



City of Stevenson

Planning Department

(509)427-5970

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

TO: R3 District Property Owners
FROM: Ben Shumaker
DATE: October 12th, 2020
SUBJECT: R3 District Text Amendment—Public Participation Summary

This memo provides an update for the Planning Commission on the 11 public involvement strategies described in the September staff report. The strategies relate to 4 policy questions under consideration as a Zoning Text amendment for the R3 Multi-Family Residential District and 3 questions related to Zoning Map changes.

A-Project Website- The project website is active and continues to be updated as new information is generated. Staff has not and does not intent to track the website's analytics.

B-Online Questionnaire

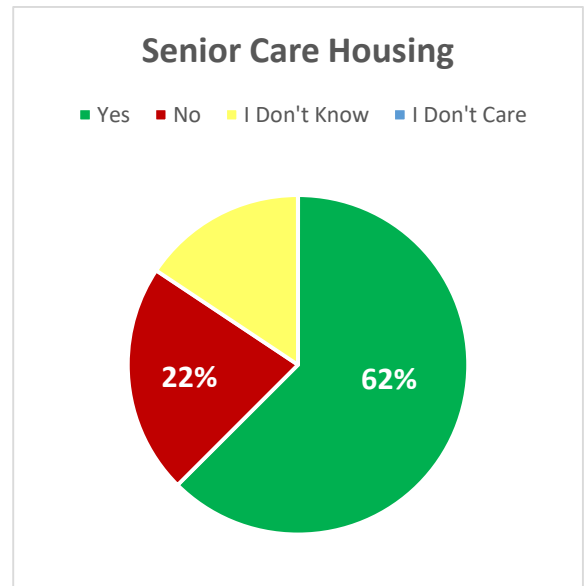
Protocols – The community questionnaire was created using www.surveymonkey.com. No paper-based questionnaire was available. A link to the questionnaire was mailed to each property owner in the R3 District. Electronic copies of the mailing were emailed to 30+ community members known by staff to own or have interest in the R3 District. The link was posted to the project-specific website created for these policy discussions. Finally, the City Facebook page publicized the questionnaire on 2 occasions. The questionnaire was available between 9/9/200 and 10/9/2020.

Questions – Five (5) multiple choice questions comprised the bulk of the questionnaire. The questions were preceded by a short explanation of the issue. Each question then offered "Yes", "No", "I don't know", and "I don't care" options as well as an open-ended option for respondents to more fully explain their answer. Two (2) open-ended questions were also available and respondents were asked for their email addresses if they desired to receive updates on the discussion. See Attachment 1.

Response Rate – The questionnaire generated 33 responses overall, however, individual questions generated between 26 and 32 answers.

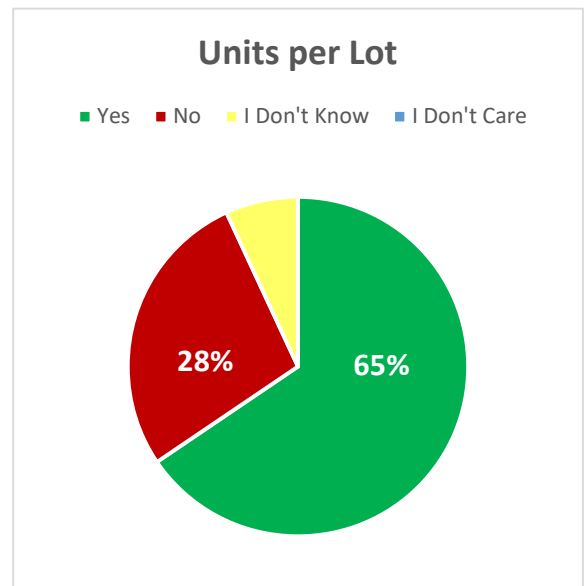
Question 1 (Senior Care Housing): This question asked “Should it be easier to build senior care housing in the R3 Multi-Family Residential District?”. This question was answered by 32 respondents and enjoyed the least support (62%) of the 5 policies under consideration. Those opposed to the policy made up 22% of respondents, including the most vocal opposition of the questionnaire with respondents stating:

