

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 25, 2026
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue city Hall
Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Khanloo, Vice Chair Lu, Commissioners Goeppel
Kennedy, Nilchian, Villaveces

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Ferris

STAFF PRESENT: Kate Nesse, Thara Johnson, Community Development
Department; Kristina Gallant, Shawn Edghill, Development
Services Department; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's
Office

COUNCIL LIAISON: Not Present

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER
(6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Khanloo who presided.

2. ROLL CALL
(6:31 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Ferris.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
(6:32 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Goeppel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kennedy and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None
(6:32 p.m.)

5. STAFF REPORTS
(6:32 p.m.)

Senior Planner Dr. Kate Nesse informed the Commissioners that an urban design workshop for the Eastgate and Factoria neighborhood area plans is scheduled for Saturday, February 28, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Hyatt House in Eastgate.

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Dr. Kate Nesse took a few minutes to review the Commission's schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items. It was noted that the Commission's March 11 meeting has been canceled due to quorum issues.

6. WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Written Communications
(6:34 p.m.)

Dr. Kate Nesse briefly summarized the written communications received since publication of the packet.

B. Oral Communications
(6:35 p.m.)

Chair Khanloo reviewed the procedural rules, including the three-minute time limit per speaker, the total 30-minute allotment for oral communication, and the requirement under Ordinance 6752 that comments relate to matters within the Planning Commission's authority.

Jessie Clawson expressed surprise that many of Bellevue's parking codes had not been updated since the 1960s and urged the Commission to modernize the code. The Commission was encouraged to consider incorporating tools used by other jurisdictions, including reducing the parking minimums based on citywide parking studies, and allowing existing nonconformities to continue when buildings are re-tenanted in order to support small business vitality. The city's parking minimums have recently created barriers for businesses seeking to occupy Downtown buildings.

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None
(6:38 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Check-in on the Parking Reform Land Use Code Amendment
(6:38 p.m.)

Chair Khanloo stated that during the 2024 - 2025 legislative sessions, the Washington State Legislature adopted three bills standardizing parking stall dimensions and certain development standards, establishing caps on minimum parking requirements for residential and non-residential uses, and limiting when minimum parking requirements can apply in light rail and bus rapid transit station areas. Bellevue must comply with the mandates by January 27, 2027. The City Council initiated the work and directed staff to analyze and engage the public on options that could extend beyond the state's minimum requirements.

Code and Policy Planning Manager Kristina Gallant introduced the project scope for the Parking Reform LUCA, explaining that while much of the effort is driven by state legislation, the city has already recognized in multiple planning documents, including the draft Affordable Housing Strategy update, the risks of requiring excess parking. Structured parking can cost more than \$50,000 per underground stall, which influences project feasibility and often results in

developments designed around parking constraints rather than public benefits such as housing or active uses. Although market-based approaches carry some risk, it is important to evaluate the trade-offs and to understand any potential impacts through data and engagement. The LUCA will both ensure compliance with state law and provide an opportunity to consolidate and streamline the city's parking code.

Senior Planner Shawn Edghill said minimum parking requirements have long been established land use tools. They are typically tied to land use type, unit count, or building size, and historically they have been intended to prevent spillover parking and ensure peak-time availability. Bellevue's base parking requirements date largely to 1962 and reflect a suburban, auto-oriented development pattern that no longer aligns with the city's increasingly dense and transit-accessible environment. The Comprehensive Plan supports housing near transit and greater flexibility, yet the current standards, many of which are over 60 years old, often exceed the actual parking demand, raising construction costs and reinforcing auto-dependence.

Shawn Edghill said three recent state bills, SB-6015, HB-1491, and SB-5184, collectively impose mandatory changes. As a result, Bellevue can no longer require parking for residential or mixed-use developments within a half-mile walking distance of light rail stations, or a quarter-mile walking distance of bus rapid transit stops. Additionally, minimum parking cannot be required for certain uses, including residential units under 1200 square feet, small commercial spaces under 3000 square feet, affordable housing, senior housing, childcare centers, ground-floor commercial uses in mixed-use buildings, conversions from nonresidential to residential uses, and changes between commercial uses.

