

Peduto Transition Team
Economic Development Committee
Subcommittee on Planning &
Development Process

Recommendation Nos. 1 - 5

Chair: Clifford B. Levine
December 26, 2013

Recommendation No. 1

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(Please use one report for each subcommittee recommendation)

Subcommittee Name	Planning and Development
Subcommittee Chairperson(s)	Clifford Levine
Title of recommendation	Appoint a Planning Commission that is skilled and balanced. (P&D Recommendation No. 1)
Describe the recommendation	<p>We recommend that the Planning Commissioner (PC) selection process be focused to achieve a commission that serves as an independent and balanced board, reflecting a measured focus on urban planning and diverse representation. Commissioners need to be dedicated to the belief that, when aligned, diverse perspectives will bring about change that serves both individual and community needs and helps our City meet its visionary aspirations.</p> <p>PC members should be selected to reflect three key perspectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of good urban planning, design and architecture; 2. Developer/owner; and 3. Neighborhood/community groups. <p>In addition, there should be an overall perspective on the Commission's role in the legal review and planning process.</p> <p>In addition to these selection criteria, the City should develop specific guideline for the training and orientation of Commission and Board members involved in the planning and land use process. Create workshops that explain the details of the entire planning and regulatory process, including review of the American Planning Association Code of Ethics and relevant legal codes.</p>
Is this an immediate or long term recommendation?	Immediate
How will this address our	Pittsburgh needs to be well prepared in order to attract

<p>challenges or reach our goals?</p>	<p>public and private investments in the city while addressing the challenges the city is facing today. It is in everyone's interests for these investments to thrive while, at the same time, involving our neighborhoods and improving our city as a whole.</p> <p>In addition to being a reviewing and recommending body for individual projects, the PC must be composed in a manner that ensures the development of a workable and visionary Comprehensive Plan. Through its role in public and private investment efforts, the PC is responsible for ensuring that individual development efforts also advance our neighborhoods and our City's vision for its future.</p>
<p>What are the obstacles to implementation?</p>	<p>A potential obstacle would occur if Planning Commissioners were selected prior to evaluating candidates against a criteria and assessing their capacity to advance this agenda.</p>
<p>Who needs to be involved?</p>	<p>The Mayor, his executive team., and people who have insight into the three perspectives discussed above</p>
<p>What city resources need to be invested?</p>	<p>Executive Time to lead an informed PC selection process for members of boards and commissions involved in land use and planning process. This time will be paid back by the role of the PC in advancing new plans and recommendations and in general supporting the Planning Director and Department of City Planning.</p>
<p>What will be different if the recommendation is adopted?</p>	<p>The Planning process will increase in legitimacy and this will in turn create a better environment for investment and change-making that come together to advance Pittsburgh as the visionary city</p>
<p>Describe any background materials that you consulted</p>	<p>The group is familiar with many planning models as well as City and Regional planning efforts and practices. The group reviewed the PlanPGH process and status.</p>
<p>Have other cities implemented this recommendation?</p>	<p>Benchmarking studies of effective PC practices have been done as part of PlanPGH and should be evaluated for insight. We have requested these from the current Director of City Planning.</p>
<p>Are there any other considerations?</p>	

We request that each recommendation be submitted by the subcommittee Chairperson to Kevin Acklin and your Committee Chair by **5:00 pm on Friday, December 27.**

Recommendation No. 2

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(Please use one report for each subcommittee recommendation)

Subcommittee Name	Planning and Development
Subcommittee Chairperson(s)	Clifford Levine
Title of recommendation	The Planning Director should oversee and coordinate the development of a Comprehensive Plan, through a Vision Statement, Coordination of the pending PlanPGH project and creation of Neighborhood Plans. (P&D Recommendation No. 2)
Describe the recommendation	<p>Benefit of Comprehensive Plan</p> <p>A Citywide Comprehensive Plan allows the City to place in one document, its planning vision and aspirations. A Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for the Zoning Code and Map, and thus a well-developed Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance for appropriate amendments to the Zoning Code and Map. As an example, twenty years ago, the Strip District was zoned for industrial uses and residential uses were prohibited. A Comprehensive Plan would identify and articulate the aspirations of a mixed use urban area, to reflect market forces and planning objectives. These changes would then be included in the Zoning Code, as was done in the late 1990s when the Zoning Code was substantially revised. Pittsburgh is rapidly transforming and a Comprehensive Plan will help ensure that the transformation is done in a positive manner that improves the quality of life in the City.</p> <p>PlanPGH</p> <p>A few years ago, the City Planning Director, with support from local foundations, embarked on a planning project called PlanPGH. PlanPGH involved a review of 12 categories of city life, such as parks, transportation and housing, and began an intensive review effort to take inventory of current conditions and identify areas of growth and development. PlanPGH appears to have operated</p>

