

# CITY OF SHORELINE

## SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

October 16, 2014  
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall  
Council Chamber

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### Commissioners Present

Vice Chair Craft  
Commissioner Malek  
Commissioner Maul  
Commissioner Mork

### Staff Present

Rachael Markle, Director, Planning and Community Development  
Paul Cohen, Planning Manager, Planning and Community Development  
Miranda Redinger, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development  
Brian Lee, Planner, Planning and Community Development  
Lisa Basher, Planning Commission Clerk

### Commissioners Absent

Chair Scully  
Commissioner Montero  
Commissioner Moss

### Others Present

Kayla Schott-Bresler, Policy Manager, Housing Development Consortium  
Kelly Rider, Policy Director, Housing Development Consortium

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pro Tem Craft called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

### ROLL CALL

Upon roll call by the Commission Clerk the following Commissioners were present: Chair Pro Tem Craft and Commissioners Malek, Maul and Mork. Chair Scully and Commissioners Montero and Moss were absent.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 2, 2014 were adopted as submitted.

### GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

**Tom Poitras, Shoreline**, explained that according to the proposed requirements, one intent of alleys near the 185<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is to preserve street appeal with regard to new construction. Street appeal

is also important for homes converted to commercial uses. He said that while he was unable to find this discussed in the Shoreline code, he did find a section of the City of Pasadena Zoning Code that would preserve neighborhood character and maintain the single-family residential look to some extent by requiring that there be no parking lots in the front yards of converted businesses. This is important because Northeast 185th Street and other arterials are predominantly single-family now and may remain so for a long time. A requirement similar to Pasadena's would be better for the aesthetics of the entire street, whether the conversion is near new construction or existing homes. He said it is presumed that the commercial use code would dictate the number of parking spaces required. For example, Shoreline's minimum off-street parking requirement for restaurants is one space per 75 square feet in dining and lounge areas. He read the following language from Pasadena's code:

***"17.50.070 – Conversion of a Residential Structure to a Commercial Use***

- A. Applicability.*** *The conversion of a residential structure to an allowed commercial use shall be in compliance with this section and the applicable provisions of this Zoning Code.*
- B. Location of off-street parking.*** *Off-street parking shall only be located behind the structure.*
- C. Maintenance of existing driveway.*** *The existing driveway width shall not be widened to accommodate the new commercial use."*

Mr. Poitras commented that there are many requirements in the City's code designed to insure that new commercial and residential buildings are attractive, and he believes there should be a separate section of the code for converted homes. The language should indicate which requirements for new construction also apply to conversions, and which requirements would work for converted homes to improve their appearance and functionality.

**Liz Poitras, Shoreline,** said her comments are related to property zoned MUR-35 and MUR-45 that are located on arterials. Since this is the first time the City will be mixing residential and retail uses, she suggested the City needs to be careful and perhaps have more regulations. The City needs to consider the noise levels, hours of operation, outside activities and the nature of the retail businesses next door to single-family homes, especially those with children, whether they live in town homes, duplexes, or detached houses. She specifically expressed concern about drinking establishments, particularly hours of operation, outdoor activities, noise levels, odors, and inebriated folks wandering about the sidewalk. She asked if they would be allowed to stay open past 10 or 11 p.m., if outdoor activities would be allowed, and if they would have entertainment and speakers.

Ms. Poitras acknowledged that some of these problems can occur in other retail businesses, and her second thought went to tattoo parlors, smoke shops, taverns, sales of medical marijuana, dry cleaners using chemicals, etc. Some problems can be managed through ordinances such as how late a retail business can stay open when it abuts a totally residential building. However, there needs to be additional rules such as "businesses catering to mainly adults should not be allowed if there is residential still on either or both sides of the parcel." As the block becomes mostly or all retail then maybe it would be okay. She summarized that some types of retail might not be appropriate ever where residences and businesses can mix in the same zone, and she does not think families will want to live in residences near some of this type of retail.

