
VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

MEMORANDUM

January 8, 2019

TO: Gil Kelley, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability

CC: Mayor and Council
Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Joyce Uyesugi, Planner, Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability

FROM: Vancouver City Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Regulation Redesign Input and Feedback

Introduction

The Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC) is a citizen's advisory body of the City of Vancouver (the City). Established by by-law, VCPC is broadly mandated to advise Mayor and Council on issues relevant to the future and ongoing planning and development of the city. Though not presently part of any formal planning or development approval process within the City, VCPC nevertheless works to provide broader, meaningful higher-level input to the City on significant planning and development matters and relevant long-term considerations.

In accordance with and in support of its mandate, VCPC undertakes a number of ongoing projects and initiatives, such as the ongoing Chronology of Vancouver's Planning & Development, an annual 'Summit' event, as well as engagement and liaison work with other City-appointed advisory bodies and committees.

VCPC welcomes the opportunity to provide input and feedback to Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability (PDS) regarding the ongoing 'Regulation Redesign' process – which includes examining the role of planning and development related advisory bodies. We acknowledge that a survey of VCPC members related to their individual experiences and satisfaction is already underway, and wish to supplement that input with this additional broader feedback from VCPC as a whole.

Support of Objectives

In thinking about the City's efforts to review and consider the regulations, processes and structures that affect the planning and development processes within the City, VCPC is broadly supportive of the objectives of this review, in particular:

- Exploring opportunities to reasonably improve the efficiency, certainty, timeliness and consistency of the planning, development application and approval processes within the City.
- Ensuring that suitable improvements and changes to the planning, development application and approval processes do not compromise the ongoing critical needs for the application of good planning principles and approaches, meaningful and genuine public engagement, and the balancing of key public interests.
- Ensuring that revised 'day-to-day' planning and development processes remain anchored to and in service of broad future-oriented policy goals and city-wide objectives, including but not limited to: long-term sustainability and resilience, healthy communities, affordability, livability, diverse and inclusive communities, and reconciliation.
- Preserving and enhancing the meaningful and effective participation and role of citizen advisory bodies, including VCPC, in the City's planning and development processes and long-term planning and policy-making.

VCPC Core Principles:

In considering any review of the planning and development process and the role of advisory bodies such as VCPC, we believe the following core principles are key to VCPC and its mandate, and are important to uphold going forward:

- *Autonomy within the City* – maintaining productive and collaborative working relationships with Mayor and Council as well as PDS, while preserving an appropriate level of 'arm's length' autonomy as a body of citizens responsible for thinking broadly and independently about the future of the city as a whole.
- *Broad and flexible mandate* – maintain VCPC's somewhat unique position of offering advice and input on the future of Vancouver and broad planning and development issues, above the narrow day-to-day development processes (i.e. addressing specific individual planning and development projects, proposals and applications), and doing so through a lens of the broader public interest for the future of the City.
- *Citizen-led structure and engaged processes* – maintaining VCPC's structure as a diverse, engaged, citizen-led body (distinct from both the elected political and the administrative professional realms) that is able to bridge, interact and collaborate with the public at large, as well as other elements within the City, such as different citizen advisory bodies, boards, committees, agencies, and departments.

Future Considerations

In looking ahead to the future of the planning and development processes within the City, and the role of VCPC, we think the following key opportunities and challenges are worthy of attention:

- Consider enhancing the resources and capacity of VCPC (financial, personnel, and otherwise) to enable the Commission to be better informed and better equipped to provide solid, coherent, and effective advice and input to the City on planning and development issues, as well as to further support VCPC's ongoing projects, initiatives and events.
- Consider opportunities to enhance the interaction and engagement between VCPC and Mayor and Council.
- Consider policies and practices to regularize and strengthen the ongoing structural connections between VCPC and PDS.
- Consider policies and practices to connect VCPC to the anticipated city-wide planning process mandated by Mayor and Council, and expected to be undertaken in the near future.
- Consider exploring and examining the models, structures, policies and practices of other city planning commissions in other jurisdictions (both in Canada and the United States) for possible lessons and best practices for potential improvements (in consultation with VCPC).
- Consider opportunities to better structure and formalize meaningful VCPC participation and input into ongoing *significant* City planning projects, processes and policy development undertaken by PDS that reasonably intersect with VCPC's broad mandate – including opportunities to provide initial input at the early stages of such activities (as opposed to offering latter-stage comments).
- Consider whether the term of appointment for VCPC members should be extended to provide greater continuity.
- Consider modernizing the rules and procedures governing meetings to allow advisory bodies, such as VCPC, to accommodate meeting participation by members through electronic means (e.g. participation by teleconference or video conferencing) when necessary.

We are pleased to offer VCPC's input and comment on the City's 'Regulation Redesign' process, and to specifically provide our thoughts on the role and position of VCPC within the context of this review. We look forward to future updates and further opportunities to provide input as this initiative proceeds.

Should you have any questions, or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact us.