

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

May 18, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present

Chair Pam Sager
Vice Chair Julius Rwamashongye
Commissioner Janelle Callahan
Commissioner Christopher Mosier

Staff Present

Andrew Bauer, Planning Manager
Elise Keim, Senior Planner
Julie Ainsworth-Taylor, Assistant City Attorney
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Leslie Brinson (excused)
Commissioner Andy Galuska (excused)
Commissioner Mei-shiou Lin

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Ms. Hoekzema called the roll.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of April 20, 2023 were accepted as presented.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no general public comments.

STUDY ITEM: 2024 Comprehensive Plan: Discussion of Middle Housing

Senior Planner Elise Keim made the presentation regarding middle housing. Middle housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units that encourage walkable neighborhoods. The City has been doing some work related to middle housing that is grant funded. This has given Shoreline a head start on the topic of middle housing. Shoreline will continue the work on middle housing after the grant ends in June. They will continue work on preparing Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and updating the development code to comply with state requirements. Deliverables from the grant include an existing conditions report, public outreach and summary, a racial equity analysis, and draft policies & implementation concepts. She provided an update on some of what has been done so far and new state regulations.

The options for housing types in Shoreline fall into three broad categories – single-family detached (66%), single-family attached (7%), and multifamily (27%). The median price for a single-family home in Shoreline in 2022 was \$822,990 while monthly rent was \$1,635. She summarized that choices for forms of housing in Shoreline are pretty constrained and also pretty expensive. She discussed displacement and how Shoreline is preparing policies to address this.

Public participation has included work with specific community-based organizations who represent different vulnerable populations in Shoreline. They have convened focus groups of people who may be interested in middle housing in Shoreline. They have heard that people have affordability concerns, and current housing policies are not addressing housing issues. There is general support for middle housing but also skepticism that it is really going to address people’s housing needs. An online survey revealed that the biggest housing challenges in Shoreline are access to amenities, cost of housing, sense of safety, and having a house that meets the residents’ needs. There will be a virtual public meeting on May 24 regarding middle housing.

HB 1100 requires the City to allow at least two units per residential lot. The City will also allow at least four units per residential lot if it is within ¼ mile of a major transit stop or if at least one unit in the development is affordable. Compliance with the bill is required six months after the City’s next Comprehensive Plan update (mid-2025). The bill also requires cities to allow at least six of nine forms of middle housing identified in the bill (duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, townhomes, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing). The bill also focuses on a form-based approach. She reviewed details of this.

Discussion:

Commissioner Rwamashongye discussed how “stacked flats” have different meanings in different parts of the world. He recommended defining this very clearly.

Commissioner Callahan asked if there would be any opportunity to have specific standards for different neighborhoods with the form-based approach. Ms. Keim indicated she could look into this.

Commissioner Mosier asked if the form-based code takes into account that most middle housing will be infill or if it assumes a green field as is reflected in the diagrams. Ms. Keim thought it was probably a blend of both. They will need to dig into this further to see what it will look like for Shoreline.

Chair Sager asked if the plexes could be either rented or owned. Ms. Keim replied there are many different ownership structures available, and the City does not regulate that. Chair Sager asked about the difference between a multiplex and an apartment. Ms. Keim explained that the important thing about middle housing is that it is house scale. Chair Sager asked how the infrastructure will be handled. Ms. Keim responded that currently development is responsible for any needed updates. This will need to be a part of future conversations.

Commissioner Mosier referred to neighborhoods that are far away from other things. He wondered if there is anything they should be doing to foster those as little villages or transects, especially in terms of parking requirements. Ms. Keim explained that the City has the freedom to do what is appropriate for Shoreline. There was some discussion about the implication of changes in bus routes on zoning regulations.

Commissioner Mosier referred to things that are not in the zoning code but are in the engineering manual such as driveway access, rain capture, etc. He asked about getting input from other departments. Ms. Keim replied that staff realizes the importance of coordinating with Public Works, Fire, and utility providers to see how this is going to happen. She offered to reach out to Public Works to see how to include them in discussions with the Planning Commission.

Discussion questions:

Should staff explore policies and regulations for a form-based residential code?

- Chair Sager – Yes.
- Commissioner Rwamashongye – Yes but get input from neighborhoods to shape them the way that is best for the neighborhoods instead of a cookie-cutter approach.
- Commissioner Mosier – Yes. Also, look at some test parcels.
- Commissioner Callahan – Yes, but she has concerns about implementation issues for staff. Ms. Keim noted that the bill requires objective design and development standards to help with this. She thinks it will be very clear for staff to implement.

What forms of middle housing should staff explore?

- Chair Sager suggested looking at everything on the list.
- Commissioner Mosier said the only thing he had concerned about is townhomes. He doesn't like how the main thing you see is a garage. That might not be appropriate in all areas, especially where they are trying to discourage the use of cars. Ms. Keim explained that with the form-based code they could have an overlay where they specify what forms of middle housing would be available in different areas.
- Commissioner Callahan asked if they are looking at businesses being allowed as part of this. Ms. Keim responded that is something they can look at. There are some forms of middle housing such as "live work" which might have a shop front in combination with living quarters. The bill requires six of nine forms that are listed in the bill but the City can look at other forms as well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planning Manager Bauer stated that the Comprehensive Plan online open house closed last week. There were almost 4,000 visitors to the online open house. Of those, there were almost 1300 unique visits, almost 300 survey responses, and about 154 comments posted on the virtual idea wall.

He also reported that the City Council will be discussing interim regulations for ground floor commercial requirements on Monday night. The Planning Commission will be tasked with developing the permanent regulations. This will be coming to the Planning Commission in the next few months.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Staff reviewed the agenda for the next meeting – June 1.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.



Pam Sager
Chair, Planning Commission



Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission