

**Planning Commission Meeting
Springwater Trail Conference Room
Gresham City Hall
November 28, 2016 - 6:30 p.m.**

I. Opening/Citizen Comments

A regular session of the Gresham Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Stephen Butler on the 28th of November 2016, at 6:30 PM in the Springwater Trail Conference Room at Gresham City Hall located at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham Oregon. Minutes were prepared by Tammy Richardson.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Richard Anderson
Stephen Butler, Chair
Hermann Colas, Jr.
Paul Drechsler
Jef Kaiser, Vice-Chair
Laura Pramuk
Sue Ruonala
Phil Wich

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: David Berniker, Urban Design & Planning Director
Ann Pytynia, Urban Design & Planning

COUNCIL LIAISONS PRESENT: Councilor French

II. General Comment Period

Comments submitted by John Bildsoe, NW Neighborhood Association Land Use Chair, regarding the Bella Vista Street Vacations asking about status of the project. This request will be given to the staff person in Urban Design & Planning leading the City Council-initiated application.

III. Work Sessions

Development Code Improvement Project-9B (DCIP-9B)

Ann Pytynia, Principal Urban Planner, gave an overview of the DCIP-9 Part B project. This project is on the 2016 Council Work Plan. DCIP-9B is designed to make the Development Code clearer and more consistent, and is primarily focused on Design Standards and Guidelines. She noted that there was a stakeholders meeting on November 14 and a community forum on November 15. There were no attendees at the community forum. The Design Commission provided input to staff on this project at their November 2nd meeting.

Ms. Pytynia led the discussion on the issues contained in the DCIP-9B project and staff's identified preferred alternative for each issue. Actual code language proposals will be developed in spring of 2017.

Design Review Categories

Ann said the five design review categories are currently described in narrative form and are difficult to understand. Staff is recommending conversion of the narrative to a table format.

The Commission felt this was a good approach.

Modification of Design Standards

Ann said there is no mechanism to review a modification to a DR-E, highest level of design review, after it has been approved by the Design Commission. The dilemma is that once the project is in the building permit review, if there are minor changes to the design, at what point is it significant enough to take back to the Design Commission. Staff presented to the Design Commission, and the Design Commission concurred, that changes which do not result in changes to compliance with standards, guidelines or conditions can be handled by the building permit process. The Design Commission recommended that multiple small changes not be allowed to change the project in a major way. Changes to specific discretionary design features would need to go back to the Design Commission. Ms. Pytynia said staff is still looking at what type of process that should be and will be developing more information on this as the project proceeds into the next stage.

The Commission had no concerns or questions at this time.

Downtown Street Types

Ms. Pytynia said there are no standards for Downtown streets that are not specifically classified as one of the Downtown street types. Staff is suggesting that unclassified streets be listed as required to meet Urban Residential standards. This will result in reasonable and appropriate standards for streets not having the same pedestrian and vehicular traffic found in other areas of the Downtown. It was determined that these streets should have some standards since they are lower pedestrian traffic streets. Staff looked at Urban Residential and Urban Commercial street standards and determined Urban Residential was better and more appropriate for a lower traffic

street. The main difference is that Urban Residential streets have a narrower sidewalk width and a different setback. Ms. Pytynia said this approach was supported by the Design Commission.

A question was asked about the different streets and if they are affected by zoning.

Ms. Pytynia said there is a map in the Code that has all the streets outlined by type and each has specific design standards, but there are some streets in the Downtown that the Code is silent on; they are actually street types, not dictated by zoning district.

Screening of Ground Level Mechanical Equipment

Staff found that except for vegetative screening in the Downtown, there are no specific standards for the screening of ground level mechanical equipment anywhere in the design standards. It is recommended that specific standards for screening ground level mechanical equipment be developed in all districts for fencing, walls, and specific landscaping standards such as spacing and height limits.

There was some discussion about color standards, but it is difficult to regulate color.

The Commission thought this was a good approach.

Downtown Public Open Spaces

Ms. Pytynia noted that the guidelines and standards regarding public open space in the downtown are unclear. Staff is recommending that a sentence be added to the standards that requires all sites of 40,000 square feet or greater must supply public open space. This will ensure that moderate to large sites will provide this amenity.

It was noted that in the paragraph above in that part of the code shows 20,000 square feet; how was 40,000 square feet decided.

Ms. Pytynia said she believes 40,000 square feet is referenced someplace else in the code. The problem is that the Code says “for sites of 20,000 square feet that are *proposing* public open space”. It does not require it. She is not sure where the other reference to 40,000 square feet is but that is how staff came up with the number.

A question was asked about maintenance of these public open spaces and if it will be clear as to who is responsible for on-going maintenance.

Ann Pytynia said if it is on private property the property owner will be responsible. If there is something in the right of way, it will be the City’s responsibility.

Chair Butler asked if there is a way to guarantee that maintenance is provided since the public will be allowed to use the open space on private property, and ensure that it is usable.

David Berniker responded that he will have to go back and check on it, but his guess is that a lot of time planting materials come with a certain amount of time that they need to be established, and if they don’t, the onus is on the developer to put that in.

Ann Pytynia said she believes it is two years.

