



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

4:00 PM February 23, 2022
2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

1. ROLL CALL

Council Members: Kyle Strengholt, Brent Lenssen, Gary Bode
Staff: Dave Timmer, Heidi Gudde, John Williams

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Community Development Committee Meeting Minutes of 1/19/22

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Mixed-Use Zoning Code Amendment

Review of Survey Results. Committee and staff reviewed the survey results and conclusions from an online stakeholder survey conducted after the last CDC meeting. Many of the respondents own commercial property or manage rentals within the City. The Committee discussed the survey conclusions which generally indicated strong support of medium to high density housing near existing commercial centers. Results suggested that these sites be maximized with housing units with few commercial requirements or reservations of open / recreational space. The Committee, while interested in the survey results, noted that most respondents stand to profit from higher densities and fewer design requirements. Council members indicated support for on-site amenities enhance the quality of life within the multi-family developments. Noted that in today's housing market renters may include young families that are not able to purchase due to property costs. This creates a wider demographic of renters within multi-family housing developments.

Parcel by Parcel Review. Gudde presented maps which she had created to generally illustrated which properties would become eligible for the mixed-use overlay under the current proposal. Gudde explained that the proposed criterion for eligibility is: properties that have a CSL or CSR zoning, are within ¼ mile of an existing qualifying commercial center, and are at least 1 acre in size (or 1 acre of common ownership).

The Committee also reviewed which parcels would be candidates for transitioning to residential land uses. Some areas that would transition to residential land uses would become legal non-conforming because of the way the building was constructed or because businesses already exist on the property.

The group discussed the potential need for buffers between industrial and these mixed-use properties. The group also discussed the criteria associated with mixed-use eligibility and what constitutes a “qualifying commercial center”. Drafted criteria include centers which have a minimum of 30,000 sf of commercial space and at least 8 commercial entities which are open to the public.

West Lynden annexation area was reviewed as well. Proposed changes here would be established through an amendment to the Future Land Use Map in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The Committee indicated support for a proposed shift of planned commercial area south of Birch Bay Lynden Road to transition to industrial and residential land uses which are in higher demand. The Committee also agreed with staff’s suggestion that the future residential areas come into the City with a lower housing density if the mixed-use ordinance is passed that allows for high density housing near commercial centers (as presented). The Committee speculated that additional support for the annexation could be garnered if properties were shifted away from the commercial land use designation. Generally, if capacity for multi-family housing is increased around commercial centers, the City may want to focus on single-family housing in other residential areas of the City to maintain the goal of providing opportunities for single-family housing.

Review of Design Standards and Potential Required Components. The group discussed some of the design requirements presented at the last CDC meeting including the division of mixed-use site and designated uses. The flex space requirement which is designed for pedestrian use but also holds area in reserve for future commercial. Also, the required open space and multi-family amenities.

The Committee agreed that mixed use developments should be required to provide usable recreational space for residents. Inaccessible critical areas (steep slopes, wetlands, etc) cannot be used to meet this requirement but could potentially reduce the required amount of recreational open space. The group also discussed the potential of reducing an open space requirement if the property was located near a public park. Noting, too, that many of the proposed eligible properties are not near public parks.

Conclusions:

- Staff will continue to draft the mixed-use overlay code consistent with the concepts presented so far.

- Staff will consider adjacent land uses, buffering, and how some of our larger ag-equipment commercial properties could be impacted. Also, considering what merit there is in preserving retail opportunities west of the Guide.
- Consider shifting the criteria associated with “qualifying commercial centers” so that the Fair Square would also be included.
- Committee is interested in adding open space requirement to multi-family developments (those not using the mixed use overlay) especially when they are not located within walking distance of a park (an RM-3 example was used) so that resident amenities such as playgrounds are provided.
- A City-lead Comp Plan Amendment will be done by the Planning Department which will collect the parcels that are shifting land uses and amendments to the future land use map for areas within the City’s UGA.
- Consider implications related to the potential conversion of commercial centers to residential uses.
- Staff will continue to move this amendment forward. Planned workshop with the Planning Commission on March 24.
- CDC will see the amendment again on the March 23rd CDC meeting.

b. Parking Code Amendment

Timmer reviewed the status of the parking code amendments which he has been working on at the CDC’s request. Proposed amendments were summarized in the meeting’s executive summary. It was noted that much of the code has been revised to be more concise and user-friendly. Changes generally remove some opportunities for parking reductions. The amendment proposes to reduce the size of a parking stall from 21 feet in length to 19 feet in length.

The Committee was supported of the proposed changes. Discussed, specifically, the change to the parking requirements north of the HBD along the Grover Street frontage. This area would benefit from reduced parking requirements as many of the structures are existing and redevelopment is difficult without the opportunity to add on-site parking.

Conclusions:

- Staff will continue to move this amendment forward. Planned workshop with the Planning Commission on March 24.
- CDC will see the amendment again on the March 23rd CDC meeting.

c. Planned Residential Development Code regarding CCR Approval (LMC 19.29.130)

Gudde introduced this topic. It relates the City's existing code on approving CCRs of new PRDs as well as a requirement to review amendments to CCRs. Legal counsel and staff are proposing that, upon formation of a PRD, staff should have an opportunity to comment on CCRs to ensure consistency with the approved PRD and City code however, that the City abstain from approving CCRs. Staff proposed that subsequent amendments to CCRs not be reviewed by the City. The City does not enforce private CCRs and has no effective means of monitoring when CCRs might be amended. Additionally, Gudde noted, it is important to consider why the City would be reviewing CCRs – simply for consistency with development standards and not in relation to voting structure, assessments, or any other private management issues.

Committee indicated support for the amendment. Staff noted that although other sections of the PRD code could benefit from an update, at this time, staff capacity limits the amendment to just this section.

Conclusions:

- Staff will continue to move this amendment forward.

Next Meeting Date: March 23, 2022