

6a. Staff Report - Townhouse Design Standards Code Update

Planning Commission Meeting Date: October 3, 2019

Agenda Item: 6a

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Public Hearing Townhouse Design Standards Code Update
DEPARTMENT: Planning & Community Development
PRESENTED BY: Catie Lee, AICP, Associate Planner

Public Hearing
 Discussion

Study Session
 Update

Recommendation Only
 Other

Introduction

The City has experienced increasing demand for the townhouse housing style since the adoption of the Mixed Use Residential (MUR) 35' and 45' zoning in the 185th and 145th Station Areas in 2015 and 2016. The City's current design standards for townhouses are better suited for apartment buildings than townhouses. While the increase in new townhouses constructed helps to expand housing choice within the city, it is important that these developments be appropriately designed to ensure both functional and desirable places to live.

The current design standards for townhouses are found in SMC 20.50.120 through .210 Multifamily and Single-Family Attached Residential Design. Most of this section will be deleted in its entirety and replaced with "Single-Family Attached Residential Design." The regulations in SMC 20.50.220 through .250 – Subchapter 4. Commercial Zone Standards, will regulate all multifamily development in the City regardless of zoning district. Other Development Code sections, such as Definitions SMC Chapter 20.20, Unit Lot Subdivision SMC 20.30.410(B)(4), and Landscaping SMC 20.50 Subchapter 7, need to be amended in conjunction with the townhouse design standards amendments.

The overarching goal of the proposed amendments is to yield quality townhouse developments that add value to the community.

Background

Research was conducted by City staff earlier this year that looked at the zoning code of 22 jurisdictions in the Pacific Northwest. City staff met with internal and external stakeholders in a series of nine (9) meetings from January to June this year. An online visual preference survey was open the month of April that received 534 total responses.

August 1, 2019, Public Workshop and Planning Commission Study Session (#1)

Prior to the Planning Commission meeting, a public workshop was held. City staff made a presentation after which the meeting divided into two smaller groups to discuss site

Approved By:

Project Manager



Planning Director



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design and building design. Ten (10) community members were in attendance. City staff and several Planning Commissioners also attended the workshop.

At the August 1 Planning Commission meeting, staff introduced the draft Townhouse Design Standards code amendments. A link is provided to obtain more information about the August 1st Planning Commission meeting including the Staff Report:

<http://www.shorelinewa.gov/home/showdocument?id=44616> and a link to the meeting video recording page:

http://shoreline.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=9&clip_id=973.

September 5, 2019, Planning Commission Study Session (#2)

At the September 5th Planning Commission meeting, staff summarized feedback received at the August 1st public workshop and Planning Commission meeting. Staff outlined options for addressing concerns raised at the August 1st meetings and requested direction from the Commission. A link is provided to obtain more information about the September 5th Planning Commission meeting including the Staff Report:

<http://www.shorelinewa.gov/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/14014/182?toggle=all> and a link to the meeting video recording page:

http://shoreline.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=9&clip_id=978.

Planning Commission Direction to Staff

The Planning Commission provided direction on six (6) specific items of concern outlined by staff at the September 5th meeting. These were in direct response to concerns raised by the Commission at the August 1st meeting, and also by community members, at the August 1st public workshop.

1. SMC 20.50.160(C) Site Configuration

- *Proposed Language (August 1 Draft):* At least 40 percent of units within a site shall be located between the property line and a 25-foot distance from the property line to create a “street wall” which enhances the streetscape and overall pedestrian experience.
- *City staff presented three options:* 1) Make an exception to this standard for lots 60 feet wide or less; 2) Re-write the requirement; or 3) Keep the originally proposed language.
- *Result:* The Commission discussed the various options but ultimately directed staff to keep the original proposed language.

2. SMC 20.50.160(D) Site Access and Circulation

- *Proposed Language (August 1 Draft):* Each unit shall have onsite pedestrian access to a public sidewalk, and common outdoor space and common parking areas, if provided.

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- *City staff proposed the following clarifying language to be added:* For buildings that do not front on the public right(s)-of-way, this requirement shall be considered met if pedestrian access is provided from a public sidewalk to the building(s).
- *Result:* The Commission viewed this proposed clarification as satisfactory.

3. SMC 20.50.160(H) Outdoor Space

- *Proposed Language Summary (August 1 Draft):* The draft provided an option for developments meeting this requirement, either 150 square feet of private outdoor space shall be provided; or 800 square feet or 50 square feet per unit (whichever is greater) of common outdoor space shall be provided. No minimum lineal dimension of the private outdoor space was specified.
- *For minimum lineal dimension staff presented two options:* 1) Minimum of four (4) feet; or 2) Minimum of six (6) feet.
- *Result:* The Commission directed staff to set the minimum lineal dimension for private outdoor space at six (6) feet.
- *For private vs common outdoor space staff presented two options:* 1) For developments with ten (10) or more units, require both private and common outdoor space; or 2) Keep the original language where an option was provided.
- *Result:* The Commission directed staff to require developments with ten (10) or more units to provide both private and common outdoor space.

4. SMC 20.50.170(B)(1) Building Modulation, Massing and Articulation

- *Proposed Language (August 1 Draft):* Each unit shall have a covered entry or porch with weather protection at least 30 square feet with no dimension less than five lineal (5) feet.
- *City staff proposed the following language to be added:* Each unit shall have a covered entry or porch with weather protection at least 30 square feet with a minimum width of six (6) feet and minimum depth of four (4) feet.
- *Result:* The Commission viewed this proposed revision as satisfactory.

5. SMC 20.50.170(B)(2) Building Modulation, Massing and Articulation

- *Proposed Language Summary (August 1 Draft):* The draft required buildings to use at least three (3) variation techniques to make the front of the building facing the street more visually interesting.
- *City staff presented two options:* 1) Increase the requirement from three (3) techniques to four (4) techniques and add trim as one of the options; or 2) Keep the requirement at three (3) techniques and add trim as one of the options.

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- *Result:* The Commission directed staff to keep the requirement at three (3) techniques and add trim as one of the options.
- 6. SMC 20.50.485 Front façade landscaping, single-family attached and mixed single-family attached developments – Standards**
- *Proposed Language Summary (August 1 Draft):* The draft required a portion of the building facing the street to have landscaping along the façade equal to 50% of the required setback.
 - *City staff proposed the following language to be added:* If a property has a required setback of zero (0) feet, landscaping shall be provided at a depth of at least four (4) feet and width at least 30 percent of the unit width. The required landscaping shall abut the entry. For example, if the unit width is 20 feet, the landscaping next to the entry shall be a minimum of six (6) feet wide.
 - *Result:* The Commission viewed this proposed revision as satisfactory.

In addition to these concerns, city staff also outlined other changes in the draft made between the August 1st and September 5th Planning Commission meetings as a result of ongoing internal discussion among city staff. The Commission offered no comments on these changes.

Concern with Lack of Fire Sprinkler Systems

An issue raised by the Commission at the September 5th meeting related to townhouses and fire sprinkler systems. This is an important life-safety issue that is regulated by the International Fire Code (IFC). The City has amendments to the IFC in SMC 15.05.050. All buildings over 4,800 square feet are required to have fire sprinkler systems. Most townhouses being built exceed 4,800 square feet, but some are under that threshold. Buildings under 4,800 square feet may still be required to have a fire sprinkler system based on factors such as fire flow and distance to a hydrant.

Since 2018 the City of Shoreline has required a Fire Impact Fee (FIF), which was established by Ordinance No. 791, and is contained in SMC Chapter 3.75. The 2019 rate for a single-family residential unit, such as a townhouse, is \$2,187.00. If a fire sprinkler system is not required to be installed by the IFC, but is done so voluntarily, then a credit of 30 percent is applied. On a townhouse unit that amounts to \$656.10 less, so a FIF of \$1,530.90. According to staff at the Shoreline Fire Department, the national average to install a fire sprinkler system is \$1.35 per square foot. A fire sprinkler system in a townhouse building that is 4,799 square feet would cost \$6,478.65.00 to install.

Any changes to current Building Code regulations or the FIF incentive structure would require amendment of those respective SMC sections, not the Development Code (Shoreline Municipal Code, Title 20).

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Edits to the Townhouse Design Standards since September 5th Planning Commission Meeting

All the updates as directed by the Planning Commission at its September 5th meeting have been made to the Proposed Townhouse Design Standards Development Code Amendments (**Attachment A**).

As a result of ongoing internal city staff discussions, the following changes have also been made and are itemized below.

- SMC 20.50.160(D) Site Access and Circulation:
 - (D)(5)(a): The September 5th draft stated that onsite pedestrian access could be raised or otherwise separated from vehicle circulation. The Proposed Townhouse Design Standards Development Code Amendments (**Attachment A**) has removed the word “raised” clarifying that pedestrian access must be separated by a building or five-feet of landscaping. The reason for the change is to mitigate a large amount of hardscape with no softening provided by landscaping. Leaving the word “raised” would allow a 20-foot wide access drive and a four-foot walkway right next to it amounting to 24 feet of hardscape.
 - (D)(5)(b)(iii): The words “doors” and “windows” have been added to the list of elements of a building that allow informal surveillance.
- SMC 20.60.160(H) Outdoor Space: For parcels with nine (9) or fewer units, the verbiage “or 50 square feet” was removed from the phrase “Each development shall provide a minimum of 800 square feet or 50 square feet per unit of common outdoor space, whichever is greater...” This recognizes that 800 square feet is always going to be greater than 450 square feet (50 x 9).
- SMC 20.50.170(B)(2) Building Modulation, Massing and Articulation: Changed requirement that three (3) variation techniques have to be used from “per unit” to “per building.” This clarifies the proposed requirement because some of the modulation techniques apply to the entire building, not to every unit.
- Table 20.70.450 – Access Types and Widths: The September 5th draft classified single-family attached developments with ten (10) or more units as a “Private or Public Street” access type, which means that a 20-foot wide access drive and a raised five-foot walkway is required on one side. This amounts to 25 feet of hardscape uninterrupted by any landscaping to soften it. Staff is now proposing to add “Mixed Single-Family Attached” in the list of use types to be considered a “Multifamily” access type, which means a minimum 20-foot wide access drive is required. Onsite pedestrian access would defer to the applicable design standards (Single-Family Attached Residential Design or Commercial Zone Design).

There were also a few very minor edits that were not substantive such as typographical errors or an incorrect reference.

Attachment A is now formatted to include the illustrations and images previously attached to staff reports as a separate document. These illustrations and images are intended to provide further clarity on code requirements. Specific dimensions are not called out on the illustrations as the code could be amended over time, necessitating

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changes to the illustrations as well. These illustrations were created by a consultant through a one-time supplemental budget request (2019-2020 Biennial Budget).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission make findings and conclusions to recommend approval of the Proposed Townhouse Design Standards Development Code Amendments (**Attachment A**) to the City Council.

Next Steps

November 25, 2019 City Council Meeting – City Council will discuss the Planning Commission’s recommendation on the Townhouse Design Standards Development Code amendments.

December 9, 2019 City Council Meeting – City Council is scheduled to consider adoption of the Townhouse Design Standards Development Code amendments.

Attachments

Attachment A – Proposed Townhouse Design Standards Development Code Amendments (Strikethrough and Underline)