somewhat is a "silo" manner with each of the 12 categories being addressed independently. To date, recommendations have been prepared in only a few of the categories and efforts are continuing with the other categories. However, there does not appear to be the necessary levels of coordination to ensure that the various reports are mutually compatible. Further, there has not been adequate neighborhood involvement to ensure that the plans would receive support from the various community groups.

The Subcommittee believes that the PlanPGH process should be continued. It provides an excellent opportunity to gain insight and understanding of best practices. However, it is imperative that the process be coordinated. The natural coordinator would be the new Planning Director. In addition to general coordination, the Mayor has an interest in ensuring that his Administration's vision of Pittsburgh be articulated and understood, and serve as a guide to the further development of the PlanPGH recommendations.

The Subcommittee, therefore, recommends, that the Planning Director be designated as the overseer of the PlanPGH project. The Director should have the support of a consulting firm to ensure meaningful review and coordination. The Director would work with the Mayor to develop core visionary goals, which should be provided to the various PlanPGH committees. (One goal, for instance, might be to increase the population of the City by 10 percent in a certain number of years.) The Director would then ensure coordination of the committees with one another. Finally, once the committee analysis was developed to a sufficient degree, the City Planning Neighborhood Planners, working under the Director, would work with Neighborhood Groups to provide feedback. This coordinated effort should lead to PlanPGH recommendations that would support the development of a Comprehensive Plan. The key is that the Director, on behalf of the Mayor, must be actively involved in understanding the work of each committee and ensuring that the Administration's vision is being effectuated.

Neighborhood Plans

Neighborhood Planners can begin the process of meeting with stakeholders in their assigned neighborhoods and getting general input on issues with the Zoning Code and Map, and general concerns as to where stakeholders in the

	<p>neighborhoods see the future. This information can be communicated back to PlanPGH. Further, the PlanPGH information can serve as guides for the Neighborhood Plans.</p> <p>Role of the Director of City Planning</p> <p>The role of Director is critical; otherwise there will be a serious of unconnected reports and recommendations. The Administration should consider elevating the Director to a cabinet position, or at least ensuring a comparable role.</p>
Is this an immediate or long term recommendation?	Begin immediately with a goal to complete in two years.
How will this address our challenges or reach our goals?	The most progressive, attractive cities have a clear, well-articulated vision, and a process by which to continually evaluate and update it. A systematic and coordinated process, led by the Director of City Planning, and involving PlanPGH and Neighborhood Plans can serve as the tool for implementing that vision and lead to a visionary Comprehensive Plan.
What are the obstacles to implementation?	Failure to have the Director of City Planning in charge of the PlanPGH process will lead to a fragmented and dysfunctional planning process. Further, failure to introduce the PlanPGH concepts into Neighborhood Plans will further increase frustration and confusion. The Director should have resources to help draft a Comprehensive Plan that reflects worldwide best practices and the needs of the various Pittsburgh neighborhoods.
Who needs to be involved?	The Mayor, his executive team, the new Planning Director and planning team, and a properly established steering committee representing the public and private sector and community interests, including Neighborhood Planners. In addition, the consulting team involved with PlanPGH should be evaluated, and adjusted, if appropriate, and placed under the direction of the Director of City Planning. .
What city resources need to be invested?	Executive Time to review the process to date and current recommendations; possibly additional funding to re-engage consultants and/or hire new consultant teams to evaluate existing materials and approach, rethink the process and deliverables.
What will be different if the recommendation is adopted?	The City will have a vision that is truly representative of its constituencies. A well done visioning process and