- ‘While I understand the need for more senior care housing, I do not see the need to change from case by case approval “C” to automatic approval “P” on any lot in R3 areas. I would argue that it would be better to designate R1 and R2 as “C” and leave R3 as “C”’
- ‘These are critical decisions that should continue to be reviewed by the Planning Commission on a case by case basis. The current review and approval process allows for public participation. It is satisfactory and appropriate.’



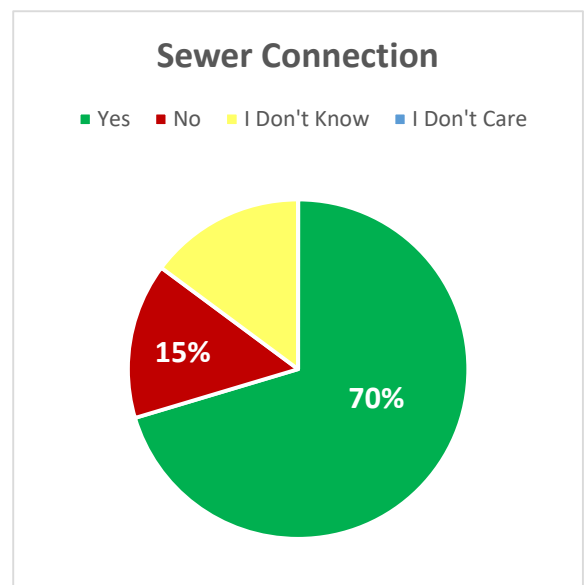
Question 2 (Units per Lot): This question asked “Should more housing units be allowed on properties in the R3 District?”. Among the 29 respondents, this question generated the most out-right opposition (28%), while still generating 65% support. Two respondents qualified their support by stating:

- ‘Yes, but the city should move to expand the R3 areas (and the associate sewer system) into R1 and R2 areas. Existing R3 area should not be the only ones that take the brunt of inevitable growth. More affordable housing is super important, and even more important now that it appears mobile home parks are not permitted anywhere in Stevenson.’
- ‘If they are town homes and not tiny homes.’



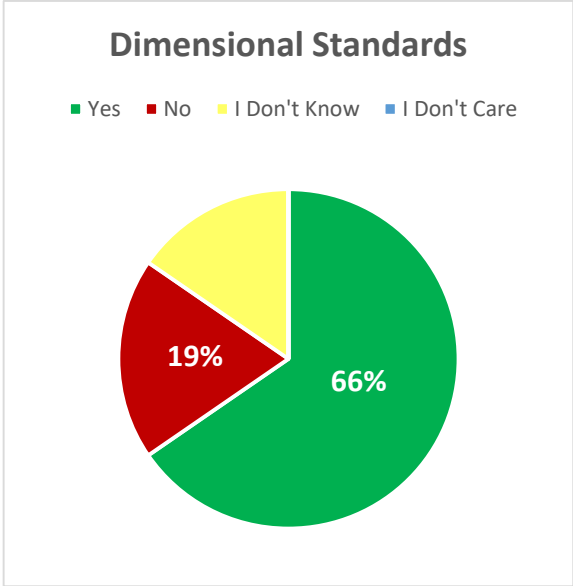
Question 3 (Sewer Connection): This question asked “Should connection to the public sewer system be required for development in the R3 District?”. Twenty-seven respondents answered this question, and it was both the most supported (70%) and least opposed (15%) stand-alone policy. One open-ended response was provided:

- ‘Definitely yes. The City should make long term efforts to move those who are not connected onto the sewage system.’



