TO: Mayor Studebaker and City Council

FROM: Scot Siegel, Planning and Building Services Director, Planning Commission Liaison
       Robert Heape, Chair of Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Planning Commission and Commission for Citizen Involvement Goals 2019

DATE: December 27, 2018

ACTION

Provide direction to the Planning Commission/Commission for Citizen Involvement (Commission) regarding 2019 Goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo provides the status of the Commission’s 2018 Goals and outlines eight proposed goals for 2019, including some carried over from 2018 (Housing, Climate Action Plan, Short-Term Rentals) requiring City Council direction. The memo also addresses potential workload implications. In summary, staff has capacity to complete the Commission’s goals as recommended.

STATUS OF 2018 GOALS

1. Amend Community Development Code (CDC) per the City Council goal on Economical Housing. This was part of a multifaceted strategy that included code changes and adoption of financial incentives for economical housing. In 2018, the Planning Commission recommended and the City Council adopted code amendments for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that eased the restrictions on ADUs (LU 18-0003/Ordinance 2784). The Commission also reviewed the Community Development Code to identify potential new incentives for below-market rate affordable housing.

2. Continue process improvements for Citizen Involvement. This is an ongoing effort (PP 18-0005). To date, the Planning Commission has:
   - Encouraged more citizen input using online forums such as Nextdoor.com.
   - Provided more advanced hearing notice (35 days) for legislative hearings.
   - Continued to solicit input using Public Review Drafts.
   - Implemented “community-sourcing” of planning studies, as was done for the...
Uplands Neighborhood Plan and Forest Highlands Re-Zoning.
- Continued Commission tours of the neighborhoods.
- Reduced meeting length and number of meetings where possible, and without diminishing public involvement. In 2018, a total of 20 PC/CCI meetings were held, compared to 21 meetings in 2017 and 23 meetings in 2016.
- Reviewed the Citizen Involvement Guidelines and identified additional process improvements through focus groups with neighborhood leaders and building industry representatives.

3. **Review the Residential Infill Design (RID) variance procedure.** The Commission conducted a work session on August 13, 2018 to review the RID Variance Procedure ([PP 18-0006](#)). On October 15, the Commission toured former RID projects with staff to see if the code was achieving the City’s goal of added flexibility, compatibility, and superior design for single family building projects. Through this process, the Commission determined that RID is having positive outcomes for homeowners/builders and the public, and decided that no change in policy or code is warranted at this time based on the examples reviewed.

4. **Continue to assist neighborhood associations with planning.** In 2018, the Commission completed its review of Flag Lot and Private Access Lane Standards ([LU 17-0052](#)/Ordinance 2762). These citywide amendments were widely supported by the City’s neighborhood associations and approved by City Council. The Commission also completed work on the Forest Highlands Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map Amendments ([LU 17-0078](#)/Ordinance 2771), resulting in City Council adoption.

The Commission also identified a potential review of the First Addition Neighbors-Forest Hills (FAN-FH) R-6 Zone Dimensional Standards as requested by the neighborhood association. However, upon checking in with FAN-FH, the neighborhood decided not to proceed with those changes. Other tasks identified in 2018 were maintenance of existing neighborhood plans (Palisades and Old Town) for consistency with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Due to workload and recent staff turnover, that did not occur.

5. **Implement the recommendations of Climate Action Plan.** This is pending completion of the Climate Action Plan and adoption by the City Council.

6. **Review public street standard for applicability to infill situations.** This was resolved by City Council at its meeting of April 3, 2018, without the need for a code amendment.


8. **2018 Other Work.** As in previous years, the Commission completed other work tasks. In 2018, these included the 2017 and 2018 Annual Community Development Code Amendments ([LU 18-0007](#) and [LU 18-0035](#)), Comprehensive Plan Map Corrections ([LU 17-0079](#) and [LU 18-0005](#)), and exploration of Short-Term Rental Regulations which included a community survey with over 850 responses ([LU 18-0034](#)). The Commission
also completed a public hearing on Lake Grove Village Center/West Lake Grove Design District code amendments, including incentives for Tree Preservation and Mitigation and removal of conflicts in Building Design Standards (LU 18-0059). This package of code amendments is anticipated to come before City Council in early 2019.

Other Projects/Tasks Completed in 2018:

1. Toured two neighborhood associations (Blue Heron and Oak Creek), and toured Downtown developments with Planning staff.

2. Met five times as the Commission for Citizen Involvement as part of a comprehensive review of the Citizen Involvement Guidelines.

3. Attended Planning Commissioners training at the League of Oregon Cities conference.

RECOMMENDED GOALS FOR 2019

1. Seek City Council direction on Community Development Code (CDC) incentives for affordable housing. The Commission has identified density bonuses as a possible incentive for multifamily affordable housing that should be explored. The Commission also received information from staff on other CDC amendments that could expand the range of allowed housing types, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the City Council’s affordable housing goal. For more information, see the staff report from the Commission’s October 22, 2018 work session on Affordable Housing (PP 18-0008).

2. Implement recommendations of climate action plan once adopted by City Council. The Commission assumes that its work would begin in the second half of 2019. This effort may consider support for electric cars, zero energy buildings, and other green initiatives based on the Action Plan from the Sustainability Advisory Board.