The legislation also establishes caps of no more than 0.5 spaces per multifamily unit, one space per single-family dwelling, and two spaces per 1000 square feet for commercial uses. Many of Bellevue's current requirements exceed those limits outside certain Downtown areas. The city's development standards must also change to tandem parking and count both enclosed and unenclosed spaces toward the minimums. Parking stall dimensions cannot exceed 8 by 20 feet, except for ADA requirements which are governed by federal law. Up to six gravel parking spaces must be permitted, and cities may not require garages or carports as a condition of approval.

While limited flexibility remains, such as regulating visitor parking, drop-off areas, loading zones, and carpool or vanpool spaces, the legislation includes only a narrow off-ramp allowing deviation if a city can demonstrate that reduced requirements will significantly harm safety. That is a high bar that requires an empirical study with uncertain outcomes and potential costs. Given Bellevue's transition toward a more urban, transit-oriented community and the desire for consistency with neighboring jurisdictions, staff are not recommending pursuit of the option.

Shawn Edghill said the City Council provided some project guidance at its January 13 meeting. The Council expressed support for flexibility, market-responsive approaches, and continued reform near transit, but emphasized the importance of data-driven analysis and robust engagement, particularly with businesses. The Council authorized research into potential expansions beyond the state minimums, including standardizing the half-mile buffer for both light rail and bus rapid transit; exploring application to frequent bus service; examining change-of-use barriers, ensuring pedestrian safety considerations are incorporated; and studying the possibility of eliminating minimum parking requirements citywide. The staff are committed to returning to the Commission with findings at future milestones.

With regard to the public engagement process, Shawn Edghill said staff are committed to a

robust program. As a Process VI amendment, there are formal notice and public hearing requirements. A virtual public information session was held earlier in the month. An in-person data walk is scheduled for April 20 to allow community members to review the research findings and discuss the trade-offs. Also planned is additional outreach with residents, neighborhood groups, developers, and a technical advisory committee, all in coordination with transportation staff.

Shawn Edghill said there is ongoing coordination with other municipalities, county governments, and the Department of Commerce to clarify areas of ambiguity within the legislation and to ensure consistent interpretation. Information about the project will remain available through the city's website, informational sheets, frequently asked questions, and publications such as *It's Your city* and *Neighborhood News*. Staff are presently in the first outreach phase. A draft Land Use Code Amendment is anticipated to be prepared by summer at which time it will be brought forward to the Commission for initial review. Additional public input is planned for both spring and summer. The schedule calls for having a recommendation from the Commission in the fall and final Council adoption by the end of the year in order to meet the January 2027 state compliance deadline.

Commissioner Villaveces sought clarification regarding the state-imposed parking caps and stall dimensions, specifically asking if the figures presented represent the maximums the city can require or the maximums that can be provided. Shawn Edghill explained that the caps are state-imposed limits on what the city can require. Kristina Gallant added that they do not establish maximums on what a developer may choose to provide. For example, while the city may not require more than one space per single-family dwelling, a project may voluntarily provide more. Similarly, the 8-foot by 20-foot stall dimension represents the maximum size the city can require in the code. Developers can choose to construct larger stalls, but the city cannot mandate dimensions exceeding that cap.

Commissioner Villaveces voiced the concern that an eight-foot stall width is quite narrow and may present usability challenges. Other jurisdictions use slightly wider dimensions. Commercial facilities such as warehouse retailers often provide 10-foot by 20-foot stalls. If the city cannot require larger stalls, it might at least encourage them. The code clearly articulates aisle widths and maneuvering standards for different parking configurations, including one-way and two-way aisle areas, alleys, and internal drives. Shawn Edghill agreed and stated that part of the consolidation of the parking code will provide an opportunity to streamline and clarify the dimensional tables and aisle standards, particularly given that the state cap effectively supersedes existing local dimension requirements.