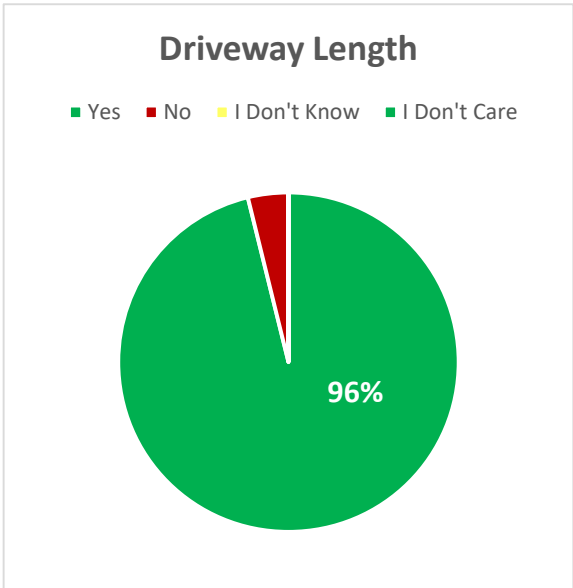
Question 4 (Dimensional Flexibility): This question asked “Should development be allowed on more portions of lots in the R3 District?”. Two-thirds (66%) of the 26 respondents supported this policy stance. Opposition to the policy stance was 19%. One open-ended response was provided:

- ‘Yes, but ... R3 should not take the brunt of all the changes in the town to accommodate growth, especially among lower income citizens.’



Question 5 (Driveway Length): This question asked “If development should be allowed on more portions of lots, should the City try to avoid situations where vehicles in driveways block travel on sidewalks and streets?”. This question was overwhelmingly supported (96%), with only one of the 26 respondents opposing. Staff treats this question as a dependent on Question 4, however based on the support, the City could consider this policy even if the dimensional flexibility of Question 4 is not adopted. One open-ended response took the question beyond the physical layout of housing and asked for was provided:

- ‘Yes. The City should not just try, but should actually avoid those situations. One example of this is on Lasher St. which has no sidewalks and the ends of large vehicles sometimes parked out into the street. Sidewalks and room for people to walk are more important in R3 areas as lower income people may be more likely to walk to stores or schools than higher income people.’



Question 6 (Contact Information): Nine (9) respondents asked to be added to the City’s email list for this policy discussion. Three (3) of these respondents were already on the email distribution list. The 6 new emails have been added.

Questions 7 & 8 (Open-Ended Experience Questions): No questionnaire respondents chose to answer these questions.

C-Facebook Post- The initial post to the City’s Facebook page generated 111 views, 16 post clicks, and 39 reactions, comments or shares. The follow-up, survey reminder post generated 112 views, 33 post clicks, and 9 reactions, comments or shares, including the following comment:

- ‘The questions seem pretty technical for the average citizen. I'm not a builder so don't really care about how many inches of set back is best etc. how about allowing single person homes - off grid - in town.’

D&E-R3-Owners Mailing- Six (6) of the 102 mailings have been returned to the City by the Post Office. The hard copy generated 1 request for an electronic copy of the letter and 1 email comment (Attachment 2). This comment

generated a proposed update to the discussion draft of SMC 17.15.050 (Attachment 3). These engagement strategies also led to 3 interviews with community members about development in the R3 District, its barriers and impacts. The interviews involved 2 builders with experience developing property in the district and the property manager for 2 subsidized apartment complexes in the district. Key components of the discussions involved the following topics.

Demand – Waiting lists for apartments range from 2 years (2 to 3 bedroom units to 5 years (1 bedroom units). -

This demand is partially driven by seniors. This demand spreads beyond the apartment complexes. An estimated 60% of housing vouchers go unused in the community because of a lack of available housing.

-Rentals are getting top dollar and there are not enough of them.

Market Response – Not seeking to maximize allowable density (existing).

-Catering to retirees, who still want space even if the home is small.

-Managers are left saying “Look in Washougal, look in Washougal” when discussing housing with prospective tenants.

