

Memorandum

Date: April 11, 2025

To: Planning Commission

From: Chris Myers, Associate Planner

Subject: VISION43 Project Briefing

VISION43

The City of West Linn is working toward a new vision for the Highway 43 corridor (Hwy 43) which serves as a critical north/south transportation link in the Portland Metro region. The vision aims to create:

- complete and safe facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users;
- safe crossing points on Highway 43; commercial services that provide neighborhood needs; and
- pedestrian connections to needed goods and services as well as to other neighborhoods.

Additionally, the City seeks to establish a new mixed-use zone to re-energize the corridor with a diverse mix of housing types, workplaces, shops, and parks for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

The purpose of this work session is to reach a Planning Commission (PC) consensus on the focus area boundaries and the three policy questions outlined below. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Chris Myers at cmyers@westlinnoregon.gov or 503-742-6062.

FOCUS AREAS

As part of VISION43, the City has identified three specific focus areas along Highway 43 where a new mixed-use code would be established and redevelopment could take place. Initially, the City defined four different focus areas along the Highway 43 corridor. However, we have removed Focus Area 2 for several reasons. Focus Area 2 was originally conceived to allow future low-income housing. Given recent changes in State laws, City staff have determined that the property can be developed with low-income housing under existing code. As a result, a zoning change for Focus Area 2 is unnecessary and therefore has been removed from consideration.

We are in the process of finalizing the focus areas boundaries (see attached maps below). The project team seeks PC feedback regarding the focus area boundaries. As a reminder, changing the zone for a property does not require an immediate change of use. Property owners may continue to use their property, as it is today, for as long as they like.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you have concerns, or do you see any opportunities regarding the boundaries?
2. Are there specific properties that should or should not be included in the focus area boundaries?

MIXED-USE POLICY QUESTIONS

After nearly 15 months of public engagement, it has become clear that the West Linn community is supportive of more dense, mixed-use development in the focus areas along the Highway 43 corridor. The project team is drafting a new Mixed-Use Zoning code for the three focus areas.

As the project team develops the new draft mixed-use code for the 3 focus areas, there are 6 policy questions for the Planning Commission to consider. The policy questions are divided into two work sessions, during which the PC will work towards consensus on proposed code policy positions. Based on the PC's input, the project team will incorporate the consensus into draft code language to present for further review as part of the VISION43 adoption process.

POLICY QUESTION 1:

Should new development, within the focus areas of VISION43, be required to include a housing component?

CONTEXT:

If Walmart decided to demolish and rebuild their existing store, should it be required for Walmart to include housing as part of the new development?

POLICY QUESTION 2:

Should new development, within the focus areas, be required to build a minimum of 2-stories?

CONTEXT:

If Walmart decided to demolish and rebuild their existing store should the City require that, at a minimum, the newly built structure be at least 2 stories in height?

POLICY QUESTION 3:

Should new development, in the focus areas, be required to “step back” the height of new structures when immediately adjacent to a residential zone?

CONTEXT:

If Walmart decided to demolish and rebuild their existing store should the City require a lower height (“step back”) at the rear of the property immediately adjacent to a residential zone? Rather than the entire structure measuring 55 feet should the rear of the property, closest to the residential zone, have a maximum height of something less than 55 feet such as 45 feet?

NEXT STEPS

- PC Work Session Two: Additional Policy Questions
- Incorporate PC feedback into draft zoning code language
- City Council Briefing, May 2, 2025

Check out the VISION43 project webpage [here](#).





