

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 1, 2025**

**Minutes**

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Monday, December 1, 2025 work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council members present: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Mr. Reiner.

Staff present: Mr. Barker, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Rauch, Mr. Gracia, Ms. Singh, Mr. Bitar, Mr. Will, Mr. Ament, Ms. Hunter.

Also present: Mr. Way and Mr. Alexander, Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission; Martin Zogran and Anthony Polidoro, Sasaki.

**Metro Center Design Guidelines and Zoning Approach**

Mayor Amorose Groomes introduced the discussion topic for the evening and turned the presentation over to Martin Zogran from Sasaki. Mr. Zogran explained that this presentation was a follow-up to work that had been conducted throughout 2023 and 2024, with the team having spent the past six months working with city staff to develop Metro Center Design Guidelines. He reminded Council that two visioning sessions had previously been held where visual examples of architecture, place-making, and landscape were presented to establish a direction for the design guidelines.

Mr. Zogran outlined the purpose of the evening's presentation, which was to build on previous work and discuss the overall approach to the design guidelines. He emphasized the importance of understanding how the City would approve and review projects for Metro Center development in the future, noting the complexity of having both zoning requirements and design guidelines that needed to interface effectively. He stressed that flexibility was key to the approach and explained that the team would present the overall design intent, discuss how the project area would be subdivided into character areas, and review the implementation approach that would bridge design guidelines and zoning requirements.

The presentation agenda included an overview of the process timeline, goals and strategies structured in a clear hierarchy, character areas with their distinct features, and the implementation approach. Mr. Zogran reviewed the process steps, noting that visioning sessions had occurred in April and June, followed by six months of refining design guidelines. He explained that the next steps would include taking guidance from this meeting, continuing to develop the guidelines, and conducting testing with third-party reviewers to ensure feasibility. The goal was to finalize guidelines and draft rezoning for public review and approval in spring 2026.

Mr. Zogran presented the design foundations that had been established based on the visioning sessions, which included:

- ecological urbanism,
- biophilic design,
- cities for people,
- organic versus rational urban design, and



- distinguishing between special and fabric buildings.

He explained that these foundations were based on contemporary theories of good city form and place-making. He emphasized that Metro Center should be distinct from Bridge Park, incorporating human scale, nature, creativity, and flexibility while being less rigid and prescriptive than the Bridge Street design guidelines.

The presentation then moved to discussing the five overarching goals for Metro Center, which are: fostering sense of place and identity, exploring nature-based solutions, designing for people, creating dynamic urban form, and considering flexibility and adaptability. Mr. Zogran explained how each goal would be implemented through specific strategies in three areas: site design, architectural design, and landscape/public realm. He provided examples of how developers could achieve these goals through local materials, social gathering spaces, native plantings, natural materials, and incorporation of art.

Council members provided feedback on the goals and approach. Ms. Kramb suggested strengthening the action verbs in the goals, changing "explore" to "prioritize" and "consider" to "emphasize" or "plan for" to make them more commanding. She also recommended simplifying planning jargon to make the document more accessible to various audiences.

Ms. De Rosa raised a critical concern about the absence of business-focused language in the design guidelines, emphasizing that Metro Center needed to remain an economic driver for the City. She stressed the importance of incorporating language about the future of work and ensuring the guidelines explicitly prioritized business development. She also highlighted the need to address how new development would integrate with existing buildings over the 20-year development timeline, and suggested considering a new name for the area beyond "Metro Center."

Mr. Keeler commended the team for their listening and incorporation of previous feedback, noting that he heard elements like balconies, murals, art, and green roofs that had been discussed in earlier sessions. He supported Ms. De Rosa's points about emphasizing the business aspect and suggested that a slide deck should be developed specifically for pitching the development to potential businesses.

Vice Mayor Alutto expressed support for the structured approach of goals and strategies, agreeing with the need to smooth some of the language and include business references. She emphasized the importance of creating design guidelines that would have longevity over the 20-year development period and praised the nature aspects and interactivity elements of the plan.

Ms. Fox appreciated how the design foundations captured the desired feel for the area but suggested that the foundations should be more explicitly referenced in the goal definitions to ensure developers understood the connection. She recommended being more specific in the definitions to avoid generic interpretations and emphasized the importance of using pictures that truly reflected the unique vision for Metro Center.

Mr. Reiner referenced classic urban planning texts and emphasized the importance of creating subspaces and transition zones throughout the development. He expressed enthusiasm for the water feature design that would extend to Frantz Road, creating a dramatic gateway experience. He strongly advocated for finding a new name for the development, arguing that "Metro Place" did not capture the vision of creating the world's most advanced walkable work-and-live city.

Mayor Amorose Groomes raised important questions about construction costs and feasibility, expressing concern about creating design guidelines that might be too expensive to implement. She emphasized the need to balance aspirational design with market reality, noting that the City would be taking on significant expenses for common grounds and public spaces. She stressed the



importance of creating guidelines that would attract development without requiring excessive variances or negotiations from the dais.

Planning and Zoning Commission Vice Chair Gary Alexander and Chair Kim Way provided additional perspective. Mr. Alexander suggested incorporating sustainable building practices into the strategies and questioned how the board and staff would evaluate projects against these guidelines. Mr. Way emphasized the challenge of translating big ideas into codifiable requirements and expressed interest in seeing how the guidelines would accommodate different scales of development while maintaining quality.