-Not catering to high-end housing (e.g., Hood River townhome/condo development)

Barriers – Expense of sprinkler systems is added for construction of tri-plexes and up.

-Bank lending differs for construction of tri-plexes and up.

-Age of developers makes them risk adverse; shorter returns on investment (i.e., 1 year) are a greater priority than overall percent.

-Potential for market downturns limits risk-taking.

-Street requirements (both the expense and the territory required) limit development. Private streets more viable than public streets.

-Construction material costs typically increase between 10-12% per year.

-Lumber costs have jumped 64% this summer (COVID).

-Lack of up-front capital limits development possibilities.

-Up-front costs (permits, connection fees) lengthen the time period for returns on investment.

-Consumer condo financing is more available than it had been previously, but buyers still prefer to “own the dirt” (townhome, detached dwellings)

Solutions – Any construction of 1 bedroom or studio units would benefit the local housing situation, where professional staff have trouble finding housing when taking jobs in the community.

-Consider reducing water/sewer connection fees to incentivize multi-family construction.

-Keep making similar efforts as these policies.

-Better utilize the available land base of the county, where sewer systems should be extended/created.

F-J - C1/R3 Zoning Map Changes- One (1) of the 8 hard copies has been returned to the City by the Post Office. That owner was also contacted via email. These engagements led to the conversation in Attachment 4 related to taxation impacts of Zoning Map amendments. They also generated staff discussion with another owner in this district.

K - R3/SR Split Zoning- As discussed in September, this owner seeks to have the entire property designated as SR.

Attachments:

- 1- Questionnaire Instrument
- 2- Heinze Email
- 3- Recommended Update to Discussion Draft SMC 17.15.050
- 4- Ashley/Spencer Emails

Increasing R3 Building Capacity

The gist of it

The City of Stevenson is considering potential changes to the zoning regulations of the R3 Multi-Family Residential District. The potential changes are proposed in response to a recent study by the Skamania County Economic Development Council (EDC). In their Skamania County Housing Needs Analysis the EDC is anticipating the need for ~2,000 new housing units over the next 20-year period. The study also found that City and County development regulations (such as the Zoning Code) combined with a lack of appropriate infrastructure limit the possibilities for the development of these homes. As a result, housing costs, utility pricing, and community frustration are all expected to increase. To address these deficiencies, the EDC’s consultants have recommended several changes to the Zoning Code. The City is hoping to get your feedback on some basic policy questions prior to making a change.

The proposed changes revolve around the policy questions on the following pages.

Additional information is online at <http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/letsbuild/>

[Page Break]

Senior Care Housing

The state considers senior care housing based on the number of people living in a home and the type of care given, with 3 basic types:

- 1- Adult Family Home - The state requires the city to allow homes with 6 or fewer seniors in the same way it would allow any other home and anyone may build or convert a home in the R3 District to this use.
- 2- Assisted Living Facility - A home with 7 or more seniors is considered an “Assisted Living Facility”, and cities have more leeway with where/how these buildings are allowed. People wanting to build or convert a home as an Assisted Living Facility would first need to prove to the Planning Commission’s satisfaction that their specific proposal will not negatively impact the neighborhood.
- 3- Nursing Home - Residents of this type of senior care housing require greater medical or convalescent care or attention than the types above. The City currently treats these in the same way it treats Assisted Living Facilities, with case-by-case approval required.

The need for senior care housing is expected to increase in the near future and it has been recommended that the City be more permissive to accommodate this need. In this case, being more permissive would remove the case-by-case Planning Commission approval and allow Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes on any lot within the R3 Zone.

1. Should it be easier to build senior care housing in the R3 Multi-Family Residential District?

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know
- I don’t care
- If you’d like to explain your answer, please do so here. _____

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Total Number of Homes per Lot

Multi-family housing can be built in the R3 District. The total number of units built depends on the size of the lot. Currently the City limits development to 1 unit if the lot is 4,000-5,999 square feet, then allows an additional unit for

every 2,000 square feet of property. An exception to the 4,000 square foot threshold is available for shared-wall townhomes, which can be placed on lots as small as 2,000 square feet.