Commissioner Villaveces commented that while a stall width of eight feet is very narrow, a stall length of 20 feet is quite generous. The question asked was if the city could require a shorter length, such as 19 feet. Shawn Edghill said the 8-foot by 20-foot dimension is a firm cap established by state law from which the city cannot deviate. Kristina Gallant acknowledged the need to seek clarification as to whether the dimensional standard includes encroachment by columns.

Commissioner Nilchian asked how the transit-based parking exemptions will function administratively, particularly if buffer areas around light rail or bus rapid transit stations are expanded in the future. Kristina Gallant said the city's code references transit service; it does not map fixed geographic boundaries. Applicants are required to demonstrate compliance with the walking distance requirements at the time of application, based on the actual pedestrian path within the public right-of-way. The legislation permits use of walking distance rather than

straight-line measurements, which allows the city to account for barriers such as freeways. When asked by Commissioner Nilchian to what degree the city may interpret walking distance, Kristina Gallant said the statutory thresholds are one-half mile for light rail and one-quarter mile for bus rapid transit, and that public rights-of-way will likely form the basis for measurement, though further clarification is ongoing.

Commissioner Kennedy emphasized pedestrian safety as an important consideration, something that was included in the Council's direction in January. The question asked was how pedestrian safety will be evaluated and funded, particularly in situations where parking requirements are reduced but sidewalk infrastructure may be incomplete. Kristina Gallant said the Council's discussion of pedestrian safety was framed primarily as a consideration when evaluating options that go beyond the state minimum requirements. For example, if the city were to consider expanding transit buffer areas, staff could evaluate existing sidewalk conditions or grade to inform policy decisions. However, incorporating pedestrian infrastructure considerations into the mandatory state exemptions will likely require pursuing the legislation's limited "off-ramp" provision, which entails a substantial empirical safety study and carries significant procedural and financial implications. Any analysis of pedestrian conditions will focus on existing infrastructure rather than prospective future improvements. Shawn Edghill added that the existing design standards within the city's code already include provisions that can enhance pedestrian safety within parking areas and may be refined as part of the update.

Commissioner Goeppele acknowledged that the statewide standards are ambitious and will bring significant change, but expressed caution about extending reforms beyond the state requirements at the outset. As an example, the Plymouth Crossing/Porchlight development in Eastgate, an affordable housing project with limited onsite parking that has reportedly generated spillover parking impacts in surrounding neighborhoods. Staff was asked whether such real-world experiences are being taken into account when determining how far the city should go beyond the minimum state mandates. Kristina Gallant acknowledged that the legislation does not provide location-based nuance for such projects. Market-rate developments tend to respond to economic pressures by providing parking aligned with actual demand, while affordable housing projects may lack similar financial incentives. Parking construction costs can pose significant barriers. The issue is being closely monitored and potential mitigation tools are under consideration, including broader application of residential parking zones. Although no simple solution exists, staff emphasized a commitment to analyzing local impacts and identifying responsive strategies, noting the compressed timeline imposed by state legislation but expressing confidence that the city can proceed thoughtfully.

Commissioner Goeppele offered reflections based on living in Amsterdam where about 40 percent of the garages are owned by the municipality. Those garages are subsidized in part to support residential use without encouraging excessive vehicle ownership. Such shared facilities, it was suggested, could support both commercial and residential users and provide relief for residents who rely on vehicles due to time constraints or economic circumstances. Kristina Gallant acknowledged that shared parking options were discussed during the Council's initiation of the project, and confirmed that the expanded use of shared parking and other creative solutions fall within the scope of the ongoing research.

