



City of Stevenson

Planning Department

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TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ben Shumaker
DATE: December 13th, 2021
SUBJECT: Zoning Code Amendment – SR District Setback Caveats

Introduction

The City has received an application to amend the text of the Zoning Code (Attachment 1). The proposal addresses the rear and side yard setback requirements of the SR Suburban Residential District (Attachment 2). The proposal was introduced to the Planning Commission at its October 11th, 2021 regular meeting, where public involvement expectations were established (Attachment 3).

This memo introduces the requested amendment, the public comments received on the proposal, and allows the Planning Commission to continue evaluating the proposal. A Decision Tree for action involves:

- Decision Point #1 – Are refinements to the proposal necessary?
 - Decision Point #2 – If refinements are necessary, should the Planning Commission continue evaluating the proposal submitted?
 - Decision #3 – If refinements are necessary and the Planning Commission continues evaluating the proposal, what methods of Public Involvement are appropriate for the refined proposal?
 - Decision #4 – If refinements are necessary and the Planning Commission continues evaluating the proposal, who is responsible for undertaking the Public Involvement methods selected?
 - Decision #5 – If refinements are unnecessary, does the Planning Commission recommend City Council adoption of the proposal?
 - Decision #6 – If refinements are unnecessary and the Planning Commission recommends adoption, what methods of Public Involvement are appropriate to check-in with the public on the proposal?
 - Decision #7 – If refinements are unnecessary and the Planning Commission recommends adoption, who is responsible for the Check-in methods selected?

This decision tree is incomplete and does not contemplate all potential courses of action. Refer to the attached project-specific flow chart for conscientious public involvement.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment would modify SMC Table 17.15.060-1 Residential Dimensional Standards. The current text of the table is included below. The SR Suburban Residential District is largely located on the west side of Rock Creek where the recent Angel Heights and Hidden Ridge subdivisions have been constructed. Additional parcels carry this designation on the east side of Rock Creek. These parcels are located on the periphery of city limits and at higher elevations where water service is difficult.

District	Maximum Height of Building	Minimum Setbacks				
		Front	Side, Interior	Side, Street	Rear, Interior Lot	Rear, Through Lot
R1	35 ft	20 ft	5 ft	15 ft	20 ft ¹	20 ft
R2	35 ft	20 ft	5 ft	15 ft	20 ft ¹	20 ft
R3	35 ft	10 ft ^{3,4}	5 ft ²	15 ft	20 ft ¹	20 ft
MHR	35 ft	30 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft ¹	20 ft
SR	35 ft	30 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft

1-5ft for residential outbuildings that are both 12 ft in height or less and 200 sq ft in size or less
2-A 10-foot setback is required when adjacent to an R1 or R2 district.
3-See also SMC 17.15.130.B.3.
4-However, no structure shall be located within a pedestrian visibility area (SMC 17.10.632).

The darkest shaded cells of the table show where the changes are being requested. The lighter shading provides context within and between zones. The proposal would apply Note 1 to the Minimum Interior Site Setback and the Minimum Interior Lot Rear Yard Setback.

Conscientious Public Involvement

To ensure any proposed changes to the Zoning Code incorporate public input and occur within a manageable timeline, the Planning Commission’s bylaws include expectations for public involvement. On October 11th, the Planning Commission chose to 1) hold a public hearing on the proposal, 2) provide a press release about the proposal, and 3) mail a flyer to each property owner within and adjacent to the SR District. Tonight’s public hearing was advertised in the December 1st and 8th. printings of the *Skamania County Pioneer*. A “news in brief” about the discussion appeared in its December 1st printing. A flyer was mailed on December 1st. The text of the flyer was vague, based on an example from the bylaws and was printed on bright green paper stuffed into an white envelope.

Several recipients of the letter contacted City Hall via phone or email to inquire about the proposal. One provided written support. An additional written comment was supplied by a co-applicant for the request, clarifying current residency within the affected district (Attachment 4).

Comprehensive Plan Context

Guidance and guardrails relating to the review of this change are present in the Comprehensive Plan. An incomplete selection of relevant components:

Community & Schools

- 1.2 Provide opportunities for citizens to participate and express their views to City officials.
 - 1.2-1 Solicit and use citizen knowledge and ideas in the development of City policies, goals, and objectives.
- 1.17 Provide a clean, visually attractive community.

Urban Development

- 2.1 Protect the natural and scenic qualities of the area by regulating land use and carefully managing urban change.
- 2.4 Establish landscaping standards and guidelines.
 - 2.4-2 Consider developing landscaping guidelines for residential areas.
- 2.12 Facilitate and encourage the use of innovative building types and land development patterns that encourage conservation of energy and other resources.
- 2.13 Establish standards for urban development that encourage mixtures of land uses and intensities.
- 2.14 Ensure development review processes are prompt, predictable, open, and uncomplicated.
- 2.15 Minimize the impacts of abutting conflicting land uses by subjecting the more intensive land use or the site being developed to special site development standards.

Housing

- 3.1 Periodically review and revise land development regulations for residential areas to accommodate changing social and economic needs of residents.
- 3.2 Encourage a range of residential land uses, housing sizes, types, and price ranges and establish appropriate development criteria.
- 3.7 Ensure major residential developments and high density residential areas provide adequate open space and recreation areas.
- 3.8 Review all development proposals for compatibility with surrounding established residential areas. Policies related to land use, transportation, public facilities, and utilities should seek to maintain and enhance the quality of these areas.

Zoning Context

When originally implemented as part of the 1975 Zoning Ordinance, the development standards for the SR zone contained no provisions for lots served by both public water and sewer. As sewer was extended into those areas, lot sizes were no longer dependent on septic system installation. The 1994 Zoning Ordinance added some new provisions to account for the new possibilities. These provisions were modified in 1996 to increase lot dimensions when both water and sewer were unavailable. In 2008, maximum lot coverage was increased for lots served by both water and sewer. In 2013 an apparent—but important—typo was corrected changing the *maximum* lot area to *minimum* lot area. In 2017, the code was reformatted but maintained the previous regulations.

Next Steps

The decision tree on page 1 provides context for next steps. Generally, the Planning Commission could:

- 1- Decline to recommend adoption of the proposal.
- 2- Refine the proposal.
- 3- Recommend adoption as presented.

Prepared by,

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Attachment

1. Application
2. Zoning Map
3. Public Involvement Framework
4. Written Comments