

CAC August 1, 2018

Why we've reconvened the CAC: City Council directed additional research on the 50-year benchmark, on the review of single family dwellings, and strategies for recent past resources. Clarion is looking into these additional research topics and we will bring their reports to you for your feedback. We are also looking to do additional outreach.

Today, Cameron will be explaining his changes to the LUC, and then we will discuss the Historic preservation Codes for development review.

Cameron: Compatibility Code Updates is what we've been calling this. They relate to the Historic Preservation, NCB, and Downtown pieces of code. The Downtown Plan and Old Town Neighborhoods Plan reinforced need to update the LUC. The Downtown Plan called for a new Downtown Zone district boundary. It includes Innosphere (north side of Vine, east of College) and the north campus area. We have Downtown subdistricts, which addresses how the different sections have different character. The two unifying things: the pedestrian quality and emerging skyline. One of the unifying qualities of the downtown is the storefront/street character. We have storefront, mixed use, and green edge street frontage types. The further out you get from the historic core, the more green edge you get. As developers come in, we will be holding them to design standards that relate to their frontage types that will influence design, building placement, materials, etc.

In our code, we have build-to ranges. We will also be regulating the building base materials. We are asking for higher quality materials on the first four floors. We're suggesting they should put the greatest emphasis on the lower stories to strengthen the pedestrian experience. We are also putting in standards about window transparency. We've had issues with about where the upper-story setbacks and we're saying now that if it contextually makes sense, they could push back at the fourth story rather than the third. Our proposed height limits have been through review before. We received pushback about decreasing height limit so we've added back some of that height in other areas. We've tried to create a buffer around the edge to the neighborhoods. We don't think these heights will create harmful effects, but we did receive a lot of push back to not decrease height limit. DDA was concerned that we might lose capacity in the downtown. Most of the height was gained in the Canyon subdistrict and lost in the Civic subdistrict. We want to see four sided architecture for buildings greater than 6 stories.

The other component to our work is the transition areas: the neighborhood conservation buffer. We are sticking with a three story maximum building height. There is a standard for a solar setback on the north end, which is our main substantive change to these standards. We see the NCB as a place for the missing middle housing that we need. The schedule has been pushed back, but we look forward to meeting with LPC and P&Z soon.

Brian: I noticed one partial block in the Canyon subdistrict area that disappeared and came back in different maps. Could you explain that?

Cameron: On that block, we are putting that block back into the D district. It is correct on the map. We heard from the property owners in that block—they were opposed to downzoning to the NCB. They will be at the four story height limit.

Per: The materials on the building – is it meant to be a full brick or a veneer/thin brick?

Cameron: If it's done well, we'll allow it.

Per: I've never seen thin brick done well.

Matt: The Eye Care Center at Oak and College is an example. They used half thickness brick to achieve their look.

Per: I'm concerned when we talk about high quality materials because thin brick does not meet high quality. It cannot turn the corner. I would like the code to reiterate that maybe on the first floor we could at least have full or cut brick rather than thin brick.

Cameron: We've been criticized in the past for requiring expensive materials. We're looking to get a great pedestrian scale and it is a challenge. I think the term authentic is in the proposed code language.

Matt: I think you gave a good example at a previous meeting—we do need to address how the material goes around the corner. There has to be a way to end the material if you're using something like thin brick.

Jennifer: Could you put it in the code that they have to butt something against the thin brick rather than keep going?

Per: Can I suggest that we have to have "high quality materials" in the code?

Cameron: There needs to be a judgment call by staff at some point. It will be the responsibility of the planners to uphold the code.

Per: Another question about percentage of transparency: a current trend is screens—for design and for privacy. How do you deal with that if the expectation is transparency?

Cameron: The other issue we run into is that we can't control what happens after building ie Denver grocery store that had merchandise in front of bay of windows. If the standard doesn't apply, they can always go forward with a modification; however, we are confident that the 60% standard is the right answer.

Per: I think the screens do work architecturally without having large pieces of glass.

Cameron: Any other questions? (No) Alright, thank you!

Karen: I wanted to pass out historic preservation codes chart because our chart is hard to read on the screen. While these are being passed out, I want to recap some of the key changes that we're bringing forward: 200-foot buffer, developing criteria that promotes flexibility, two LPC meetings for

nonconsensual designations rather than three, initial eligibility decisions being based on survey, and clarity on imminently dangerous (as part of Building Code Updates).