**STUDY ITEM: DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS FOR 185<sup>TH</sup> STREET LIGHT RAIL STATION SUBAREA PLAN**

Chair Pro Tem Craft recommended that the public be invited to comment after the staff presentation and Commission discussion for each topic. The Commission agreed that would be appropriate.

**Requirements to the MUR Zones**

Mr. Cohen reviewed that the Commission has spent a great deal of time discussing the components and requirements for development agreements for development in the MUR-85 zone that exceeds the height limit. As part of this discussion, the Commission expressed interest in establishing specific requirements for the MUR-35, MUR-45 and MUR-85 zones, without a development agreement. For example, they discussed whether affordable housing should be required in all of the zones, and not just as a bonus for additional height in the MUR-85 zone.

Director Markle advised that, as currently proposed, affordable housing would be a mandatory element of a development agreement for development over 85 feet in the MUR-85 zone. However, there are opportunities to provide affordable housing in the MUR-45 and MUR-35 zones, as well. She explained that, to date, Shoreline's philosophy has been to create zones and regulations that implement the vision of the City and are in tune with market realities, and the City cannot build Vision 2029 without private investment. Currently, the development code defines the building envelope, dimensions, and specific design elements that are consistent with the City's vision, but it does not ask for anything in exchange except quality development.

Director Markle advised that the City's Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies related to affordable housing, but state law does not allow the City to require affordable housing without providing some form of compensation. Most jurisdictions have accomplished this by offering increased development potential such as greater density. However, because the proposed new MUR zones use a form-based code approach, density bonuses would be irrelevant. She explained that just by rezoning the R-6 properties to MUR-35, MUR-45 and MUR-85, the City is creating a tremendous amount of development potential; more so than you would find in any type of density bonus. This additional development potential can be viewed as compensation for asking for affordable housing in all three of the MUR zones. One option is to include language that explains the policy direction and purpose in creating the new zones. In return, the City could require a percentage of the units to be affordable. A more traditional approach would be limit density and/or height in the MUR-35, MUR-45 and MUR-85 zones unless affordable housing is provided as part of a project. While the latter option is a tried and true method, it flies in the face of the form-based code approach; and developers may choose to limit development to the lower levels to avoid the affordable housing requirement, which would be inconsistent with the City's vision for the area.

Director Markle said that in addition to a mandatory requirement for a minimum level of affordable housing, the City could offer a property tax exemption for up to 12 years for developments that include more affordable housing than the minimum required. For example, if 20% of the units in the MUR zones are required to be affordable at 70% of average median income (AMI) for King County, developers who provide units affordable at 60% AMI could be eligible for the 12-year property tax

exemption. This option would incentivize developers to go to the deeper affordability level, which is more difficult to finance.

If the Commission is not comfortable with a mandatory affordable housing requirement, the property tax exemption could be used to create an affordable housing program in the MUR zones. For example, the only way a developer could obtain a property tax exemption in the station area is by providing units that are affordable at a certain percent of AMI. She noted that property tax exemptions can be very valuable. She said other options for encouraging affordable housing include exemptions from transportation impact fees (already allowed by code), and waiving building permit fees for the portion of a project that is considered "affordable."

Mr. Cohen provided a chart to illustrate how three recently developed projects were impacted by current permit fees, and how they would be impacted by the Transportation Impact Fee (TIF), which will be implemented in January 2015. The chart also illustrated the cost/savings associated with other concepts the Commission is considering for the MUR zones such as a 2% arts fee, Property Tax Exemption (PTE) for affordable housing, and TIF exemption. Taking into account both the development cost savings and the rent loss associated with building affordable housing, there would have been an overall savings if the City required affordable housing but offered TIF exemption and a PTE for a full eight years. He pointed out that paying a fee-in-lieu for the affordable housing requirement would have generally been the more costly approach.