Vice Chair Lu asked about the implications for emergency access, particularly in cases where minimum parking cannot be required for certain uses. Kristina Gallant clarified that fire and emergency access standards are governed by separate provisions within the land use and building codes and will remain unchanged. The requirements for fire truck access, turning radii, and other safety measures will continue to be enforced independent of the parking regulations to assure

that emergency response capabilities will not be compromised.

Vice Chair Lu asked about the legislative rationale behind the list of uses exempted from the minimum parking requirements, including childcare centers. Kristina Gallant answered that the provisions were established by the state legislature and are not subject to local modification, though local jurisdictions do retain the flexibility to require operational elements such as loading or drop-off areas to address practical needs associated with uses like childcare.

Chair Khanloo observed that there could be impacts on residential and small commercial uses. Smaller residential units under 1200 square feet will no longer be required to provide parking. The demand for parking within existing residential buildings already exceeds the supply and is likely to intensify. Small businesses in Downtown areas incur substantial costs to validate customer parking, reducing their profitability and possibly deterring customers. While acknowledging that the city may have limited authority to mandate parking for small commercial spaces under 3000 square feet, Chair Khanloo encouraged exploration of creative solutions such as improved drop-off, pick-up, or curbside options to support the visibility of small businesses.

Commissioner Villaveces voiced support for exploring shared parking concepts and referenced examples of mixed-use shared parking structures in other cities that function as community assets and wayfinding elements while serving both commercial and residential users.

Commissioner Nilchian expressed support for shared parking ideas and asked whether the city could explore ways to encourage rather than require parking in certain circumstances despite the state's restrictions. Kristina Gallant confirmed that while no formal strategy has yet been established, consideration of incentive-based or supportive approaches to parking provisions remain under discussion. Commissioner Nilchian said such research could be particularly valuable for uses such as senior housing and childcare centers, even if additional requirements cannot be imposed.

Commissioner Kennedy asked how projects currently under development will be affected if the parking requirements change between development phases. Kristina Gallant clarified that the city's existing nonconforming code provisions will continue to apply. Any subsequent project phases will be evaluated under the updated code at the time of application in line with the standard procedures.

Commissioner Kennedy asked about the feedback received during the initial public information session held earlier in the process, and asked how the staff are incorporating public comments into the ongoing analysis. Shawn Edghill said there were comments received in regard to issues local residents were encountering. Visitor parking was one such issue, as was the potential impacts of reduced off-street parking requirements on surrounding neighborhoods. The city retains some regulatory flexibility under state law over visitor parking and time-restricted parking; those topics can be addressed through local code provisions to mitigate community concerns. There was additional feedback related to existing spillover parking and on-street congestion, and about enforcement issues such as vehicles blocking mailboxes or fire hydrants. Although such matters fall primarily under enforcement rather than land use regulation, it was emphasized that the anticipated impacts in regard to on-street parking are being taken seriously as part of the broader analysis. Kristina Gallant added that public inquiries frequently involve practical questions about on-street parking duration and enforcement. The city intends to provide clear public information addressing the topics. Coordination with transportation and code enforcement staff is underway to identify existing friction points and inform future policy considerations, even where comprehensive quantitative data may be limited.

In response to a question asked by Commissioner Kennedy regarding coordination with other jurisdictions, Shawn Edghill confirmed ongoing collaboration with peer cities and participation in a statewide technical advisory committee convened to interpret the new legislation and develop implementation guidance. There recently were discussions with the city of Tacoma, which is conducting its own analysis and has agreed to share data upon completion. Kristina Gallant added that the statewide advisory group is expected to produce additional guidance addressing areas of uncertainty in the legislation.