Mr. Berniker stated that landscaping and other amenities cannot just be planted and then let go. He will get back to the Commission with a code reference.

Sustainable Design

Ms. Pytynia said the Code includes good sustainable design standards already, but they don't currently allow for an option to propose edible landscaping. A good option that serves a dual purpose and promotes sustainability is to allow an option for a set percentage of all landscaped area to be planted in edible perennial landscaping. Ms. Pytynia said staff is continuing to research what the standard should be and will be brought back to the Planning Commission when reviewing draft code.

It was asked what the purpose of is for edible landscaping.

Ann replied that it would allow for an option, but would not be required. Some of staff felt it should be an option because it serves a dual purpose. It is not listed as an option now.

Multi-Family Bike Parking

Currently in the Development Code, multi-family units are required to have sheltered bike parking but it is not clear how this is to function in individual units. Ann said staff would propose allowing bike parking in individual units if there is a designated storage space in shared hallways, covered entries, or in separate common storage areas. This would allow for alternatives to storing bikes in the living areas, but it would not be disallowed. However, the storage of bikes in living areas does not count toward the required bicycle parking spaces.

Commissioner Anderson asked how they keep hallways and entryways clear. Ms. Pytynia said it would need to be clear that there is a necessary amount of clearance and that would be included as part of design review and building permit review, including a site inspection.

Pedestrian Connections: Multi-Family

Ms. Pytynia said it is really unclear in the Development Code how pedestrian connections between street and ground floor units should be addressed when there are common entries. To clarify this, and consistent with what the Design Commission has done in the past, staff recommends that multi-family units on the ground floor must have individual walkways between The unit and the street, but would also allow for shared walkways between the street and shared entries of multi-family building when they provide an entrance to the upper-story units.

Ann said at the Design Commission there was a consideration about having a lot of little sidewalks all in a row that might take away from the landscaping. She said staff will be looking at mechanisms for how those walkways may be combined so that maximum landscaping is still preserved.

The Commission agreed with this concept.

Building Facades

Ms. Pytynia reviewed the list of minor items that lack clarity and consistency in certain Design Standards. The Design Commission was supportive of the changes but asked staff to do a little more research on some items. Staff will be doing that between now and the draft code review for this project.

Commissioner Anderson asked about the use of thin brick versus standard-sized brick.

Mr. Berniker said the problems with thin brick, even though it is a masonry product, is more like tile. One of the problems is how it gets applied to the building. It is so linear that it tends not to look like real brick, and that's compounded by the fact that due to its thinness, the joints also do not look like brick. It can end up looking like wall paper and if done poorly, it's bad. An application came in proposing the use of thin brick, and they proved it could be done with their application. However, it is not a standard material.

Ms. Pytynia said someone can still propose using thin brick under the discretionary guidelines and standards, but it is not a standard material.

Mr. Berniker said the intent is to put a reasonable cap on certain materials to get good quality and attractive buildings. It is also intended to simplify the palette and an applicant can always go discretionary and go a different direction.

Ann said with the last change with the code that allows an applicant to go with staff level review when they meet all the standards, they would meet that high-level bar. The use of discretionary items will still require a hearing.

The Commission felt these were good issues to further explore.

Photographs

Ann Pytynia noted that each Design District in the Development Code has numerous photographs. Although most are helpful, there are some that could be altered, captions clarified, or even deleted. These will be evaluated during this project review.

Typographical Errors

There are a few typographical errors that have been identified in the Design Codes. Most are mis-references or mistakes in formatting. Staff will be compiling a complete list before developing the draft code.

Ann Pytynia said there are two issues that are not design related that need to have revisions. The first is regarding plat and other types of vacations that affect property ownership. She said the code does not address coordination with the County Tax Office for these applications. Staff recommendation is to include the Multnomah County Tax Assessors office as a reviewing agency, and also including a condition of approval that back taxes would need to be paid if they are delinquent when they go through a development Permit. She noted that the language needs

to be refined a bit after discussing it with the City Attorney's office, because the burden is more on the City than the County Tax office. They will be a reviewing agency, but it needs to be clear that the City is doing the bulk of the work on this.

Commissioner Ruonala asked about a subdivision that was recently vacated and the property taxes were owed on each lot. She thought the taxes went away when the subdivision was vacated except for the main property.

Ann said she doesn't know a degree of detail about it, but will take an additional look at the entire issue.

Commissioner Ruonala said she feels it is important to get on board with the Multnomah County Tax office.

Commissioner Anderson said that designation of right of way is another issue that has come up with vacations.

Commissioner Ruonala said the was the same subdivision vacation – Terry Hill Estates.

Ann said staff will be coordinating closely with Legal on this issue.

Ms. Pytynia said the second issue is the timing for sending DLCD/Metro notice. Metro and DLCD require a 35-day notice prior to the first hearing on Comp Plan Amendments but the City's Development Code still requires 45. The change is being made to be consistent with the requirements of DLCD and Metro.

The Planning Commission thanked Ms. Pytynia and staff for the work on this project.

IV. Other Business/Adjournment

September 26, 2016 Planning Commission Minutes

Motion to approve. Seconded. Motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Colas abstaining due to his absence from that meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Chairperson

Recording Assistant

Date

Date