

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

September 21, 2023
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present

Chair Pam Sager
Vice Chair Julius Rwamashongye
Commissioner Leslie Brinson
Commissioner Janelle Callahan
Commissioner Andy Galuska
Commissioner Mei-shiou Lin
Commissioner Christopher Mosier

Staff Present

Andrew Bauer, Planning Manager
Nathan Daum, Economic Development Mgr.
Julie Ainsworth-Taylor, Assistant City Attorney
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

Other:

Patrick Doherty, Consultant

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 August 3, 2023 and September 7, 2023 were accepted as presented.

STUDY ITEM: Ground-Floor Commercial Development Code Amendments

Planning Manager Bauer and Economic Development Program Manager Daum introduced this topic and introduced consultant Patrick Doherty. Mr. Bauer gave an overview of multifamily buildings and ground floor commercial (GFC) regulations in Shoreline and what the experience has been like in North City and Ridgecrest. Lessons learned were that there were challenges associated with the “restaurant ready” height bonus, the fitness center allowance, and parking requirements.

Mr. Doherty discussed staff's perspective on various topics, proposed questions, and then invited feedback.

Commercial vs. Nonresidential – Should the required ground floor space be referred to as “nonresidential”?

- Commissioner Mosier asked if any of these regulations would apply retroactively to buildings with solely nonresidential uses in those zones. Mr. Daum explained this is an update to the multifamily section of the code so the expectation is that it would apply to multifamily developments. Mr. Doherty added that this is about the standards for how to get ground floor commercial in multifamily buildings. If someone wants to build a commercial or retail building there would be nothing further to regulate because they are already doing what is desired. These regulations are a way to get commercial in a way that otherwise wouldn't happen. Mr. Daum added that existing buildings would be grandfathered in.
- Commissioner Galuska said he is open to broadening the term to nonresidential but said he wants to be careful about allowing certain uses like storage or even offices in some neighborhoods because they don't generate much activity.
- Commissioner Mosier agreed that nonresidential is a good change because it broadens the scope. He expressed caution about limiting the type of use too much.
- Commissioner Callahan asked if they are seeing this change in verbiage in other jurisdictions. Mr. Doherty affirmed that they are. He noted that the primary issue they are focusing on is not losing land for commercial uses no matter how exciting they are. It won't always be just purely retail. Mr. Bauer explained that the permitted uses are tied back to the underlying zoning with some specific uses called out.
- Chair Sager thinks the change to nonresidential is great; commercial is too restrictive.
- Vice Chair Rwamashongye referred to a little business that couldn't start up near 20th Avenue NW and Richmond Beach Way a couple years ago. He asked if this change in regulations would help that business to start. Mr. Bauer replied that it wouldn't apply because these provisions only apply to multifamily developments in the subset of zones identified. However, there were provisions adopted related to commercial adaptive reuse that allowed more flexibility and may have helped that situation.

Primary and Secondary Commercial Corridors – Should GFC regulations differ between principal and minor arterials versus all other streets?

- Commissioner Brinson asked if they have a sense of how the future land use map and 10,000 jobs relates to the amount of ground floor commercial space. Mr. Bauer thought they could come up with some rough estimates. He stated they are in the early stages of doing the analysis related to jobs capacity for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update. That work will further inform the approach they have toward commercial zones and residential development. Commissioner Brinson noted that this discussion is about restricting the amount that is available. It's difficult to think about whether or not there is enough in advance. Mr. Doherty commented that is why they have proposed the interim live-work residential use which will be looked at in a number of years and can be adapted as needed.
- Commissioner Mosier thought this makes sense, but a lot of primary streets are already occupied by large commercial developments like grocery stores that probably aren't going anywhere. He

is hesitant to limit the side streets because it can limit the potential of what can be built there. Mr. Doherty clarified that the existing regulation is that 70% of the ground floor should be commercial or non-residential. What they are proposing is that a smaller percentage (maybe 60%) should be on the side street where it is not necessarily a commercial street yet to avoid vacancies. It is not that they wouldn't require any; it would just be a lesser amount. Commissioner Mosier agreed with Commissioner Brinson that it is difficult to make that decision not knowing what they already have and what they need.