Director Markle specifically asked the Commission to provide feedback on specific questions related to requirements for the MUR zones. Chair Pro Tem Craft noted that several Commissioners were absent. While they could discuss the questions and provide feedback, he suggested they have a follow up discussion at a future meeting. Director Markle agreed to incorporate the Commission's feedback into the proposal for continued discussion at their next meeting. However, she emphasized that the Commission must complete its discussion regarding the Development Code by their last meeting in November, and then they will begin talking about the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Subarea Plan, itself. The entire package should be ready for a public hearing on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The Commission and staff discussed the questions as follows:

- **Should the proposal include a mandatory affordable housing requirement in the MUR zones? If yes, which zones?** Commissioner Maul said he supports a mandatory affordable housing requirement in the MUR-85 zone, but the requirement could be onerous for smaller developments in the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones. Rather than a mandatory requirement for all MUR zones, he suggested that a PTE incentive could be used to encourage the use in the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones. Chair Pro Tem Craft concurred that he is uncomfortable with the idea of mandating affordable housing, particularly in the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones. However, he would support the idea of incentivizing it to attract more participants.

At the request of Commissioner Monk, Director Markle explained that a mandated affordable housing requirement would require developers to construct affordable housing units, but the City could offer a fee-in-lieu program, as well. Commissioner Monk asked if developers would be granted a PTE for putting money into a fee-in-lieu program. Director Markle explained that, as per the City's commitment to create transit-oriented densities around the station, the proposal would

rezone numerous properties from R-6 to MUR. This would result in increased development potential, and in exchange, the City could ask developers to provide affordable housing. A PTE would be an additional incentive, but it would not be available for units that are paid-in-lieu. It would only apply to units that are built and taxed.

Director Markle summarized that the Commission would like staff to bring back a recommendation that has a mandatory program for the MUR-85 zone, as well as a voluntary program for a deeper level of affordability. The Commission could then choose which components would be mandatory and which would be voluntary. They could also have additional discussion about applying the requirement to the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones.

- **Do you think the program should apply to rental and owner products?** Director Markle advised that in most cities, the program applies to both rental and owner products. Chair Pro Tem Craft agreed that would be appropriate, but he requested more details about what the appropriate range would be for both rental and owner properties. Director Markle said the Housing Development Consortium (HDC) provided this information, which was forwarded to the Commissioners in a previous packet. Typically, cities make the affordability level higher for ownership and lower for rental properties. She agreed to work with the HDC to come with a recommendation that is both competitive and comparative to other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Maul asked if the “affordable” requirement would only apply to the initial sale of an owner unit. He questioned how the City would control the cost of the unit after the first sale. Director Markle answered that a notice about the conditions of affordability would be recorded on the title for both the rental and owner units. Staff has been working on Development Code regulations that will manage the program, which will be presented to the Commission at their next meeting.

**Kayla Schott-Bresler, Policy Manager, Housing Development Consortium**, commented that the AMI number could increase as income levels and property values change. Commissioner Maul asked what would happen if the initial buyer triples his/her income, but the value of the home is locked into a specific percentage of AMI. **Kelly Rider, Policy Director, Housing Development Consortium**, advised that, typically, a person would own the home until he/she decides to sell it. However, she agreed to research this question more and provide additional information to the Commission. She noted that, oftentimes, models allow for adjustments for different units. If one owner is able to move into another unit, they could sell out the other home. However, the number of units that are required to be affordable would not change. This is particularly true for rental units.

- **What level of affordability should be considered for rental units and what percentage of the units should be affordable?** Director Markle advised that other Cities typically use 70% to 80% Average Median Income (AMI), but some go as low as 50% AMI.
- **How long should the units be affordable?** Director Markle recalled that from previous discussion, the Commission appears to support a 50-year term for how long the units must remain affordable.

