



CITY OF SNOHOMISH

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MIDTOWN TASK FORCE MEETING #4, continued February 9, 2021

TASK FORCE MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

Alice Armstrong	Thomas Kreinbring
Gordon Cole	Van Tormohlen
Ray Cook, Vice Chair	Jeanette Pop
Mitch Cornelison	Kyle Stevens
Paula Denney	Kat Thompson

Task Force Members Absent: Rio Ingram, Karl Houtman, Ethan Martez

There were 11 other meeting attendees from the public, City staff, and consultants.

PRESENT POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Consultant Bill Trimm presented the potential recommendations to the Task Force. The recommendations will be suggested revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, and planning principles that will inform the Planning Commission in considering future zoning regulations and design standards.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Morgan Davis discussed proposed policy MF 5.6. He expressed concern the draft policy's promotion of a mix of new residential units and encouraging affordable housing could mean an existing mobile home park would be closed. He would like to see something protecting the existing mobile home park. He didn't think the mobile home park residents would be able to afford to live in a new development and that they should be protected. Mr. Davis doesn't think the Midtown character would be improved by big buildings like the new apartment building just finished on Weaver Road. He objected to offering incentives like those that other jurisdictions do (as Mr. Trimm had said in his presentation) because Snohomish is not like other jurisdictions. He also spoke in opposition the draft recommendation #9 which includes incentives mentioning how he had to pay full fare on his property and it irks him that he and other landlords will have to pay more taxes to make up for the incentives being given away. Mr. Davis was still speaking when his three minutes were up and he was muted.

Karen Crowley discussed recommendation \$23, which addresses green building practices. In a previous draft, it said "incentivized" but that has changed to "encouraged" in the latest draft. She wants to ensure the Planning Commission talks about what can be done to consider green building practices, and it should be incentivized if possible. These practices are becoming more affordable and available. Recommendation 9 regarding affordable housing is also interesting, whether it should be required or incentivized. She recognizes it is challenging, but some percentage of the new housing should be affordable for lower income families. She encourages the Task Force and Planning Commission to make that so.

DELIBERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were 26 draft recommendations presented to the Task Force for inclusion in their memorandum to the Planning Commission. The first seven are changes to Comprehensive Plan policies, while the remainder are regulation recommendations. The Task Force discussed each recommendation individually. Changes from the recommendations as presented that were proposed by the Task Force are shown with underline and ~~strikethrough~~ font.

- 1: LU 2.12** Create a Midtown Zoning District in the Commercial Land Use Designation Area generally along the Avenue D corridor from Sixth Street to SR9. Provide two distinct overlay areas to accommodate differing land use densities and intensities.
- The southern portion of the district between Sixth and 10th streets should allow mixed land uses and low-rise building heights with moderate residential densities to maintain compatibility with surrounding public and residential neighborhoods.
 - The northern portion of the district between 10th Street and SR 9 should allow for mixed-use land use developments with ~~moderate to high residential~~ higher densities and mid-rise buildings deemed compatible with surrounding uses and neighborhoods.

2: LU 2.13 Create new site and building design standards applicable to ~~Avenue D and cross streets~~ in the Midtown Zoning District that provide for varying building facades and heights, streetscape features, parking, vehicular and pedestrian access, and landscaping provisions.

3: LU 2.14 Promote the use of innovative regulatory tools to encourage flexibility in the design, conditions and phasing of unique or mixed-use development proposals.

After some discussion, the Task Force made no change to the language of this recommendation.

4: MF 5.5 Multi-family residential in the Midtown District should be sited and designed consistent with the district design standards for building massing, details, façade materials, open space, landscaping, parking and service elements. The siting and design of buildings that front on Avenue D and cross streets should reflect the block frontage standards stated in the design standards.

The Task Force made no change to the language of this recommendation, however they requested that the Block Frontage graphic be included to illustrate the intent of the language.