The proposal would simplify the calculation by reducing the initial 4,000 threshold to the same 2,000 square feet used in other instances. In doing so it would permit an additional unit on most lots. This change is recommended to help address the community's need for smaller, more affordable housing units by providing owners more options to respond to the needs of the housing market need.

2. Should more housing units be allowed on properties in the R3 District?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I don't care
- If you'd like to explain your answer, please do so here. _____

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Utility Connections

At the state-level, multi-family development requires approximately 1/4 to 1/2 acre of property per unit in the development. The state is considering raising this amount. Locally, there are no requirements to pump or otherwise maintain multi-family septic systems. Documented public or environmental health issues would need to arise before such requirements could be made.

In Stevenson, all new development must connect to the City water system. New development is allowed on septic systems when the public sewer system is not available to a lot. As a result, multi-family development could occur in the R3 District, provided the development is not within 300' of a public sewer line. However, all properties currently designated as R3 are within 300' of a public sewer line.

The proposal would formalize the requirement for new development to connect, ensuring more units could be built per acre and protecting the public/environmental health of the community. Existing development on septic would not have to connect until the existing system fails.

3. Should connection to the public sewer system be required for development in the R3 District?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I don't care
- If you'd like to explain your answer, please do so here. _____

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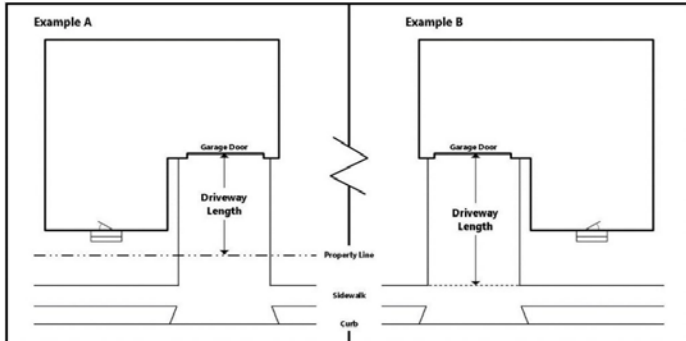
Location of Buildings

The City restricts development in the R3 District by a) requiring construction to be located specific distances from property lines (setbacks) and b) limiting the overall amount of rooftops and decks to a certain percentage of the lot (lot coverage).

These restrictions 1) are not aligned with each other, 2) lead to confusion from property owners, and 3) in the case of lot coverage, require an inordinate amount of staff time to verify.

To reduce the barriers these limitations present, the City could reduce the front setback requirement and eliminate the lot coverage limitation entirely.

In some instances development in the City involves a specific driveway length requirement to prevent parked vehicles from inhibiting pedestrian and automotive use of sidewalks and streets.



This does not currently apply to development in the R3 District, but could be considered if the front yard setback is reduced.

4. Should development be allowed on more portions of lots in the R3 District?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I don't care
- If you'd like to explain your answer, please do so here. _____

5. If development should be allowed on more portions of lots, should the City try to avoid situations where vehicles in driveways block travel on sidewalks and streets?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- I don't care
- If you'd like to explain your answer, please do so here. _____

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6. To receive ongoing updates on this topic, please enter your email here. _____

7. If you'd like to share a specific case study of how the existing regulations of the R3 District have caused you to redesign or abandon a development proposal, please do so here. _____

8. If you'd like to share a specific case study of how the existing regulations of the R3 District have protected your neighborhood from a development or change you didn't want, please do so here. _____



R3 zoning Lana Heinze

Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>
To: Svetlana Lebedeva <shokoladus@yahoo.com>
Cc: Nikki Hollatz <nikkih@klickitatcounty.org>

Mon, Oct 12, 2020 at 9:46 AM

Received. Thank you, Svetlana.

