

OLD TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

POLICIES & STRATEGIES WORKSHOP – 3.29.16

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Keys to preserving character: regulate demolitions and new construction. Important factors: square feet, setbacks, trees.
- Incentivize: exterior lighting, off-street parking, noise abatement.
- Need mandatory review of development plan with design guidelines in order to point out problems and possible remedies. Compliance can still be voluntary, but the evaluation of proposed development against guidelines should be mandatory. Need guidelines for exterior lighting to preserve night sky. Need setback (front) guidelines so it's consistent with nearby existing buildings.
- Design with context to allow flexibility as times change, as they will. Should take the average of massing, setbacks, roof pitch of the block – this will allow for an incremental change which is often more acceptable.
- Use mostly as an educational tool. Have been through a remodel project and other one would be an accessory building, but not planned at this point. I have interest and concern of the direction of progress – wishing to preserve but improve what needs it. How do we find a way to honor history, preserve what's historic and improve dilapidation?
- Education is key. Handing flyers out when someone comes into get a permit is too late. Architects and developers should be well informed so they can educate their clients. Perhaps going over the info with clients should be required (like how realtors are required to disclose info to clients). The advantages of landmarking your home (especially financial incentives) should also be conveyed to clients. Even with all this education, people who want to scrape and build something inappropriate will do so anyway. Especially with spec housing, this points to these guidelines needing to be standards.
- Develop a certification program that lists builders/developers who have shown respect for the guidelines. These builders would not be required to receive a guidelines instruction to get a permit. Most relevant parts are limiting height and FAR. These cause tangible negative effects on neighbors. Regulate the tangibles – creating heat islands with pavement, shortening neighbors' gardening seasons or increasing heating bills because of shading.
- Make them standards, not guidelines. Incentives to use guidelines. Educate architects to use. List of "preferred" builders/architects who use them and who create projects that are compatible. Regulate tangible issues (shading, heat island from pavement, etc.). Incentives to building smaller houses – and/or retain smaller houses; make a restriction on tearing down small houses (huge penalty to tear down a small house). Scale is important.

- The guidelines need to be standards enforced and need to be more restrictive – setbacks wider on sides, from street are compatible with neighbors. Scale + size are the worst offenses. FAR needs to be reduced. Require new property owners to review neighborhood concerns before closing or better yet prevent scrape offs – provide incentives to encourage respect for neighborhood character.
- Size is the most important regulation, based on how the house fits on the lot and doesn't encroach on the neighbors. Make sure height regulations are being followed early in the construction process. Any other design elements should be completely voluntary and not encouraged any other way. Energy efficiency is very important. Character districts are not useful to me at all. Many areas have already changed enough to make the districts inappropriate.
- Design ideas for character areas: energy efficiency planning. Distribute as part of planning process. Energy efficiency, exposed foundations, urban gardens, landscaping.
- At some point, we would like to build a 2-car garage to replace our current 1-car garage. Now I learn we could potentially add a carriage house. As homes sell in our neighborhood, compatibility is important to me if a home is scraped or remodeled.
- Make key provisions of the guidelines mandatory (setbacks, porches, roof design, & height). Design guidelines have useful information but aren't likely to be widely used by either property owners or architects. Consequently, many of us believe they should be mandatory. We had a property owner who wouldn't even consider meeting with Historic Preservation, which offers a free consultation. Why would property owners use these guidelines?
- Suggestions: make design review mandatory at the building permit stage for changes to building facing the public right of way; educational courses for realtors, builders, architects on design guidelines, design assistance review program, and financial benefits of landmark designation; give thumb drives of the above items to all who inquire about new buildings and remodels in Old Town Neighborhood.

LAND USE / ZONING

- Area on Downtown edge rezoned to NCB: strongly agree. Would prefer NCM.
- Revisit height limits in area "G." End the practice of spot zoning to promote security that zoning is upheld and not subject to special interests. Expand buffer zone on west side into "G" area. Tall building (13 stories) directly conflict with the character of Old Town and should be located in another part of the City to protect & preserve the character of this valuable resource.
- Yes – support these zoning changes, all of them. Would be nice to lower building heights in downtown zone areas adjacent to NCB zones so that NCB is buffered from highest density downtown zones.
- Don't rezone Beaver's ever.
- All changes make sense and seem well planned/thought out.
- Yes on rezoning G to NCB. Yes on D to NCM. Yes on C to E (including the NW corner of D on Loomis) as long as the City still owns the building. Rezone NW corner of NCB district south of Mulberry Pool (Whitcomb, Mulberry, Sherwood) to NCM. Yes on changing A to NCM. Yes on changing B to NCM. Have a higher bar for variances. Too many are rubber-stamped.
- Eliminate pockets of other zoning where the current use conforms to surrounding zoning (automatically if possible). Rezone the rest of F to NCM. Create a solid NCB (rather than just that triangle). "Reduced flexibility for property owners" is a GOOD thing. Prevent commercial in LMN w/ multi-family. Support all down zoning that is remotely possible. Both city-owned parcels proposed to Employment should be restricted to City-owned or rezoned to NCM.
- Variances are far too easy to obtain – please enforce current zoning. Parking needs to be addressed for future redevelopment.
- A – yes. B – yes. C – yes. D – yes to NCM, no to E if something changes there. A new business should not be put where there are single family homes. E – yes. F – yes, although I'd like to see old brick house on Laporte remain. G – yes, definitely NCM. H – there should be a buffer between Mountain and Oak at Meldrum. I – corner of Magnolia and Sherwood should be NCM. J – Whitcomb and Mulberry area should be NCM where single family homes are. J – It's ridiculous that there's a commercial lot in the middle of single family residential at Sherwood and Maple. At most it should be NCB, and that would be a serious stretch. NCM makes more sense.
- Yes, support zone changes.
- Rezone the area that are already used as NCM, but anything that is currently an LMN use should be kept as LMN.
- No specific objections, and we support limiting heights and restricting apartments, but it would be nice to allow certain commercial uses. Coffee shops, cafes, small retail and food shops would

enhance neighborhoods and promote walking/biking. Gas stations and light industrial uses would not.

