

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 6, 2023

TO: City Council

FROM: Eric Homes, City Manager

RE: **Comprehensive Plan and Title 20 Code Update – Chartering Process**

CC: Lon Pluckhahn, Deputy City Manager; Chad Eiken, Director, CDD; Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, CDD; Domenic Martinelli, Senior Long-Range Planner, Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner

Intent

Provide Council with a high-level review of the organization and structure of the update process, and establish a framework for review and endorsement of key milestones and decisions throughout the project's timeframe – with adoption anticipated in June 2025.

Background

The City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan provides the overall long-term vision and policy direction for managing the built and natural environment in Vancouver and providing necessary public facilities to achieve that vision. The City adopted its first comprehensive plan under Washington's Growth Management Act in 1994 (Chapter 36.70A RCW), with a major re-write occurring in 2004, and a less substantive update occurring most recently in 2011.

On April 4, 2022, staff provided an overview of the proposed methodology and approach for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan and Title 20 Land Use Code, consistent with regulatory requirements under the Growth Management Act, and in response to changes that have occurred in the community since 2004. These changes include increased population growth, greater diversity in the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the community, expanded private sector investment and development activity, recent Council policy direction on climate action goals and targets, new technologies that have transformed how people move around the region and engage with each other, and a global pandemic and associated public health and economic crises. The proposed methodology also reflects the evolution in Council policy priorities that have occurred since the last update, which places an emphasis on climate action, community safety, and equitable access to opportunities and resources.

Based on the input received from Council during the work session, staff proceeded to scope the overall process, work plan and deliverables, and execute a competitive procurement process to provide additional professional planning services to support the effort. On December 19, 2022, City Council authorized the City manager to execute a consulting services contract with WSP to provide such support.

Scope of Work

In response to the scoping process that was conducted, the overall effort has been organized into the following categories:

1. **Co-Creation:** Establish a process to develop and create the plan with members of the community, conduct community engagement activities in a method consistent with state law, and place an emphasis on elevating the perspectives of communities that have been historically underrepresented, excluded or negatively impacted from public decision-making processes.
2. **Comprehensive Plan:** Perform a holistic re-write of the existing Comprehensive Plan, that includes defining a new set of goals, objectives, policies, and overall strategy that responds to the issues and needs identified during the process of co-creation with plan stakeholders and the public as well as data and analysis of long term trends that will affect the community in the future. The plan strategy will establish an overall land use framework that specifies where and how the City will grow and the infrastructure needs necessary to achieve that vision, as well as overall strategies related to housing, climate, environment, resiliency, community health, public facilities and services, economic development and opportunity, and achieving equitable outcomes.
3. **Implementation Strategy:** Develop a detailed strategy for implementing the goals, objectives, policies, and overall strategy outlined within the revised plan, including recommendations for future programs and policy work, and a public facing tool to help staff and members of the public understand how implementation of the plan is progressing over the long term;
4. **Land Use Code:** Modify the existing zoning code (Title 20 of the Vancouver Municipal Code) to reflect the goals and policies identified in the revised plan and achieve the community's vision;
5. **SEPA:** Complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process in compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA);

Chartering

Given the number of discrete collective policy decisions that need to be made within each one of the aforementioned categories over the life of the project, and the level of complexity and interdependency of the various subject matters included in it, the following steps will be necessary to ensure the final plan is reflective of its identified goals:

1. Establishing an overall decision-making framework to ensure shared understanding and collective ownership of cumulative decisions made during the policy development process;
2. The development of a robust visioning and goal setting process (in partnership with the City's in-process update to the Strategic Plan), to ensure policies, regulations, and implementation methods are rooted in an articulated purpose;
3. Collective formation *and* buy-in of the established vision and related goals, between co-creative partners designing the plan;

4. Divide a highly complex and inter-related process with a wide variety of interested stakeholders into manageable and logically organized phases, where policy direction is cumulatively based on previous decisions established earlier in the process.

The development of a formal decision-making framework and chartering process with City Council and Planning Commission is one of the most effective methods to ensure the four steps above are achieved during the process. Based on the scope of work, staff has put forward a draft chartering structure for Council consideration and feedback during this work session. Following this, staff anticipate returning to Council for formal confirmation of the project charter via a resolution.

Draft Chartering Structure

As outlined below, the process will involve numerous touchpoints with both City Council and review by Planning Commission. Note that we have called out the Planning Commission within the chartering process because they are the primary citizen oversight committee tasked with reviewing and making recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan and the City’s development code. However, the project will also engage with other applicable boards and commissions that are not listed here at appropriate points, in coordination with other City departments. The following table provides an outline of the remaining project phases and their associated proposed timelines. Information for all phases will be shared with City Council during periodic updates, workshops, and resolution adoption. The plan is legally required to be adopted by June 2025, per requirements of Washington’s Growth Management Act.

Endorsement	Elements	Review / Action	Time Window
Equity Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure to ensure disproportionately impacted and historically marginalized populations drive policy design process • Other key process design goals from Council and Planning Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint PC / Council Workshop • Council Resolution 	1 st / 2 nd quarter of 2023
Community Partnership Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The details on how we Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower Co-Creative Partners • The who, how, and when this occurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC Workshops • Council Workshops • Council Resolution 	1 st / 2 nd quarter of 2023
Goals Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from Scenario Planning and Community Partnership efforts • Identification of Plan Chapters & Elements • Prioritization of goals against each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC Workshops • Council Workshops • Council Resolution 	2 nd / 3 rd quarter of 2023
Land Use Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from Scenario Planning and Community Partnership efforts • Consideration of Capital Facility and Infrastructure needs to support vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMC Workshops • Joint PC / Council Workshop 	4 th quarter of 2023 / 1 st quarter of 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 3 alternatives established for EIS process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional PC & Council Workshops as needed Council Resolution 	
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tangible policies to mobilize objectives of Goals + Land Use Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC Workshops Council Workshops Council Resolution 	1 st quarter of 2024
Code Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level concepts for mobilizing the established policy framework through the Land Use Code Identification of potential early action items, structure, arrangement, and content of code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint PC / Council Workshop Additional PC & Council Workshops as needed Council Resolution 	2 nd / 3 rd quarter of 2024
Implementation Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework for mobilizing policy items not covered under the Land Use Code (dashboards, program development, incentive structures, future sub-area planning) Framework for measuring success and outcomes of the plan effort Final review of accountability matrix structure for incorporation of feedback into plan outcomes, and long term follow up on implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC Workshops Council Workshops Council Resolution 	3 rd / 4 th quarter of 2024
Code Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input from Co-Creative partners on Code Concepts Relevant inputs from Draft EIS More detailed framework for mobilizing the established policy framework through the Land Use Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC Workshops Council Workshops Council Resolution 	4 th quarter of 2024 / 1 st quarter of 2025
Plan Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final EIS completed 60 days prior to adoption Final Comp Plan Document, Appendices, and Land Use Framework Final Code Language Final Implementation Matrix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PC Recommendation Adopted by Ordinance (Council) 	June 2025

Staff Contacts

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