



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

Mixed Use Zones PAC Meeting Summary

Date: 7/16/2014

In attendance:

PAC (18) Mike Warwick, Jason Miner, Lauren Jones, Vicki Skryha, Michael Hayes, Cora Potter, Heather Hoell, Duane Hunting, Carol Gossett, Jason Barnstead-Long, Sarah Iannarone, Brendon Haggerty, Doug Klotz, Damien Hall, Denis Petrequin, Daryl Garner, Curt Schneider, Steven Gilliam

Staff/Consultants (6) Tyler Bump, Barry Manning, Bill Cunningham, Samantha Petty, and Nick Kobel (BPS); Grant Morehead (PBOT); Deb Meihoff, Bill Tripp (consultants)

Purpose of meeting: Review Portland zoning code issues, development/design analysis update

PAC Process Updates and Feedback

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Comprehensive Plan draft will be out on Monday July 21st. There are a variety of implementation projects tied to the update including the Mixed Use Zones Project (MUZ). Because the MUZ project is bigger and more complex, and it may go to Planning Commission later than some of the other projects. We will brief the Planning Commission on the MUZ project on August 12th.

Progress Report on Roundtable Meetings

We will be hosting five roundtable discussions. On August 6th and 7th Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) staff and MUZ consultants will meet with two roundtables of developers, one roundtable of architects, one roundtable of affordable housing professionals, and a business roundtable group in partnership with Venture Portland. PAC members have not been invited to participate on the roundtables but can continue to share their expertise/perspective in these areas through the PAC process. Staff presented a draft list of questions to ask roundtable participants and welcomed PAC feedback.

PAC feedback on the draft roundtable questions (Staffs Qs available [here](#)):

- Directly ask developers how they can further the Comprehensive Plan goals through their work. What types of public incentives would lead them to develop dense, small, and affordable apartments?
- What sorts of measures can the city take to encourage developers to protect historic buildings?
- It will be important to explore the concept of transfer of development rights during these roundtables.



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- BPS should consider talking to lenders to find out what their lending practices are regarding mixed use development.
- Solicit suggestions from the developers and architects about how to keep the street active even if the building is purely residential. It hurts businesses where there is a break in the active streetscape so how can we make residential buildings active at the street level?

Other PAC Comments

- A PAC member asked for clarification regarding what was meant by zoning performance. Staff clarified that they meant the quantity/type of development happening in different zones.
- A PAC member requested clarification on why primarily US best practices were being studied. Staff stated that because good US examples are available it is appropriate to focus on them because the legal land use environment is more applicable.
- A PAC member suggested that for both the Roundtable Discussions doc and the Assessment Report there needs to be more text and dialog connecting the new zoning, larger buildings, and growth, with the need for this to happen because of population increase and the benefits of having denser "main streets" - closer shopping, services, entertainment, and housing.

Zoning Code Assessment Update

Staff shared information on how the new Comprehensive Plan policies relate to the Mixed Use Zones Project. The handout for this presentation can be found [here](#).

PAC Feedback on the Comprehensive Plan Presentation:

- Some of the things encouraged by the new Comprehensive Plan work at cross purposes. For example, the Plan encourages adaptive reuse and in another section promotes seismic retrofits. However, these retrofits are so expensive that it is easier to demolish than retrofit. It should be clearer how these things fit together. Is Portland going to subsidize these retrofits so they are affordable? This is being considered for Old Town. What about east of 82nd?
- There also seems to be a contradiction between promoting high density as an overarching tool and context sensitive design.
- No specific mention was made regarding reduced carbon emissions. Compact development will be key to this reduction. Are we emphasizing this in MU zones?
- Do we need to require commercial development or allow it? What do we know about what the market is already producing? If we get only residential development it will be difficult to achieve the 20 minute neighborhood goals.
- Requiring commercial uses that are not market driven is a recipe for blight. Instead we should think about flexible spaces where interim residential uses can eventually become commercial.
- We should break down Commercial into retail and other types of Commercial. We should also be promoting non-retail uses like office and medical uses.
- Can we be thoughtful about development of our large opportunity sites? There are areas (like NW) which are not good candidates for urban renewal but could benefit from a planned development strategy. Perhaps a master plan strategy (currently not used by Portland) would be appropriate.



