MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025
Richland City Hall – Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

Planning Commission Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Roll Call:

Attendance:	Chair Richardson	Present
	Vice-Chair Nicholson	Present
	Member Anderson	Present
	Member Hernandez	Present
	Member Lambert	Present
	Member Leonard	Present
	Member Samuel	Present

Also present were Councilmember VanDyke, Development Services Director Rizzitiello, Planning Manager Stevens, Planner Nelson and Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick.

Approval of Agenda:

VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER HERNANDEZ SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA WITH THE SWITCH OF PUBLIC COMMENT WITH THE PUBLIC HEARING.THE MOTION PASSED 7-0.

Approval of Minutes:

1. Approval of August 27, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, and September 10, 2025, Planning Commission Workshop meeting minutes.

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED, AND COMMISSION MEMBER LAMBERT SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 27, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AND THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES. THE MOTION PASSED 6–0, WITH VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON ABSTAINING.

Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick read the Public Comments procedure.

Public Comments:

None.

<u>New Business:</u>

2. 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Presentation

Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick read the Public Hearing Procedures. Chair Richardson opened the public hearing.

The following individuals provided public comments:

Francesca Maier, a Richland resident and prior Planning Commission Member, recognized the tough job the Commission has tonight on deciding award amounts for CDBG, and thanked applicants for their service.

CDBG/HOME Administrator Lehman provided the Commission with an overview of the 2026 CDBG applications and went over that there is approximately $43,720.00 available for Public Services and $197,750.00 available for Public Facilities/Rehabilitation.

The applications for Public Service total $93,950.00 with 7 applicants. The following representatives gave a presentation outlining their public service project and amount of grant funding requested.

Elijah Family Homes – Program Director Christine Stacy ($10,000) Gave a brief presentation in support of their application for Transition to Success Program and the funds would be used for a Case Manager.

Senior Life Resources – Director of Mid-Columbia Meals on Wheels Brian Kinner ($20,000) Presented on what resources Meals on Wheels currently offers, and due to growth of the community there is increased need for funds as they operate on donations alone.

ARC of Tri-Cities – Co-Executive Director Donna Tracy ($10,450) Spoke in support of the Therapeutic Recreational Services program which provides activities and community engagement opportunities for adults (18 and older) with developmental disabilities who reside within the city of Richland.

Columbia Basin Industries – President and CEO Michael Novakovich ($8,000) for the *Community Center Recreational Scholarships* program spoke in support of their grant request. The funds would help provide recreational opportunities for adults with disabilities residing in the city who may otherwise be unable to afford participation.

Domestic Violence Services of Benton and Franklin Counties – Program Director Shannon Snapp ($20,000) spoke in support of their grant application requesting funds to help support the salary of a bilingual shelter case manager. The position would expand services by assisting with shelter intake and connecting clients to housing, healthcare, legal assistance, and employment resources.

Boys and Girls Club – Chief Development Officer Liz McLaughlin ($13,500) The presenter provided a brief overview of the grant application for the Richland Teen Center at Chief Joseph Middle School, which offers daily after-school and summer programs serving nearly 200 youth. The program focuses on academic success, career exploration, mental health support, and life and workforce readiness.

Support, Advocacy and Resource Center – Executive Director JoDee Garretson ($12,000) The request is to fund a portion of a full-time sexual assault advocate position, ensuring residents have 24/7 access to free, confidential crisis response services and ongoing support.

Committee members took a five-minute break to go through the priority spreadsheet and prepare for rankings.

After the brief break, commission members discussed priorities and provided rankings to CDBG and HOME Administrator Lehman. Following the priority rankings, commissioners debated funding amounts and strategies considering the reduced funding availability. The discussion also included consideration of HOME Grant funds that some applicants may be eligible to apply for.

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER LEONARD SECONDED THE MOTION TO FORWARD THE AMOUNTS AS INDICATED IN THE SPREADSHEET TO CITY COUNCIL AS THE RECOMMENDED DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVAILABLE GRANT FUNDS. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED, AND VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON SECONDED, THAT IF ADDITIONAL FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE, THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF BENTON AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES SHALL RECEIVE THE ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION; AND IF FEWER FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE, REDUCTIONS SHALL BE APPLIED EVENLY ACROSS ALL AGENCIES. THE MOTION CARRIED 7–0.

Each commission member thanked applicants for their time and service to the community

CDBG/HOME Administrator Toni Lehman introduced the Public Facilities/Rehabilitation applications, which totaled $299,200, with $189,450 available for allocation.

Public Works requested $199,200 for architectural barrier removal.

CDBG/HOME Administrator Toni Lehman – CDBG & HOME for Owner Occupied Rehab Program requested $100,000

Following review of applications, commission members asked questions and expressed appreciation for the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program, along with discussion regarding appropriate funding levels.