- **Should the City offer a fee-in-lieu option? If so, should there be a per-foot cost per unit or should it be a per-unit cost.** Director Markle advised that the per-square-foot option may have some benefits because the City would not have to predetermine the mix of units. If the per-unit approach is used, the City must specify whether the units can be studio or if they must be one or two bedrooms. Perhaps the City could create a program that has fee-in-lieu for commercial space, and not just residential units. The Commission expressed support for a fee-in-lieu program in conjunction with a mandatory and/or voluntary affordable housing requirement.
- **Should the base fee be based on the cost to develop at market rate or the cost of affordable not-for-profit?** Director Markle explained that, typically, the cost of not-for-profit affordable housing is a little more. She agreed to identify potential fee-in-lieu rates for not-for-profit versus market-rate affordable housing. Chair Maul requested an explanation of the differences. Ms. Ryder explained that the difference in cost relates to efficiency. When a market redeveloper produces affordable housing on site, they gain some efficiency because they already have a basic building. On the other hand, a non-profit group must start the entire building over. If a developer only pays a fee that is equal to the cost of an affordable unit in his/her existing building, it would not be enough to produce the unit in an entirely new building.
- **Should the City offer a building permit fee reduction?** Commissioner Maul expressed support for reducing building fees, particularly for non-profit organizations. He noted that a non-profit group's upfront costs to get a project started have a bigger impact on the project moving forward, and a little extra incentive might have value. Chair Pro Tem Craft suggested that perhaps for-profit developers could be offered a smaller reduction.
- **Does the Commission want to discuss any other components that are currently proposed in the MUR-85 zone with a development agreement as a mandatory or incentive-based component in the MUR-35, MUR-45 and MUR-85 zones?** Director Markle referred to the list of potential components that was included in the Staff Report. Commissioner Maul pointed out that the Commission is considering the option of a development agreement in the MUR-85 zone to allow for additional height. He is not sure this same concept would be appropriate in the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones. The current zoning proposal provides for a nice transition, and there would be very little MUR-85 zoning next to single-family residential. If additional height is allowed in the MUR-35 zone via a development agreement, the affect of the intended transition would be diminished. Perhaps it could be an option in the MUR-45 zone. The Commission agreed that additional height should not be allowed in the MUR-35 zone, but it could be appropriate via a development agreement in the MUR-45 zone in exchange for affordability, sustainability, parking, etc.

Director Markle said a few other cities that have a mandatory affordable housing program also offer an incentive to get development to occur more rapidly in certain places. For example, the first 300 units that are developed in the MUR-85 zone would not be required to provide affordable housing or a much lower level of affordable housing would be required. The goal of this incentive is to get pioneer development that will, in turn, bring in other projects for which the affordability component would apply. This speaks to previous comments from Sound Transit about the need to incentivize certain development around the station and near the Shoreline Center. Commissioner Maul indicated support

for the concept, given that it would provide flexibility to get redevelopment started. The Commission agreed that staff should refine the concept for further discussion.

**Dan Dale, Shoreline**, said that with all due respect to the schedule, the Commission is covering a lot of material in a short amount of time and more information is needed. While the Commissioners are giving it their best effort, nearly half of their members are absent. He suggested the Commission needs more real-world examples and additional insight from the HDC. They need to ask more questions and become more informed before making a recommendation to the City Council.

**Merissa Reed, Shoreline**, agreed with Mr. Dale. As a citizen, she is concerned that decisions are being made too quickly. She suggested they consider changing the time table, as making the right decision should take priority. She asked if the Commission has talked about “passive” or “net zero” building and creating eco-districts. She suggested the Commission consider taking the incentive concept to a new level. They have a great opportunity to impact future development, and green building is not quite as cost prohibitive now, particularly for larger developments. She also said she supports the concept of phasing the zoning to maintain the urban village feel rather than urban sprawl. She recalled that, at the last Commission meeting, she spoke out against apodments and microhousing, which is not what she believes the neighborhood would best benefit from. Similarly, creating a situation where people can redevelop existing single-family properties with mega mansions instead of affordable housing options seems counter to the intent of the subarea plan.

