

To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design and Planning Staff
Memo Date: August 19, 2021
Meeting Date: August 23, 2021
Subject: Background for August 23 Meeting and Draft List of Topics for Consideration

Background for August 23, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

During the Summer of 2021 the Planning Commission has held numerous meetings and work sessions around the topics of coordination with City Council, assisting on Council Work Plan projects/priorities, and topics of consideration for future Planning Commission Work Plan or City Council Work Plan items. The Planning Commission work sessions and discussions included/will include:

- June 28, 2021: Joint work session with its subcommittees; [Community Development and Housing Subcommittee](#) (CDHS), [Design Commission](#) (DC), [Historic Resources Subcommittee](#) (HRS), [Transportation Subcommittee](#) (TS), and [Urban Forestry Subcommittee](#) (UFS).
- July 6, 2021: Joint work session with City Council
- August 9, 2021: Planning Commission Work Session with presentations from City staff on their current work related to land use, the work of the Planning Commission, and City Council Work Plan projects and priorities.
- August 23, 2021 (upcoming): Planning Commission Work Session, including presentation from the City Attorney on the rules and roles of the Coordinating Committee in the Gresham Revised Code (GRC) and background for future communications with Council.
- September 7, 2021 (upcoming): Joint work session with City Council

The following draft list is a summary of the topics related to land use and placemaking brought up for discussion during these Planning Commission work sessions by the Planning Commission and its subcommittees. This list is intended as a draft list for Planning Commission’s discussion during their Aug. 23, 2021 work session. These topics of consideration will ultimately be refined during Commission discussions at that work session, with the Commission narrowing down the list of topics to focus on what they would like to share with the City Council at their next joint work session on Sept. 7, 2021 (which is being held in advance of the annual Council Workplan retreat).

At the end of the Planning Commission’s Aug. 23 discussions, the Commission will direct staff on how to finalize the Topics for Consideration summary list prior to staff distributing it to the City Council. At the Sept. 7, 2021 joint work session the Planning Commission Chair and Vice Chair will present this more succinct list to Council, with further discussions of individual topics at Council discretion.

Operational Topics

- How should Planning Commission be undertaking their following responsibilities (outlined in the GRC)?:
 - Coordinating Subcommittees (Per the GRC the Planning Commission acts as a coordinating entity for their subcommittees in so far as the work plans of these bodies relates to land use.) (Priority topic.)
 - Citizen involvement related to land use (Per the GRC the Planning Commission monitors avenues of citizen involvement in land use planning and advises Council on such matters to ensure effective citizen involvement relating to land use matters.)
- Planning Commission recommends making sure the City Council Advisory Committees (CCACs) are supported, adequately staffed, and able to meet and perform their roles.
- Consider increasing development fees to provide more sustainability to planning and code enforcement. (Priority topic.)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Priority topic)

- Recruitment for all CCACs will need to be more inclusive and representative of the greater Gresham Community and neighborhoods.

Housing (Priority topic)

Increasing the availability and attainability of housing and continuing the current Housing and Houselessness Council Work Plan focus is a priority. Specific housing topics discussed include:

- Continued implementation of State-required housing policy updates
- As part of the Housing Production Strategy (HPS) project, work to identify methods of increasing housing production and equitable access to a wider variety of housing options for both ownership and rental.
- Continue/expand collaboration with other regional jurisdictions for increased production of affordable housing in Gresham and across the region.

Code Compliance

- Planning Commission encourages expanded support for Code Compliance as it relates to the Development Code. In addition to those noted above, this topic was discussed at their 10/26/2020, 11/23/2020, and 12/14/2020 meetings. Discussions included:
 - Increased code compliance action/follow up for conditions of approval, including consequences for when a developer does not comply with the conditions.
 - DC: DC shared on June 28, 2021 they would like greater accountability for utility companies to follow their approved equipment placement plans.
 - Expanding code compliance enforcement regarding tree issues (also noted as a priority consideration from the Urban Forestry Subcommittee). (Priority topic.)
 - Consider a new position for a dedicated staff person to handle code enforcement related to the development code. This could be supported through increased development fees or requiring developers to hire third-party inspectors. One option discussed would be to add a new Oversight and Inspection role to UDP that would be responsible for making sure approval conditions are met throughout the building process. Planning conditions are different from, and in addition to, the many regulations that Code and Building Inspectors oversee, and as such building inspection staff does not have the training/capacity to enforce planning conditions.

Climate Action and Natural Resources (Priority topic)

In the work sessions outlined above Climate Action was noted as a priority by the Planning Commission, the UFS, and by City staff.

- As part of the Climate Action Plan also look at/consider impacts and benefits from emerging technology in transportation and parking.
- UFS: Treat trees as integral components of the city’s infrastructure similar to utilities.
- Planning Commission and UFS: The City’s tree canopy plays a critical role in mitigating the impacts of climate change. The City should track the City’s tree canopy, including what it is now and what it should be, and consider policies to protect, maintain, and/or increase canopy coverage in the city, including tree code updates in the development code. (Priority topic.)
- DC: Consider implementing sustainable water management practices, Gresham seems to be behind other cities in the region on this.

Transportation and the Transportation System Plan (TSP)

- Include review of emerging technologies and parking, and management of the curb. (Priority topic.)
- Examine how transportation systems and policies can be integrated into the Climate Action Plan. (Priority topic.)
- Study thoroughfares.
- TS: Concerned with safety and equity in transportation access, alternatives, and quality. (Priority topic.)
- TS: Addressing how to close and prevent transportation gaps for all users when reviewing development/redevelopment projects (including equity in access as well as physical accessibility issues)
- TS: Promote Safe Routes to School, including walking and biking as alternatives to vehicles.

Additional Topics

- At their July 12, 2021 meeting the Planning Commission approved a motion to recommend that the City consider beginning the development of a long-term vision for the gravel pit sites to inform and build on the momentum of the County's Vance property planning effort.
- Additional topics brought up for discussion by the Planning Commission Subcommittees not mentioned above include:
 - UFS: Indicated a need for updates to their bylaws in the GRC to outline a clear purpose statement and identifies their duties and responsibilities. (Priority topic.)
 - UFS: Suggested consideration of development code revisions to refine the policies in the tree code with an emphasis on tree preservation and mitigation for canopy trees that are removed.
 - UFS: Advocated for the possible hiring of a consulting urban forester to interact with the public, work with City development review staff, assess code revisions, and look at compliance issues.