

## ***December 14, 2021***

### **REGULAR MEETING** (Convened telephonically, no in person attendance)

Vancouver City Hall - 415 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver WA

### **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The December 14, 2021 meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Ledell.

**Present:** Marjorie Ledell, Zachary Pyle, Jim Atkins, Jack Harroun, Tim Schauer, and Steve Schulte

**Absent:** Larry Blaufus

**Motion** by Schulte, second by Schauer, and carried unanimously, to excuse the absence of Commissioner Blaufus.

## **WORKSHOPS**

### **4:02 P.M. HOUSING CODE CHANGES**

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner; Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner

*Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, introduced the workshop. Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, provided background on the project purpose and goals, work done to-date, and draft proposed new code language for R-17 and R-50 zoning districts, cottage cluster housing, micro-housing, and updates to existing code for accessory dwelling units on properties with historic garages.*

### **Commission Discussion**

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Could the City apply the design guidelines as proposed in the R-17 code to similar proposals for lower density multi-family zones, such as alley loading, and maximum garage width? Staff responded they would follow up and agreed that this likely makes sense to include.
- For the R-50 zone, does the code consider the parking count minimum to include on street parking created by the developer? Staff responded with R-50, that has not been considered yet, and with this zone, the number of on street spots would be much lower as it relates to the number of housing units.
- If a lot is 25 feet wide with a single car garage with a 9 foot wide door, the house would be 15 feet wide, is that allowable? Staff responded that they didn't think the code would limit the garage in that instance but would need to look into it further.

- For alley-loaded products, will the alley be public, or can the square footage of the alley be included in the square footage of the lot with a public easement? Staff responded they haven't gotten into the calculation for the alleyway yet but will consider this.
- Regarding the proposed reduction in required parking spaces for R-50, has the City considered what happens if a family downsizes a unit? Staff responded that this rate would only apply to new developments but agreed it could be a significant change. Staff also noted that with mid-rise apartments, they often generate fewer trips per unit than single family houses. Further, staff underscored that the current proposal only considers reducing parking minimums but does not include maximums, and that individual developments can and do choose to include more parking than required by code in order to serve their target market.
- Does this work correspond with Clark Counties work on housing options? Staff responded the County is at a different stage of the process, and they are developing policy recommendations for their planning commission and council. The City is ahead of this in that strategies have already been developed and we are now at the phase of proposing draft code language for consideration, additional refinement and future adoption.

*Matt Hastie, Angelo Planning Group, who is a consultant to the City on the project, added comments on the parking ratio and addressed some of the driveway questions that came up in the discussion. In the R-17 zone, the minimum lot size is 2,500 square feet, and most lots will be 25 feet wide or wider, which allows for the driveway to be less than 50% of the width of the lot. Staff continued the presentation, covering cottage cluster housing, apartments with shared kitchen and bathroom, adjusting ADU standards, support for aging in place, setbacks for new apartments next to existing homes, and parking reductions near transit.*

### **Commission Discussion**

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Change in codes to allow for 3 and 4 bedroom apartments? Staff responded that is not part of this housing code update but could be addressed in the future.
- Consider shared driveway with a shared attached garage, where narrow lots with a driveway that is along the property line, and the garage is attached? Staff responded they could look into this.
- Request to consider a minimum lot size of 2,000 square feet.
- Request to look further into roof height and slope allowances, to ensure the code language meets the goals of the change and does not unnecessarily restrict desirable housing typologies.
- Funding for the four programs? Staff responded this is related to past activities related to affordable housing projects with the City and does not rely on one specific funding source.
- Micro housing with shared bathrooms and considering less than a 1:1 parking ratio and consider more bike parking and electric bike parking to substitute for car parking. Staff responded they could look at this, and that it is likely appropriate in this instance.
- Setbacks for apartments next to single family housing being dependent on building height. Staff agreed this makes sense and would look into it.
- Parking requirements for apartments that have units with 3 or 4 bedrooms and consider adding spots for buildings that have larger units. Staff responded they would look what is done elsewhere on this. Most zones don't have maximums, and developers can and do build more parking, depending on the product and market.
- Code changes for manufactured housing.

**4:59 P.M. HQ VANCOUVER/FISHERS QUARRY MASTER PLAN**

Keith Jones, Senior Planner

*Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, introduced the workshop, focusing on the changes to the proposal since the last meeting. Keith Jones, Senior Planner, provide an overview of the plan concepts and objectives, the scope of the work, and the master plan approval process. For Lot 30, the applicant modified the proposal based on staff and community feedback, to be a 12 lot single family subdivision with a buffer from the existing residences, and a trail to a viewpoint, to be connected down to the main area of the quarry. The presentation covered the applicant's requests for text changes related to allowed industrial service uses, extended office, and manufacturing. Staff provided answers to questions from the Planning Commissioners asked at the last meeting.*

*Ryan Hurley, Hurley Development, presented on the economic impacts of the project, fiscal impacts, the proposed trail on the site, dog park, bridges over the dry riverbed, a pond setting, amphitheater, gondola, and renderings of the proposed buildings. On affordability, the applicant is planning for a minimum of 10% of units to be affordable based on state and code requirements. On sustainability, the applicant is committed to carbon neutrality across the campus. The applicant described the concept of a smart city and the goals for this development including parking, facility management, signage, security access, and energy and sustainability. He noted "HQ" stands for headquarters. On reclamation, the applicant is working with the Cadman Group, the previous owner, to modify the reclamation plan and work with the Department of Natural Resources, to keep the cliff wall exposed and fill the quarry to the planned level.*

**Commission Discussion**

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Support for single family sites in Lot 30, and open to smaller lots that would be more consistent with neighboring lots.
- Concern with compliance and consistency with the subarea plan. Staff responded this is a legislative process, with an ordinance that will be produced. If the Planning Commission feels strongly, they can recommend that staff amend the subarea plan to reflect changes but noted that the RGX zone allows single family development in some areas already. The code doesn't currently allow this use in Fishers Quarry, but staff indicated they believe a code change to facilitate this still maintains consistency with the overall vision and intent of the subarea plan.
- Support for keeping the rock wall exposed.
- Subdivision with the master plan, vesting that could occur with the subdivision. Ryan Lopossa, Public Works Streets and Transportation Division Manager, responded that there is not currently a plan to have vested trips as part of the master plan and would be dealt with as each site plan is submitted.
- On calls for a larger park area, comment that this should be consistent with or greater than what the subarea plan requires.
- Suggestion to allow some uses for items staff is currently proposing to prohibit or only allow through a conditional uses process.
- Traffic considerations in the NE 192<sup>nd</sup> corridor and how proposed new intersections and traffic volumes will impact traffic movements and access to SR-14. Ryan Lopossa affirmed that this area is getting busier from a traffic standpoint and noted that several future projects have been identified and are in process to address those changes. Staff are working with WSDOT to add signals at the Hwy 14 interchange on the westbound off ramps to regulate vehicle volumes

entering the highway. Another project at 192<sup>nd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Street will convert the intersection to concrete to facilitate the future vehicle volumes that are anticipated to travel through the intersection. In addition to identified projects, staff are working with HQ team to refine their traffic study, including updates to the study's underlying assumptions and an updated analysis to intersections with 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Staff confirmed that they are analyzing this project in conjunction with other larger projects in the area - the Vancouver Innovation Center and future development in Section 30) - to ensure a holistic understanding of impacts and needed mitigations to the overall transportation system.

- On housing affordability, the area median income (AMI) for Portland is \$95,000, and \$64,000 in Vancouver. The Commission would like income thresholds for this project to be Vancouver specific rather than regional when considering affordability and suggest passing this issue on to City Council. Staff responded that they would consult with legal regarding this topic as well as economic development and would include this recommendation in information delivered to City Council for this project.
- Concern with lighting and glare on the rock wall, for those driving on Hwy 14. Ryan Lopossa responded they expect to see LED lighting on the installations, and those lights tend to direct light downward, rather than towards the roads.
- Applicant interactions with C-Tran, including a hub for transit in the plan. Staff indicated that they are coordinating with C-Tran on this project and noted that C-TRAN is the transit operator and determines future transit investment through their Transit Development Plan (TDP).
- On Footnote 41, a question of whether there is a conditional use for any other item that was similar but not within the plan goals.