	comprehensive plan can get everyone pulling in the right direction, thereby maximizing private and public resources in order to build the Pittsburgh that the Mayor has envisioned.
Describe any background materials that you consulted	The group reviewed materials publicly available for PLANPGH; some team members have experience of the current Management Committee for the plan; team members have worked in other cities and are familiar with progressive city visioning
Have other cities implemented this recommendation?	Most major cities that evolve through difficult economic times, continue to attract investment and residents of all walks of life have gone through this visioning effort. Washington, DC's efforts on "A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City" is one example of carrying out a visioning process that then guides the evolution of a comprehensive plan.
Are there any other considerations?	

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Recommendation No. 3

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(Please use one report for each subcommittee recommendation)

Subcommittee Name	Planning & Development Process
Subcommittee Chairperson(s)	Clifford Levine
Title of recommendation	The City should Develop a User-Friendly, Transparent and Effective Permitting Process. (P&D Recommendation No. 3)
Describe the recommendation	<p>The City should set up a customer-service oriented centralized permitting center to process permit applications across departments. This should include a strong triage function at the entry point to the process that would direct applicants and projects in an informed manner to the appropriate path based on their complexity or 'routineness,' and should have adequate staffing to handle demand and process applications efficiently. It is envisioned that users would encounter a situation similar to that of a hotel check-in desk or of the "Genius Bar" at Apple Stores. Knowledgeable and friendly staff would help customers fill out applications, answer questions and/or direct them to resources. Applications and customers would then be matched with the appropriate staff in the appropriate departments.</p> <p>Based on the scale of the project, applicants should have access to a designated representative, including a neighborhood planner or other Department of City Planning (DCP) employee. In addition, employees of DCP working on application intake should be trained in customer service techniques.</p> <p>The City should create a new website that serves as a central permitting development information and resource hub. It should include permitting and development process information, resources across all departments and general relevant FAQ information and appropriate links. There should be a clear roadmap for each type of application and process that includes "if-then" processing, checks and</p>

	<p>balances, and self-review checklists. The site should be user-friendly and offer online permitting, payment, application tracking, and custom filtering and searching. The site should also allow for owners/contractors to request inspections. The lack of timely inspections and follow through is a major source of project delay and frustration.</p> <p>Community engagement should be integrated into the permitting and development process, by updating the website to allow for the timely posting of all applications and issued permits. Through connections with the neighborhood planner, community participation, trust in the process will be improved. This will provide developers with the process for engagement to review the Zoning Code and the neighborhood plan, and will eliminate surprises that might derail a project at the latter stages of the process. This website should be professionally developed, working hand-in-hand with the point person for this initiative, and should seek to set a new bar for government website functionality, transparency, and ease of use.</p> <p>When appropriate, workshop-style design and planning review conferences should be considered to build consensus and provide for better formal reviews at the commissions. The Zoning Board and Planning Commission should adopt rules which will allow, when appropriate, for processes involving various stakeholders.</p> <p>The City should benchmark these recommendations against best practices nationally to find the most innovative, efficient, and best fitting elements for Pittsburgh.</p>
Is this an immediate or long term recommendation?	This should be a high-priority, begin the survey of affected departments immediately and roll-out features as they become available.
How will this address our challenges or reach our goals?	These recommendations will improve predictability, trust, and participation in the permitting and development processes. They will improve equity among neighborhoods by ensuring that neighborhood planners are integral to the process. They will by ensure a user-oriented system, and will improve accessibility and efficiency by offering services online and expedited permitting when appropriate.
What are the obstacles to implementation?	Technology capacity and costs, data access across departments, sense of turf/cross-department conflict in