**Yoshiko Saheki, Shoreline**, asked that as the Commission considers the proposed MUR zones, they keep in mind that the proposed MUR zones are complicated, with a variety of defining attributes. This is unlike the current zoning that most of the property owners in the subarea fall into (R-6 or R-8), and they are easy to understand. She has heard that no matter how the neighborhoods may be rezoned, change will not happen overnight. However, in talking with and listening to others, by and large, the MUR zones are unpopular among those whose homes will be in the MUR zones.

Ms. Saheki expressed her belief that the MUR zones have suffered from bad public relations; they have been badly packaged and poorly introduced to the communities. If at all possible, she would like a win-win out of the rezoning; something that not only the City leaders can support, but a plan that can be embraced as a positive change by property owners. She suggested that the Commission throw out the MUR zones and start over. By doing so, they could reuse all of the things in the proposed MUR zones, but they could be packaged differently and called something else. Specifically, she suggested that the R-6 and R-8 nomenclature be retained, but allow for additional permitted uses by creating zones named R-6A, R-6B, etc. Perhaps R-6A could allow for some attached housing, with clear intent that the maximum number of dwellings in an acre will exceed six. An R-6B could include all that is allowed in R-6A plus additional features such as home-based businesses. More permitted uses could be added with subsequent letters so that by the time you get to R-6ZZ, the zoning could have the 85-foot height and microhousing to boot.

Ms. Saheki expressed her belief that expanding additional permitted uses is a more constructive approach to rezoning than eliminating or “grandfathering” current uses. For staff to say “non-conforming does not mean not allowed” is a waste of energy. Staff should expend its energy explaining the positive outcomes of rezoning and not be placed in a defensive position. She asked that the

Commission recommend that the single-family, detached housing be retained as a permitted use in all light rail station subareas. The way to convince property owners that rezoning is in their best interest is by expanding rather than diminishing their possibilities. People understand R-6 and R-8, so it makes sense to start with that and expand on them. MUR is too different for most people to digest easily, and the City can get to the same end by taking a different path. Since change will not happen overnight, retaining single-family, detached housing as a permitted use in all zones is the best way to keep all neighborhoods vibrant and healthy in the near future and beyond.

**Kelly Rider, HDC**, said the HCC appreciates the Commission taking affordable housing seriously and trying to figure out how best to fit affordable housing into the rezone. They realize the issue is extremely complicated and new. She reminded the Commission that once this value is given away in the increased density, they cannot go back. She asked the Commission to keep in mind what the City wants, how they ask for it, and how they give developers the value in return that they need. She noted that, across the King County region, they are typically looking at steel and concrete development at the 85-foot level. This is a much more complicated and costly type of development. It is easier and less costly to put the affordable housing units in the lower buildings; and that is where the majority of affordable housing is created. She reminded the Commission that near the transit station is where low-income individuals will be able to access the transit they need to get to work. They are the most dependent on transit, so whatever the Commission can do to make sure affordable housing gets built in the subarea will be great for Shoreline and its community.

### **Transit Way Development Agreements**

Director Markle advised that staff has had discussions with Sound Transit regarding regulations that would apply to the stations, parking and the rail line, itself. Staff has also researched what other cities have done. The goal is to have a defined process in place when Sound Transit is ready to move forward with permitting and agreements. She reminded the Commission that the current Development Code has a general development agreement process, and the Commission is proposing a separate development agreement process for the MUR-85 zone. Staff is currently advocating that the general development agreement process be used to define how the City will regulate the light rail uses.

Director Markle explained that the City still has a lot to learn about how all of the different agreements will work, particularly since all cities have different mixes where light rail is located. The concept was included in the Staff Report as an introduction of one way the City could address the tracks, station, parking garage, support facilities, stormwater, utilities and other structures related to the light rail facility. If the Commission supports this approach, staff will continue discussions with Sound Transit to come up with the best proposal for the Commission to consider at their November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Commission agreed that would be appropriate.

