



City of Stevenson

Planning Department

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TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ben Shumaker
DATE: March 8th, 2021
SUBJECT: C1 Parking Reductions; Public Participation Summary

This memo summarizes the 7 public involvement strategies incorporated into the Planning Commission's discussion of a Zoning Text amendment to reduce the parking requirements of the C1 District. No additional decision points are included in this memo that were not in the companion memo. Additional context is provided through the results of a general questionnaire related to this topic. Specific sections of the Evolving Draft amendment are referenced where relevant to the each question.

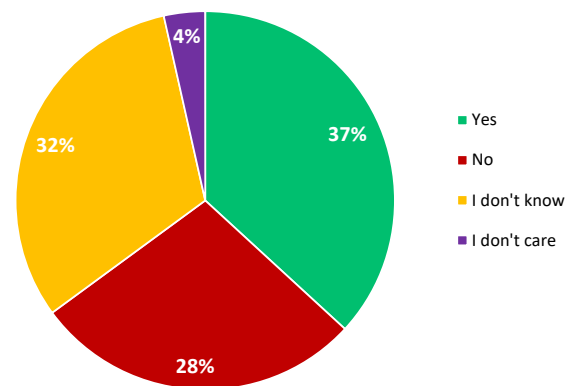
Questionnaire Details

1- Should construction of new housing downtown have fewer roadblocks? Very little context was provided for this question in the questionnaire, and respondents were thoroughly mixed. Four respondents took the opportunity to explain their opinion.

Amendments which would remove existing roadblocks to housing are incorporated into the draft at:

- SMC 17.25.130. Roadblocks to mixed use commercial/residential buildings would be removed by requiring less parking for the residential portion.
- SMC 17.42.080. Roadblocks to duplexes would be removed by allowing off-site parking to substitute for on-site parking.
- SMC 17.42.090. Roadblocks to all types of residential uses would be removed by reducing the ratio of required spaces for residential units.
- SMC 17.42.090. Roadblocks to affordable residential units and senior care housing could be removed on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Commission.

Should construction of new housing downtown have fewer roadblocks?



Text Responses-

- Yes (Staff categorized). Density. And affordable dwelling included in any new construction.
- I don't know (Staff categorized). I am unaware of the road blocks
- Yes! Downtown housing is at a premium by today's standards. Yet, locals already live there. At the same time, local businesses are suffering through the Covid pandemic. And, yet the City Council want to reduce rents and create more "high density" housing while adding levies that only affect property owners. Could that add to increased rent? Developers and contractors have explained to the Council the reality that you cannot tear down a building to create new housing without extreme cost. Unless the City Council subsidize the "Plan For Success" it will not be tenable. If City Council members want to buy identified properties and subsidize the lost revenue, then sure. But the City Council will not. Sadly, no members of the City Council or Planning Commission own "downtown" property. Therefore, they are planning to use the cudgel of "imminent domain" as they have tried in the recent past. Buy a piece of it! Show the many long time Stevenson downtown property owners your plan, now! How can those already invested do it better? Talk is cheap!!
- yes fewer roadblocks but the decibel level for houses in the downtown area should expect a 65 decibel levels

Answered: 57 Skipped: 1

2- Should storage areas for retail stores and restaurants be exempt from the parking requirement? Again, very little context was provided for this question in the questionnaire, however, a majority of respondents were supportive of the exemption in general terms.

Amendments which would effectuate this exemption are included at

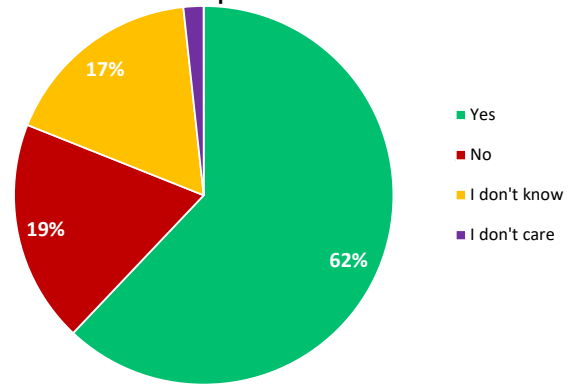
- SMC 17.10.312. Net Floor Area is defined to exempt several areas of buildings.
- SMC 17.42.090. Net Floor Area is substituted for Gross Floor Area in the parking ratio for several uses.

3- Should outdoor seating at restaurants require less parking than indoor areas? This straightforward question received strong opposition with 71% answering "no". One respondent provided an explanation which staff determined was supportive of a policy to differentiate between the areas.

Prior to awareness of this opposition, the Planning Commission requested differentiation of the parking ratio in the Evolving Draft. Draft amendments related to this issue are included at:

- SMC 17.10.310. This clarifies the square footage of outdoor seating is subject to parking requirements.
- SMC 17.42.090. The table provides a lesser ratio for outdoor seating areas.
- SMC 17.42.090. The table includes optional language exempting parking for outdoor seating during the pandemic.

