

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: AHP Citizens Advisory Committee
Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to Chapters 55 & 59 regarding Area, Height and Placement: Summary of Public Involvement Process

DATE: November 6, 2009

Background

On March 16, 2009, City Council approved a public outreach strategy for the proposed amendments to Chapter 55 (Zoning) and 59 (Off-street Parking) pertaining primarily to the Area, Height and Placement chart in Chapter 55 that regulates setbacks, height and non-residential density. This memo summarizes the strategy, identifies major concerns expressed by participants of the process, proposes modifications to the proposed amendments, and makes recommendations for next steps.

Summary

City Council appointed an advisory committee to assist Planning and Development Services staff in developing a successful outreach strategy. Staff met with the Advisory Committee a total of four times: twice prior to hosting the public meetings, once after the first six meetings were held, and once to review this memo. The committee consisted of a member of City Council, a Planning Commissioner, a member of the original Technical Advisory Committee, a representative from each of the five City Wards, and representatives from the business community.

Public notice of the meetings included:

- Direct e-mail to Neighborhood Associations
- Direct e-mail to Commercial Associations
- GovDelivery e-mail notification
- CTN
- Direct e-mail to Stakeholders (list from earlier efforts with additions from the Advisory Committee)
- Announcements at City Planning Commission meetings
- Meeting announcements on the project web page of the City's website.
- Press Releases

The first of eight public meetings was held on May 27, 2009 at the CTN studios. Planning and Development Services staff introduced the project, summarized the history, summarized the proposed amendments which included visual images, and answered questions from attendees. The meeting was recorded and later periodically

televised. This broadcast was also added to the project webpage so members of the public could watch the presentation at their convenience.

The following five public meetings were held in each of the five City Wards. The meetings were similar in format to the May 27 meeting. The meetings were attended by a total of approximately 120 individuals. The attendance list revealed approximately 100 unique names. Members of the public provided extensive comment at each of the meetings. The comments for all the meeting are summarized in the attached document. Staff also received e-mail comments throughout this process which are also attached.

After the five Ward meetings were held, staff met again with the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee agreed to schedule two “wrap up” meetings at which staff would summarize the process to date, summarize the major concerns that had been raised, indicate how the proposed amendments could be modified to address those concerns, and receive feedback from participants. The last of these two wrap up meetings was held on October 7, 2009.

Attached to this memo are: a) meeting summaries of the eight public meetings, b) list of attendees, and c) letters and e-mails received regarding this effort.

Major Themes from Public Comment

The following is a list of frequently heard concerns expressed by members of the public at public meetings, in comment sheets and through e-mail. This list is not intended to include all comments; those are summarized in the attached meeting documentation

- Uncapping height gives developers the ability to create towers which can impact surrounding neighborhoods. Capping height should be restored.
- Retail sites vary dramatically regarding size and context. The 200% FAR might work well with some sites but be impactful with others and should be re-examined.
- Residential neighborhoods adjacent to employment and retail zoning districts could be significantly impacted by the proposed changes. These impacts should be considered and minimized.
- The proposed reduction in front setbacks should be reexamined to preserve areas for landscaping and be context sensitive: busy streets might need larger front setbacks.
- The proposed maximum setback of 40-feet in the R2A and R2B districts can result in new homes being placed in a manner that is inconsistent with the front setback pattern of established neighborhoods.

Proposed Modifications to the Draft Amendments

Staff and the Advisory Committee propose that the major concerns raised at the public meetings be addressed by the following modifications to the proposed amendments:

- Restore height limitations for Office, Research, ORL, and C3 zoning districts.

- Re-examine proposed increases in Retail Density (FAR) to ensure that the standards are sensitive to the dramatic differences in lot size and context of retail districts.
- Explore ways to reduce impacts in those areas where residential districts abut non-residential districts.
- Re-examine front setbacks to ensure that they are appropriate for each zoning district in a variety of locations.
- Revise the proposed maximum setbacks for the R2A and R2B districts so that the standard applies only to larger development projects and not small infill lots in established neighborhoods.

Recommendations

Staff and the Advisory Committee recommend that City Council direct staff to work with the Planning Commission to address the proposed modifications listed above. After the Planning Commission's Ordinance Revisions Committee completes its work, a public meeting should be held to summarize the results. Planning Commission would then hold a public hearing on the modified draft amendments. The proposed amendments would then be scheduled for a public hearing with City Council.

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