3. Support the Historic Resource Advisory Board in updating the City’s preservation code. This effort is intended to achieve consistency with recent changes in state planning requirements, remove obstacles to landmark designation where property owners have consented, and streamline the permit process for minor alterations to landmarks.

4. Recommend Short-Term Rental regulations for City Council consideration. This effort (LU 18-0034) is currently on hold, pending City Council direction.

5. Implement process improvements for citizen involvement in land use planning.

   a. Maintain current public notification procedures, and continue to push information out with nextdoor.com and similar social media.

   b. Continue the practice of receiving public comment in work sessions, in addition to public testimony at Commission hearings.
c. Continue to use online surveys and focus groups for feedback on planning issues.

d. Make it easier to comment on land use plans and development applications with easy-to-read notices and online information.

e. Continue neighborhood tours by the Commission and encourage meet-and-greet events in neighborhoods and for the community at-large.

f. Continue to support neighborhood associations with financial assistance for neighborhood newsletters, inventory public meeting spaces, and update the Citizen Involvement Guidelines and Neighborhood Resource Guide, as recommended at the November 14 work session on PP 18-0005.

g. Encourage equity, diversity, and inclusion in planning projects. Support broader efforts in the community in this regard, for example through formation of a task force or committee, subject to City Council approval.

h. Offer training on city codes as applied to home improvement projects and remodels, similar to the City’s Urban and Community Forestry workshops.

i. Provide more orientation/onboarding for commissioners (Planning and Development Review Commissions) to familiarize commissioners with past plans, ongoing projects, and neighborhood priorities.

6. **Review the criteria for membership on commissions whose focus is Land Use.** This goal follows the Council’s recent review of the Development Review Commission (DRC) criteria. Some citizens have suggested that the PC/CCI should advise Council on the makeup of the PC and DRC, as both are responsible for land use decision making or provide land use policy advice to Council.

7. **Explore the need for new or updated neighborhood plans.** The Commission has recommended putting out a new call to the neighborhood associations requesting proposals for planning assistance, subject to staff workload/capacity.

8. **Review and recommend annual CDC amendments and address other land use policy issues as may be directed by City Council.** The number of code changes processed through the Annual CDC Amendments continues to diminish. Currently, the Planning Department is tracking only a handful of potential code amendments for 2019. Though the Commission will reserve capacity for any new planning issues that may arise.

**WORKLOAD CONSIDERATIONS**

The Commission is sensitive to how its goals have workload implications both for staff and community volunteers. A key workload indicator is the number of meetings (work sessions and
hearings) required to review new work, as there is a finite number of potential meetings. Another workload indicator, albeit an ‘optional’ function of the Commission, is the number of neighborhood meetings and tours that it conducts; the tours typically occur on weekends. The Commission also serves as a quasi-judicial hearing body on some land use decisions, such as formal requests for similar use determinations and zone changes, though these are infrequent.

Based on the Council’s expectations and the volume of work delegated to the Commission, as discussed on page 2, the Commission has reduced the number of meetings it holds without compromising the public process or extending the length of meetings.

Planning Department Capacity

A key staff workload indicator is the number of labor hours it takes to prepare and process the proposals that come before the Commission. Personnel from both the Long Range Planning and Development Review divisions of the Planning Department manage “long-range” planning projects. The Commission is supported by one administrative support position in Long Range Planning and the Deputy City Attorney, both of whom have other responsibilities with the City.

Planning staff is also responsible for long-range planning projects and programs that do not come before the Planning Commission. These include annexations, historic preservation, neighborhood enhancement grants, neighborhood association program support, natural resource planning, capital improvement program support, and maintenance of non-land use codes such as the Tree Code, Sign Code, and Building Code (including Demolitions), among others. The Planning Department currently has two planning positions in the Long-Range Planning Division in addition to the department director. Only a portion of each position is allocated to projects that come before the Commission. During 2017, staff from both the Long-Range and Development Review Divisions worked with the Planning Commission.

Staff availability for long-range planning is subject to fluctuations in development activity because development applications are subject to state-mandated deadlines. As such, these projects may take priority over other work. Development began to increase in 2012 and has remained strong since then as indicated by the number of land use applications, building permits, and other types of permits that the City processes. This year to date the department has processed 85 pre-application conferences and 65 development review applications.

For these reasons, the Commission and staff take a conservative approach to workload forecasting and only recommend goals that are attainable within the calendar year. Larger, multi-year planning efforts, such as an update of the Comprehensive Plan, should be planned and budgeted farther in advance.

“Lean LO” Process Improvement

As part of our Continuous Process Improvement Program (“Lean Oswego”) we seek to streamline the permit processes, reduce overtime, and free up staff for services and programs that are the Council’s highest priority, while meeting statutory requirements. This includes examining methods of project delivery and using new technology as appropriate.
The Planning Department has considered outsourcing more projects to consultants, but ultimately capacity for new planning work is constrained by personnel (to manage the work), volunteer hours, including Planning Commission meetings (to review work products), and the public’s capacity to participate. Lake Oswego citizens expect a high level of engagement in policy making, including access to city officials, and this can be a challenge when working with consultants on individual projects. The Planning Department did not use any consultants for Planning Commission work in 2018. However, that remains an option that can be deployed if necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

Review the Commission’s proposed goals to help inform the Commission’s work plan for 2019. The Commission is also available to meet and discuss its recommendations.