



Planning, Development & Transportation

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 15, 2017

TO: Mayor Troxell and City Councilmembers

THRU: Darin Atteberry, City Manager
Jeff Mihelich, Deputy City Manager
Laurie Kadrich, Director of Planning, Development & Transportation
Tom Leeson, Community Development and Neighborhood Services Director

FROM: Cameron Gloss, Planning Manager
Karen McWilliams, Historic Preservation Manager

RE: **Work Session Summary – December 12, 2017 re: *Compatibility and Character Code Updates***

Attendees:

Cameron Gloss and Karen McWilliams presented an update on on-going efforts to development new compatibility and character Land Use Code standards and responded to questions from Council. All City Council members were present.

Specific Questions to be Answered by City Council:

Is it appropriate to create an expanded Downtown zone district?

Is Council comfortable with staff's intention to integrate compatibility requirements in the Land Use Code to improve overall clarity and predictability?

Discussion Summary

- The Code changes should focus on clarity, predictability, and simplification
- More specificity is requested with the revised standards with respect to terminology:
 - "Sensitivity to development" is ambiguous.
 - Terms other than "compatible" should be considered (no alternatives were suggested)
- Predictability is good, but we also want creativity in design. The standards need to find the right balance between the two.
- Need to allow the funky old with the new--prescription vs allowance for designs to have some unusual elements.
- The ability to have greater predictability for developers and the community is a good goal.
- More visual graphical representations are helpful in explaining the design concepts.

- Ginger and Baker was mentioned as a great combination of preserving the old and integrating a complementary addition.
- The quality of staff processes shows in the projects that are being built.
- We need to be careful not to overprocess. Sometimes less is more when it comes to process.
- The impact of the design standards on construction costs and affordable housing needs to be considered. Housing should be affordable to different income levels with the Downtown and Old Town Neighborhoods.
- Expectation that there is design sensitivity at the interface between neighborhoods and surrounding districts.
- Need specific metrics for the ramp-down of buildings; this transition should happen within the Downtown District and not within the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Commercial pressures from Downtown are such that we need to protect residential areas.
- Building Height standards should consider the following:
 - Number of stories is not a very useful metric. Use feet rather than stories.
 - Lower building heights are better next to neighborhood districts.
 - Reference the height of individual buildings, but not the overall character of zones.
 - May want to consider how other communities have created system of an air rights market, where if you want to construct a building of a certain height, you must buy air space.
 - Varied building heights adds positively to Downtown; look at higher densities where they make sense (along the MAX corridor was mentioned).
 - Clustering tall buildings Downtown makes sense.
 - View corridor protection is important.
 - Pedestrian experience is paramount; however, property owners and building tenants should be important considerations, as well.
- Would be interesting to explore overall character and the kinds of tools that can be placed to make sure that the overall Downtown zone doesn't get changed based on specific projects.
- Historic Preservation compatibility standards should consider the following:
 - The current adjacency standard makes compatibility hard to judge; prescribing a radius of historical influence would be helpful.
 - Site line metrics to historic resources should be more specific.
 - Defining relevant historic resources that would be impacted, rather than those that fall within a specific area, was suggested.
 - Suggested that staff be more proactive about identifying landmarks versus evaluating every building over 50 years old.
- Council is supportive of the integration of the historic preservation standards with other development standards found in the Code.
- Staff shared the on-going partnership with CSU to create a virtual reality model for Downtown which will become a future tool for evaluating proposed changes.

Follow-up Items:

Council requested that staff:

- Include the Affordable Housing Board and other relevant boards and interest ground in development of the standards.
- Need to carefully craft citizen engagement so we ensure feedback that clearly defines what the community desires.
- Need to spend more time educating the community on the Code objectives and the options being pursued.