

DRAFT
CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

August 3, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present

Vice Chair Julius Rwamashongye
Commissioner Leslie Brinson
Commissioner Janelle Callahan
Commissioner Andy Galuska (Zoom)
Commissioner Christopher Mosier

Staff Present

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

Commissioners Absent

Chair Pam Sager
Commissioner Mei-shiou Lin

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Rwamashongye 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 July 20, 2023 were accepted as presented.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Cole, Home Realty, Seattle, commented on the tremendous lack of available properties in Shoreline. He spoke in support of regulations allowing flexibility such as ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) and

DADUs (Detached Accessory Dwelling Units) to allow more people to have an opportunity for housing. He noted that the great opportunity in Shoreline is the geography.

Catherine Weibridge, Shoreline, expressed frustration that regulations do not allow them to subdivide their lot to build a second home. She noted that most of the plans for middle housing would benefit developers and not homeowners. This is because most of the existing homes are ranch style, and the only way they could add on would be to build up or destroy their home to put up smaller attached homes. She also wondered if staff would be looking at making it easier to remove deed and plat restrictions that basically enforce single-family homes only in the area.

Kathleen Russell, resident, Save Shoreline Trees, noted that the Comprehensive Review of the entire Tree Code planned for 2025 should not preclude or eliminate the discussion of the Tree Code during discussions and decisions pertaining to middle housing. In the middle housing bill, House Bill 1110, the state legislature confirmed that certain regulations will remain under individual municipal codes, one being tree regulations as pertaining to middle housing. However, in the discussion questions presented to the Planning Commission this evening, page 7 of the study report, discussion question 2, the theme of environment is not included as one of the main themes. Save Shoreline Trees asks that this theme and how middle housing will encompass the natural environment be included as a primary theme. In support of this request, the discussion should be how to keep tree canopy in lower density districts and how to keep and build tree canopy in greater density zones. Environmental issues are consequential to housing decisions as we will continue to experience impacts of climate and heat islands in the northwest. Ms. Russell summarized they would like the City to include the environment and tree canopy in the middle housing discussions.

STUDY ITEM: 2024 Comprehensive Plan: Discussion of Middle Housing

Senior Planner Elise Keim made the presentation regarding middle housing. She reviewed work to date which has been funded by a grant from the Department of Commerce - an existing conditions report, public outreach, and a racial equity analysis. The racial equity analysis was citywide and not focused on just middle housing; it will be discussed in detail at an upcoming meeting. She discussed the impacts of House Bill 1110 which means that Shoreline will be allowing two units per residential lot and four units per lot near transit or if the development includes at least one affordable unit. The House Bill lays out nine forms of middle housing, of which cities need to permit at least six forms. All development documents need to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan so laying a supportive policy foundation will be an important first step.

Public Engagement Summary:

- People were supportive of development through conversion of existing units/properties.
- There is a tension from uneven development impacts (east of Highway 99 versus west of Highway 99)
- There is support for open spaces, biodiversity, and tree canopy preservation.
- There was an acknowledgement of a history of displacement and exclusion.

Ms. Keim explained that existing land use and housing goals and policies were reviewed for how supportive they were of middle housing. The results showed unclear support, such as support for diverse

housing choices but placing strict density limits on approximately 80% of zoned land in the city. In light of HB 1110, this language will need to be updated. Staff has drafted goals and policies that are supportive of middle housing. This includes revision to existing goals/policies as well as some new goals/policies. Ms. Keim reviewed some of the draft goals and policies. Themes of the changes include an increase in the variety of housing choices, a focus on affordability of housing, focusing regulations on building form rather than building use, and continuous community involvement.

Discussion Questions

How would you describe the overall goal (the desired future state) for middle housing in Shoreline?