Some of the feedback we would like to receive today: What horizontal lines are we aiming for? Where should we measure the setback? Gable of the roof?

We are looking to put graphics in the code to help explain what we're looking for. For example, for solid-to-void pattern, we are looking to maintain the void percentage of abutting historic properties at similar typology. We do not want mimicry.

Matt: How will a situation be handled for example Cameron was talking about the 60% transparency—this graphic is good relative to representing the Colorado retail block---what about the River District? How does it work when a building has no windows? How will we accommodate the historic codes, building typology, and Cameron's codes?

Karen: I think typology is key. You can do solid to void ratios without using glass or actual windows. You just need something that breaks the building's massing into recognizable patterns and scale. The pedestrian should see the relationship.

Tom: I think Matt brings up a good point—the LUC changes Cameron is bringing forward is about transparency, which might not work for historic buildings. Solid to void is better than percentage of transparency.

Sherry: We can't address every exception though. I like the solid-to-void ratio because it gives direction without being too rigid.

Jennifer: But the solid to void and window transparency have a conflict—needs to be addressed.

Karen: Yes, we are taking note of that and will have to reach out to Cameron to get this fixed.

Karen: Here is the character for new construction near historic buildings. We're looking for feedback on what's important, is it worded correctly? This will be critically important because this or something very similar would be in the code.

Question: should alleys be included in abutting or just shared property lines?

Jennifer: You're talking perpendicular to the block face? (Yes) I think it should be included as abutting. Alleys should count as abutting. To put in streets would be too much.

Per: Yeah, most two-way streets are about 24 feet and that's just too much. Alley width sounds more reasonable.

Sherry: Before, it was based on the master street plan. If it was a local street or under, you did x. If it was an arterial, you do y. Since there's already precedent to use those, it might be easier.

Meg: Going across the street seems like too much, but across alleys would be reasonable. It seems to go by width rather than alley or streets. I would think lot size would be a good width.

Per: We shouldn't have primary in here if we are developing on the alleys and we want to regulate that.

Anna: Could you just say in the Downtown and even maybe in the old neighborhoods that's where alleys matter?

Matt: I liked where Per was going—secondary facades shouldn't get as much regulation as primary facades. Preservation asks for change or impact to the rear/secondary elevations.

Sarah: What if we just said to align with whatever historic buildings' setbacks are?

Karen: Setbacks fluctuate too much.

Karen: For primary entrance, we didn't think we need to address it unless there are abutting historic properties. If you are abutting, you should maintain proportionality and placement of entrances.

For most of these, you will see that abutting historic properties have the more strict regulations. Building height and upper-story setbacks as well as massing and rhythm we are thinking no requirements in the area of adjacency. At this point, staff feels that we do not need requirements for that unless you are abutting historic properties.

Jennifer: I disagree with the none—I think building height and upper-story setbacks and massing and rhythm need to be part of the area of adjacency and we need regulations on those.

Sherry: Might warrant having a standard—massing can create a huge incompatibility.

Per: Why even have the 200 ft area of adjacency? Maybe only review abutting?

Karen: We also have proportion and scale. When we actually started getting into definitions, we felt proportion and scale were captured in other things, like massing, façade details, materials, etc.

Per: Also addressed in 3.5.

Jennifer: It's difficult, but still needs to be referenced. (So you want it called out? Or is it already addressed?)

Sherry: I think we're defining proportion and scale with materials, height, and massing.

Matt: Putting massing and scale together and proportion and rhythm would be better. Put the apples with the apples.

Karen: What other questions do people have on this?

Per: Will this go to a public review after Brad has reviewed it?

Karen: Yes, it will probably be evolving all the way up to the second reading at City Council. The key thing is you folks review. I will forward you all of the boards that you see around you. You've all already got the chart with the packet information. Please spend some additional time on these charts. We're looking to allow variety and good design. We also want to protect those historic properties.

Per: I think this allows for a lot of creativity.

Karen: I'd like to wrap up—Updates: Spencer has left the City, Anna is leaving. Shawna is joining us on this project. Introduced three historic preservation interns: Dillon, Kylee, and Yani.

Please send me comments or questions.