	current hierarchy, additional staffing costs (if needed).
Who needs to be involved?	All departments and authorities must be required to buy-in and use the centralized system shared technology to maximize efficiency. This initiative should be owned by a the City Planning Department which should be empowered to implement across departments.
What city resources need to be invested?	CIS technology and staffing resources, staff capacity across departments. Collaboration with NGOs will help facilitate this effort.
What will be different if the recommendation is adopted?	Improved efficiency, transparency, predictability and scalability. The City would build a reputation as being innovative in its approach to Economic Development.
Describe any background materials that you consulted	http://citizensplanninginstitute.org http://www.planetizen.com/node/29243 http://planphilly.com http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/
Have other cities implemented this recommendation?	Denver, Chattanooga, and Atlanta appear to have online permitting systems and may be good cities to benchmark. There are many other cities that have implemented these recommendations to varying degrees.
Are there any other considerations?	Work with University Center for Social and Urban Research and Design Center to develop external links to open data so privately funded and managed apps can be developed in NGOs effectively reducing costs to the City.

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Recommendation No. 4

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(Please use one report for each subcommittee recommendation)

Subcommittee Name	Planning & Development
Subcommittee Chairperson(s)	Clifford Levine
Title of recommendation	The City should Strengthen the Department of City Planning (DCP) through Clarification of its Role and Function. (P&D Recommendation No. 4)
Describe the recommendation	<p>Clarify the role and function of the Department of City Planning (DCP) with respect to its relationship to all other Authorities, Boards, and Commissions.</p> <p>In particular, the URA should not hold a planning function. Rather, the URA must consult and partner with DCP on planning all future development. URA action should be consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan, which is to be developed by DCP. On a project basis, the URA must bring the DCP into the process at a very early stage. It is important to ensure there is collaboration between the URA and DCP.</p> <p>As the primary entity responsible for developing the Neighborhood Plans and Comprehensive Plan, the DCP should be included in all phases of the development of projects related to infrastructure and public investment. DCP will have the responsibility of advancing and evaluating projects related to the Comprehensive Plan. Thus, the DCP director should function at the authority/cabinet level.</p> <p>DCP has the task of developing and implementing the Comprehensive Plan and general planning process. Thus, the DCP should serve as a coordinator with BBI, Zoning, DPW, PWSA, Housing Authority, Sports and Exhibition Authority, ACHD-Plumbing, ACCD, DEP, Alcosan, PennDOT etc., to ensure conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Codes, Neighborhood Plans, design review, and the general relationship to infrastructure</p>

	<p>systems that are either the responsibility of the City or separate/affiliated agencies.</p> <p>Deploy the additional neighborhood planners by assigning one to each sector of the city. The neighborhood planner should be involved in development review from the initial intake point and should manage the application through the process. The neighborhood planner will alert community stakeholders early in the process, participate with specialist planners and connect the applicant to the other departments/agencies that need to be involved. This will greatly improve communication and coordination of all involved in the process.</p> <p>To ensure that planning initiatives are reality based, cross train neighborhood planners on zoning and building codes as well as funding mechanisms and overall City strategies. Develop clear engagement between the neighborhood planners and other City bodies, especially regulatory and financing agencies. Integrate, throughout DCP, the design, development and review procedures. This action would (1) give more heft to the planning side to supplement the regulatory component and (2) involve the DCP in the day-to-day planning decisions. The ultimate goal is have a process in which planners can develop a neighborhood and/or development strategy that is based in clear and articulated zoning objectives.</p>
<p>Is this an immediate or long term recommendation?</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>How will this address our challenges or reach our goals?</p>	<p>Improve transparency, predictability, efficiency, fairness, and development quality. The problem now is that other agencies make decisions in silos and then come to DCP for the necessary approvals without planning and/or zoning being at the table for the planning of the policy/investment. This will address that problem. It will also address the current disconnect between zoning staff and planners so that strategy and regulation are integrated.</p>
<p>What are the obstacles to implementation?</p>	<p>Agencies currently accustomed to acting independent of any planning concerns will be required to consider planning aspects associated with a particular project. Although they may resist the DCP involvement, the planning and development process will be coordinated and better received</p>

