



**PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Notes May 21, 2025**

Commissioners present: Joel Metlen, Gary Walvatne, Kathryn Schulte-Hillen, Kris Kachirisky, and David D. Jones. Tom Watton arrived late.
Commissioners absent: Jason Evans
Staff present: Planning Manager Darren Wyss, Associate Planner Chris Myers, and Management Analyst Lynn Schroder

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 Items not on the Agenda**
None.
3. **Approval of Meeting Notes: 03.19.2025, 04.02.2025, and 04.16.2025**
Commissioner Jones moved to approve the meeting notes for 03.19.2025, 04.02.2025, and 04.16.2025. Commissioner Metlen seconded. **Ayes: Jones, Schulte-Hillen, Walvatne, Kachirisky, and Metlen. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 5-0-0.**
4. **Work Session: Vision 43 Project**
Project Planner Chris Myers presented 3 policy questions related to a new mixed-use zone in three focus areas.

Background: The public engagement for the project demonstrates support for increased density and mixed-use development along Highway 43. The project team is drafting a new Mixed-Use Zoning Code to apply within the three designated focus areas. To guide this effort, the team has identified a series of policy questions for the Planning Commission to consider. The Planning Commission considered Policy Questions 1-3 at a previous meeting.

Policy Question 4: Should we have different standards for properties immediately adjacent to the highway and those that are off the highway. Such as lot coverage, plazas, open spaces, requirements for amount of commercial development, etc.

Commissioner Kachirisky leaned toward softening the standards for properties on the neighborhood side, given that multi-story development is part of the zone. Creating a large, monolithic structure directly across the street from single-family homes would significantly alter the neighborhood character—something she did not support. She stated that there are good reasons to consider more flexible standards in these areas.

Commissioner Schulte-Hillen agreed with having different standards for properties located off the highway. She supported the idea of a "zone within a zone" and felt that a phased approach to implementation made sense. She noted that Walling Way has a different context compared to areas like Cedar Oak, where you transition abruptly from Highway 43 to a gas station and into a residential

neighborhood.

Commissioner Watton recommended incorporating a lighted intersection at some locations when feasible.

Chair Metlen noted that Commissioners agreed with a zone within a zone approach to standards within the mixed-use zone.

Policy Question 5: Should we require 100% of the first floor of a new development, to be commercial spaces?

Myers clarified that the goal is for commercial uses to front the highway, and that should likely be the primary focus for commercial development. However, he expressed concern that requiring 100% ground-floor commercial could lead to a high number of vacant storefronts.

Commissioner Watton supported street facing commercial but noted that there are other complementary 1st floor uses that should be allowed.

Chair Metlen suggested removing the requirement altogether and allowing the market to determine the appropriate balance between commercial and other uses on the first floor.

Commissioner Schulte-Hillen acknowledged that she doesn't have the expertise to determine the exact percentage of first-floor commercial use but felt that the overall spirit of the project supports requiring at least some minimum percentage (15-20%).

Vice Chair Walvatne expressed that he was comfortable with requiring more than 15 to 20% commercial use but acknowledged that the market will ultimately influence the outcome to some extent. He noted that having commercial space along the front side of the ground floor seems appropriate. He floated a 40% commercial requirement. Walvatne noted that smaller lots off Highway 43 could be ideal for quaint, locally owned shops, studios, and restaurants. He expressed a preference for the Mixed-Use zone to allow the conversion of existing houses in these areas, rather than requiring demolition and replacement with four-story buildings. He suggested we look at Lake Oswego Wizer block mixed-use code for the approach to street-facing commercial standards.

Commissioner Kachirisky expressed difficulty in determining an appropriate percentage for commercial use, noting her concern about the type of commercial—such as retail versus office—being a key factor. She wanted to create places for the community to go along the corridor. She wanted to support local businesses.

Commissioner Jones noted that setting specific percentages is always challenging due to building layout and footprint considerations. He supported requiring commercial uses on buildings that face Highway 43. He noted that consideration should be given to other types of businesses models like food carts. He doesn't want Highway 43 to become stripe like Foster Avenue in Portland where there isn't any parking for customers.

Watton noted that the Code could specifically require retail uses on the first floor to encourage people shop and mingle. He also noted that there will be pockets of opportunity for development, but not all of them need to become vibrant village centers designed to draw people in. Some of these areas could simply feature three-story residential buildings with a lobby, ground-floor parking, and a few ground-level units with small patios—similar to what you might see in other urban neighborhoods. He

expressed concern forcing every space into a residential-over-commercial, village-style development. While the Highway needs some of that; he also wanted to ensure that a broader range of building types and zoning approaches are allowed.

Jones noted that not all businesses want a big glass window (i.e. therapist, physical therapy, tutoring, etc.) so the design approach needs to be flexible.

Policy Question 6: Should we allow single-use commercial buildings/businesses within the focus areas?

Jones noted that large anchor stores, such as grocery stores, can serve as a catalyst for attracting additional businesses to the area.

Kachirisky noted that the goal should be to focus placemaking and local businesses along Highway 43 to help foster a small-town community feel. She wanted to create a Multomah Village feel to the highway corridor.

Policy Question 7: Should we have a maximum single-use building size?

Commissioners agreed that the code should manage the potential for large, big box retail.

Walvatne noted that if the code controls the building size, then it also limits how many square feet a single use could be.

5. **Planning Commission Announcements**
None.

6. **Staff Announcements**
Planning Manager Wyss reviewed the upcoming Planning Commission schedule. He noted that the Commission will hold its regular meeting on June 18, which will include a work session on a strategic code update related to density standards. Due to a lack of agenda items, Wyss recommended canceling the June 4 meeting, as well as the July 2 meeting due to its proximity to the holiday. He proposed rescheduling the July meeting to July 9. The Commissioners expressed support for these changes.

7. **Adjourn**
Chair Metlen adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:35 pm.