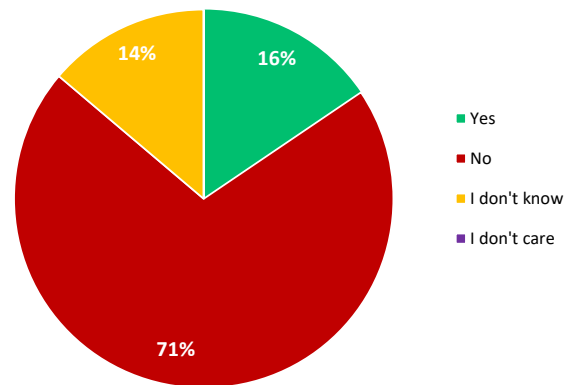
Should storage areas for retail stores and restaurants be exempt from the parking requirement?



Text Responses-
-I don't know (Staff categorized). Only during the pandemic.

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

Should outdoor seating at restaurants require less parking than indoor areas?



Text Responses-
-Yes (Staff categorized). We cannot be afraid to walk a block to get to a restaurant.

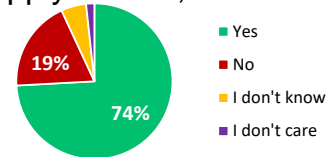
Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

4- Should more options be available to supply off-site, off-street parking? Respondents provided the greatest support for this general question with almost 3/4ths stating more options should be available.

While the most effective way to directly implement this policy would be to construct a public lot, the amendments includes several sections making usage of such a lot more likely. These are included at:

- SMC 17.42.060. A wider array of uses are allowed to share spaces in a joint lot.
- SMC 17.42.070. The distance between the uses sharing a spaces is increased for retail, food service, and hotel uses.
- SMC 17.42.090. The allowed distance between certain uses and their off-site, off-street parking is increased.

Should more options be available to supply off-site, off-street parking?



Text Responses-

- Yes (Staff categorized). I'd like to see a Trolley system. Check out park city, Utah. Or utilize golf carts.
 - Yes (Staff categorized). Stevenson needs a designated parking lot downtown in the area of 1st street, not taking up limited parking areas on the waterfront.
 - Yes because some/many people can't get into existing parking by parallel parking, unless there are few people parked already. It would be great if there were a mid-town parking "lot" type area for crappy drivers.
 - Yes (Staff categorized). If the goal is to increase housing units in Stevenson, there will be a definite need for designated off-street parking areas for tenants and visitors, especially in the evening hours. With the addition of the two new downtown hotels/lodging facilities, this need will become apparent quickly since they have NO requirement to provide parking on-site. Another issue is the grandfathering of the no on-site parking requirement when a new owner/business replaces the previous business even if the "use" changes and that new use requires more parking per the code for "new" construction.
 - Yes (Staff categorized). Downtown Stevenson is in great need of designated off-street parking areas/lots (and restrooms too!) that can accommodate both current and future downtown parking needs, especially due to the new 12-room hotel on Russell St. (24 nightly guests and potential cars) and the future Public Plaza on Hwy 14. Note: have you ever tried to find a parking space on Russell? If a new downtown business does not have the required off-street parking, they must finalize a joint-use agreement for using an existing business' parking area that meets the minimum # of parking space requirements Prior to opening the new business. There will also be a need to monitor the hotel guests' registered cars to ensure that they are parking in the designated spaces/lot and not on downtown streets instead. I also recommend that new and existing downtown businesses currently without adequate parking pay a sufficient annual fee toward the development and maintenance of new parking lot(s). It is also reasonable to charge parking users a fee to park in these parking lots during peak hours/days/seasons (many automated payment systems exist and it also generates revenue). Unless adequate parking is required, planned for, supplied, and monitored, all downtown Stevenson businesses will be impacted/hurt, as both residents and visitors go elsewhere to where convenient parking IS available for their dining and shopping, etc.
 - Yes (Staff categorized). People need to walk it won't hurt actually it will help them, business owners NEED to park FAR AWAY from the business leaving at least that one space open.
- Answered: 58 Skipped: 0**

The following answers to the questionnaire provide additional context for Planning Commission review.

If you'd like to share a specific case study of how the existing downtown parking regulations have caused you to redesign or abandon a development proposal, please do so here.