	publicly..
Who needs to be involved?	Department of City Planning, the URA Executive Director and the Mayor.
What city resources need to be invested?	Staffing funds
What will be different if the recommendation is adopted?	Efficiency, predictability, collaboration, cross-agency cooperation, communication, fairness, transparency, community engagement, accountability.
Describe any background materials that you consulted	
Have other cities implemented this recommendation?	<p>This recommendation does not seek a structural change, but a more active role of the DCP in particular transactions to ensure better planning and public input. In other cities, the URA function is often a component of the planning department. In San Francisco the redevelopment authority is within the planning department. Alexandria VA waterfront redevelopment – a waterfront plan was developed by planning department and operated by public works. Redevelopment authority serves simply to provide financing not able to flow directly through the city. The Alexandria planning department is doing the redevelopment of the waterfront. In Seattle, the planners work side-by-side with a zoning official, as well as transportation, environmental etc., planners, in developing plans as well as implementation strategies. Early involvement of the DCP with URA projects will avoid a disconnect that other cities have begun to address.</p> <p>Consider national best practices when further developing this recommendation.</p>
Are there any other considerations?	Clarify role of neighborhood planners and Mayor's Office neighborhood initiative staff.

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Recommendation No. 5

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

(Please use one report for each subcommittee recommendation)

Subcommittee Name	Planning & Development Process
Subcommittee Chairperson(s)	Clifford Levine
Title of recommendation	Citizen input gained through deliberative and structured processes can help development outcomes and stimulate healthy patterns of economic growth. (P&D Recommendation No. 5)

Describe the recommendation	<p>The City should improve engagement of local stakeholders in a manner that is not an impediment to development and that improves project qualities and outcomes.</p> <p>This recommendation is presented in three parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the Process 2. Educating Planners and the Community 3. Incubating New Ideas <p>Improving the Process How do we increase the level of engagement between neighborhood planners and community organizations?</p> <p>Neighborhood planners will be a key element of community outreach. It is important that capacity be built and that each neighborhood have at least one planner dedicated to guiding development through the process of engagement.</p> <p>Neighborhood master plans can be used as tools for developers to understand the community's vision. A process should be implemented through which neighborhood master plans can be standardized, developed and formally reviewed by the Planning Commission and referenced by staff on a regular basis. Further, the Administration, led by the Director of City Planning, the Solicitor and the Planning Commissioner, should determine the appropriate manner to give legal efficacy to these plans, including through modification of the Zoning Code and Zoning Map.</p>
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City Council should take an active role in working with and understanding the activities of neighborhood planners. The URA and other local institutions should be invited to engage as well.

CDAP (Contextual Design Advisory Panel) could be incorporated into the Zoning Code for consideration on major projects—those appearing before the Planning Commission or having a value above some monetary threshold.

CDAP should reference neighborhood plans and input from community organizations to provide input on development details.

Unless an initial community engagement has occurred, and there are no community objections, the Planning Commission should not take action at the first hearing. The first hearing is only a hearing; two weeks later the project would return for a continued hearing and possible action. Citizen input and testimony should not be limited at the second hearing. The record should remain open for any comment. The Commission, like other Boards and Commissions, must be mindful of its role as a quasi-judicial body and allow parties the means to adequately present testimony and evidence and not routinely be limited to a three-minute time limit. Consideration should be made for how this requirement is placed in the Code.

It is recommended that the Law Department should enter an appearance on behalf of the City in any land use or zoning appeal to the Court of Common Pleas (CCP) from City Council, the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) and the Historic Review Commission (HRC). At present, this is not done. With this simple process, the City would become party to the case, and can take whatever position (or none at all) it chooses. This will avoid the situation in which the ZBA rejects a project and the developer and ZBA are the only parties in the appeal process. (Note that only the City, not the ZBA, can appeal an adverse decision of the CCP.)

Educating Planners and the Community

Develop specific guidelines for training and orientation of new Commission and Board members involved in the land use and planning process. Create workshops that explain the

details of the entire planning and regulatory process, provide best practice case studies, and emphasize the importance of community engagement.

Briefing sessions would be more beneficial if they included topics related to the broader context of the neighborhoods for which projects are being proposed, and the strategies associated with the development of Neighborhood Plans.

Workshops and community outreach to neighborhoods can be coordinated and promoted through City Council.

A goal of DCP should be to make citizens aware of the planning and regulatory functions of various city entities, with a dedicated focus on underserved neighborhoods.