I will:

- A-Add your email address to the project specific distribution list,
- B-Provide your email (together with this response) to the Planning Commission for consideration at tonight's meeting,

To answer your specific questions:

1-I am copying this response to the Skamania County Environmental Health Department to discuss how these changes might interact with existing septic systems. My understanding is the proposal would not add any additional regulatory requirement. The current regulation allows existing systems are allowed to continue, however, if they fail then connection to the public sewer system is required so long as there is a public line within 300' of the building (which appears to be the case for your property on Lutheran Church Road). Connection is the responsibility of the homeowner.

2-No maximum lot size is currently proposed. The proposed minimum lot size is 2,000, which would facilitate division/development of your property.

3-The increased maximum lot coverage would apply to all lots in the R3 District, yours included.

4-Coverage of lots would necessarily exclude all areas within setbacks (including driveways) and 100% coverage would not be possible (i.e., no development could violate the maximum standard). Your question does show an unnecessary confusion in the regulations, and I will be recommending a change to the discussion draft to use "n/a" instead of "100%" in the table.

The Zoom meeting can be accessed as follows:

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please click this URL to join. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83482269900>

Or join by phone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099

Webinar ID: 834 8226 9900

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83482269900>

Looking forward to discussing this more tonight,

BEN SHUMAKER

-----Original Message-----

From: 'Svetlana Lebedeva' via planning [mailto:planning@ci.stevenson.wa.us]

Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2020 9:54 PM

To: planning@ci.stevenson.wa.us

Subject: R3 zoning Lana Heinze

To whom it may concern:

ATTN: Ben Shumaker Planning Director City of Stevenson, Washington

Dear Ben,

This is Lana Heinze (293 NE Lutheran Church Rd.) reaching out to you with regard to a letter I received about R3 zoning changes. I have some specific questions I need clarified:

- 1) My home was built in the 60's and runs perfectly well on a regularly-maintained septic system. I understand my existing setup will remain grandfathered in while new units will receive city sewer. If the new developments are unable to respect my current setup, I am requesting a timeline for when and how you plan to install the appropriate changes to my property.
- 2) What are the maximum and minimum lot sizes for the planned community? Will I have the option of dividing & developing my 1 acre lot?
- 3) I received a letter on September 10, 2020 suggesting that in the newly planned community, a lot may be 100% covered by a building. Does this apply

to my R3 lot as well if/when you migrate my lot to public sewer as well?

4) Just a logistics question: how do you measure 100% building coverage on a lot that requires a 20-foot driveway?

My understanding is that there is a planning meeting on Monday, October 12, 2020 on Zoom. I have not yet received the details for joining my community's meeting. I am requesting you forward the details to me at shokoladus@yahoo.com or text me instructions at 858-699-9502 so that I'm given a fair opportunity to learn about impending changes to my neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Lana Heinze

17.15.050 - Residential density standards.

A. Density and Lot Size. The maximum density and minimum lot dimensions for Residential Districts are contained in Table 17.15.050-1: Residential Density Standards.

Table 17.15.050-1: Residential Density Standards						
District	Utility Availability	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Lot Width	Minimum Lot Depth	Maximum Number Dwelling Units	Maximum Lot Coverage
R1	Water, Sewer	6,000 sf	40 ft	90 ft	1 Unit ²	35%
	Water, Septic	15,000 sf ¹	90 ft	120 ft	1 Unit ²	25%
	Well, Septic	1 acre ¹	200 ft	200 ft	1 Unit ²	10%
R2	Water, Sewer	5,000 sf + 2,000 sf per unit over 1	50 ft ³	90 ft	2 Units	50%
	Water, Septic	15,000 sf ¹	90 ft	120 ft	2 Units	30%
	Well, Septic ⁶	—	—	—	—	—
R3	Water, Sewer	4,000 sf + 2,000 sf per unit over 1 ⁴	75-20 ft ⁵	90 ft	—	65% n/a
	Water, Septic ^{6,7}	15,000 sf¹ + 5,000 sf per unit over 2	90 ft	120 ft	—	40%
	Well, Septic ^{6,7}	—	—	—	—	—
MHR	Water, Sewer	5 ac + 5,000 sf per unit over 40	200 ft	200 ft	—	40%
	Water, Septic	5 ac + 2 acres per unit over 2	200 ft	200 ft	—	40%
	Well, Sewer	5 ac + 2 acres per unit over 2	200 ft	200 ft	—	40%
	Well, Septic	5 ac + 2 acres per unit over 2	200 ft	200 ft	—	40%
SR	Water, Sewer	15,000 sf	100 ft	100 ft	1 Unit ²	25%
	Water, Septic	20,000 sf ¹	100 ft	100 ft	1 Unit ²	20%
	Well, Septic	1 acre ¹	200 ft	200 ft	1 Unit ²	10%

