## Sustainability & Climate Justice Commission Agenda

**Date**  
Monday July 10th

**Time**  
5 pm

**Location**  
City Hall- Third Floor – Council Chambers

**Watch Online**  
[https://www.youtube.com/@CityofIthacaPublicMeetings](https://www.youtube.com/@CityofIthacaPublicMeetings)

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| 1. Call to Order  
1.1 Agenda Review  
1.2 Review and Approve Minutes | No Yes | June 27, 2023 | 5 |
| 2. Public Comment  
2.1 Statements from the Public  
2.2 Commission Response | No No | Register to speak or submit a comment here: [Speakers and Comments](https://www.youtube.com/@CityofIthacaPublicMeetings) | 10 |
| 3. Announcements, Reports & Presentations | No | Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Development | 20 |
| 4. New Business  
4.1 Training: How to structure a recommendation to Council | No | Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Development | 45 |
| 5. Meeting Wrap-up  
5.1 Next Meeting: August 8th  
5.2 Agenda Planning for Next Meeting  
5.3 Adjournment | No Yes | | 5 |
To: Sustainability and Climate Justice Commission  
From: Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Development  
Date: July 5, 2023  
Re: Orientation – How to write a recommendation to Council

At the July 18th meeting, we will discuss how to write a recommendation to the Common Council. An important part of the Commission’s work will be providing feedback and guidance to staff regarding the development of plans and policies to implement the City’s sustainability and climate justice goals. Once plans and policies have been drafted, the Commission will make recommendations to the Council regarding next steps, including adoption or implementation.

I have provided a selection of recommendations for your reference. At the July 18th meeting we will review these examples and I will provide additional guidance on how to draft an effective recommendation.

Please feel free to contact me at lnicholas@cityofithaca.org with any questions prior to the meeting.
Planning and Development Board Recommendation of the Draft 
Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan to the Common Council, Adopted January 22, 2019

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision for the city’s future and serves as a guide for future decision-making, policies, and funding, and

WHEREAS, the City decided to pursue a two-phased approach to its new Comprehensive Plan, where Phase I entailed the preparation of an “umbrella” plan, Plan Ithaca, that sets forth broad goals and principles to guide future policies throughout the city and where Phase II includes the preparation of specific neighborhood and thematic plans, and

WHEREAS, the Common Council adopted Plan Ithaca in September 2015, and the planning process then began to focus on the Phase II plans, and

WHEREAS, the Phase II plans provide an opportunity to take a proactive look at specific areas throughout the city, particularly those with significant potential for change, and to implement policies and capital improvements to help implement a shared vision, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the City of Ithaca Municipal Code and New York State General City Law, the Planning and Development Board is responsible for preparing and recommending a new Comprehensive Plan to the Common Council for adoption, and

WHEREAS, formed in September 2016, the Southside Neighborhood Plan Committee was composed of 15 area residents, including a member of the Planning and Development Board, and worked with City Planning staff to conduct public outreach and prepare the draft plan, and

WHEREAS, the complete draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan was made available for public review in September 2018, and the Committee hosted community events, neighborhood meetings, and an online survey to gather public comments on the draft plan, and

WHEREAS, following its review of the comments, the Committee revised the draft plan to incorporate public input, and

WHEREAS, at its meeting on December 19, 2018, the Southside Neighborhood Plan Committee voted to recommend the draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, dated December 19, 2018, for review and consideration by the Planning and Development Board as part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board recommends the draft Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan, dated December 19, 2018, for review and adoption by the Common Council as part of Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan:

Moved by: Jones
Seconded by: Petrina
In Favor: Blalock, Elliott, Glass, Johnston, Jones, Lewis, Petrina
Against: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None
To: Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency
From: Ithaca Planning & Development Board
Date: July 24, 2019
RE: Maximizing Affordable Housing at the Green St Garage Mixed Use Redevelopment Project

The Planning and Development Board supports the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency's work on the Green Street Garage project. Affordable housing and conference space are both valuable additions to Ithaca's downtown, and this project promises to deliver both. However, conference centers are famously difficult to develop, and there is an open question as to what the project looks like in the absence of a conference center.