- Commissioner Callahan thought some flexibility seemed good. She asked if they intended to ask stakeholders what they think about this. Mr. Daum affirmed that they would. Mr. Doherty added that most developers are multifamily developers who are begrudgingly providing the commercial space and would most likely be happy to do less. He discussed how this was handled in Seattle.
- Commissioner Mosier commented on his experience with living in a live-work space in Seattle. One challenge was that a lot of landlords will put a prohibition in your lease from using the live-work as a commercial space regardless of what the city code says is allowed.
- Commissioner Lin asked what they would do with the primary/secondary regulations if they have an area that is already overbuilt. Mr. Doherty proposed looking at these regulations on an interim basis and committing to look at them again in a certain amount of time or after certain thresholds have been met. These issues are about the transition that Shoreline is in right now to what it may be in ten years or more. The regulations will help smooth the transition in the interim.
- Vice Chair Rwamashongye said it is almost like a leap of faith. It gives us the chance to see the city in a different form by providing opportunities and removing barriers from development. He thinks the 60% may be a good place to start, but they should look at it again at some point down the line.
- Commissioner Galuska supported having the primary corridors and something a little less intensive, but he disagreed with basing this on principal and minor arterials. For these new neighborhoods, he thought they should be looking at something like a walkshed from a central area such as a train station. Commissioner Brinson agreed that thinking about it from a distance perspective might be more helpful. Mr. Bauer suggested staff could bring back some visuals and maps highlighting where the regulations would apply with greater detail. He indicated staff could draw it on the map as an overlay type area similar to what is done in Ridgecrest and North City if desired by the Commission. There appeared to be an interest in identifying and focusing on primary locations such as main intersections and moving out in intensity from there. Mr. Doherty suggested they could have a citywide standard that it doesn't become secondary until it is a certain distance from a primary corridor. Several commissioners liked that idea.
- Chair Sager agreed with having less, and 60% sounds like a great place to start.
- Commissioner Mosier asked if there is an option for deviation or flexibility through the administrative design review process. Mr. Daum replied that they could write that into the code.

Percentage Ground-Floor Façade as GFC – Should secondary streets (not principal and minor arterials) have lesser requirement (such as 60%)?

- This was included with previous topics.

Depth of GFC Space Requirements – Should minimum depth be allowed to be less, such as 15 feet?

- There appeared to be consensus that 15' sounds good.

Height of GFC Space – Should minimum height be measured floor-to-ceiling or floor-to-floor AND should minimum height be set at 15'?

- Commissioner Mosier thought 15' floor-to-floor makes sense.

Percentage of Ground-Floor Façade Transparency - Should the requirement be increased to 60% on primary commercial corridors measured between 30" and 8' above sidewalk level? Should secondary commercial corridors have a lesser requirement (at approximately the same ratio of 60% requirement to 75% GFC width) such as 45%?

- Vice Chair Rwamashongye brought up privacy concerns. Mr. Doherty explained they are not talking about specific uses. It would be built with a transparent storefront system, but particular users can have blinds if desired. They are just trying to make sure the space is there to accommodate the full range of uses.
- Chair Sager agreed with increasing it to 50% on primary corridors.
- Commissioner Mosier asked about having some flexibility with certain uses such as a restaurant. Mr. Bauer explained that they could go through the administrative design review process for departures from the standard.
- There was general agreement with staff's recommendation.

Live-Work Residential – Should live-work residential be a permitted use in ground-floor space along secondary streets (not Principal or Minor Arterials)? Should an interim, or transitional period, be explored further where live-work residential is permitted for an initial five-year period, for example?

- Commissioner Brinson thought this makes sense as a transitional piece.
- Mr. Doherty suggested adding a definition of live-work residential to the code.
- There was discussion about the benefits to small businesses to having this sort of arrangement which allows the City to build today for what they will need in the future. Commissioner Brinson expressed concern that these could be too desirable to developers to build, and it might be all we end up with. Mr. Doherty noted that the proposal is to limit them to the secondary streets and clarified that staff's recommendation is that this would only be transitional for five years. He suggested that instead of allowing all of that to be potentially live-work, they could say that only something like half could be live-work. He noted they could come back with a pick list for this with various options.
- Chair Sager said she was okay with transitional.