### **Alleys**

Mr. Cohen said alleys seem to be a desirable component to building communities, especially along Northeast 185th Street. One significant benefit is that alleys reduce the number of curb cuts needed along arterials within the subarea. He reviewed that the North City Business District zoning included a requirement that alleys be established as development occurred. The requirement was unsuccessful and



later eliminated because 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue has such long blocks. Because of the shortness of the blocks along Northeast 185th Street, staff considered this option as a possibility in the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Subarea. However, they felt that allowing alleys to be constructed on a site-by-site basis as properties develop would not work well in this situation, either. Another option would be for the City to actually purchase land and build the alleys as rights-of-way, but this would be a costly and controversial undertaking. If the Commission is interested in pursuing this option, they could recommend that this policy be added to the subarea plan.

Mr. Cohen said staff believes that the best option for getting the desired product without requiring the City to actually acquire land to build alleys would be to include provisions in the Development Code that require properties with side streets (corner lots) to have access from the side streets. Properties without side streets could be required to have an administrative review if the developer wants to place the access mid block. In addition, garages and parking would have to be located in the rear of the parcel and may eventually lead to a through-alley. He noted that this requirement would be more restrictive than the current commercial zone, which allows a small amount of parking on the back side of the sidewalk.

**Tom Poitras, Shoreline**, asked if property owners who decide to retain their residential homes would be required to give up a portion of their land for an alley easement. Mr. Cohen emphasized that the requirement would only pertain to new development. Ms. Redinger emphasized that the City's transportation planners have not expressed an interest in developing alleyways. The question before the Commission is whether the subarea plan should include a policy for the City Council to dedicate funding to study the alleyway concept as part of the Route Development Plan.

Commissioner Maul expressed support for minimizing curb cuts on Northeast 185<sup>th</sup> Street, and they should definitely consider not allowing new parking along the frontage of Northeast 185th Street. However, they must also recognize that the driveways and parking areas for existing homes can be maintained. He acknowledged that alleys that extend the entire block would likely only occur with full-block developments, and he would hesitate to require all development to provide an alleyway. However, he supports the concept of requiring corner lots to access via the side streets.

The Commission agreed it would be appropriate to limit curb cuts for new development and create a mechanism by which access to properties on Northeast 185<sup>th</sup> Street could come through alleyways or other non-arterial streets.

Commissioner Maul requested more information about why the alleyway requirement was not successful in North City. Mr. Cohen explained that the requirement was too general and difficult to administer and implement. Staff did the best they could, but additional policy direction was needed.

### **Pedestrian/Street Front Amenities**

Mr. Cohen advised that, in addition to the general required street frontage improvements, staff has considered ideas for enhancing private property development that fronts on a street. The existing commercial zoning includes a requirement for public plazas that are visible and accessible from the public sidewalks. It also discourages parking and car usage between the buildings and the sidewalks.

However, other than a size requirement and a requirement that the public space be used for pedestrians or people sitting, the code is not very specific.

Mr. Cohen referred to proposed language that would provide more direction regarding amenities, such as plantings, artwork, fountains, etc. The requirement would apply to all development on arterial streets in the MUR zones. In addition, staff is proposing a step back requirement for all development on arterials in the MUR-85 zone in order to avoid a "canyon effect." Because properties zoned MUR-85 are primarily adjacent to MUR-45 zones, staff is proposing that a 10-foot step back occur at 45 feet before continuing up to the height limit.

Commissioner Mork asked if the City would offer an incentive for developers to provide the street front amenities. Mr. Cohen answered that, as proposed, the amenities would be a requirement for developing in the MUR zones. Ms. Redinger recalled the Commission's earlier discussion about whether or not transition area standards should apply between the various MUR zones. She pointed out that the transition area standards work well in some areas of the City, such as along Aurora Avenue North, which is a major arterial with single-family residential homes within a couple of blocks. However, the proposed zoning in the subarea is boxy and blocky, especially if a phased approach is implemented, and they could end up with buildings that are odd shaped and overly expensive. A member of the 145SCC suggested that development along major arterials could be stepped back to enhance the pedestrian feel, and staff provided some sketches at the recent design workshop to illustrate the concept further.

Chair Pro Tem Craft said he supports a step back requirement. He also supports more specific standards for street front amenities. The remaining Commissioners concurred. Mr. Cohen clarified that, as proposed, the higher standards would apply to all commercial zones in the City, and not just the MUR zones.

### **Microhousing**

Mr. Lee provided a chart representing census data for household sizes for the past 40 years in the United States. He noted that the number of single-person households has steadily increased (from 17.1% to 27.4%), while the number of larger households has decreased (from 20.9% to 9.6%). Single and two-person households now represent the largest segments.

Micro units can be compared to a studio apartment. They range anywhere from slightly more than 100 square feet to several hundred square feet in size. They can have their own kitchen and bathroom facilities, or they can have shared facilities. He provided a layout of a typical, self-sustained micro unit, as well as pictures depicting micro units that have recently been constructed. He also provided examples of model microhousing developments, and described the unique features of each one. He noted that micro apartment buildings are becoming more popular, but they can also be controversial.

Mr. Lee reviewed recent controversy in the City of Seattle, which resulted in a moratorium on microhousing for a good portion of the year. While the City of Seattle never had development regulations in place to address microhousing, it did have regulations related to congregate residences (groups of sleeping rooms with shared kitchens and restroom facilities). The Seattle City Council recently took action that allows congregant residences in high-density urban zones only. They also

created a new terminology called “small efficiency dwelling units” that will be allowed in all zones. The minimum size requirement would be 220 square feet, and the units must be self-contained. In addition, Seattle will now require design review for all congregate and small efficiency developments.

Mr. Lee asked the Commission to provide specific feedback about whether micro-housing should be allowed and regulated in the City, and specifically in the subarea. If the Commission would like to consider allowing microhousing with more detailed standards, staff recommends the use be prohibited in the subarea until additional work can be completed in 2015.

**Dan Dale, Shoreline**, said a developer friend of his has constructed several microhousing developments. They are inexpensive because there are no parking requirements. While the concept is very beneficial to developers, it can hurt the surrounding community because they do not have any realistic parking. While Utopia says that everyone living in the units will use public transportation and not own cars, that reality is quite far away. Before recommending that microhousing be allowed in Shoreline, and specifically the subarea, he suggested the Commission take time to dive deeper into the issue. He noted that most of the citizens in the neighborhoods surrounding the subarea are very cautious, if not against, this type of development.

Commissioner Maul expressed his belief that microhousing is an excellent option for providing housing at affordable rates. He suggested that the negative connotation that has developed is because there were loop holes in Seattle’s code that allowed the units to be developed without any parking requirement. While there may be locations where this is appropriate (near universities or colleges), there should be some parking requirement for most buildings that are exclusively micro units. However, if micro units are included in a larger project that provides parking for the rest of the tenants, there may not be a need for additional parking to serve the micro units, particularly if the development is located adjacent to a light rail station. He reminded the Commission that parking increases the cost of development, and there needs to be a balance. Again, he suggested that the negative attitude regarding the use comes from units that were constructed in single-family neighborhoods with no parking whatsoever. These situations have definitely burdened the neighborhoods.

Chair Pro Tem Craft said he has heard enough concern that he would like to prohibit microhousing in the subareas until they can have a larger, citywide debate to understand the issue better. He felt the discussion should focus on a citywide scale rather than just the two station areas. He noted that a microhousing development has already been proposed on Aurora Avenue North. While there may be benefits to this type of use, there are still many questions and concerns. Mr. Cohen clarified that while the use is not outright allowed, it is not specifically prohibited in the City. He said it appears that Chair Pro Tem Craft is suggesting that the use be explicitly prohibited in the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Station Subarea until the concept can be studied further.

Commissioner Malek asked if there are examples where microhousing has been integrated into projects that include larger units or if they tend to be stand alone projects. Mr. Lee said the example he provided of a development in California is comprised of a combination of different types of units. He is not sure if Seattle or anywhere else in King County has that type of a mixed development, but he could certainly look into it.

Commissioner Malek requested more information about the current application on Aurora Avenue North. Mr. Lee said the City has received an application for a microhousing development at 17020 Aurora Avenue North. Commissioner Maul advised that he is working on this proposal, which would have 11 pods, each with six to eight rooms off a common area. The four-story complex would require just shy of ½ parking stall per bedroom or suite. The developer is working with Shoreline Community College, who has a strong interest in pre-renting a number of units and providing a shuttle to and from the campus.

Chair Pro Tem Craft said he is not taking the position that the use should be outright banned in Shoreline at this time. He is suggesting that the concept needs to be talked about on a larger, citywide scale. Again, he recommended that the use be prohibited in the MUR zones for now, while the Commission has a much broader discussion of what the standards should be. While microhousing can offer benefits, it can also create a great deal of consternation and disruption to neighborhoods.

### **Townhome Design Standards**

Mr. Cohen reviewed that townhome design standards are mostly addressed in the existing multi-family design standards in the Development Code. However, concern has been raised about the potential canyon affect that can be created by access drives between 4, 6 and 8-pack developments in the MUR-35 zone. In some cases, these areas are paved right up to the back of the buildings. Staff is recommending that the design standards be tweaked to require either 5 feet of landscaping or a 5-foot sidewalk along one side of the driveway.

Mr. Cohen said concern was also expressed about fences in the front yard with hardly any yard behind them. In these situations, there would be no entry or yard visible from the street. He noted that this concern can be addressed via the current multi-family design standards, which limits fence height to 3 feet and requires that entries be located on the street front.

The Commission supported the changes as proposed by staff.

### **Recap of Discussion**

Mr. Cohen provided the following recap of the Commission's previous discussions regarding development regulations for the 185<sup>th</sup> Street Light Rail Station Subarea Plan:

- Some Commissioners were in favor of a phased-zoning approach, and some were not. He referred to an updated map, which illustrates the proposed boundaries for Phase 1. He noted that the map incorporates the Commission's recommendation to expand the MUR-85 zone both north and south.
- The Commission previously agreed that transitions in the form of zoning designations are appropriate in the subarea, and no additional standards are needed.
- The Commission discussed that new single-family, detached development should be allowed in MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones. However, their direction was unclear about whether this same concept should apply in the MUR-85 zone.

- The Commission recommended not using minimum densities in the MUR-35 and MUR-45 zones, but they did not provide clear direction about whether it should be required in the MUR-85 zone.

Mr. Cohen announced that the topics of discussion at the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting will include a follow up on transit way development standards, affordable housing, and the pioneering incentive. The intent is for the Commission to wrap up its review of the Development Regulations on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting will include a review of the final Environmental Impact Statement and draft subarea policies. On December 4<sup>th</sup>, the Commission's discussion will focus on the Subarea Plan and Planned Action, and any outstanding issues will be carried to the December 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. A public hearing is scheduled for January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Markle did not have any items to report.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

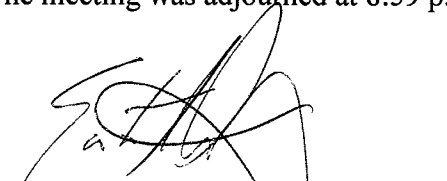
Commissioner Maul reported on his attendance at last week's 145<sup>th</sup> Street Station Area Design Workshop, which was well attended. The key feedback from attendees was that smaller is better. Other issues were related to Thornton Creek and tree preservation.

### **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

There was no additional discussion related to the November 6<sup>th</sup> agenda.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.



Easton Craft  
Chair Pro Tem, Planning Commission



Lisa Basher  
Clerk, Planning Commission

