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Mixed Use Zones Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

Date: October 15th, 2014

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Location: 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Portland, 2nd Floor - Room 2500

Committee Members in Attendance: Jason Barnstead-Long, Doug Klotz, Carol Gosset, Sarah Iannarone, Mike Warwick, Damien Hall, Cora Potter, Brendon Haggerty, Duane Hunting, Curt Schneider, Denis Petrequin, Michael Hayes, Vicki Skryha, Bob Bolieau, Charlotte Larson, Susan Lindsay

Project Team in Attendance: Barry Manning, Bill Cunningham, Samantha Petty, Tyler Bump, Lora Lillard (BPS); Grant Morehead (PBOT); Bill Tripp (Consultant); Deb Meihoff (Facilitator)

Member of the Public in Attendance (14)

Meeting Goals: Review modifications to Code Concepts paper and overview of key findings in Assessment Report; provide feedback on public workshops and input on materials.

PAC Process Updates and Feedback

- Meeting notes from our last PAC meetings are available online. Meeting notes from our two work sessions are available in today's meeting packet.
- There have been two public hearings so far. The next one is October 28th and the last hearing is November 4th. However, the public comment period will extend until March. This will allow time for comments on early implementation project concepts.
- There has been a request for a memo to the PSC outlining the basic concepts of the Mixed Use zones. Staff will keep the PAC updated as to our progress on that memo.

Updates on the Concurrent Parking Study

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/63980>

Grant Morehead, the project manager for the parking study briefed the PAC on what the purpose of the study and how it might interact with their work. He explained the study is part of a citywide policy review that looks to incorporate a proactive and systematic and data driven approach to parking in the right of way. It will develop prototypes for parking management plans based on things like Development Activity, Levels of Transit Service, and Comp Plan Designation. The project will present some initial ideas to City Council in late summer or early fall. Carol Gosset serves on both committees (MUZ PAC and Parking Study) and can serve as a liaison between the two.

The five case study areas for the project are:

- St Johns (Town Center, Civic Corridor, frequent bus service)



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- Hollywood (Town Center, Civic Corridor, light rail station area, transit center)
- SE Division Street (Town Center, Neighborhood Corridor, frequent bus service)
- N Mississippi Ave (Neighborhood Center, Neighborhood Corridor, frequent bus service)
- NE 28th Ave (no center designation, Neighborhood Corridor, no bus service)

PAC Comments/Discussion on Parking Study:

- This study should help us use parking as a tool to incentivize development. Especially in East Portland which is not seeing development.

Upcoming MUZ Project Public Workshops

- The first public workshop will be held Nov 5th from 6pm-9pm at the BPS building
- Possible 2nd workshop will be held Nov 6th from 6pm-9pm at Jefferson High School

Topics for November and December PAC meetings

- We are on track to move into the Concept Phase of our project and plan to start writing code in the spring.
- Staff hopes to have visual and economic modeling for the PAC to review in Nov. or Dec.

Assessment Report Summary/Overview

The Assessment Report is complete and will be available online here:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/65113>

Content

- Zoning overview and evaluation
- How code could be improved and/or simplified
- Best practices from other jurisdictions
- Concepts to address

Report conclusions

- Recast Commercial zones as Commercial Mixed Use zones – clarify to the public what is possible in these zones
- Consolidate and reduce the number of zones – in some cases zones are underutilized or have very small differences
- Combine neighborhood commercial zones
- Eliminate office zones
- Increase 30' height limit to 35' for small scale zone
- Adjust maximum lot coverage
- Adjust limits on size of uses



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- Storefront Commercial zone – a lot of development is happening in this zone and future changes should be aware of changes that might inhibit development in this zone
- There is a need to maintain some type of zone that allows auto-oriented uses, maybe recast as “commercial employment”

PAC Comment on Assessment Report:

- The assessment report states that residential centers in East Portland have a higher density than most areas in the city. This is an important thing to keep in mind when we justify underserving this area based on lack of density.

Code Concepts

- Staff added a new concept: green features

PAC Comments/Discussion on Code Concepts:

- Green features (like bio swales) do not belong on Civic Corridors. They compete with pedestrian space and detract from the ROW or sidewalk width.
- Prioritize innovative stormwater management strategies that do not compete with pedestrian space.
- Review of Work Session and further PAC comments on future direction topics

1. Relate building height to street scale/transit function. Create zones that can respond to different street scales and contexts, allowing taller or larger buildings on larger-scaled streets such as Civic Corridors, in key locations close to the Central City, and around high capacity transit stations.

- Aesthetic ratio do relate to policy goals because taller buildings bring a sense of street enclosure and all related benefits. Moreover because of lack of connectivity in East Portland, denser development provides more goods and services to residents.
- This could create an equity issue because the larger streets are mostly on the fringes. We should be cautious about what types of development we are forcing to the fringes of the city.
- Should we really be basing development on our current street scale? Lots of streets in E. Portland should be narrowed to provide a better pedestrian experience so we should be planning development accordingly.
- Remember that ROW changes over time.
- We need to think about the other ingredients that relate height and that might be more important like transit service, traffic speed/volumes, etc.
- I like the idea of having heights be sensitive to street width but heights should also be sensitive to buildable area. If you have three property owners than you could have three allowed heights based on the size of their properties. This would force variety.
- Heights should be on a gradient from the Centers - the closer to the Center the higher the allowance.



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3. Height transitions and buffering. Explore citywide approaches to setbacks, height transitions and buffering for mixed-use zones adjacent to lower-density residential zones to foster a more gradual scale transition. Consider solar access issues in shaping these transitions.