1-When sewer is unavailable, minimum lot area may be increased based on current health district regulations.

2-Unless an accessory dwelling unit (SMC 17.13.010) is allowed under SMC 17.40.040.

3-Except 40 ft for single-family detached dwellings.

4-Except 2,500 sf for townhomes.

5-Except 25 ft for townhomes, 40 ft for single-family detached dwellings, and 50 ft for two-family dwellings.

6-Service by the public water system is required.

7-Service by the public sewer system is required.

B. Exceptions. The following exceptions are permitted to the standards of Table 17.15.050-1:

1. Properties receiving approval to deviate from standards according to SMC 17.38 - Supplementary Provisions.
2. Properties obtaining variance approval in accordance with SMC 17.46 - Adjustments, Variances, and Appeals.
3. Properties receiving modification approval in accordance with SMC 17.17 - Residential Planned Unit Developments.

(Ord. No. 1103, § 5, 2-16-2017; Ord. No. 1104, § 3.B.C, 6-15-2017)



Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Potential Zone Change

Karen Ashley <karen@stevensonvetclinic.com>
To: Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Fri, Sep 11, 2020 at 9:17 AM

Thank you!

On Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 2:01 PM Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us> wrote:

See below.

BEN SHUMAKER

From: Gabe Spencer [mailto:spencer@co.skamania.wa.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 1:44 PM
To: Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>
Subject: RE: Potential Zone Change

Not necessarily in direction, that has to do with sales which fluctuate but it has some effect on how we determine a value for tax purposes. By going to C1 we will be using sales from other C1 zoned properties an analysis may or may not conclude a differing value. My thoughts are that over time a higher potential for increased taxable value would occur with a more development friendly zoning.

Gabe

From: Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 1:46 PM
To: Gabe Spencer <spencer@co.skamania.wa.us>
Cc: Karen Ashley <karen@stevensonvetclinic.com>
Subject: FW: Potential Zone Change

**** WARNING:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **

Hi Gabe-

The City is considering redrawing some of our zoning boundaries. Most of this will involve changes from R2 (or some R1) to R3. As part of this, we are also considering changing the zoning of the Vet Clinic, City Hall, and the Living Faith Church from R3 to C1.

If these changes take effect, the zoning would be more development friendly for each lot. Would this impact the way the properties are taxed?

Thanks,

BEN SHUMAKER

From: Karen Ashley [mailto:karen@stevensonvetclinic.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 1:27 PM
To: Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>
Subject: Re: Potential Zone Change

Do you know what it does to property tax rate?

On Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 12:39 PM Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us> wrote:

Hi Karen-

As discussed, please see attached and let me know if you have any questions.

Shortly, you'll also receive an email about a potential change to the text of the R3 Zone. If you want to make the change to C1 Commercial, then you can disregard that email.

This same letter is being sent to the City and the Living Faith Church.

A will deliver a hard copy too.

Thank you,

BEN SHUMAKER

PLANNING DIRECTOR

CITY OF STEVENSON, WASHINGTON

(509) 427-5970