

6 Zoning Code Update

6.1 Staff Report (For Possible Action): Presentation, discussion, and potential recommendations on Zoning Code RENOvation Issue Sheet 3A (Administration and Procedures) 6:08 PM

Arlo Stockham, Community Development Director, followed up on discussion from last month and provided an overview of the planned public outreach process. The first draft for public review of Module 1 of the code dealing with zoning districts and uses will be released within a week. As a kick off to that release we are doing a citywide mailed notification to every property owner in the city. There are three modules in total that will come out in sequence through the end of the year and into January. A consolidated complete draft of the code is scheduled to be ready in early April when we plan to do a second draft public notification that also gets into some of the map amendments. Adoption is planned about a year from now in the summer of 2020.

Public workshops and open houses are planned for each phase of the project. Clarion will be present for the initial open house which will be an introduction to the plan and how it is organized. That presentation will also be given on September 3rd and again at the September 4th Planning Commission meeting. We will also be doing a round of NAB meetings next month and in early 2020.

Mr. Stockham discussed City Council actions on prior issue sheets involving the development standards. There was general opposition from the City Council for the additional air quality regulations recommended by the Planning Commission related to non-residential buildings and solar and EV enabled homes. Staff received direction that it is more of a healthy department function and there were concerns about the impacts on the cost of housing. At this point the initial draft will not include those additional regulations. There was also discomfort with the additional process requirement for annexation and abandonment reviews. Staff received direction from City Council to retain the exceptions to minimum densities as we have them in code. In terms of the streamlining of special use permits (SUP) for grading related activities, the Planning Commission recommended retaining the SUP requirement and the City Council directed staff to reconsider that as part of this issue sheet which focusses on process more generally. Finally, staff received direction from City Council to expedite a code amendment for the park shadowing ordinance to come up with an alternative in our downtown and mixed use areas as to not be an impediment to medium and high intensity infill. That may be a good topic to bring back to the next Planning Commission meeting for discussion.

Mr. Stockham led discussion on the issue sheet for Administration and Procedures outlining preliminary recommendations on the following four topics: 1) process improvements; 2) new tools for design flexibility; 3) project approval findings; and 4) system of planned unit developments and specific plan districts.

Public Comment:

Donna Keats provided positive feedback on the process and the work done by staff and the Planning Commission.

Topic #1

Commissioner Gower suggested pushing the noticing requirement for minor site plan reviews back out to a 500 foot radius instead of 250 feet.

Commissioner Marshall discussed the importance of engaging the public and stated oftentimes the point of that engagement is during the SUP process.

Mr. Stockham agreed that public engagement and involvement is critically important and stated that is much more effective if you engage at a planning level and not at a more adversarial project by project level. That is a big reason why we recommended, and the Planning Commission endorsed, doing post update neighborhood engagement efforts.

Mr. Stockham explained for Commissioner Taylor that the proposal does not exclusively loosen the restrictions on developers because we are planning to adopt more stringent development regulations. The proposal for targeted process streamlining does benefit the development community as well as our budget.

Commissioner Taylor felt that what is being proposed for neighborhood meetings will get better results for engaging the public than sending out more mailers.

Commissioner Gower expressed concern with using the existence of an arterial roadway to say there are no impacts on adjacent residential and would not be in favor of removal of that discretionary review.

Mr. Stockham clarified that many larger projects would still trigger that discretionary review because of the nature of the project. The proposal would be that adjacency itself would not trigger that review.

Chair Johnson agreed with the proposals in concept but expressed concerns about specific implementations.

Topic #2

Mr. Stockham explained for Chair Johnson that the recommendation for major deviations up to 50% is that it be treated like a site plan review where it would be an administrative decision with public notice that is appealable up to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Commissioner Gower discussed the proposal for a Design Review Committee (DRC) and stated that whatever process we go with it needs to be easy for the public to navigate.

Topic #3

Mr. Stockham explained for Commissioner Marshall that we don't want to get rid of important findings. There are best practices for findings nationally and ours are not quite aligned with that. We have had the same findings for many decades. The proposal is really just to refine them and bring them in line with best national practices for project approval findings.

Topic #4

Mr. Stockham explained for Commissioner Marshall that PUDs are an agreement that can't be amended without consent of the property owner that is subject to it. SPD is zoning that the city could amend over the objection of a property owner.

Commissioner Gower requested a future agenda item to discuss opportunities to implement some of the topics discussed in the MPA process, the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, and in the City of Reno's resolution to accept the Washoe County Air Quality Management Division's Ozone Advance Program.

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