



General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

January 14, 2025

Summary and Motions

Vice Mayor Wu called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Committee Members Vice Mayor Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Shayla Lynch, Hannah LeGris, Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, Whitey Elliott Baxter, Dave Sevigny, and Jennifer Reynolds were present. Council Members Tyler Morton, Denise Gray, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, and Hil Boone were present as non-voting members.

I. Election of Committee Chair/Selection of Vice Chair

Motion by Lynch to nominate Sheehan committee chair. Seconded by Baxter. Sheehan accepted the nomination. The motion was passed without dissent.

Sheehan appointed Lynch as the committee's vice chair.

II. Approval of January 14, 2025 Committee Summary

Motion by Ellinger to approve the January 14, 2025 General Government and Planning Committee Summary. Seconded by Wu. The motion passed without dissent.

III. Urban Growth Master Plan Update

Sam Castro, a consultant with TSW, presented the most recent update on the UGMP, a project that began in November 2023. First, she reviewed the plan's intent, followed by their means of public engagement. Design principles, formed through residential and commercial market analysis, include having a mix of housing types, diversity of uses, gentle density, connectivity, multimodal transportation, and sustainability. Regulation changes came in concurrence (mixed use), open space, and circulation.

On October 31, 2024, one year after the project began, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to include the Urban Growth Master Plan in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The standards our planning team set with this plan have been nationally recognized. Upcoming action items include the Complete Streets Design Manual, the Infrastructure Funding Plan, the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, and the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments.

The Parkland Dedication Ordinance will determine the standard for how much land should become parkland as part of our infrastructure process. This recommendation is in its early stages, but the committee could receive a presentation at the end of 2025. Planning provided existing property and landowners, less than 100, the opportunity to meet and discuss the plan. Planning expects most developers to wait to file for a zone change until we have the details of the Infrastructure Funding Plan.

No action was taken on this item.

IV. Lexington's Growth Management Program

Hal Baillie, Long-Range Planning Manager, presented the program, which is based on Theme E, Goal 4 in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. This program will construct the process for future growth and preservation decisions. The Council will provide its input and adopt it as an amendment to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan by August 1, 2026.

He reviewed the challenges of previous approaches. Those challenges led to the recommendations in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to improve our growth management processes. The prior work of the Sustainable Growth Task Force and the Goal 4 Work Group will aid in establishing the process. The Sustainability Growth Task Force developed baseline data in 2020 and Planning staff updated it in 2024. That data will be in the Imagine Lexington Data Research Center, which will serve as a transparent data source of ongoing development trends, land vacancy, demographic change, and environmental impacts. This resource should be available by the end of the month.

Planning staff will coordinate the process with the General Government and Planning Committee Chair by refining the project's scope, establishing a framework for public input, and scheduling committee reports and updates.

The chair will place this item into the committee at the 1/14/25 Work Session and add "preservation" to the title, as preservation is equally important as growth.

The committee took no action.

V. House Bill 443

Traci Wade, Planning Manager, presented HB 443, which creates a new section of KRS Chapter 100 to require that local laws dealing with subdivision plats and development plans be set out by objective standards and applied ministerially and to set out conditions for applying discretion. It was introduced in February 2024, enacted on April 4, 2024, and will become effective July 1, 2025. KRS 100 is state-enabling legislation for Planning and Zoning in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Currently, the Planning Commission does apply discretion when they review development plans, and they do so based on their process. Ambiguity or vagueness to applicants could be why we are seeing a change in the state law to ask for precise objective standards that are applied equally across the board to everyone and that there only be applied discretion when, under those two cases, we have an applicant ask for discretion, discretionary review, or deviation from the objective standard; or if there's a specific public health safety and welfare concern. Therefore, our Planning Commission would use its discretion only in those two cases.

Wade provided an example of vague and ambiguous wording in our current ordinance. Our development process will change to comply with HB 443 through changes to our current zoning ordinance, where we see vagueness and unobjective standards. They do not anticipate a change to the Preliminary Development Plan process with a zone change, as those requests are discretionary. There will be no change to the application, staff review, or Technical Review Committee process for Final Development Plans. A change will be seen with the Planning Commission Review of Final Development Plans, as those will now only be necessary with a waiver or deviation of the standard or if it poses a specific threat to the affected area's public health, safety, or welfare. We will see changes in the form of an amendment to Article 21, which governs our development plans.

The planning staff has met internally with division representatives to inform them of the updates. HB 443 also impacts their rules and guidelines. The staff has met with development stakeholders to review the legislation, and there will also be a follow-up meeting with them.

Planning will initiate a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment in January. In February, they will mail notices to registered Neighborhood Associations. It will be on the agenda at the March Zoning Committee meeting. There will be a public hearing at the March Planning Commission meeting. The Council will receive the final reports in April. The Council may then refer it back to the committee for further discussion or place it on the docket for readings.

The committee took no action.

VI. Annual Review of Items in Committee

Chair Sheehan reviewed the committee's current items. The Review of Short-Term Rentals is now an annual update. Rural Short-Term Rentals will return to the Council during today's work session, where it will receive further action.

Motion by Ellinger to remove Recommendations for Ensuring the Continuous Operations for Shared Use Paths, Sidewalks, and Bike Lanes from the committee. Seconded by Curtis. The motion passed without dissent.

Councilmember Brown is the new sponsor of the Assessment and Historic Preservation of Lexington's African American Hamlets (A Sense of Place). Chair Sheehan reviewed the intent of placing Examine Opportunities to Relocate Programming and Initiatives from the Mayor's Office to Other Relevant Divisions within LFUCG into committee and will keep it on the list.

Vice Mayor Wu will now be the sponsor of the Charter Review. Councilmember LeGris will now sponsor Acquire Investor Owned or Other Properties. The Disparity Study is on the agenda of the upcoming Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee. Councilmember Lynch expects the Boards and Commission Comprehensive Review to be on the March agenda. Councilmember Reynolds is actively working with planning staff on two items from the Planning and Development Study: Recommendation #8 – Tighten Certification to Lock in Requirements, and Recommendation #10, Establish a Development Liaison Position. Councilmember Elliot Baxter will be the new sponsor of Electronic Billboards. Councilmembers Ellinger and Gray will now sponsor the Homelessness Need Assessment RFP. Vice Mayor Wu expects a report on the Comprehensive Plan Theme A: Equity Policies 1 & 2 Continuing Education this year.

Motion by Wu to remove Office/Residential Conversions from the committee. Seconded by Ellinger. The motion passed without dissent.

Motion by Wu to remove Two-Way Street Conversions from the committee. Seconded by Sevigny. The motion passed without dissent.

Bring Back the Bluegrass will remain on the committee referral list. The Absentee Landlords item needs to be added to an agenda for presentation this year. Chair Sheehan and Councilmember Sevigny will now sponsor the Solar Energy Systems Zoning Ordinance. Councilmember Brown will now sponsor Efficiencies in our Development Processes and Compliance with House Bill 443. The Annual Status Report on Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Easement Acquisitions will stay with the committee chair.

Motion by Sheehan to remove Division and Program Review from the committee. Seconded by Reynolds.
The motion passed without dissent.

Councilmembers Curtis and Vice Chair Lynch will now sponsor annual reports on the Lexington History Museum and Landlord and Tenant Advisory Boards, respectively. The Public Input Subcommittee continues to meet under the sponsorship of Councilmember LeGris.

Chair Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 2:43 p.m.