Commissioner Villaveces shared with the Commissioners visual examples of shared parking structures and mixed-use parking facilities from other cities, including Miami and Copenhagen. The examples illustrated parking facilities that function as community amenities, incorporating pedestrian-oriented design, public spaces, and recreational elements. One example described a municipally-developed parking structure topped by a public park, while others demonstrated mixed-use parking structures that host events or serve as landmarks supporting adjacent pedestrian districts. It was emphasized that reduced parking requirements can be successful when supported by adequate infrastructure and thoughtful design. The city should be encouraged to explore shared parking structures as well as case studies from jurisdictions that have eliminated minimum parking requirements. The examples cited included Buffalo, Austin, Port Townsend, and Hartford, where reforms are reported to have stimulated development, reduced housing costs, and revitalized downtown areas. The staff and the Commission were urged to review both successful and less successful outcomes from other cities to inform local decision-making.

Commissioner Goeppele asked how the city might interpret the legislative provision allowing temporary or time-restricted parking requirements. The suggestion was made that such provisions could function as a form of shared parking to help manage the demand. Kristina Gallant acknowledged that the legislative language is imprecise but indicated it could be interpreted to allow standards addressing needs such as loading zones, delivery areas, visitor parking, and other short-term uses. There is ongoing coordination with various teams involved in curb management and pricing studies to determine how best to incorporate explicit standards into the code, particularly given the likelihood of increased demand for temporary parking spaces as minimum requirements are reduced.

Vice Chair Lu asked if the findings from a recent Downtown paid parking study will be available before the Commission completes its deliberations on the parking issue. The data on the existing parking utilization and restrictions could inform decisions regarding time-limited spaces and overall parking management. Kristina Gallant said staff will provide relevant information if available, and acknowledged that such data would be useful for the Commission's analysis.

Chair Khanloo noted a prior interest among Councilmembers in regard to innovative shared parking and mixed-use structures such as those found in Copenhagen and expressed hope that similar concepts could be explored locally. The Chair also emphasized the differences between Bellevue and European cities that have extensive transit networks and observed that Bellevue's transit system remains comparatively limited. Many residents, particularly those balancing work and family responsibilities, continue to rely on personal vehicles. The Chair stressed the importance of acknowledging those realities as the city considers reforms and potential infrastructure solutions.

Commissioner Villaveces agreed with the comments regarding the challenges of limited transit connectivity and noted that gaps between transit stops and residential destinations can sometimes be bridged through creative mobility solutions. Examples were offered from other regions where

informal or alternative transportation options, such as small-scale bicycle taxis or similar services, have emerged to address the distance between homes and major transit routes. Such supplementary mobility options can help address the first- and last-mile gaps.

Commissioner Goepple voiced support for the Chair's earlier comments concerning the limitations of existing transit infrastructure. While expressing enthusiasm for state investments in transit, the Commissioner observed that the investments remain only an initial step toward creating fully walkable, transit-oriented urban environments. Given the historical underinvestment in such infrastructure, the Commissioner emphasized the need for transitional strategies that can help residents adapt as the built environment evolves. Shared parking concepts and other creative solutions are needed as potential mechanisms to ease the transition and to accommodate the current mobility realities while longer-term improvements are developed.

Commissioner Villaveces asked about the intended time horizon for the parking reform study and whether it is being designed for a short-term period or for several decades into the future. Kristina Gallant replied that the immediate requirement is to achieve compliance with state mandates by January, 2027, but acknowledged the Commission's inquiry related to longer-term planning considerations. Commissioner Villaveces observed that Bellevue is experiencing rapid technological and economic change, including growth in advanced technologies and autonomous systems, and suggested that long-term planning should account for emerging transportation innovations such as autonomous vehicles or shared mobility systems that could fundamentally alter parking needs. The city will need to remain adaptable and creative in planning for future mobility patterns.

B. 2025 Annual Process Improvement Survey
(7:27 p.m.)

Dr. Kate Nesse said internal discussions had occurred regarding how best to address the recommendations that arose from the annual process improvement survey, which was conducted in October 2025. The results were discussed by the Commission at its retreat in November 2025.