COMMISSION MEMBER HERNANDEZ MOTIONED AND COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION TO GIVE ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS ($125,000) TO THE CITY OF RICHLAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR OWNER OCCUPIED REHABILITATIONS AND FOR THE REMAINDER TO GO TO THE CITY OF RICHLAND PUBLIC WORKS ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER REMOVAL. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

CHAIR RICHARDSON MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION THAT IF ADDITIONAL FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE, PUBLIC WORKS ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER REMOVAL SHALL RECEIVE THE ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION; AND IF FEWER FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE, REDUCTIONS SHALL BE APPLIED EVENLY ACROSS ALL APPLICANTS. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON MADE A SUBMOTION AND COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL SECONDED THE MOTION THAT IF LESS FUNDS ARE RECEIVED THAT IT WOULD ONLY BE APPLIED TO PUBLIC WORKS ARCHITECTURAL BARRIER REMOVAL PROJECT. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

3. RMC 23:54 Off-Street Parking and Landscaping Discussion

Planning Manager Stevens provided an update on the ongoing discussion regarding Off-Street Parking regulations, previously reviewed at the June Planning Workshop, along with other Boards and Commissions.

The three options to review:

1. Updating parking minimums to meet SB 5184 and abolish parking minimums within the Central Business District (CBD)
2. Modify parking code to comply with SB 5184
3. Abolish parking minimums citywide

Administrative Assistant II Kirkpatrick read the Public Hearing procedure.

The Public Hearing opened at 8:28 p.m. and closed at 8:39 p.m., with community members present.

Randy Slovic, a Richland resident, addressed the committee to share her perspective as a new resident twenty years ago and her immense interest in the city of Richland today, expressing hope that eliminating parking regulations would help the City grow to have more of a downtown area.

Francesca Maier, Richland resident and engineer, highlighted concerns regarding the factual basis of parking rate figures included in the materials. She noted that the City’s outdated parking code continues to present challenges for development. She also encouraged the Commission to consider opportunities to strengthen bicycle-parking provisions if further revisions are made

Kurt Maier provided public comment as a Richland resident, not in his capacity as a City Councilmember, to share that he had been focused on reforming parking regulations even prior to SB 5184 due to the challenges they created for developers. He emphasized that the proposed ordinance does not take parking away but could encourage additional development in the city by removing outdated requirements.

Chair Richardson welcomed Robert Ferrin from Kimley-Horn joining via zoom.

The Commission discussed the consultants' scope, with Mr. Ferrin confirming that the scope of the work and recommendations were based on the Central Business District (CBD) and referenced parking reforms in other communities, including Spokane, WA when looking at a city-wide reform.

Commissioners raised questions regarding where parking would be accommodated if not mandated, the effects of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and increased development of parking supply, and the assumption that parking would be found rather than provided.

Further discussion highlighted potential impacts of the proposed parking requirement changes. Benefits include supporting affordable housing, encouraging efficient land use, promoting walkability and transit use, reducing paved surfaces, and providing developers with greater design flexibility. Potential challenges include increased street parking demand, ADA and senior accessibility concerns, parking spillovers into surrounding areas, need for improvement with current transportation, and the possibility that parking supply may not align with actual demand.

Potential parking management strategies were also considered, including time limits, enforcement, assigned spaces, and other creative approaches to increase availability.

COMMISSION MEMBER SAMUEL MOVED AND COMMISSION MEMBER LAMBERT SECONDED THE MOTION THAT CITY STAFF COME BACK WITH A REVISED ORDINANCE 23.54 THAT IS SPECIFIC TO THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) PARKING REQUIREMENTS AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CONCERNS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS. THOSE IN FAVOR: CHAIR RICHARDSON, COMMISSION MEMBERS HERNANDEZ, LAMBERT, LEONARD AND SAMUEL. THOSE OPPOSED: VICE-CHAIR NICHOLSON AND COMISSION MEMBER ANDERSON

Planning Manager Stevens noted that a revised ordinance could be presented at the combined November/December meeting.

Communication:

Planning Manager Stevens stated that at the next workshop meeting on October 10, 2025, AHBL will provide an update on the Comprehensive Plan and Development Update.

Councilmember VanDyke reported that he attended the exit interview for the state's financial audit for the City of Richland, which the city successfully passed. He also noted the success of the recent Ironman event and expressed appreciation for the hard work of city staff.

Committee Member Samuel discussed the upcoming Board and Committee Recognition Dinner and encouraged members to attend.

Adjournment:

Chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 9:31 P.M.

PREPARED BY: Carly Kirkpatrick
Carly Kirkpatrick, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED BY: ______________________
Jet Richardson, Chair