

Memorandum

Date: May 21, 2025

To: Planning Commission

From: Chris Myers, Associate Planner

Subject: VISION43 Project Briefing

VISION43

The City of West Linn has been working towards implementing 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 future vision of the Hwy 43 corridor, called VISION43, includes providing complete and safe facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users; safe crossing points on Highway 43; commercial services that provide neighborhood needs; and providing pedestrian connections to needed goods and services as well as to other neighborhoods. The City is interested in exploring mixed-use zoning to re-energize the corridor with a mix of housing types, work places, shops, and parks for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

The goal of this work session is Planning Commission (PC) consensus on policy questions 4-7 listed below. If you have questions or comments, please send them to Chris Myers (cmyers@westlinnoregon.gov or 503-742-6062)

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 development throughout the Highway 43 corridor. As part of the VISION43 project the project team is drafting a new Mixed-Use Zoning code to be implanted within the three focus areas. The project team has identified policy questions for the Planning Commission to discuss as part of the project. The policies will be divided up into multiple work sessions, where the PC will work towards consensus on any proposed code policy positions. Based on PC input the project team will draft code language to bring back to the PC as part of the VISION43 adoption process.

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.

PROS:

- Allows for flexibility in development of commercial buildings
- A more nuisance approach taking into consideration location of a property
- Help preserve residential feel while promoting commercial activities
- Creates a transition zone to residential areas

CONS:

- Increasing complexity and potentially confusion for developers
- Potentially lessen the goals we are trying to achieve with a mixed-use zone
- Promote uneven development pattern

POLICY QUESTION 5:

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

PROS:

- Ensures continuous active frontages, maximizing foot traffic, window shopping, and visual interest.
- Supports vibrant commercial corridor
- Strong pedestrian environment
- Concentrates commercial activity

CONS:

- Risk of vacant storefronts
- Reduces housing feasibility
- Adds to construction costs and feasibility
- Rear/front corner lots, side streets, or low-visibility locations may not support commercial.

POLICY QUESTION 6:

Should we allow single-use commercial buildings/businesses within the focus areas?

PROS:

- Supports market flexibility allowing developers to respond to current demands
- Encourages early investment into transitioning areas
- Attracts anchor tenants such as grocery stores and gyms
- Can become neighborhood anchors
- Accelerates redevelopment

CONS:

- Undermines walkability
- Reduces around the clock activity
- Lowers the potential for housing

POLICY QUESTION 7:

Should we have a maximum single-use building size?

PROS:

- Protect walkability
- Encourage small businesses
- Manage the scale of development
- Support human scale development

CONS:

- Inhibit economic viability
- May deter large anchors
- May over complicate the code

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