An example of expanding community involvement is "Democracy in a Box" along the lines of "Block Watch in a Box" that includes models for community conversations, suggestions for using online tools, and resources that the City can provide. (See notes below.)

Another example includes the idea of "Plan Pittsburgh" a comprehensive planning app for mobile devices that allows everyone to participate in the planning process. Users can find the latest development proposals that interest them, receive push notifications of hearings and community group meetings, and can dig deeper to access information about neighborhood plans and learn about the planning process.

Incubating New Ideas

Sustainable development requires that the process be as inclusive as possible and encourage citizens from all walks of life (not just development professionals) to participate in the betterment of public space.

City planning processes should promote the traditional developer model, but also nurture new models. How can "regular" people become the initiators of projects that positively impact the urban fabric?

The recommendation is to develop an online platform that allows individuals to submit ideas for public improvements that promote development.

One precedent platform that has been successful in London

	<p>is spacehive.com. It is built to function similarly to Kickstarter but is dedicated to the improvement of public spaces. Ideas are submitted by anyone, vetted by the administrator (in this case the DCP), and then the community provides feedback and matching funds over a specified period. Those projects that meet their goals are provided a matching grant and city support. The platform development and support could be a partnership between the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Foundation and other partners.</p>
Is this an immediate or long term recommendation?	<p>Primarily long term in that many of the subsets of the recommendation are infrastructural improvements to the process of project approvals. However, there are many aspects of the recommendation that could be acted on immediately.</p>
How will this address our challenges or reach our goals?	<p>By providing predictability, clarity, transparency and accountability to the development process, the City will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove a barrier of uncertainty that can threaten to slow economic development (if the public engagement process is seen as complex and problematic, then developers could be dissuaded from investing); 2. See better built results that have been positively transformed along the way by constructive public input into the conceptualization of projects; 3. Increase capacity and strengthen lines of communication between City Planning and Pittsburgh's neighborhoods; and 4. Create pathways to citizens to become more engaged in the design of the City.
What are the obstacles to implementation?	<p>Appropriating the City resources required to build the needed capacity for successful implementation will be challenging.</p> <p>The level of civic engagement in some of Pittsburgh's neighborhoods may not meet the levels required for successful implementation.</p>
Who needs to be involved?	<p>The recommendations in this area will require the coordination of the Planning Director working in concert with the Mayor.</p>
What city resources need to be	<p>Development and legal review of recommendations.</p>

invested?	<p>Modifications to existing regulations. Increased capacity at City Planning. Potential for procurement of services Web application development Outreach management</p>
What will be different if the recommendation is adopted?	<p>Development in the City of Pittsburgh will be more sustainable and provide increased and universal economic benefits.</p>
Describe any background materials that you consulted	<p>An example of a Citizen Engagement process adapted from the deliberative process of civic engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Gather</i> a representative sample of the community (include those who self-select to attend as well as others who are reached through various outreach techniques—bring new people into the process). Neighborhood planners assist in this task. <p>At the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. <i>Provide</i> those participating with background materials that present <i>specific issues</i> and <i>detailed options</i> that the project is addressing (the meeting should have the feeling of “a problem to work on” rather than a topic to debate). Background materials can be the same materials that the design team has gathered in the research and analysis phase. Define the outcome of the meeting. 3. <i>Communicate</i> primary site challenges, opportunities, and design framework through a Charrette-style engagement session where designers are present and work from a high level to integrate the design into the local contexts. 4. <i>Break out</i> into <i>small, roundtable groups, with trained moderators</i> to ensure that the discussions stay on topic, that no one individual dominates the conversation and that those who are quiet can be brought into the discussion. 5. <i>Generate</i> questions to ask of the designer and the developer. 6. Fill-out a <i>survey</i> that represents what the people think of the project once they have become informed about it and have discussed it amongst themselves and with experts. <p>After the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. <i>Submit</i> a report to the Planning Department that summarizes the findings of the meeting and outlines the project’s strategies to proactively address its key findings.
Have other cities implemented this recommendation?	Vancouver, London, San Francisco
Are there any other	None

considerations?	
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