depth for a small scale retail establishment and ground floor residential.
- With these guidelines, is the City considering current best practices and thinking forward to the next 30 years of development? Staff responded they are considering best practices, while also keeping in mind the restrictions in place through the heritage overlay along Main Street.
- Consider what character is protected in the heritage overlay and also defining what character should exist along Main Street.

Community Forum

Carmen De Leon was present to comment on maintaining community character in Vancouver and embrace green building policies.

Section 30 Code Update

Chad Eiken, Director, Community Development Department; Chim Chune Ko, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity and Housing

Staff presented background information on Section 30, the current property owners with existing pre-annexation development agreements (PADA), uses of concern that could be developed under PADAs, market context to delay development to benefit all parties, proposed solutions for better use outcomes, Council direction on this issue, the proposed code amendments, and the timeline for code amendments.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- What investments has the City brought to Section 30 that would help support higher uses? Staff responded HP is in development of their campus in Section 30. As part of that Development Agreement, the City agreed to fund \$10 million of infrastructure in the section that will benefit other properties, not just HP. The City also invested in upgrading and reconstructing SE 1st Street.
- What is the gap between what is likely under and ideal under this extension? Could the City take control of specific pieces of the property similar to what happened with the Heights? Staff responded it's something that is being considered.
- Does this initiative preclude a potential purchase of land by the City? Staff responded it would not, purchase of the property is another option for the property owners to consider.
- Support for higher density in this area and a consistent approach to development to support community feel.
- Has there been any master planning done in Section 30? Staff responded the single family development in Section 30 is greater than 25 acres and the existing development agreement doesn't require a master plan. The master planning requirement wasn't in place in Section 30 when the PADAs were established.
- What are the motivations of the property owners? Staff responded they believe they're interested in developing the land, possibly open to purchase, and have done some conceptual planning work on how the properties could be developed.
- What is the timeline for these conversations? Staff responded it's likely been about a year of work on this.
- Is the alternative presented favorable to the property owners? Staff responded the conversations have been productive, though there's not complete agreement on what is proposed. The pressure of the DA expiration dates is real but the 1 year extension has taken some of the pressure off.
- How much closer are we to what the City envisioned for Section 30 if these changes go into effect? Staff responded it still preserved some of the intent of Section 30, it would allow a wide mix of uses that are compatible such as offices, clean industrial, multifamily, and increased density.
- How will the Comprehensive Plan affect Section 30? Staff responded the Comprehensive Plan will establish new zoning citywide and will identify areas that need subarea planning, such as Section 30.

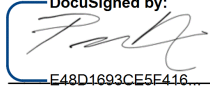
Communication from the Chair

None.

Communication from Staff

Staff noted there will be additional security at the meetings around election season as a precaution.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm

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Patrick Adigweme, Chair