

SMILE Land Use Committee
DRAFT Meeting Notes
June 6, 2018

Land Use Committee members present: David Schoellhamer, Miriam Erb, Vikki DeGaa, Francisco Salgado, Rocky Johnson, Bob Burkholder, Kevin Palmer, and Shari Gilevich. The meeting was attended by seven area residents.

Chair Schoellhamer called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Discussion on the Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA) Tools Concept Report (May 2018).
(<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/70324>)

David summarized the DOZA project: the City is amending the Design Overlay code (design guidelines, community design standards, and design review process) to make the process more efficient and predictable. The City also is looking at whether the "d" overlay should be added to some areas, but removed in others. In Sellwood-Moreland, the "d" overlay now is on the R2.5 zone, and the multi-family and commercial zones.

At this meeting the group discussed the first three concepts in the *Tools Concept Report*: where the design overlay zone should be added or removed; proposed development thresholds for using community design standards or design review; and the concept of providing incentives for new development that incorporates or preserves older, "character buildings" in a neighborhood.

The *Tools Concept Report* also proposes ideas for amending the discretionary design guidelines and objective design standards which focus on detailed architectural requirements. Those guidelines and standards will be discussed at a future Land Use Committee meeting.

1. Design overlay zone: The City proposes to remove the "d" overlay from the R2.5 single family zone. The rationale is that R2.5 developments are usually small, single family projects, and the City thinks that the design overlay should apply only to large projects.

Meeting attendees discussed what standards are provided with the overlay and what might be lost if the overlay is removed. David noted that a few of the "d" overlay design requirements (such as landscaping for narrow lots) are incorporated in the Residential Infill Project code.

The current Community Design Standards applied in single family zones with the "d" overlay are in the code section 33.218.100. A major issue in discussing this section of the code, though, is that because design standards are being revised in the DOZA project, it's unknown which standards will be applied with the "d" overlay.

Tyler Janzen brought up that the committee previously discussed the importance of supporting affordable development and thought that applying the "d" overlay may add time and cost to these residential projects. The meeting attendees discussed whether there would actually be any cost reduction because the overlay is removed and whether the City has provided any analysis of potential cost savings by removing the "d" overlay. While the base zones apply some development standards, it would seem that some desirable features may be foregone if the "d" overlay is removed. Miriam thought that an affordable unit could benefit from the design standards and be an attractive project to add to the livability of the neighborhood. Vikki also

thought that design standards (for example, landscaping, location of main entrance) could help a development fit into the neighborhood without dictating a specific building style.

David said that the City is considering adding the "d" overlay to commercial areas within all Neighborhood Centers to make the overlay consistent throughout the City.

A question was raised about how much voice we have with the city. David responded that we do have some impact especially when our comments are directed to amendments of the actual code language.

Land Use Committee members Vikki, Miriam, Francisco, Shari, Rocky and David supported keeping the "d" overlay in the R2.5 zones. Bob and Kevin had left this meeting at 6:30 to attend a SMILE Board meeting, so were not available to make their recommendation on this question. Miriam and Rocky will write up comments on this topic for David.

- 2. Threshold Table** (page 17 of the *DOZA Tools Concept Report*) David said that this concept would not change much for us. Almost all of our commercial or multi-family developments use the Community Design Standards, and those would continue to apply to buildings with residential units and to commercial development less than 20,000 sq. ft. in size.

Meeting attendees discussed the exemptions listed in the table, one being an exemption from Community Design Standards for developments with 3 or fewer residential units. It would appear that two attached units in R2.5 would be exempt from the standards.

Rocky said that the City is doing a big shift to add additional units in single family zones. The Planning & Sustainability Commission has discussed even allowing 4-plexes everywhere. That would seem to lead to multi-family level density, but no additional design standards beyond those in the base zone for these projects.

Land Use Committee members did not have objections to the listed thresholds.

- 3. Character Buildings.** In Sellwood-Moreland, the character buildings are the storefront, low buildings (often brick facades) associated with the street-car era. In order to preserve these, the City had considered down-zoning the commercial areas to CM1 (3 story development), but ultimately kept the CM2 zone (4 story development).

The City's proposal is to allow additional building square footage by increasing building height to five stories if a character storefront is maintained. Overall the concept is still rather vague.

Several issues were discussed with keeping storefronts, including that brick facades usually do not meet earthquake standards and that not all storefronts have design worth maintaining. It's possible that we would have preservation of an ugly building and get a taller building above it.

It would be beneficial to have/review an inventory of historic neighborhood buildings as a basis for making decisions on which buildings and styles would be desirable to keep. Vikki thought that it would be easier for people to adjust to the changes and redevelopment if places such as Gino's and the building with ZoomCare could be preserved. (It was also noted that the Residential Infill Project has an historic preservation section, and that that should be used to support maintaining historic homes. An incentive might be to allow larger ADUs in the back of the home if an historic home is kept.)

The concept of "character buildings" on commercial corners is generally supported, but details are needed about what criteria create a character building, and how building height and design are controlled. David suggested that there should be a requirement to step-back the building on the upper stories. Also, it will be key to retain public review of and input on these projects, and to require that they go through the design review process.

David brought up the current Community Design Standard that limits building height in the RHd zone to 55 feet, 20 feet lower than the height otherwise allowed in the RH zone. Committee members agreed that the height limit should be kept.

Zone changes now in effect with the adopted Comprehensive Plan (May 24, 2018).

With implementation of the new Comprehensive Plan and commercial zoning, the Sellwood-Moreland neighborhood now has the "d" overlay on all commercial zoned properties.

Testimony to present at the June 12th Planning & Sustainability Commission (PSC) on the *Better Housing by Design (BHD)* project.

David will testify at the PSC meeting and focus his comments on the extremes of housing types that may result from the BHD code. The code sets up FAR limits for structure size, but does not limit the number of dwellings that could be wedged into that structure. At the other extreme, the FAR and requirement for a minimum number of dwellings could result in a "McMansion" main house with a small internal ADU to meet the minimum number of units.

Next Land Use Committee meeting and Neighborhood Contact meetings.

The first Wednesday of July is the 4th, so a special date will need to be selected for the next meeting of the Land Use Committee.

A Neighborhood Contact Meeting (or several meetings) needs to be set up for 3 projects with design review.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.