



PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Notes April 2, 2025

<u>Commissioners present:</u>	Joel Metlen, Gary Walvatne, Kathryn Schulte-Hillen, Kris Kachirisky, and Tom Watton
<u>Commissioners absent:</u>	Jason Evans and David D. Jones,
<u>Staff present:</u>	Planning Manager Darren Wyss and Management Analyst Lynn Schroder
<u>Consultant present:</u>	Matt Hastie, MIG Consultants and Brendan Buckley, Johnson Economics

The meeting video is available on the [City website](#).

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Metlen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Planning Manager Wyss called the roll.

2. Public Comment related to Land Use Items not on the Agenda

Alice Richmond provided public comment.

3. Public Hearing: PLN-25-01: Recommendation to City Council on Adoption of the West Linn Housing Production Strategy

Chair Metlen introduced PLN-25-01, a proposal to adopt the West Linn Housing Production Strategy. Metlen provided an overview of the hearing process and opened the public hearing.

Planning Manager Wyss provided a brief process overview. He introduced Matt Hastie of MIG Consultants to provide the staff presentation.

All cities in the metro area are required to adopt a Housing Capacity Analysis every six years, followed by the development and adoption—by ordinance—of a Housing Production Strategy (HPS). The purpose of the HPS is to outline specific actions the city will take to address the housing needs identified in the Housing Capacity Analysis. The deadline for the City to adopt its HPS is June 20, 2025. Because this is not a land use action, the City Council's final decision on the HPS cannot be appealed. After adoption, the City must demonstrate progress on the strategies included in the HPS throughout the six-year implementation period.

The draft Housing Production Strategy (HPS) includes a contextualized housing needs assessment, a set of recommended actions, an evaluation of progress toward achieving fair housing outcomes, and a monitoring framework. The housing needs assessment identified a need for an additional 1,005 housing units in West Linn. It specifically highlighted the need for housing that serves low-income and subsidized households, workforce/moderate-income households for local workers, accessible housing, supportive housing to allow residents to age in place, and expanded homeownership and wealth-building opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities.

Stakeholder interviews early in the process highlighted several challenges to affordable housing in West Linn, including limited land availability, high development costs, strong demand—especially for rentals—and the need for infrastructure improvements. Entry-level housing was seen as largely out of reach in this high-end market. Participants also pointed to unclear development standards. In response, the draft Housing Production Strategy proposes actions to improve clarity, increase flexibility, and reduce

development costs.

Strategies increase housing options included rezoning land, encouraging smaller dwelling units, updating system development charges, and providing multiple unit property tax exemptions. Actions to promote affordable housing include tax increment financing for affordable housing, surplus land banking and land acquisition, public-private partnerships for affordable housing, low-income rental housing tax exemptions, zoning incentives for workforce and affordable housing, and a construction excise tax. Actions to promote equitable housing include a homebuyer opportunity limited tax exemption and education and referrals. TIF districts have been successfully implemented in many cities for affordable housing. Land acquisition and banking costs vary based on the process and can be lower if properties are already available. Implementing a CET is a strategy aimed at providing direct city funding to affordable housing projects. The cost of land in West Linn is a significant challenge for affordable housing development.

Commissioner Schulte-Hillen asked whether there would be a check-in point where the Planning Commission or City Council could evaluate the effectiveness of the adopted strategies—and whether it would be possible to introduce a new strategy later if one was initially left out, depending on progress made. Hastie responded that the state would review progress on strategy implementation at the three-year mark, and additional strategies may be added if needed. The Planning Commission and City Council will play key roles in evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies and guiding implementation decisions.

Vice Chair Walvatne pointed out that three action items—the TIF, surplus land and land acquisition/banking for affordable housing, and the construction excise tax—are rated high in both cost and effort. He expressed concern about the feasibility of implementing these strategies effectively, given the significant resources and effort they would require to establish and carry out successfully. Hastie responded that a TIF district is a widely used option by other jurisdictions. He noted that the cost for land acquisition and banking can vary depending on the existing land the City already owns. The CET is one of the more contentious and would take more discussion to implement.

Commissioner Kachirisky asked whether the CET could include tiered rates based on specific, desirable housing attributes. Buckley responded that this is allowed.

Commissioner Watton expressed concern about implementing a CET, noting that West Linn lacks the volume of commercial or large-scale new construction seen in other cities. As a result, the tax would likely fall on small, local residential builders and home buyers. To be successful, the City would need to make changes to the development code to allow taller buildings, among other things.

Chair Metlen asked for public comment. There was none.

Chair Metlen closed the public hearing was closed. Commissioners deliberated.

Vice Chair Walvatne noted his concern about the CET and the lack of specificity of the program.

Commissioner Kachirisky noted that the CET could help support the development of housing types that are currently lacking in the city.

Commissioner Schulte-Hillen noted her concern about the contentiousness of the CET.

Chair Metlen outlined potential amendments to recommendations based on concerns raised.

Vice Chair Walvatne moved to recommend that the City Council approve Resolution 2025-02, adopting the

West Linn Housing Production Strategy, with a modification to delay consideration of Option 10—the Construction Excise Tax until 2030. Commissioner Watton seconded. **Ayes: Kachirisky, Walvatne, Schulte-Hillen, Watton, and Metlen. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 5-0-0.**

4. Planning Commission Announcements

Vice Chair Walvatne noted that the OEGC Public Meeting Law training is available and encouraged Commissioners to sign up.

5. Staff Announcements

Planning Manager Wyss reviewed the upcoming Planning Commission schedule.

6. Adjourn

Chair Metlen adjourned the meeting at 7:39 pm.