

## Meeting Framework

Adopted March 14, 2023

On March 1, 2023, the City Council provided direction to: 1) stop the scope planned for the Form-Based Code; 2) produce a draft of the Code as soon as possible for public review and comment; 3) complete review of the General Plan updates, including the Gateway Area Plan, and the Code by June 2023, and 4) provide a recommendation to Council on these drafts by the Commission's first meeting in July. This memo provides a proactive response to the Council's direction.

To satisfy the Council's direction, the Commission adopted this meeting framework, which is designed to produce conclusions and recommendations efficiently. The following elements are included in the framework: ground rules, a well-defined purpose, the objectives of the meeting, the explicit outcomes the meeting will result in, and an agenda with estimated timeframes for each discussion. These elements will help the Commission stay focused on results, will provide a shared understanding of the work, and will provide accountability among the members.

The following framework was adopted on March 14, 2023. It may be amended from time to time to better accomplish the goal set by the Council.

**Ground Rules** – These ground rules will be posted in the room, and members or staff can refer to them as necessary. The draft ground rules include:

- 1) Come prepared to take action.
- 2) Review the material and prepare cogent positions on any changes you feel are necessary ahead of the meeting.
- 3) Be prepared to state your position concretely and succinctly.
- 4) Be willing to accept the majority position and move on.
- 5) Share the air; we want equitable contributions among Commissioners.

**Purpose** – Our purpose is to develop a recommendation to the Council supported by the majority, if not consensus, on the drafts of each of the General Plan Elements, the Gateway Area Plan, and the Form-Based Code by July 11, 2023.

**Objective** – Our objectives are:

- 1) to complete review and provide recommendation on priority issues within a particular Element at each meeting, holding over minor concerns to later revision;
- 2) to provide concise changes in policy referring explicitly to the draft provided by staff;
- 3) to work to build consensus efficiently; and
- 4) if consensus cannot be reached to advance to a vote, to work towards a recommendation that the majority can support.

**Outcome** – The outcome of this work will be revised drafts of each Element and FBC that will receive a consensus, or lacking consensus a majority, recommendation.

**Agenda** – Each meeting will have an Agenda posted in physical form in the room that describes the process and objectives for that meeting. It will reflect the purpose, objective, and outcomes listed above with detail on the work we are doing that day. The Commission will form explicit agreements to abide by the agenda and ground rules for the meeting. This agreement will be the basis of the discipline

necessary to complete the work in the time allowed. The agendas will include timeframes for presentation, discussion, a brief break, a regroup for decision for each topic. We'll end the agenda with a brief introspection/retrospective to look for process improvements.

**Meeting Method** – To ensure the meetings are disciplined and efficient, we propose the following methods to get through the materials timely.

- 1) Staff will send the Planning Commission relevant meeting materials requiring their comment one week in advance of the meeting. Any materials sent to the Commission will be posted on the City's website for public review.
- 2) Commissioners will provide a ranked priority list of the policies they wish to discuss by 10 a.m. the morning the day before the meeting. Generally, this will be Monday, 10 a.m.
- 3) Staff will collate the responses to facilitate discussion and send the compiled list out to Commissioners by 5 p.m. of that same day.
- 4) In the meeting discussion, priority will be given in descending order to: 1) policies provided in advance with explicit recommendations for changes, 2) policies provided in advance with a succinct description of the type of change desired, 3) policies without explanation provided in advance, 4) policies brought up at the meeting. Policies that may have an impact on the environment and will, therefore, affect the Environmental Impact Report will be prioritized first. Where ranking does not resolve few enough policies to address within the agenda timeframe, equally prioritized changes will be randomly assigned to the agenda.
- 5) Commissioners will form agreement on which items to consider. This will be done through a mix of polling techniques (negative voting, straw polls, Gradients of Agreement, etc.)
- 6) Items that do not make the list for discussion will go into the "bike rack", which will hold ideas for later discussion. Bike rack items will be considered in subsequent rounds as time allows, during special meetings the Commission may schedule, or during the June meetings.
- 7) The Bike Rack items will be included in each meeting agenda as a running list. A section of the Bike Rack will be reserved for items that have been submitted with complete recording of the policy, which may be adopted as a consent item without discussion if desired by the Commission. Items that have been flagged by Commissioners but do not include a fully developed proposal for alternate language will be housed in a separate section for discussion by the Commission.
- 8) Each item is taken in turn for polling. A simple majority in each vote sways the decision.
- 9) Policies that have no counter proposal are voted on in the following way:
  - a. Proposal is shown on the screen.
  - b. Proposer is allotted 45 seconds to succinctly provide an argument for the change.
  - c. Staff conducts a negative vote: Does anyone have concerns about this change?
  - d. If no, the change is made, if yes, go to e.
  - e. Allow debate rules deliberations: any commissioner provides their counter proposal or argument, the proponent provides an up to 2-minute response, the counter proposal is allowed a 1-minute rebuttal.
  - f. Consider whether there are other points of view that need to be considered. If no, move to g, if yes, move to e with alternative point of view.
  - g. Show of hands vote for each of the various proposals on the table. Simple majority resolves the matter.
- 10) Policies that have a counter proposal: show both proposals and move to debate rules 7e.
- 11) Staff will track the votes and changes in real time on the screen.

**Visual Aids** – Visual aids will help the Commission, staff, and the community track the progress of the discussion. At a minimum, staff recommends the following be posted in the room at each meeting:

- 1) The agenda with meeting timeframes;
- 2) Ground rules;
- 3) Gradients of Agreement;
- 4) The “bike rack”; and
- 5) Overall timeline with milestones.

**Polling Options** – There are several polling techniques that the Commission can use to efficiently resolve policy changes and/or disagreements. Staff will help facilitate when each is best used, but the Commission should consider the options to ensure they concur with the process. Among the polling options, staff recommends at a minimum, the Commission use simple straw polling, negative polling, and gradients of agreement.

Straw polling is familiar to the Commission. This is a show of hands for or against when the question is called. Straw polling can be used in combination with negative polling to quickly resolve matters in an equitable and efficient way. Negative polling is essentially asking whether there are any in opposition to a proposal.

Negative polling and straw polling result in binary (for or against) decisions. Often, decision makers feel that they land along a continuum. That is, they do not feel completely for or against, or they have mild objections but would not necessarily vote for or against.

Gradients of agreement is a polling technique that allows non-binary consensus building. The range of polling responses in a gradients of agreement are: 1) I fully support this and will vote for it; 2) I have some reservations, but I will vote for it; 3) I am neither for nor against it, and will go with the consensus; 4) I have concerns about passing it, but will not block it; and 5) I have serious concerns and will vote against it. Polls are conducted by each participant holding up their hand with the number of fingers showing that corresponds to their position along the gradient.