5: MF 5.6 Promote a mix of new residential units, sizes and densities and use effective strategies designed to ~~create~~ include residences that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

6: CO 6.1e Midtown District

- e-1: Enable increased density and intensity standards that will incentivize desired commercial development and respond to local market conditions.
- e-2: Retain and support expansion of existing uses in the Midtown District and support infill development consistent with adopted design standards.
- e-3: Promote more intensive development in the corridor north of 10th street through redevelopment of large surface parking lots to mixed-use developments and upgrades to existing multi-tenant buildings. Architectural and urban design standards should begin to define the “Snohomish Character” and enhance the northern gateway to the District and City.
- e-4: The former Snohomish County Public Works Shop site at 1201 Bonneville Ave. should be planned for mixed land uses including multi-family residential, office, flex-tech, and commercial uses. Site design should take advantage of the elevation change with terraced building pads, varying building heights, open space layout and opportunities for structure parking. Site improvements that front on Avenue D and Bonneville Avenue should provide enhanced streetscape features such as abundant landscaping, widened sidewalks and safe vehicular access.

The Task Force made no change to the language of this recommendation, however agreed that the Planning Commission should conduct some public outreach in order to define the Snohomish character, as referenced in item e-3.

7: TR 22 Land use planning. Plan for land use densities and mixed-use development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit use in designated areas. Consider amending the City’s Capital Improvement Program to provide for the preparation of a streetscape and landscape improvement plan for the Avenue D corridor.

No changes were made to this recommendation.

8: Building design regulations should help define and promote “Snohomish character”.

The Snohomish character definition was again discussed. Mr. Bengford noted the building design policies get close to defining the Snohomish character, which are drawn from the visual preference survey and public input. No change was made to this recommendation.

9: The creation of affordable housing should be encouraged, with consideration given to establishing minimum requirements and/or providing incentives.

~~[required/incentivized]. Incentive examples can include any or all of the following:~~

- ~~○ density/height bonus;~~
- ~~○ reduced parking ratios;~~
- ~~○ multiple family tax exemption;~~
- ~~○ fee waivers/reductions (utility hook ups, impact fees).~~

The Task Force discussed this recommendation in detail and in addition to the language changes, they agreed the Planning Commission should be informed that many Task Force members were in favor of requiring affordable housing, rather than just encouraging or incentivizing it.

10: The maximum allowed density in the area should be increased from the current cap of 18 dwelling units per acre.

After some discussion, the Task Force made no change to this recommendation.

11: The maximum allowed building height should be increased with a smaller increase for the south area and a larger increase in the north.

- Up to 45' in south
- Up to 55' in north

Building height was discussed, and the Task Force voted on the potential height limits in the draft recommendation. The results of the vote are as follows:

Should the Task Force recommend allowing increased building heights in Midtown with a larger increase for buildings in the north and smaller increase in the south as discussed?

Yes 60%

No 40%

Should the recommended maximum building height allowed in the south be 45 feet?

Yes 60%

No 0%

35-foot maximum 40%

Increase beyond 45 feet 0%

Should the recommended maximum building height in the north be 55 feet?

Yes 50%

No 40%

35-foot maximum 0%

Increase beyond 55 feet 10%

The language of the recommendation was not changed but will require further deliberation.

12: ~~Development on larger sites should be required to go through enhanced development review.~~ Enhanced development review should be considered for larger sites.

Some Task Force members preferred to delete the recommendation entirely, replacing it with language that identifies the County property as a "special site". No consensus was reached.

13: A minimum amount of commercial space should be ~~required~~*incentivized* encouraged on the street level facing Avenue D.

14: ~~The following uses should be prohibited in Midtown:~~ Midtown regulations should prohibit specific undesirable uses.

- ~~○ Warehouses~~
- ~~○ Industrial with outdoor storage~~
- ~~○ Storage/self-storage~~
- ~~○ Large big box businesses~~
- ~~○ Marijuana facilities~~
- ~~○ Auto sales~~
- ~~○ Single family detached~~
- ~~○ Other?~~

The Task Force agreed it was preferable not to list the uses in the recommendation, but rather provide the information to the Planning Commission and allow them to consider the list.

LAST STEPS

The Task Force did not finish their deliberations by the end of the meeting. The meeting will be continued to March 9th. Staff will provide a new draft of the memorandum up to item 14 prior to the next meeting, when the Task Force will review revised language and complete deliberation of the remaining 11 items.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.