In the event that the conference center component of the project does not move forward, the Planning and Development Board unanimously encourages the IURA to maximize the amount of affordable housing developed. While there are trade-offs concerning height and construction impacts, this project presents a unique opportunity to supply affordable housing within walking distance to jobs and services. This opportunity should be maximized.

Maximizing the amount of affordable housing is not only good planning: It is in keeping with the mission of the IURA, which is charged with "...expanding access to quality affordable housing, strengthening neighborhoods and the local economy..." The Planning and Development Board supports this mission and this project, and looks forward to seeing both progress.
From: City of Ithaca Planning and Development Board

To: Common Council

Re: Planning Board Recommendation to Council Regarding the Proposed Amendments to the Waterfront Zoning Districts

Date: May 26, 2020

The Planning Board has reviewed the memo describing the proposed amendments to the waterfront zoning districts from Jennifer Kusznir, Senior Planner, dated May 8, 2020 to the Planning and Economic Committee.

The Board has no objections to the addition of needed definitions and updated primary uses. The Board does not recommend any proposed amendments that make zoning more restrictive for the following reasons:

- The current zoning was thoughtfully deliberated and developed in order to encourage a new kind of development in this special area of the City. There is now an influx of projects that the zoning was meant to encourage. Before acting to change the zoning, we need to observe the impacts over time, particularly the interplay between the zoning and the Design Guidelines.

- The Planning Board already possesses the authority and tools to uphold the principals of the Waterfront Plan without a change to zoning. Each proposal and development site is measured against the principals in the Comprehensive Plan, the Waterfront Plan and the Waterfront Design Guidelines. In addition, the Site Plan Review Ordinance gives the Board very broad authority to influence design.

- Board members, many of whom are trained designers, feel that they can achieve better outcomes without more restrictive zoning, such as a maximum building length. More zoning flexibility allows more creative solutions that are unique to a project and its site.

- The Board has seen several exciting and well-designed proposals for waterfront development, most of which would be negatively impacted, if not rendered unfeasible with the more restrictive proposed amendments.

- The City has limited area left for development. The waterfront area has a huge potential to infuse the City with vibrant mixed use development in walkable neighborhoods proximate to jobs, services, housing and retail. More restrictive zoning could prevent the realization of this potential as properties in this area are particularly expensive to develop due to soils conditions and other constraints.
Cherry Street is emerging as a unique and vibrant mixed-income neighborhood with potential opportunities for developers to partner with the art community in creative placemaking, as expressed in the attached letter from Sam Buggeln, Artistic Director of the Cherry Arts, dated May 26, 2020. Again, the Board feels that more restrictive zoning could curtail positive momentum of this emerging neighborhood.
To: Planning & Economic Development Committee  
From: Planning & Development Board  
Date: December 3, 2019  
RE: Planning Board comments on the Establishment of Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

At their November 26 meeting, the Planning and Development Board reviewed the proposal to establish regulations for developing ADUs in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. The Board discussed the proposal and agreed to submit the following comments for your consideration:

- The Board strongly supports the goal of the proposed ADU regulation: “to remove or reduce regulatory barriers that limit the number and variety of housing options in single family zoning districts”.
- The Board believes many concerns about the impact of ADUs will be effectively addressed when the Board reviews their size, design, and placement for neighborhood compatibility during site plan review.
- DADUs in existing buildings should not be limited to a percentage of the primary structure (or its interior) as there is no significant exterior change to the structures and therefore limited impact to the neighborhood.
- DADUs should not be limited to 800 SF, provided that size is limited to 75% of the primary dwelling and that some greenspace is maintained. 800 SF is too small for families.
- The Board did not reach consensus on contiguous greenspace. Some feel a 35% requirement will prove too burdensome for Ithaca’s more urban neighborhoods.
- The Board leans towards not requiring owner occupancy.
  - First, it places a regulatory burden on the City that will be impossible to enforce with current staffing levels.
  - Second, this restriction could encourage gray market renting.
- In addition, the Board encourages Council to direct staff to create legislation that allows pocket neighborhoods, especially in the zoning districts impacted by this legislation.