- Commissioner Mosier - Create vibrant communities; promote housing for people at different stages of life and with different levels of income; keep business districts afloat; fund schools and parks.
- Commissioner Brinson – Creating “new communities” with compatible forms, development regulations that facilitate the new vision. She explained how the current regulations have resulted in some unintended consequences.
- Commissioner Callahan – Affordable and desirable housing; preserve neighborhoods; watch out for unintended consequences.
- Commissioner Galuska – Look at changing zoning map to allow higher densities where it is appropriate and scale down density as you go away from arterials and centers. Be proactive about looking at where it makes sense to have the higher densities rather than just allowing duplexes and more ADUs in single family zones.

Themes to help guide further refinement of middle housing goals and policies: increase variety, focus on affordability, regulate form/scale over use, and community involvement. Are any themes missing? Should anything be added or removed?

- Commissioner Callahan asked for clarification about what form/scale over use means. Ms. Keim explained that for staff it means looking at the size of the building (the building envelope) rather than how the space is programmed.
- Commissioner Brinson agreed with that definition and also creating areas where they might see higher intensity middle housing and lower intensity middle housing mixed with single family. There might be a need for new zones where there is a sort of “middle intensity”.
- Commissioner Galuska said there are some areas in the low intensity zones that could actually be moderate zones (like along 185th and subareas around the transit centers). The density could step down as you get further away from these areas. He recommended thinking about where they can increase the density around the city rather than just automatically blanketing the density throughout the single-family zones.
- Commissioner Brinson noted that from a development finance perspective, certain forms are more feasible in some areas than others.
- Planning Manager Bauer commented that there seems to be an interest in exploring different intensities of the form-based code.
- Commissioner Callahan referred to an email received from Paul Malmsten about wanting more low impact commercial uses in existing low and medium density residential zones. This seems to be consistent with what they are talking about.

4a. Draft Minutes from August 3, 2023

- Commissioner Mosier suggested an exercise of ignoring the zoning map for a moment and looking at the centers as village hubs with a high density that radiates out to lower densities. He recommended “creating communities” that are the center. There are already some of these that have schools and parks associated with them.
- Vice Chair Rwamashongye agreed with other comments. He asked how they prevent displacement with the form-based regulations. Are there forms that can generate displacement? If so, can we avoid those?
- Commissioner Brinson said that this is where the intersection of affordability and displacement are really important. There are anti-displacement tools, but usually they are financial tools, not zoning tools – utility discounts, existing property tax exemptions, etc. True affordability comes with additional public dollars that are invested and doing what needs to be done to attract those dollars to the city. In order to build for low and extremely low-income families you need a lot of subsidies. These may come through non-profits and other stakeholders.
- Commissioner Mosier noted that several public comments referenced the unique character, scale, and charm of Shoreline. He recommended defining what this is irrespective of house size. He commented that trees are the characteristic that comes to mind for him.
- Commissioner Brinson spoke to the character qualities of inclusion and community as being as valuable as architectural qualities.
- Commissioner Callahan agreed that figuring out unique identities for neighborhoods is an important part of the vision.
- Commissioner Galuska did not think they could come up with a citywide character of Shoreline, but said they could focus on character and identities of neighborhoods. He recommended having differences in architectural standards for different areas to set them apart and identify them.
- Commissioner Mosier was not in support of using architectural guidelines to create character. He thought that uses, people, and businesses create the character.

Is there any other guidance you would like to provide staff as they continue to refine these goals and policies?

- Commissioner Mosier said it is important to remind people that the City is not banning single-family homes; they are just adding to them. He thinks the City should be more encouraging of conversions and infill housing.
- Commissioner Callahan expressed concern about the impact fees and noted this is important to address.
- Commissioner Brinson agreed and added that the utility per unit charges is another issue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Manager Bauer reminded the Commission about the annual Planning Commission retreat on September 7 at 5:30 p.m. Staff has brainstormed some topics and is open to other suggestions. He also reminded commissioners about Celebrate Shoreline on August 19. Staff will have a table at the event

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talking about middle housing. Commissioners are welcome to join in. Vice Chair Rwamashongye said when he has done it, he really enjoyed it.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Staff is recommending cancelling the August 17 meeting. The next meeting will be the retreat on September 7.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Julius Rwamashongye
Vice Chair, Planning Commission

Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission