



City of Stevenson

Planning Department

(509)427-5970

7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371
Stevenson, Washington 98648

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ben Shumaker
DATE: August 10th, 2020
SUBJECT: Increasing Residential Building Capacity – Public Involvement

Introduction

This memo deals with public involvement in the discussion of increasing residential building capacity. It includes a catalogue of the public involvement efforts undertaken by the City so far and summarizes the results of those efforts. Finally, it asks the Planning Commission to broaden those efforts.

The discussion underlying this public involvement involves a suite of potential amendments to the Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and Stevenson Municipal Code's water/sewer utility connection requirements. The amendments come from several sources, including the 2020 *Skamania County Housing Needs Analysis*, the draft 2020 *Downtown Plan for Success!*, the 2013 *Stevenson Comprehensive Plan*, city elected/appointed official concepts, city staff analysis, public input, etc. See Attachment 1 for additional information on the scope of the potential amendments.

Efforts Undertaken To Date

The Planning Commission kicked-off this discussion on August 10th, 2020. The staff memo to that meeting continues to serve as an important source of information in this discussion. That memo, as well as a great deal of additional information is available at <http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/letsbuild/>. At that meeting, the Planning Commission discussed its public involvement expectations, including:

- 1) Satisfying the minimum requirements (A public hearing by the City Council, Advertising the public hearing by Staff, Recommending action by the Planning Commission).
- 2) Exceeding the minimum requirements (Mailings to affected property owners, Iterative Planning Commission Workshops, Community questionnaires, Stakeholder taskforces).
- 3) Providing opportunities for involvement during COVID (Outdoor workshops)

To date, the following efforts have been organized to exceed the minimum requirements. Together, these efforts generated 1,190+ engagements by the public.

- 1) Project Website. The city website was updated to include this project and acts as a repository for all information. No analytics have been performed to understand how many have engaged with this opportunity.
- 2) Community Questionnaires. Four separate questionnaires were circulated using [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and each were available for approximately 1 month. In total, the questionnaires generated 135 responses. The anonymous nature of the questionnaire does not allow reporting of the specific number of individuals.
- 3) Council/Commission Liaisons. Two City Council members and 1 Planning Commissioner were explicitly available to residents of the R1 Single-Family Residential and R2 Two-Family Residential districts where map (and then map and text changes) were considered. These liaisons report a total of 4 community members engaged with this opportunity.

- 4) Direct Mailings. Information about the above opportunities along with discussion draft amendments and upcoming Planning Commission meetings were sent via USPS mail to all property owners in the areas impacted by the amendments and via email to individuals known by staff to own or have interest in the affected areas. In total, owners of 232 properties were sent letters initiating and updating the conversation. The email distribution lists grew overtime as community involvement grew, currently the 4 lists combined have 268 email recipients.
- 5) Stakeholder Interviews. The Community Questionnaires and Direct Mailings offered interested individuals the opportunity to have more in-depth discussions with staff about their views/experiences. In total, 4 community members engaged with this opportunity.
- 6) Social Media Postings. Information about the City website and the community questionnaires (twice for each) were posted on the City's Facebook page. In total, these posts generated 735 views, 110 clicks, 83 reactions (comments/shares/likes/etc.).
- 7) Iterative Planning Commission Workshops. The Planning Commission has met monthly since the project kicked-off in August 2020. Each specific topic has involved at least 2 meetings, with the first introducing a discussion draft of a potential change along with the public involvement steps initiated to initiate the discussion. Subsequent meetings then considered how public contributions to the discussion could be incorporated into subsequent drafts. Until March 2021, all meetings were held remotely via Zoom. The April 2021 saw the return of limited in-person participation along with the remote, Zoom option. The minutes of these meetings reflect participation by 38 named individuals and attendance by an unknown number of unnamed individuals.
- 8) City Council Public Hearings. To date, the City Council has held 2 public hearings on the amendments recommended by the Planning Commission. Public participation occurred at these meetings. The numbers are not reported here because the hearings are part of the minimum requirement Zoning Code amendments.
- 9) Notable Limitations.
 - a. Direct mailings to the public via mail/email focus on property owners. This excludes renters and those unable to afford housing in the area considered. The mailings also rely on the addresses maintained Skamania County and did not reach those who have since-changed addresses.
 - b. Community questionnaires are not statistically valid surveys of the Stevenson community, and no effort has been made to collect statistically valid surveys.

Results of Past Public Involvement

To date, the City has adopted 2 ordinances intended to increase residential building capacity. The first deals with the text of the R3 Multi-Family Residential District, the second with the text of the C1 Commercial District and the parking requirements of the Zoning Code. Both ordinances reflect the public's engagement in their topics. In several cases the engagement confirmed broad policies stances underlying the discussion draft regulations mailed in the initial contact. In both ordinances, the public's involvement resulted in changes to the discussion drafts.

Notable changes include:

- Limiting the allowance of larger-scale senior care housing in the R3 District.
- Adding pedestrian protections near driveways in the R3 District.
- Reducing types of building areas triggering parking requirements.
- Reducing the amount of parking required of clinics.
- Expanding incentives for certain construction in the C1 District.

Planning Commission Guidance

The conversations though of the R3 and C1 districts involved allowing more where a lot was already allowed. The conversation involved in the R2 and Core Area R1 involve allowing more where less is currently allowed. A larger

number of current residents/owners are engaging the public involvement opportunities and asking for more, deeper discussion about the topics and it is clear the initial public involvement strategies should be reevaluated. To ensure the proposed changes incorporates public input and occurs within a manageable timeline, the Planning Commission is asked to address the following guidance points:

Guidance Point #1: Should the public involvement strategies be expanded to include an all-community Open House?

Conceptually, the Open House would be held at the Hegewald Center. The format would involve a staff preamble explaining the why, what, how questions underlying the potential changes followed by break-out exercises for the public to provide guidance on specific topics (e.g., location, affordability, transportation corridors/utility services, building design, etc.).

Guidance Point #2: Is a follow-up, all-community Town Hall appropriate to satisfy the public's need for engagement on this topic?

Conceptually, the Town Hall would also be held at the Hegewald Center. The format would involve a staff listing of potential actions gleaned from the Open House, followed by round-robin opportunities for verbal testimony and written comment sheets.

Next Steps

At the conclusion of this meeting, staff will initiate the requested public involvement strategies and prepare materials to assist the public engagement. The Planning Commission should expect to see this topic again on its June meeting agenda.

Prepared by,

Ben Shumaker
Community Development Director

Attachment

- Scope/Status of Potential Amendments

Attachment 1 – Scope/Status of Potential Amendment

Potential Amendment Topic	Status
2020 Skamania County Housing Needs Analysis	
Expand Accessory Dwelling Unit Flexibility Allow Duplexes in R1 Align Zoning with Water/Sewer Plans & Improvements Consolidate R2 & R3 Districts Reduce Minimum Lot Size in R2, R3, & CR Districts Permit Senior Housing Options in R3 Conditionally Permit Senior Housing Options in R2 Permit Live/Work Spaces in C1 District Allow Lot Size Averaging Reduce Setbacks Increase Maximum Lot Coverage Develop Shadow Platting Requirements Rezone Areas near Frank Johns Road, Loop Road, Vancouver Avenue, School Street Allow Utility Extension Beyond City Limits Subject to Annexation Agreements Jointly Plan with Skamania County through an Intergovernmental Agreement Perform City/County Fiscal Analyses of Annexation Jointly Pursue Funding for Utility Extensions Identify Publicly-owned Properties Suitable for Housing Acquire Tax-Delinquent Properties Pursue Community Land Trust Develop Regional [Wetland] Mitigation Banking Lobby Legislature for Homestead Taxation Authority	Not Considered Not Considered Being Discussed Being Discussed Adopted (R3/CR) Being Discussed (R2) Considered, Rejected Not Considered To Be Discussed Adopted Adopted (R3) Being Discussed (R2) Adopted (R3) Being Discussed (R2) To Be Discussed Being Discussed Being Discussed Not Considered Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning Unrelated to Zoning
Draft Downtown Plan for SUCCESS!	
Establish Sub-Zones within Downtown Area to Guide Location of Housing Reduce Residential Parking Requirements Conditionally Approve Parking Reductions for Senior and Affordable Housing Conditionally Approve Other Parking Reductions Develop Fee-in-Lieu of On-Site Parking Requirements Incentivize Mixed-Use via Parking Reductions Reduce Parking for Food Service Uses & Retail Stores Expand Off-Site Parking Options for Hotels Develop Shared Parking Lots Improve Walking/Biking Routes to Shared Parking Lots Expand Options for Joint-Use of Parking Agreements Facilitate Innovation through Bikeshares, Employee Cash-out Programs, etc. Establish Minimum Densities for new Housing Development	To Be Discussed Adopted Adopted Adopted Adopted Adopted Adopted Adopted Future Discussion Future Discussion Adopted Not Considered To Be Discussed
Others (Incomplete List of Planning Commission-,Public- & Staff-Led Topics)	
Expand R2 & R3 Near Schools Protect Pedestrians Near Driveways Align Loop Road & Frank Johns Road Zoning with Comprehensive Plan Rezone Split-Zoned Parcels	Being Discussed Adopted (R3) Being Discussed (R2) Being Discussed Being Discussed