

The Portland Tribune

Council Vote Set on Central City 2035 Plan on Wednesday

April 23, 2018

Final decision is expected on June 6 for growth plan expected to take effect three days later.

The City Council is scheduled to tentatively vote on a growth plan for downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods on Wednesday, April 25.

A final vote on the Central City 2035 Plan that will govern growth over the next 20 years is set for June 6. It is expected to take effect on June 9.

The public comment period is open until 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 24.

CC2035 — as it commonly called — is the first amendment to the update of the Comprehensive Plan approved by the council last year and scheduled to take effect on May 24.

The plan had previously been reviewed and recommended to the council by the appointed Planning and Sustainability Commission, which advises the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. According to BPS staff working on the plan, key decisions made by the council include:

Some of the most significant decisions by Commissioners are described below.

Height

- Increase the bonus height at RiverPlace from 125 feet to 325 feet.
- Restore heights in Old Town Chinatown from 350 feet to 460 feet along NW 5th to Broadway.
- Increase height on the western half of Block 33 in Chinatown/Japantown from the PSC-recommended height of 125 feet to 160 feet.
- Retain the PSC's proposed height increase at Morrison Bridgehead.

Floor Area Ratios (FAR)

- Allow the transfer of floor area from

Open Space zones

- Initiate a study to analyze options for increasing bonus floor area that new projects can earn

Scenic View Corridors

- Retain the PSC's decision to not protect the view of Mt Hood from Salmon Springs and allow taller buildings in the Central Eastside.
- Eliminate the view of Mt Adams from Upper Hall.
- Relocate the viewpoint of the Central City from I-84.
- Retain the PSC's proposal to increase the height along Jefferson toward the Vista Bridge from 30 – 45 feet to 75 feet.

Green Buildings

- Modify the eco roof standard to require that 100 percent of the rooftop must be in eco roof, but exempt up to 40 percent for other development such as mechanical equipment, solar panels and common outdoor areas.
- Hold a public hearing to consider two new administrative rules that are necessary to implement CC2035: one for low carbon buildings and one for bird-safe glazing.

Willamette River

- Retain the guidance for how to measure top of bank, which is where the riverbank levels off around and under structures such as docks.
- Modify the river setback regulations for historic buildings that were constructed prior to the setback regulations.

Transportation

- Exempt Central City public school sites from the superblock regulation, allowing them to design spaces and accessways to address safety and security concerns.
- Support the I-5 Rose Quarter action. Add direction for the City to ensure that all elements from the I-5 Broadway/Weidler Facility Plan are implemented and integrated with other City and community-led efforts in the area.

You can learn more at www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/47907.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Developers Decry Last-Minute Political Interference

By Chuck Slothower

April 20, 2018

For developers contemplating multifamily projects in Portland, the City Council's appeals process represents a perplexing puzzle.

After the City Council upheld the Pearl District Neighborhood Association's appeal of the Design Commission's approval of the Fremont Apartments, developers began to wonder where the council stands on new housing projects.

"It's chilling for anyone who goes down the fairway with entitlements," Cairn Pacific principal Tom DiChiara said.

The City Council reconsidered its decision to uphold the appeal and opened the door for further discussion. Now the council is scheduled to revisit the appeal on May 10.

In the case of the Fremont Apartments, if the development team were required to go back to the drawing board, the project would change substantially. The proposed 17-story tower would no longer be vested under pre-inclusionary housing rules, so any new application would have to include affordable units.

Inclusionary housing rules require developers to either set aside 15 percent to 20 percent of multifamily units as affordable units or pay a hefty fee. Fremont Apartments was part of a flood of multifamily projects – totaling 19,000 units – that were submitted for city approval before inclusionary housing rules took effect on Feb. 1, 2017.

The developer of the Fremont Apartments, Lincoln Property Company of Dallas, did not respond to interview requests.

The back-and-forth regarding the Fremont Apartments has added to a sense of uncertainty for multifamily projects that come before the City Council. The council also voted to allow a height increase for NBP Capital's proposed multifamily towers in the RiverPlace area; that project has not been examined by the Portland Design Commission yet. Instead, NBP Capital reportedly circulated project information at City Hall.

The uncertainty comes amid broader signs of oversupply in luxury apartment housing and increased costs for land and construction. Developers have expressed concern that the economic expansion, now in its ninth year, can't keep going forever.

Rents have declined in Portland, slipping 0.6 percent in March compared to a year earlier. Many managers of new luxury apartment buildings have taken to offering concessions.

"There is a lot of fear and hesitation and challenge to keep our development cycle going," Brad Malsin, principal of Beam Development, said at a City Council meeting in March. "Land prices are escalating, construction prices are escalating and people are fearful – developers are fearful that (with) inclusionary zoning, we can't make a lot of projects work."

Malsin began to criticize the City Council's initial move to uphold the neighborhood association's appeal of the Fremont Apartments, but he was cut off by Mayor Ted Wheeler.

"That process is not closed," Wheeler said. "Move on."

In a subsequent interview, Malsin added that allowing neighbors to halt a project at City Council sends a bad message to developers.

"I think it's problematic, and you're sending out mixed messages," he said. "The Fremont Place Apartments are a prime example of people – citizens – intervening at the wrong stage of the development process."

The public has ample time to comment on development proposals during early stages, Malsin said.

"To have people come in at the last minute and have people say you're blocking my view, I find that incredibly disturbing and undermining public process and public planning," he said.

OPB

National School Walkout Day Draws Students to Portland City Hall Rally

*By Rob Manning
April 20, 2018*

More than a thousand students from North Portland to Lake Oswego descended on Portland City Hall Friday as part of the National School Walkout against gun violence.

They carried signs that said "Guns Are Not School Supplies," and "Enough."

The protest marked the 19th anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting in Colorado. That was before most of these students were born. But students like Asher, at Portland's Lincoln High School, remember more recent shootings, like Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012.

“My mom did not tell me, because it was my 12th birthday – December 14, 2012 – and the Sandy Hook shooting happened on my 12th birthday,” Asher told the crowd.

“She didn’t want me to make me feel sad on my birthday, so she didn’t tell me that day.”

But Asher and thousands of students across the country have been turning their grief into anger since 17 students were fatally shot at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in February.

Students have been pushing relentlessly for gun control measures, with national protests starting with school walkouts on March 14, the one-month anniversary of the Parkland shooting.

At Friday’s rally in Portland, students applauded one another for braving possible discipline at school to make those buildings safer for school violence.

Catlin Gabel student Helena Khoury pressed those who were old enough to vote to punish politicians who sided with the gun lobby.

“So to all the politicians who take money from the NRA – and I am talking to you, Marco Rubio and Oregon’s own Greg Walden – the blood is on your hands,” Khoury said, as the gathered students continued her message by chanting “The blood is on your hands.”

Students also addressed allegations from gun rights advocates, that young people are being guided or coached by liberal activists. A Lincoln freshman named Elliana asked the rally if they needed adults to tell them what to believe.

“Let me ask you the students. Are we brainwashed? Are we crisis actors?” Elliana shouted through a megaphone.

Students shouted back, “No.”

Then she asked, “But can we start revolutions?”

And the students responded with a raucous “Yes!”

The only non-teenager to speak was Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who applauded the students’ efforts.

“This isn’t about adults giving you advice, this is about you telling adults what you want and expect. But don’t let this be a moment, let this be the beginning of an era,” Wheeler told students.