Dr. Kate Nesse said one area around which there was a lot of discussion was in regard to how staff responds to public input and presents the input in a manner that is easily digestible for the Commission. There are baseline engagement requirements that are established by the Growth Management Act and the Land Use Code, and the engagement plans are typically defined within Council-initiated project scopes. The Commission's role is to weigh public comments rather than to direct engagement activities. A number of Commissioners had previously expressed appreciation for the summary tables used in past processes, such as the middle housing project, which consolidated the public comments in a clear and accessible format. Staff can use that approach as a template going forward, particularly in the later stages of review processes when large volumes of comments are received. It might also be useful to introduce more consistent memo sections addressing public engagement to improve clarity and organization, while retaining flexibility to accommodate varying project types.

Dr. Kate Nesse addressed the challenges associated with responding to last-minute public comments. Comments submitted shortly before meetings are often difficult to incorporate meaningfully, particularly when materials have already undergone multiple iterations. One potential approach could be to limit the staff responses to comments received after the established review periods, such as the 14-day public notice period required for hearings on code amendments and Comprehensive Plan amendments. The timeframe is intended to provide adequate opportunity for public review and response.

Pre-meeting briefings were also discussed as a useful tool for improving communication between staff and the Commissioners. Dr. Kate Nesse indicated that such briefings help staff understand the Commissioners' perspectives and prepare more targeted presentations and responses. The briefings must remain informational and occur below the quorum level in order to comply with the open meetings requirements, but they could be scheduled on a recurring basis with advance RSVPs to ensure compliance. Additional briefings could also be arranged as needed.

There was a lot of discussion about the role and scope of the Commission relative to specific projects. The Commissioners had requested clearer identification of Council mandates and project scopes to ensure that deliberations remain aligned with the authorized objectives. Scope specificity varies across projects, with some Council directives highly detailed and others more general. To address that, Dr. Kate Nesse proposed incorporating clearer descriptions of scope and decision criteria into the staff memoranda earlier in the project timelines so the Commissioners can consider them throughout the review process rather than only at final decision stages.

In discussing the use of visual aids, it was noted that the Commissioners had expressed strong appreciation for maps, diagrams, and other visual tools that aid understanding of complex topics. Dr. Kate Nesse said the staff have agreed to continue using such tools and proposed developing a toolbox of reusable visual resources that could be applied to recurring topics such as Comprehensive Plan amendments. While acknowledging that visual aids can sometimes oversimplify complex processes, the staff are committed to balancing clarity with accuracy.

Dr. Kate Nesse addressed the concept of Commissioner mentorship and onboarding improvements. The City Clerk's office is excited about the idea of pairing new Commissioners with experienced counterparts or providing opportunities to consult with former Commissioners. The Clerk's Office is currently reviewing onboarding practices for all boards and commissions and is seeking to maintain consistency across the groups before implementing a formal mentorship program. In the interim, a list of former Commissioners willing to be contacted informally for guidance can be compiled. The City Attorney's Office also has confirmed its availability to answer questions from Commissioners regarding legal or procedural matters as a way of reinforcing the ongoing support for the Commission's work.

Dr. Kate Nesse said the survey results and the follow-up discussions concluded that compiling a glossary of acronyms would be useful. The development of lists of acronyms has proved helpful for new staff members as they come onboard. Such a resource would be helpful for the public as well as the Commissioners by ensuring a shared understanding of terminology. Rather than attempting to compile a comprehensive glossary at once, it might be better to build it incrementally over time based on terms appearing in staff memos and agenda materials.

Chair Khanloo suggested that the commission provide feedback on each of the potential process improvements in the order presented.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed support for adding a consistent engagement section to the staff memos, and for using tables where appropriate to summarize the comments received and how they were addressed.

Commissioner Goeppele agreed with the notion of limited responses to last-minute public comments. A way should be found to signal to the public that comments submitted less than 24 hours before a meeting cannot be expected to receive an immediate review or response. Chair

Khanloo echoed the concern and noted that the Commission has maintained an 11:00 a.m. deadline for written submissions for nearly two years; even so, late submissions continue to occur.