- Islands B & F should be NCL, not NCM
- Island G should be NCL not NCM or NCB
- Grandfathered uses surrounded by NCL should revert to NCL if buildings torn down

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

- Wrong way to improve affordability. Rental units threaten property values.
- Consider allowing attached ADU in NCL zone. Not in favor of reducing minimum lot size for detached ADU – leave as is.
- Allow to add an affordable housing stock as long as vacation rentals are regulated (look at permitting VRBOs to 1 per block as another limitation). Pave alleys to reduce noise, dust, etc. if allowed. Keep impervious surfaces. Allow homeownership, think tiny house movement & reduce renters.
- Total living space (main house + ADU) must be within FAR standards AND FARs should be lowered, they're ridiculously high. We need much tougher regulation of short term rentals, and rentals in general. This shouldn't be considered until short term rentals are adequately regulated. If it is ever allowed, it should be allowed, and HOAs should be required to allow it, everywhere. If we're trying to increase density, why only in older neighborhoods? We need protection of solar access and limitation of alley traffic. Better to have in-house units than ADUs. Main house should require owner-occupation. Any ADUs or in-home units must meet an affordability standard.
- If limits relaxed than tighter FAR is needed. Prefer no change. If rules for ADUs are relaxed these should never be allowed to be used as vacation rentals. Furthermore they should be required to be affordable if rented to non-family tenants. Affordability should be defined as 30% of less than the minimum wage or below market). No "in-home" we have a house where new owners put in an illegal basement apartment. This lot is 11,469 square feet in NCL. This is a student rental and would not be an acceptable use of this proposition (it's already a problem). If adding, require owner-occupied main house (especially in-house units). Whole property must adhere to occupancy-ordinance (main + adu = u+3).
- Strict regulations in place re: short term rentals need to be determined before discussing. Size and scale are still an issue in regard to solar access, heat pockets, parking. More restrictive FAR needs to be implemented and must be below FAR ratio. Prefer in-house versus carriage house. Fee structure change to incentivize smaller homes – carriage house is too big, ADUs need to be subordinate.
- I'm a little mystified that you say carriage homes are more common than attached/duplexes. I'd say it's exactly opposite. Perhaps attached are just easier to hide from City statistic gatherers? Whatever changes we make should be true Citywide, not just in Old Town. Even the HOAs should be required to abide by the same rules regarding additional units. I much prefer adding an additional unit within the existing house or in a small attached apartment in back. I am not in favor of carriage houses off the alley. And garages should not be taller than a story and a half. Two-story garages and carriage houses look out of place. Main house should be owner occupied. Additional unit should be affordable. B&Bs have staff. VRBOs should be similarly overseen. Carriage houses should be 600 square feet or smaller.

- Supporting ADUs and in-home ADUs is an affordable housing “must.” Loosening the restrictions will increase the supply of housing. Lowering the barrier and defining methods to create ADUs/in home ADUs are important.
- This is an incremental increase. If we really want to address affordability and climate change, we need to open this up to more houses. Especially if you currently could build a larger house. i.e. if you could put a 3,000 sq. ft. structure, why not allow a 2,000 square foot house with a 700 square foot carriage house?
- Carriage houses and other ADUs promote infill, not sprawl, help affordability, increases density with minimal new construction, helps City reach greenhouse gas emission goals.
- Design is important for carriage houses.
- Issue is number of occupants in accessory units, which adds to parking issues, noise, VRBO, etc.
- If allowed, limit to one bedroom/bathroom or a studio
- Include one off-street, alley access parking space
- Limit to 800 sq. ft. in all zones
- Include design review as mandatory with neighborhood notice
- Carriage house and ADU should not exceed 800 sq. ft. and be clearly proportionally smaller than the main unit

OTHER COMMENTS

- Affordability: 1) Institute a much higher bar for elimination an existing small house. 2) Create an affordable housing fee for any house that costs over a certain price (based on an affordability standard). Make it a sliding fee that increases with price. 3) Adjust the current fee structure (park, transportation fees) to favor smaller, more affordable houses and disincentive trophy houses.
- Extra fees when houses exceed some price that goes to pay for affordable housing. Fee structure adjusted so that % paid by smaller houses is proportional (at flat rate now by larger percentage). Also use fee structure to create incentive for smaller house.
- How can we incentivize the best behavior geared toward compatibility and respect for older homes? State law signs for cross-walks (crossing Mulberry near pool).
- Those who live in the neighborhood should have more say than those who own, but don't live here and far more say than anyone who neither lives nor permanently owns property here. There needs to be a much higher bar before people tear down our small, more affordable homes.
- Install a traffic circle at Magnolia St / Canyon Avenue. This is a 5-way intersection very busy with traffic, bikers, and pedestrians. Large trucks run very fast through here. Traffic circle will make this intersection much safer for pedestrians, bikers, and vehicles.
- When asking us to make recommendations, please provide a description of basic uses, density & housing types for each zone – then we can make more informed recommendations. I.e., NCM – max # units/building, max # of stories, commercial uses/residential
- Open houses may be desirable by staff – but I believe they are not really effective as neighborhood meetings with a facilitator and a note taker. People like to hear others' questions and comments and the response from staff or consultants. Open houses divide us (to conquer).