



Where Life is Sweet

Members of the Planning Commission
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of November 9, 2022

Title/Subject

Work session to discuss alternative planned unit development incentives

Summary and Background

Recent changes to state law and local development trends have raised community concerns about future residential development creating significant internal congestion and lowering the overall desirability of Hermiston for future growth. Hermiston is thus forced into a difficult position where compliance with state housing goals is required, but is also wishing to develop housing which exceeds the minimum standards possible in state law.

There are three key changes to state housing requirements which have substantially altered Hermiston's code.

1. Permitting of accessory dwellings on all single-family lots, while simultaneously prohibiting the requirement to provide off-street parking for accessory dwellings.
2. Changing single-family zoning to allow two-family dwellings in all zones.
3. Reduction in off-street parking standards to a maximum of one space per unit for two-family dwellings.

Under Oregon law, the city must establish these requirements as minimum standards. Any developer may choose to develop to the minimum standard. This type of development must be implemented by the city using the "clear and objective" development path. Clear and objective housing policy undergirds all development of what is known in Oregon as "needed housing." Needed housing is essentially single-family, two-family, multi-family, accessory dwellings, and manufactured home parks. It can also be called workforce housing. The concept underlying needed housing and clear and objective standards is that when a builder submits a housing application which satisfies the clear and objective standards (meets setbacks, meets lot coverage, meets building height), the city shall issue a permit.

Thus, when the city wishes to encourage certain development factors, such as maintaining a higher off-street parking ratio, this encouragement must be placed within a voluntary development track. The purpose of this work session is to brainstorm and discuss what types of development options can be created which create a voluntary development path which is more attractive than following the clear and objective minimum path. In other words, are there

incentives which would make it more attractive to voluntarily build a higher standard of development?

A variety of factors motivate developers, but all share one thing in common, the development must be profitable. Attached to this memo are a few concept drawings drawn by staff which increase the density of development and decrease lot size while simultaneously providing more parking. The parking increase is not overwhelming, but does allow the city to require three, four, or more spaces while trading lot coverage and lot size. In order to achieve this in some designs, street access must be sacrificed. In another, the lot width is reduced, but the dwelling is shifted to a zero lot line configuration to require a half or even full lot depth driveway.

These are concepts only; their practicality may be questionable in the real world. For example, a zero lot line dwelling needs to be constructed with a two-hour fire wall on the abutting wall and thus, no windows would be permissible on that wall of the dwelling. That may make it essentially an unsellable house.

This is intended as a brain storming work session. Are there designs that have merit? Is a return to alleys and rear parking a possibility? Is a reduction in lot size below that allowed in the zone, but requiring common overflow parking an option? The discussion should be exciting and edifying.

Tie-In to Council Goals

N/A

Fiscal Information

N/A

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

N/A

Recommended Action/Motion

N/A

Submitted By:

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