Mr. Polidoro then presented the five character areas that had been developed: Frantz Road Gateway, Waterway Park, Cosgray Run, Highway Corridor, and District Streets. For each area, he explained the thematic elements and design considerations. The Frantz Road Gateway was presented as the front door to the project with gateway features, linear park space, view corridors, and sensitive transitions to existing neighborhoods. The Waterway Park was described as the ecological heart with stormwater systems, natural landscape engagement, and social gathering spaces. Cosgray Run was characterized as a tranquil, passive space for nature walks. The Highway Corridor would serve as a green buffer and western gateway with opportunities for bold architectural presence. District Streets would engage the public realm and reorient buildings to create street-level activity.

Council members responded positively to the character area approach but provided additional feedback. Mr. Reiner praised the design solution of bringing water to Frantz Road, creating a dramatic arrival experience. Ms. Fox appreciated the development of Frantz Road as the front porch to the neighborhood and suggested incorporating more curvilinear architectural elements in the illustrations. She emphasized that Frantz Road had long been a beautiful corridor through Dublin and would now become a park-like jewel.

Vice Mayor Alutto found the character area approach very understandable and appreciated how the design elements created visual impact that would draw people into the development. Ms. De Rosa suggested that one of the character areas should explicitly reference business functions, perhaps as a business hub or business loop. She also emphasized the need for connectivity to the rest of the city through features like the signature trail system and recommended including existing buildings in renderings to show how old and new would coexist.

Ms. Kramb suggested avoiding the word "landmark" due to its specific meaning in historic district guidelines and recommended alternatives to "bold architecture." She questioned whether the thematic buckets for each area were all required or if they were optional components that developers could choose from.

Mr. Keeler emphasized the importance of the Frantz Road area as the catalytic part of development and praised the water feature as superior to Bridge Park. He noted the need for something iconic along the highway corridor to attract attention and suggested engaging the development community for feedback on feasibility. He also reminded everyone of the original vision of 4 to 6 stories along Frantz Road with scaling up from there.

Mr. Way suggested adding another character area for the fine-grained connections between buildings, such as alleys and laneways. He emphasized the importance of the highway corridor as Dublin's image to the world and suggested creating specific view corridors from the highway. He also raised the possibility of allowing greater height and density in this area compared to other parts of Dublin, suggesting that 12 stories might be appropriate in some locations.



The discussion then turned to implementation considerations. Mr. Will outlined the next steps, which included building out the design guidelines, testing them with third parties, working with the commission to ensure the guidelines would support their review process, developing zoning requirements to supplement the design guidelines, and continuing engagement with Metro Center stakeholders and surrounding neighborhoods.

Council members discussed various implementation considerations. Ms. Kramb emphasized the importance of clear public communication about the zoning changes, learning from the Envision Dublin process. Vice Mayor Alutto agreed and stressed the need for early and frequent public engagement using language that would help residents understand the implications.

Ms. De Rosa raised the challenge of how to treat the first developers who choose to build in the area, noting that early developers cannot be held responsible for creating the entire vision. She requested tools and guidance for boards and commissions on how to handle phased development. Ms. Kramb added that the City should consider what incentives might be offered to encourage sustainable building practices and attract the first developers.

Ms. Fox questioned how the new design guidelines would be integrated with existing plans and emphasized the need to ensure the most up-to-date vision was reflected. She suggested identifying low-hanging fruit areas that could attract smaller and mid-sized developers to create organic neighborhood development rather than relying solely on large developers. She stressed that the zoning needed to allow for different sized buildings and uses to create a comprehensive community. Ms. Rauch provided a brief explanation of how these design guidelines work with existing plans.

Mr. Keeler discussed potential incentives such as green roof requirements and parking considerations. He acknowledged the challenge of balancing codification versus flexibility in the guidelines and suggested that developer input would be valuable in finding the right balance. He reiterated that setting standards high would be preferable to setting them too low.

Mr. Reiner raised the issue of ensuring uniform development across the entire project area, expressing concern about piecemeal development that might compromise the overall vision. He suggested establishing an entry fee structure where developers would contribute to the costs of common infrastructure like water features and landscaping, similar to how developers have traditionally paid for traffic improvements.

Mayor Amorose Groomes concluded the discussion by expressing support for the implementation approach while emphasizing the need for clarity on zoning designations. She suggested that height limits might be more practical than story limits, given the complications with floor elevations and ADA requirements. She reiterated the commitment to maintaining 3 to 4 story heights along Frantz Road as promised to residents, with potential for greater heights further back. She stressed the importance of including existing buildings in renderings, varying which buildings are shown as remaining to avoid creating expectations.

Mr. Alexander suggested that landscape design guidelines might need to be more prescriptive than building guidelines since the landscape would serve as the glue holding the development together. Mr. Way reiterated his support for allowing greater density in this area given its strategic location and minimal impact on surrounding areas.

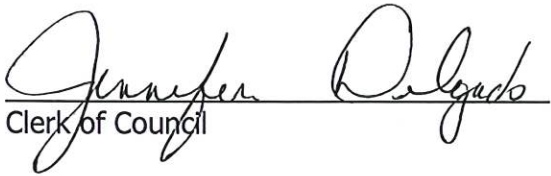
The meeting concluded with staff confirming the next steps of building out guidelines, testing, and continued stakeholder engagement. Mayor Amorose Groomes thanked the presenters for their work and thanked staff for their input.



There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.



Presiding Officer - Mayor



Clerk of Council