Staff shared information on the preliminary Portland zoning assessment. Handout can be found [here](#).

PAC Feedback on the preliminary Portland zoning assessment:

- It will be important to talk to lending institutions in order to understand how their lending practices relate to mixed use.
- Do not ignore residential zones such as R1. It is important to understand why they are not attracting development while C zones are.
- Keep overlays and plan districts in mind. These tools are challenging to understand and not easily accessible in the code.
- The presented concepts coalesce around Centers but there does not seem to be that much attention to Corridors. How will these concepts play out in linear form?
- There is a tension between context sensitivity and broad, generalized, predictable zones. Are you saying that where a property is located will dictate what can be done with the property?

Staff shared information on Preliminary Case Studies

Staff is looking at demographic and development patterns in roughly 20 case study areas. Changes in demographics and other indicators is very dramatic in Vancouver/ MLK/Fremont case study area. Housing values are increasing dramatically with rehabbed structures commanding high rents. There was a 56% increase in rents last year. Business districts are more diverse than they appear. There are lots of office, educational, and medical uses in this area.

PAC Feedback on Preliminary Case Studies:

- PAC member recommended not using the term “gentrification” to describe trend and changes
- PAC noted that solutions to the issue of rising rents and property values often include providing affordable housing, but that this new housing often does not serve the populations being displaced.

Development/Design Analysis Update

Bill Tripp presented preliminary drawings of outer and inner Division Street (found [here](#)). The diagrams show how dramatically different right of way, scale of buildings, and traffic counts are on these sections of the street. A Sketch up model of building envelopes allows the team to overlay actual existing buildings onto the model to help people visualize the street. Bill also showed some cartoons that use humor and narratives to describe some of the challenges of the project.

PAC Comments

- This work seems very useful.
- Instead of using abstractions to represent people you should use clear images of people of all ages and abilities to help viewers imagine how the streetscape feels to a variety of users.
- Does the pace of change impact the canyon effect? Do people feel the same way in areas that have been around for a long time?
- A time lapse of development would be helpful.



- I would also be helpful to model what would happen to existing neighborhoods if we don't accommodate growth and new development in centers and corridors. This would help people understand the tradeoffs.
- It is important to show the relationship of the street you are on to nearby streets because that impacts your perception of the street.
- Can you show graphically how overlay zones effect the area?

Public Comment

- How are you going to accommodate people who do not speak English? Commercial uses in lower income neighborhoods include strip clubs near bookstores. Separation of uses may be more important in these neighborhoods where commercial uses may seem less desirable.
- You really need to be sensitive to transitions to residential neighborhoods. Heights of 45 ft. will destroy the neighborhood. NW 23rd is a preferable development pattern.
- I'm not seeing much effort to coordinate with TriMet. Is TriMet going to provide frequent service in all these zones? For example, in NE Fremont density is going up but transit services are going down. I'd also like to point out that median rents are not representative because they are looking at new construction and many existing tenants live in older buildings that rent for much cheaper. Staff clarified that we are looking at various measures for rents and working with Trimet through our Technical Advisory Committee.
- Really likes Bill's presentation. FAR and TDR would be helpful concepts to illustrate graphically. Another thing that would be nice to see is height to street ratios. The roundtable questions should also be distributed to interested members of the public. In the Assessment report staff should look into setbacks and landscaping. Quality and context sensitivity should be defined or graphically represented. We have a Division Perception Survey we would like to share with staff.
- Question about what was meant by rental market. Clarification that this includes whatever is for rent. There are not many new apartments being built for families.

The next meeting is August 20, 2014. Barry will not be here; Bill Cunningham and Deb Meihoff will staff the meeting, and Dyett & Bhatia will attend to talk about best practices from other cities.