## **COMMUNITY FORUM**

Jayne Haygood was present to provide comments on the HQ Development and is a homeowner in the adjacent neighborhood. She expressed a few concerns, including the number of residential units planned, consistency with the subarea plan, the amount of park space for residents, the design layout of residences and privacy within the units, the plan and purpose of the gondola, drainage and flooding, traffic on 192<sup>nd</sup>, and proposed building heights.

Audra Houston was present to comment on the reappointment of Commissioner Schauer. She expressed concerns with the VIC project, consistency with city code, zoning ordinances, planning processes, environmental notices, and public notice processes.

Teresa Hardy was present to comment on the effects of land use and development on forests in Washington and the number of forested acres preserved and removed on the VIC site.

Andrew Houston was present to provide comments on housing developments in Vancouver. The new developments near his neighborhood have smaller lot sizes and trees were removed as part of the development process. The new developments are doing little to address the housing affordability crisis in the City.

Meridian Green was present to comment on the VIC forested area and expressed concern for the loss of wooded areas. She noted there is a need for natural infrastructure and asked how the value of the forested area was assessed with this development. She urged the Commissioners to consider the natural infrastructure when reviewing proposals.

Glen Yung was present to provide comments on home values in Vancouver, which have gone up 53% in three years in his neighborhood. The impacts of this change affect the affordability of the area and opportunities for first time homeowners. He was in support of more discussions on housing options for the City.

## **HEARING**

### **6:54 P.M. BASEMENT STORAGE**

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner

*Rebecca Kennedy introduced the hearing for Basement Storage. Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, provided the background context for this change, the outreach process and the response to issues raised, the proposed updated code language, the staff analysis of the proposed change, and a staff recommendation.*

*Randy Printz, the applicant, was present to provide further context and support for the requested changes.*

#### **Public Testimony**

No members of the public registered to speak during the public testimony portion of the meeting.

#### *Commission Discussion and Deliberation*

The Commission asked a question on the following topic, and staff provided the following response:

- The definition of basement as two feet above ground level. Staff responded this was in response to concerns raised at the last workshop regarding flexibility of the definition, and is less than six feet, which may allow for a more active viable use other than storage.

**Motion**, by Pyle, seconded by Harroun, and passed unanimously to forward to City Council a recommendation to adopt the code text changes as outlined in the staff report and the presentation, to allow self-storage in basements in the CX zone on a limited basis.

#### **Roll Call Vote**

Tim Schauer	Yes
Jim Atkins	Absent
Jack Harroun	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

### **7:09 P.M. EVERGREEN & GRAND COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS STRATEGY**

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner; Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner

*Rebecca Kennedy introduced the hearing item with an overview of the process to date. Post adoption of this strategy by City Council, staff will initiate a separate process to implement the strategy recommendations through updated code language, which will require additional Commission and Council review. Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, provided an overview of the process to date, outreach and*

*community input, the vision and goals of the proposed strategy, and transit and residential uses on the corridor. The strategy document includes recommendations on mixed use buildings, building heights, parking, active edge for street front activity, and other implementation considerations and next steps, including regulatory updates, programmatic investments, and transportation improvements.*

### **Public Testimony**

Frank Stock, WDC Construction, was present to provide comments on the Commercial Corridors Strategy. He stated his company has worked in Vancouver for about 7 years, with 10 successful projects, and over 300 multi-family residential units. They are interested in developing the Crosley Lanes bowling alley site. He has concerns regarding the viability of the project based on the building height restrictions and parking. In order to meet the parking standard, the building would need to have five floors, between 55' and 65'. The site is large enough and they are ready to develop the site, but it is not feasible without the fifth floor. He was looking for advice from the Commission on staff if it's possible for the development to have five floors of residential units and meet the strategy recommendations.

Gene Bolante represents the design firm that is currently working on a development project for the bowling alley site. He was present to request more information on the building heights and recommended height maximums of 5 stories or 60' be allowed at the site.

### *Commission Discussion and Deliberation*

The Commission asked questions on the following topics, and staff provided the following responses:

- Questions about the purpose of the strategy, and if it is binding on the Commission when the code review happens. Staff responded it is guidance, it is not binding in the sense of a legal document. It is reviewed and adopted, and states what is intended. It is not as in depth as something like a new zoning district. When adopting future standards there is leeway in the development of implementing regulations but generally these should follow guidance in the strategy document.
- Do we need to address the building heights within the strategy document? Staff responded that building heights and parking ratios are included here because there was interest by the public in understanding in more detail how subsequent code work will address this topic. Staff noted that if the Planning Commission wanted to recommend a change to something within the strategy, including to recommended building heights, it would be helpful to the Council to do that now.
- On building heights, was 50' a specific calculated height that staff came up with for a specific reason? Staff responded that the current allowance is 50' in the general commercial zone. In staff's view, the most appropriate location for increased building heights is near the BRT hub, where the draft strategy proposes to allow up to 60'. There are other locations within the study area where staff believe it makes sense to recommend a lower number, such as 3 stories. In still other areas, it made sense to keep the existing standard. Don Arambula, from Crandall Arambula Architects, a consultant on this project, responded to the heights question, noting that they considered and discussed a step back, where 40' height is adjacent to residential, and 60' an appropriate distance from the residential areas. Staff also noted that City Council takes formal action, and the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to Council. The public can engage with Council with this project. This document is guidance and code development will follow this process.
- Maintaining commercial and active engagement at the street level, with strong design standards, particularly at the anchor sites.

- The focus of the Evergreen corridor is primary residential with some commercial, and a 0' to 5' step back is more common with commercial. A larger setback in residential areas might be more appropriate.
- General support for the recommendations included in the existing draft strategy document, but an allowance that a up towards the center of the site might be appropriate.
- Washington School for the Deaf was absent from the mapping, was there discussion with the school to be part of the improvements? Staff responded they have had consistent communication with the school through the strategy planning process, and they declined to be included in study area, noting they have already identified a redevelopment plan for their site. The School for the Deaf generally supports recommendations for transportation improvements identified in the strategy that are recommended for their property frontage.
- Traffic mitigation and signage around the school. Staff responded that was the strategy includes transportation improvements outside the strategy study area that are specifically designed to enhance safe access to the school.
- 20-minute neighborhoods, complete streets, and design standards working together in this and other projects. Staff responded the 20-minute neighborhood concept is to integrate land use with safe transportation access for a variety of modes, where people can walk, bike or take transit to access services and amenities including entertainment, shopping, and open space. This plan incorporates complete streets and works to enhance a complete neighborhood. The plan recommends specific land use and programmatic investments, as well as transportation improvements and a new street section for Grand Blvd, which is being developed as part of the Transportation System Plan, called Vancouver Moves, that is currently underway. All transportation investments within the study area are subject to the City's Complete Streets Policy, and the strategy broadly incorporates complete neighborhood standards with complete street design.
- Will the strategy document be used to apply for grants to help propel the area, and are there items in the document to guide staff from a public improvement standpoint? Staff responded it could be used for applications as it displays the planning intent for the area. Aspects of the document and input received could help staff to prioritize the work.

**Motion**, by Schauer, seconded by Pyle, and passed unanimously to forward to City Council a recommendation to adopt the proposed Evergreen and Grand Commercial Corridors Strategy, based on findings and recommendation contained in the staff report and the Commission deliberation at the December 14 Public Haring as sufficient guidance for future code implementation.

**Roll Call Vote**

Tim Schauer	Yes
Jack Harroun	Yes
Steve Schulte	Yes
Zach Pyle	Yes
Marjorie Ledell	Yes

**COMMISSIONER RECOGNITIONS**

In closing, Chair Ledell highlighted the Commissions accomplishments in 2021, including new Heights District development standards, the Vancouver Innovation Center project, the HP Section 30 Master Plan, numerous rezones, human services, and park impact fees. Rebecca Kennedy expressed her appreciation

to the Commissioners, especially outgoing Commissioner Atkins, who served for four years. The Chair and the Commissioners present recognized Commissioner Atkins service to the Commission, as well as the Staff and the Chair.

**ADJOURNMENT 8:16 PM**

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Marjorie Ledell, Chair

To request other formats, contact Julie Nischik, Community and Economic Development Department | 360-487-7813.  
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