On the subject of pre-meeting briefings, Chair Khanloo offered the view that such briefings are valuable for reducing confusion about process, voting expectations, and procedural steps, and for allowing the Commissioners to ask clarifying questions in advance, thereby saving time during public meetings.

Commissioner Kennedy voiced support for establishing a regularly scheduled briefing time and emphasized that a predictable calendar placement with RSVP procedures would help avoid quorum concerns while still enabling preparation and coordination.

Commissioner Nilchian concurred but cautioned against creating an expectation that all Commissioners must attend every time. Briefings should function more like office hours rather than mandatory sessions. Chair Khanloo agreed, describing the concept as optional office hours that could be canceled when there is insufficient interest. Dr. Kate Nesse clarified that an hour could be reserved on the calendars but will likely be used as half-hour sessions. To avoid quorum issues, the time slots can be split. As always, Commissioners can meet with staff individually to discuss issues.

Chair Khanloo addressed the issue of clarifying Commission's role and scope. A prior experience was referenced in which repeated requests for best-practices research had later been characterized as outside the Council-defined scope. It would have been helpful to understand those limitations earlier to avoid misdirected effort.

Commissioner Kennedy endorsed the notion of adding a standard memo section identifying Council scope and decision criteria for each item. Consistent presentation of those elements would be especially helpful given that Council directives are not always included in the staff materials. Also emphasized was the value of consistently including engagement summaries and visual aids where appropriate, with a standardized memo placeholder to ensure key contextual information is not omitted.

Commissioner Goeppele agreed and observed that variability in Council scope is unavoidable, but having an explicit statement regarding the scope within the agenda materials would provide important context.

Vice Chair Lu added that having a clearer delineation of scope will also help address situations in which the Commission makes requests of staff that may not be appropriate. Additionally, the staff should respond more directly in the moment when a request is made that is outside the scope or otherwise not feasible, rather than just indicating that an issue will be explored and then allowing it to fade without resolution. Chair Khanloo concurred and expressed appreciation for the professionalism of the staff but emphasized the practical value of being explicitly advised when a request will expand beyond the Council-determined scope. Dr. Kate Nesse indicated an intent to work with other staff members to support clearer communication and implementation of the improvements as the process moves forward.

With regard to the use of visual aids, Commissioner Kennedy recommended incorporating a consistent prompt within staff memos encouraging the inclusion of visual representations when appropriate. It was further suggested that staff should provide step-by-step illustrative examples

showing how new processes or code changes will function in practice, including comparisons to prior procedures, to help both Commissioners and the public understand the potential impacts. Commissioner Villaveces supported the recommendation and cited a prior presentation on nonconforming code calculations as an example where visual walkthroughs significantly improved comprehension. Maps and diagrams are especially helpful tools for illustrating policy impacts and geographic implications.

Commissioner Goepple underscored the value of maps in particular and noted that visualizing geographic outcomes greatly enhances the understanding of the practical effects, especially in complex policy areas such as critical areas regulations.

There was consensus in support of continuing and expanding the use of visual aids and including them in the code documents themselves where feasible.

Chair Khanloo acknowledged that formal mentorship initiatives are under development by the City Clerk's Office and indicated that no further immediate action was required from the Commission.

Commissioner Kennedy supported the development of a glossary of acronyms incrementally and recommended that it remain an informal, flexible document rather than a codified resource, allowing for regular updates as the terminology evolves.

Chair Khanloo remarked that artificial intelligence tools can be used to assist in understanding planning terminology. Such tools could be used to generate lists of acronyms from public planning documents.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None
(8:05 p.m.)

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
(8:05 p.m.)

A. January 28, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Nilchian. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goepple and the motion carried unanimously.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None
(8:06 p.m.)

12. ADJOURNMENT
(8:06 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Goepple. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nilchian and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Khanloo adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.



Kate Nesse
Staff to Planning Commission

Date
March 26, 2026