

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mike O'Brien, Chair; Trevor Thomas; Brian Colombini; James Paradissis; John Baker

City Staff Present: Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Guests Present: Eli Ogilvie, Bryn Oakleaf, Thomas Renner

Call to Order by: Mike

Meeting Start Time: 6:30 pm

Minutes Recorded by: Ravi

II. Changes to the Agenda

None

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by: Trevor

Second: Brian

Decision: Unanimous. Motion Carried.

V. Discussion: Winooski Comprehensive Plan – General Overview; the approach for the update; the Future Land Use map; and the draft Land Use goals and actions

Ravi gave a general overview of the Comprehensive Plan. Ravi and Mike discussed the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning regulations. Ravi and Mike discussed the required housing elements for the Comprehensive Plan and the regional housing targets. Ravi reviewed the public engagement the City has done in general and for the Comprehensive Plan.

Ravi noted the role of the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment in the Comprehensive Plan. Brian asked if a presentation on the Equitable Housing Needs Assessment will be provided. Ravi said that that can be penciled in after the project is completed at the end of the year.

Ravi reviewed the schedule for discussions for upcoming Planning Commission meetings, and said that the focus of this discussion is to review the Comprehensive Plan as a whole and discuss the Future Land Use Map.

Ravi said that his goal is for the final form of the Comprehensive Plan to be less than 50 pages,

and to focus more on the goals and objectives. Ravi said that an appendix would include information in depth and help fulfill statutory requirements. Brian and Thomas suggested providing an executive summary to give a briefer overview of the City's goals and objectives.

Ravi reviewed the draft future land use map, noting that the map was pulled from the regional future land use map prepared by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). Trevor asked for clarification about hamlets. Ravi said that hamlets are irrelevant to the Winooski context, and that this applies to smaller towns with village centers that are smaller than the main village center. Brian asked about the boundary around the downtown core, asking if this denotes the area as Tier 1A. Ravi said that the City decided to have the downtown core under Tier 2 under his recommendation because of the existing Act 250 permit for the area, and the administrative burden to regulate existing Act 250 permits. Mike asked if other municipalities have applied for Tier 1A. Ravi said he's aware that South Burlington has applied for Tier 1A, that he has had conversations with other planners in the county about Tier 1A applications, and that further discussion would be needed if the City wanted to apply for Tier 1A for any part of the City.

Mike asked about the orange area in Gilbrook. Ravi said that this is identified as "transition/infill", and is more nebulous in terms of future land use compared to the other designations. Ravi said that this delineation in Gilbrook matches the current zoning map, which shows part of Gilbrook in the Public District and part of Gilbrook in the Industrial District. Mike said that the interest is to maintain flexibility in terms of land use for that portion of Gilbrook because it can be accessed via Hercules Drive in Colchester. Thomas asked about the future land use plan maps for Colchester. Ravi said he wasn't sure, will follow up with Colchester, and will show the regional future land use map right now. The attendees reviewed the regional future land use map in Colchester. Mike discussed conversations in 2000 about the possibilities of sports facilities in the northern portion of Gilbrook that did not occur in the end. Bryn asked about the rationale to continue to reserve the northern portion of Gilbrook for future use instead of preserving the current usage of the area as a park. Ravi said that the designation of the northern part of Gilbrook is a valid conversation to have, and that in his view, developing the northern portion of Gilbrook would be challenging considering the location of wetlands.

Thomas and the Planning Commission discussed the feasibility of development of other parks in Winooski. Brian asked about the implications of designating lands in the future land use map. Ravi said that the zoning map need to be connected to the future land use map, and that depending on how the City designates lands in the future land use map could impact what areas could be rezoned as.

Ravi asked the attendees about the categories in the map, adding that the categories and the names can be modified as long as the intent matches the future land use map. Ravi suggested changing "Planned Growth Area" into "Residential Neighborhoods" and "Downtown Center" into "Downtown". Mike suggested changing "Enterprise" into "Industrial" to match the current zoning terms. Thomas asked about the alignment of the areas with the parcel lines. Ravi said that for the most part, the boundaries between areas matches parcel lines except for floodplains, but that could be modified so that the designations match parcel boundaries instead.

VI. Discussion: Review of Unified Land Use and Development Regulations – Zoning Mechanics and Housing Incentives

Ravi gave an overview of the presentation on the recent updates to the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations he gave to the Development Review Board in August 2026. Ravi reviewed the incentives in the current regulations for priority housing projects and inclusionary housing projects. Ravi explained that the incentives for priority housing projects and inclusionary housing projects can be used in combination with parking reductions with Transportation Demand Management Requirements.

Bryn asked about streamlining accessory dwelling unit allowances. Ravi said that the current regulations meet the statutory requirements in terms of permitting for accessory dwelling units, and that past conversations about accessory dwellings for multiunit dwellings were at an impasse and could be revisited later. Ravi said that he and Public Works are considering potential utility impacts with new detached accessory dwellings behind existing houses.

Brian asked about parking requirements for the residential districts. Ravi said that one can opt into the transportation demand management requirements in the residential districts and get a 15% reduction in parking in the residential districts. Ravi said that past discussions on transportation demand management were focused on where bus lines were in the City.

Brian asked about the work involved with removing front porches from lot coverage requirements. Ravi said this would be relatively straightforward by defining front porches and including it in the exemptions in the definition of lot coverage.

VII. City Updates

A. Updates from the Mayor

Thomas reviewed City Council's discussions on revamping City boards and committees, and said Council was considering combining committees—such as combining the Housing and Planning Commissions—or reconfiguring committees. Thomas said that a questionnaire will be sent out to current board and committee members. Thomas and Mike discussed the role of the Housing Commission and whether staff are already covering the role and responsibilities of the Housing Commission. Ravi recommended that the Planning Commission not be expanded because any expansion would affect the reliability of regular quorum for the commission.

B. Updates from the Inclusion and Belonging Commission

C. Updates from City Staff

Ravi said that the Armory (50 Park Street) has been warned for a public hearing on September 17th, and that the surveys on the Comprehensive Plan goals and actions are on the City website.

VIII. Other Business

Ravi said that the Armory (50 Park Street) has been warned for a public hearing on September 17th, and that the surveys on the Comprehensive Plan goals and actions are on the City website.

IX. Adjourn

Motion by: Brian

Second: Trevor

Meeting End Time: 8:22 pm