Text Responses-

- Don't put code in place that you do. It intend to enforce.
- I moved from Russell Ave because there was not enough parking. And Windermere agents took up most of what was there. It was a huge negative impact on my business. The tour bus stop is also farce to generate business. Old people do not want to stop on Russell at the end of the day. Bad knees & hips. They have been out all day & probably want a restroom & a cocktail on their ship.
- Not redesign anything but truthfully I've said "screw it," and decided to continue on my way because there's no place to park nearby or any place at all. It sucks. I hate it. Sometimes I'll avoid going in or doing any business at all because there's no place to park.
- I am writing this comment here as there is no area for "other" comments. I personally find this survey to be too narrow/limited in scope and it is also lacking the "public outreach/input" that is described as the stated objective of soliciting public feedback on downtown parking. For example, why did the City/ PC not post the survey on the City's website and Facebook page, etc., and having received the survey link just today on the limited public email list, it does not allow enough time for "public input" just before tonight's meeting, etc.). One area of concern is the meeting packet statement on page 7 that states: "Changes to SMC 17.25.130(B) remove the redundancy and clarify changes of use to an existing building do not require additional parking (e.g., a restaurant could locate in the Avary Building and no additional parking would be required)." Why is this NOT a requirement if the new business is a different "use" with different parking requirements per the code? At a minimum the new business should be required to find off-set parking elsewhere in town to meet the parking requirements of that new business use. I do hope that the Planning Commission will not rush to meet an "arbitrary" March deadline and will instead conduct a thorough solicitation of Public input, conduct the appropriate research on parking needs and solutions, do an impact study, etc. before making changes to the Parking Zoning Code and requirements in order to accommodate a new hotel on Russell in March. Thank you.
- none.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 53

If you'd like to share a specific case study of how the existing downtown parking regulations have protected your neighborhood from a development or change you didn't want, please do so here.

Text Responses-

- We need more parking. I'd like to see the courthouse new development include an underground parking area.
- All downtown developments, especially housing and lodging, need to supply an adequate number of parking spaces per unit in order to maintain an adequate number of parking spaces for those who are visiting the downtown for shopping, dining, etc.
- Not personally from developing anything BUT I have heard from so many people/ customers that how the sidewalks/ curbs are NOW they suck. They're definitely NOT A.D.A. compatible at all. The crosswalks are way far away from the store's/ restaurant entrances. This is especially problematic at the pharmacy. If you're in a wheelchair or using a walker or crutches forget about it. It's always so busy and congested in that area it's impossible to open your vehicles door for any periods of time.
- Many businesses/agencies have many cars parking near them that appear to "take over" the streets. I think parking should be considered when adding development or businesses.
- none

Answered: 5 Skipped: 53

Public Involvement Summary

A-Project Website- The project website (<http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/letsbuild>) is active and continues to be updated as new information is generated. Staff has not tracked and does not intent to track the website analytics.

B-Online Questionnaire

Protocols- The community questionnaire was created using www.surveymonkey.com. No paper-based questionnaire was available. A link to the questionnaire was mailed to each property owner in the Initial Consideration Area. Electronic copies of the mailing were emailed to the Downtown Shareholders email list. The link was posted to the project-specific website created for these policy discussions. Finally, the City Facebook page publicized each questionnaire on 2 occasions each. The questionnaires were available between 2/3/2021 and 3/5/2021. Separate links were created to track whether the respondent was answering the letters mailed/emailed or the Facebook post.

Questions- Seven (7) total questions were asked of respondents. Minimal explanations preceded each question. The first 4 questions were multiple-choice, with the following answer options: "Yes", "No", "I don't know", and "I don't care" as well as an open-ended option for respondents to more fully explain their answer. One question allowed respondents to share their name and email to remain involved with discussion on the potential zoning text change. The final 2 questions were open-ended and allowed respondents to more fully describe specific experiences with the zoning regulation.

Response Rate – The questionnaire generated 58 overall responses, with individual questions ranging 5 and 58 responses.

Limitations – The questionnaire is not statistically significant. The questionnaire protocols were never designed to produce a statistically significant sample. Several limitations prevent this from being the case.

- The questionnaire was sent to property owners based on the addresses maintained by the County Assessor. This distribution method excludes residents who do not own their home. Also, several mailed notices did not reach the intended recipient.
- The use of Facebook to publicize the questionnaire resulted in the collection of opinions from non-residents and non-owner of properties in the 2 areas.

C-Facebook Posts- The City's Facebook page has been used to share information on the Planning Commission discussion and the questionnaire. The initial post related to the Questionnaire generated 153 views, 22 post clicks, and 21 reactions, comments or shares. The follow-up, survey reminder post generated 73 views, 10 post clicks, and 2 reactions, comments or shares. No comments were submitted to the City via Facebook.

D&E-R3-Owner Mailout & Email Group- Of initial hard copies mailed to owners of parcels in the C1 District, 2 were returned to the City by the Post Office. The mailout was also sent via email as described above. At the time of this writing the email lists contain 123 individuals. No written comments were submitted in response to these mailings.

F-Planning Commission Workshops- In addition to the discussion at the February meeting, tonight's meeting provides the next step in the public involvement effort, and the results of tonight's discussions will guide what happens going forward.