Parking for GFC – Should ground-floor commercial space be exempt from minimum parking requirement?

- Commissioner Mosier thought no parking requirements was a great idea.
- Commissioner Galuska suggested that if an applicant builds frontage improvements and maintains them, they could count on-street parking. Mr. Bauer commented that they have looked at that option in the past, and Public Works and the City Attorney are not big fans of that approach because of a private development using a public right-of-way to meet their parking requirements. This is one of the reasons they are proposing no parking requirements. There is a lot of literature showing that even if the City lifts all parking requirements, developers are still

going to provide parking because it is market driven. It's not that there won't be on-site parking required; the City just won't be regulating it.

- Commissioner Brinson pointed out that childcare centers always have parking requirements for pickup and drop-offs. Commissioner Mosier asked if daycares are a use permitted outright. Mr. Bauer explained it depends on the number of children. Once there are 12 children and up there is a different level of review.
- Chair Sager said she is mostly in favor of no parking requirements but she has concerns about people with disabilities. Mr. Doherty noted that in Edmonds and other older cities there is a handicapped space on every block. This is something that Public Works may want to analyze. Mr. Daum stated staff could look into that.
- Vice Chair Rwamashongye spoke to the need for drop off zones in addition to handicapped parking.
- The Planning Commission summarized that they were in support of no parking, but they need accommodation for the disabled and for drop-offs.

Height Bonus – Should SMC 20.40.465D be amended to reduce the height bonus for providing ground-floor nonresidential space from 8 feet to 5 feet? Should an additional height bonus be explored for grocery-ready ground floor space, as determined on a case-by-case basis?

- Commissioner Mosier recommended writing the height limit into the code rather than as an incentive.
- Vice Chair Rwamashongye agreed with removing some of the confusing bonuses. The incentives work but putting together the matrix of all the bonuses is mindboggling.
- There was consensus that reducing the height bonus from 8 to 5 feet was good.

Fitness Center Allowance – Should this allowance be eliminated for multi-family developments?

- There was consensus to eliminate this.

Public outreach and engagement are happening now until October 5. A developer stakeholders meeting will be held soon.

Topics for future discussion:

- Over-development of residential in commercial zones – could result in insufficient land available for future commercial development needs
- Mixed-Use/Commercial Design Standards may need revision including building modulation and ground-floor public place requirements
- Vacancy Ordinance
- Conversion of Existing Residential to Commercial

Mr. Bauer reviewed next steps and a tentative schedule going forward. Staff will present a first draft of amendments at the October 5 or October 19 meeting, depending on when they are able to get the draft completed. The survey results and results from the developer meeting will be available on the 19th.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Nataline Chew, Shoreline, commented that after 2030 all new vehicles would only be electric. This will mean that there would be a big infrastructure change because people will need to plug in their vehicles overnight. She thinks this could be a big problem for multifamily buildings not having enough places for people to charge their electric vehicles. She thinks it would be ideal for new buildings to have spaces for charging for every vehicle. In 2035 fossil fuels will no longer be available for residential vehicles. She recommended that they really need to think about more electric vehicle charging ports in new buildings and retrofitting older buildings. Another big issue is if the electrical infrastructure is sufficient. People need to consider this in their homes and at work. She suggested looking at resiliency so they never run out of electricity. One way to do this is back up batteries in all commercial buildings and in homes. She thinks there are some grants that the City of Shoreline can apply for from the Department of Energy and the Department of Commerce to fund resiliency of batteries. She recommended putting some provisions regarding these up-and-coming dates into the Comprehensive Plan for new buildings and for retrofitting buildings so every person can charge their vehicles overnight when they come home and also at businesses/work.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Bauer announced there is a groundbreaking ceremony tentatively scheduled for October 4 at the mixed-use site with ground floor commercial in North City. Staff will send out information once they know more.

Commissioner Brinson commented that Seattle City Light is looking at providing electric vehicle charging stations across their entire service territory.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Staff reviewed the agenda for the next meeting – October 5, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.



Pam Sager
Chair, Planning Commission



Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission