

Vision43 Project Working Group

Meeting #6 Summary

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Meeting Recording [Link](#)

Committee Members:

- Shatrine Krake – Community member (Bolton Neighborhood) & Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce
- Mary Carlson – Community member (Robinwood Neighborhood)
- Spencer Crandall – Community member & small business consultant
- David D. Jones – Planning Commissioner
- Carol Bryck – City Council
- Beau Genot – Resident
- Russel Williams – Community member and business owner

Project Team:

- Matt Hastie – MIG, consultant team project manager
- Brandon Crawford – MIG, consultant planner
- Matt Bell – Kittelson & Associates, Inc., associate planner
- Chris Myers – City of West Linn, planner and project manager
- Lynn Schroder – City of West Linn, project coordinator and communications

Project Status

Matt Hastie briefly discussed the agenda and project status. He noted the major work completed since the previous PWG meeting, including the first draft of the Mixed-Use Corridor Zone chapter, City Council and Planning Commission briefings on zoning options, and the first draft of the Vision43 Master Plan.

Draft Mixed-Use Code Overview

Matt summarized the location(s) of the proposed zone and the key contents of the draft zone chapter. He discussed the permitted use categories and the key development standards that are being proposed for the new zone.

- Are maximum setbacks going to be the same everywhere or will they be different in different areas?
 - They will be smaller along Hwy 43 and larger in other areas.

- At what point do we stop changing the zone boundaries?
 - We can continue to adjust the boundaries up until the adoption hearings to reflect public comments and Planning Commission and Council guidance, but we'd like them to be final or close to final when we start the adoption process.

Policy Options and Discussion

Prohibited Uses

Brandon Crawford discussed the recommendation to prohibit auto-oriented uses in the mixed-use zone. He mentioned that these uses are generally incompatible with mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development and that they would potentially increase car dependency in these areas. Conversely, the city will continue to be largely car-dependent in the foreseeable future, and therefore there will be continued demand for these uses and there are relatively few other areas for auto-oriented uses to locate in West Linn outside of our study area.

PWG Questions/Discussion

- Why was car wash that was recently developed was allowed?
 - Car washes are currently allowed as a conditional use in the General Commercial zone. The neighborhood was largely opposed but the existing code allows it.
- It may be short-sighted to prohibit drive-throughs.
- Could an existing auto-oriented use close and re-open as a new auto-oriented business?
 - No, only existing uses operating under the existing business could continue.
 - The existing auto-oriented uses would become legally non-conforming uses. The city may allow some limited expansions to existing non-conforming under certain circumstances. Redevelopment of existing non-conforming uses is also allowed in cases where the building/property is destroyed or damaged (e.g., fire).
- Highway 43 is expected to become a more heavily used arterial in response to I-205 tolling according to an article in the West Linn Tidings.
- Some drive-throughs could be allowed and limited to smaller, more local boutique businesses.
- Two heavily visited auto-repair businesses are right outside of West Linn.
- The mixed-use zone should definitely prohibit self-storage facilities.
- Drive-throughs can be another source of revenue for some businesses that want to expand.

- The City is projected to have a \$9 million deficit at the end of the next fiscal year (2026-2027). Would some of these uses help generate revenue to address that?
 - Businesses and car washes don't generate that much tax revenue for the city. Tax revenue to generated via property taxes and the amount of revenue doesn't depend much on the type of the use.
- Drive-throughs typically don't get people to stay in the area and spend money at other local businesses. They also tend to be larger chains and not as much of the money spent at those businesses stays in the community.
- The city cannot have all the possible commercial uses – residents may need to go neighboring towns for some services, such as car dealerships.
- There should be some areas off 43 that allow drive-throughs – e.g., behind 43 in subzones.
- Walkability in these zones may be challenging with the topography.
- One PWG member noted agreement with the original recommendation to prohibit auto-oriented uses, including drive-throughs.
- One PWG member is in favor of allowing drive-throughs. They noted even though people aren't leaving their car, they still stop and are able to see the other businesses/services in the area.

Ground-Floor Design and Applicability

Brandon shared the current recommendation to apply the specific ground-floor design/use standards only to development that directly fronts onto Highway 43. He noted these standards are intended to encourage walkability and public gathering and that they balance development flexibility with community desires. He shared some examples from other cities, including Fairview, Vancouver, Beaverton, and Gresham. The city could apply the ground-floor standards along the entirety of 43, along specific segments or specific locations, or throughout the entire mixed-use zone (not recommended).

PWG Discussion/Questions

- Once housing is developed, it's hard to change to commercial. Housing should be limited on the ground-floor.
- Are we confident that the required percentage of ground floor commercial uses that we are considering are consistent with market conditions?
- It is very challenging to know exactly what the right percentage is so no, we are not 100% confident that those are the perfect numbers. However, we do know that requiring 100% of ground floor uses to be commercial would be too much. The percentages we are considering are being used in other cities in the region.
- Other cities are currently experimenting with calibrating the mix of ground-floor commercial vs. housing. The city can revisit these standards after adoption and make

necessary adjustments as-needed once they have more experience and information with implementation.

- Ground-floor commercial would still be allowed on other streets, it just wouldn't be required. The purpose of the requirement along 43 or other street segments is to direct those types of uses to where the city would like to see a greater concentration of storefront commercial and pedestrian activity.

New design and development standards

Brandon shared some of the key design and development options that the city is currently considering for this zone. Some of the options under consideration include requiring a minimum of two-story development, pedestrian plaza standards and setback exceptions, block size/dimension standards, building entrance and pedestrian connectivity, accessways, and new landscaping standards. Matt noted that the TAG supported the design recommendations and suggested requiring proportional design features with the size of pedestrian plazas. He also noted that the TAG suggested incorporating some level of flexibility in the minimum number of stories standards, particularly for smaller sites or developments. One member of the TAG suggested considering a minimum floor area ratio standard as an alternative to a minimum number of stories.

PWG Discussion/Questions:

- Instead of requiring min two-stories, why not include incentives to encourage this height?
 - City council favored incentives instead of requirements/restrictions.
 - Could the city require minimum two stories with incentives to go higher? E.g., tiered incentives?
- Plaza and gathering spaces should include amenities for people to interact or engage with, such as public art or exercise equipment.
- Support reducing minimum landscaping to 10% for commercial uses.
- How many stories does 55 feet allow?
 - Typically that has equated to 4-5 stories. Generally, the ground floor needs 15' for commercial uses, with about 10 feet per upper story. However, there are new building code requirements for minimum 18 inches between stories to leave space for heating and ducts and other equipment. Therefore, 55 feet allows builders to accommodate that extra space between floors, meet ground-floor requirements, and reach four stories.
 - The maximum height is currently 45 feet in the existing commercial zone. The increased height would only apply to areas adjacent to Hwy 43 in the new mixed-use zone, not the entire corridor. The city probably won't have the market to max out building height throughout the corridor anytime in the near

future, meaning that we are very unlikely to see a street lined with 4-5 story buildings.

- Support only requiring minimum two stories or minimum height in subzones to allow smaller development/businesses in certain areas. The city could also allow minimum height exceptions for smaller lots.
- Do the landscaping standards meet the state's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) standards?
 - The initial landscaping recommendations are generally consistent with CFEC standards.

Parking location

Brandon discussed the parking location options, noting the current recommendation is to require all parking be located behind the building or in an underground garage. He mentioned that prohibiting parking between the building and street improves the pedestrian environment, but requiring parking behind the building may be challenging for smaller lots. Some options for the city to consider may include only applying this requirement in certain subzones, allow ground-floor parking (with limitations), or allow parking next to the building. Matt added that the TAG recommended providing more flexibility for parking location and to only prohibit parking/drive aisles between the building and the street frontage. He noted that Oregon City has had success with this approach.

PWG Discussion/Questions:

- Access onto Hwy 43 is controlled by ODOT and the city has access spacing standards along Hwy 43 and also on other streets, including between a driveway and the nearest intersection. The access and driveway spacing standards vary by street classification. New access or driveways onto Hwy 43 are generally discouraged. Consolidating access points and allowing for shared access to building on the same block or in the same development is encouraged.
- Does underground parking count as access off Hwy 43? E.g., the underground parking garage at West Linn Village at the southern end of the corridor.
 - It depends on the location of the driveway for the parking garage. In the case of the underground parking near Burns Street, that access is from the side street, rather than from Hwy 43.
- The city should consider above-ground parking garages. Lake O parking garage at the Wiser Blocks has a good example of a donut hole parking garage with commercial uses along the façade around the parking structure.
- The city may also consider standards to not allow parking garage frontage along Hwy 43.

- CFEC limits parking. Minimum parking is no longer required in the city, but parking can still be provided. Parking will still need to be provided because there's a market demand for parking.
 - May need incentives to encourage underground parking due to the high costs.
 - CFEC and Metro require parking maximums, which helps to ensure there aren't vacant parking lots and/or too much land devoted to parking.
- The city may want to allow parking between buildings and the street for re-use of existing buildings/development or on very narrow lots.

Housing requirement options

Brandon discussed options for a minimum housing requirement, including a minimum density requirement or a minimum residential area standard. He shared examples of density achieved for mixed-use development in peer cities and noted that the city needs to promote greater density along the corridor to support housing production goals.

QUESTION FOR PWG: Should there be any minimum housing requirements?

- It's good to direct housing density along corridors where there is transit access.
- Support having a housing requirement because increased housing opportunities helps support businesses in the area.
- Support requirements that help boost housing production in the area.
- Would the housing requirement prohibit standalone commercial?
 - This might be a larger policy question re: should the city require a housing component even if it means standalone commercial wouldn't be allowed?
 - The city could provide some flexibility for a housing requirement and only apply to specific areas or based on size/configuration of the site.
 - In addition, required housing could be part of either a vertical or horizontal mixed use development, each of which could also include commercial development. A minimum housing requirement would require some housing but wouldn't require that an entire development be devoted to housing.
- It's necessary to provide minimum housing requirement to support the city's housing production goals.
- The city should consider an affordable housing requirement for these areas and ensure that the affordable housing is evenly distributed throughout the development.
- Spencer has comments on the code chapter that he'll send to Chris and Lynn.

Draft Corridor Plan Status Report & Preview

Matt Hastie briefly summarized the status for Vision43 Master Plan, including the general format/layout and the content. The content for the plan at this stage mostly consists of previous work products that have been completed to-date.

Next steps

Matt discussed the next steps for the project, including revisions to the draft zone chapter based on TAG and PWG input and finalizing the master plan. He noted that this was the final meeting that was in the project scope, but asked the group if they'd be open to meeting one more time to review the final materials.

- The group is open to another meeting to go over a revised version of the code chapter. They would prefer a shorter meeting (e.g., 1.5 hours).