- Was there discussion of up zoning the buffer residential? Staff response: Yes, it is not always appropriate or feasible, partly because of neighborhood concerns. There has been a discussion of allowing more uses in the R-zoned properties adjacent to Mixed Use zones.
- Properties adjacent to commercial should have higher height allowances.
- Historic Districts are overlay areas that impact height and they should to be added to the assessment report and the consideration of step-downs. There is an example of step-downs to historic areas on Broadway.
- The transitions from 45' to adjacent R-zones is not as sensitive for a step-down, but 65' or 75' are quite different. This is an example of where the plan should have had a buffer and the lack of buffer zones are making the transition difficult.
- What exactly is the concern about vertical texture? Is this warranted? In the next two decades are we really expecting block after block to develop to the same height? We should revisit whether we are tackling a problem that really exists or addressing a concern about a couple areas of recent development.
- Most of Paris is at one height. Architectural features and articulation create the texture and variety not height. Some cities require buildings to be the same height to create a certain ambiance.

9. Building setbacks. Simplify maximum setback regulations and offer more flexibility for providing outdoor spaces, landscaping. Consider eliminating requirements that in some cases require 100% of street facing façades to be located within required maximum setbacks.

- Pull back the front wall of a development to allow space for café tables and balconies. The East Burnside type of approach or the Salt and Straw building approach are good examples.

11. Outdoor space. Consider requiring private or shared outdoor space for residents to be provided in conjunction with mixed use development.

- If you do not provide outdoor space you shut families out. There is a big difference between sending your kids downstairs to play in your home and taking them to a park. At the park you have to be there and stop multi-tasking because you cannot see them out the window.
- BDS sometimes considers rooftops an extra floor – this affects height/FAR allowances accordingly. So if we want to encourage rooftop outdoor space we need to clarify that these spaces do not count as a floor.

13. Detached house development. Consider limiting new detached houses in mixed use zones, especially in the core areas of centers.

- Beware of over zoning Mixed Use zones. Staff response: we are thinking about only precluding detached housing in center overlays.



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- Why prohibit detached homes?
- From an equity perspective this goes both ways. There could be smaller landowners that only have money to develop a house and you would not want to restrict them. On the other hand, in places with lagging development, like East Portland, we are getting more detached housing and that housing is precluding development people want like grocery stores.
- This is also happening in R1 zones. Instead of apartments we are getting detached houses.
- When we are talking about incentives we need to create separate incentives for places where there is no demand to build anything v. incentives for places where development has taken off.
- East Portland feels like there is too little commercial zoning and it is built up with housing. Now that many thousands of people have been added we need to protect commercial space.
- This may be a situation where zoning should not match the comp plan until the market catches up.

17. Commercial-Employment zone. Consider a new zone intended for mixed commercial and employment uses, with possible limitations on residential uses. This could apply to portions of corridors located in between centers.

- If you apply auto-oriented employment zones how will you get the density and pedestrian environment you want? Staff response: We would apply these zones to dispersed areas where a pedestrian oriented development may be difficult or not as appropriate.
- This is a good opportunity for a bonus. You get a bonus for adding commercial activity.
- Don't dismiss sustainability and livability issues. Are industrial and employment zones really a good place to have housing? Mapping these zones will get to the details of which zones should be applied where. Coordinate the implementation with other bureaus.
- As someone who does not own a car, it is nice to be able to walk to some of the bigger shops like George Moreland. The ability to buy a washing machine or the water heater in your neighborhood supports a car free lifestyle.
- I worry about prohibiting residential because planners are bad at predicting where people want to live. Look at the new apartments on SE 12th and Taylor. We thought SE 12th would be auto-oriented and now people want to live there.
- I think it would be hard to figure out why an area is not suitable for housing. The market does a good job at mixing employment, services, and housing. Williams is a great example.
- This is very restrictive for property owners. We better have a really good reason to do it. What commercial uses are we trying to protect?
- Should we be using more general bonuses to allow pure commercial development like added height for commercial ground floors?
- Maybe you need to be flexible so existing commercial uses can add residential on top without a residential entrance on the street.

PAC Comments on other Issues

- Susan Lindsay was at the work session, add her name please.



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- Is there any discussion of adding Residential into FAR? (Staff: yes, this is being considered.)
- Clarification that we are still planning to explore transfer of development rights. (Staff: yes, this is being considered.)
- How will we get housing for families, housing for people with disabilities, or people aging in place?
- Affordable housing? What does this mean?
- Who is coming to these new zones?
- What about climate refugees?

PAC Comments/Discussion on Public Workshops

- Go five steps beyond what you think is too much to have visuals and models.
- There is general support from the PAC for a second workshop.
- Really clarify to the public that this project impacts Commercial zones. No one in the neighborhood is getting his or her house taken away.
- Use the workshops as a chance to test the future direction ideas for equity impacts.
- Ask people about the impacts of mixed use development on them and what benefits will they get/want.

Public Comments

1. Over planning and over restriction can have negative unintended consequences. Sometimes you don't need restrictions to get beautiful spaces. Height might be better addressed in overlay districts. Protecting some areas to maintain business is important. Think of the Inner East Side. Mandate that housing development should have some connection to the outdoors. Outdoor space is important for low-income residents and everyone benefits.
2. Relate height to public transit frequencies all along the street not just public transit stations. Fremont is a great example of a poorly served street. How will dense residential developments be served by low frequency buses?
3. Thinking about Division St. We do have blocks where all development is the same height. How do we capitalize on robust development to get unique urban patterns? We missed an opportunity on Division St. to experiment with shared stormwater management systems, shared public spaces, shared green spaces, etc.
4. Is there discussion for a one or two story mixed use zone? (Staff: Not currently, as residential allowances are typically three stories.)

Adjourn