

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

February 27, 2018

5:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Jeff Bachrach, André Baugh, Ben Bortolazzo, Mike Houck, Katie Larsell, Andrés Oswill, Michelle Rudd, Katherine Schultz (arrived 5:05 p.m.), Chris Smith, Eli Spevak, Teresa St Martin (arrived 5:06 p.m.)

City Staff Presenting: Susan Anderson, Joe Zehnder, Tom Armstrong, Eric Engstrom, Sandra Wood, Morgan Tracy; Leah Treat, Bob Haley, Karl Arruda, Matt Ferris-Smith, Dana Dickman (PBOT)

Vice Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and gave an overview of the agenda.

[Documents and Presentations for today's meeting](#)

Items of Interest from Commissioners

- *Commissioner Larsell* noted the Gateway Education Center that is getting some attention from Prosper Portland and the Mayor's office again, which is what we need. The more people know about the project, the better. I'm excited.
- *Commissioner Oswill:* There's been a series in *The Oregonian* about displacement of school children. I think it's important to remember how displacement affects different people and different populations. It does a good job at highlighting kids specifically.

Director's Report

Susan Anderson

- Last week we received the DLCD staff report on the appeals to the Comprehensive Plan. As anticipated, the department's staff report recommends rejection of the appeals. BPS staff is working with the City Attorney to prepare a response to the department's staff report. LCDC will hear the appeals on March 15 or 16 (we will get confirmation of the time soon).
- Portland Streetcar Inc continues to work on potential system expansions. The commissioners will recall that the general plans were presented to the PSC last year. The first move is the purchase of some additional cars, to help increase frequency on the loop. Expansion of the system beyond the Central City is also being studied.
BPS expects their new proposal for expansion may trigger a conversation about how a streetcar extension could impact land use. PSI is offering to brief individual commissioners on this. Let Eric or me know if you want to be part of that. PSI will likely bring a more complete briefing to the whole Commission in the fall.

Consent Agenda

- Consideration of Minutes from the February 13, 2018

Commissioner Houck moved to approve the Consent Agenda. *Commissioner Baugh* seconded.

The Consent Agenda was approved with an aye vote.

(Y9 — Bachrach, Baugh, Bortolazzo, Houck, Larsell, Rudd, Schultz, Smith, Spevak)

R/W #8351: Unnamed Road east of NE 160th Ave

Hearing / Recommendation: Bob Haley, Karl Arruda (PBOT)

Karl provided an overview. This is an unnamed road just south of Halsey and east of 160th. The right-of-way is about 280 feet long and dead ends at the city of Portland line (east is Gresham). An issue was connectivity. Bob checked in with the City of Gresham about that, which he'll share.

Vice Chair Smith: The north-south block is about 1300 feet. Our connectivity standards suggest 350 feet and bike/ped at 250 feet. So we're way off on these goals.

Bob noted there are spacing standards between off-set intersections, and when the unincorporated properties are annexed, they wouldn't require a street because they are close to Multnomah and Wasco, which are good east-west streets. Getting the ped connection is what we're after. The ROW is only 50 feet wide, so we'd need at least another 10 feet for the dedication. The north lot is only 60 feet wide, and in R7 (which is how this is zoned), you'd need at least 60 feet. The first parcel is a flag lot with a house that was built in 2008 and sold in 2009; I don't think it's realistic to think the owner would bulldozer it down, especially considering its appreciation already. We would undoubtedly be unable to make proportionality findings for this. It would be better served by a private street, and with a land division, we'd also get a bike/ped connection. It would be cleaner on the south end of the lot.

Commissioner Spevak: The subdivision request would trigger the need for a bike/ped connection. But what if there is no trigger? Can we require the bike/ped connection anyway?

- Bob: I'd accept that. The ped connection is something we want as straight as possible, which is close to what you'd get on the south line. A plan development is like a design review. So if they can propose an attractive safe connection, we could support that.

Karl: As part of the street vacation, we can issue a number of conditions. There are a couple options with the walkway easement:

- A 15-foot bike/ped on the southern edge to 161st.
- Retain the 15-foot bike/ped easement in the vacation area that would then connect to a 15-16-foot corridor going south to 161st.

We discussed the options with the owners, and while the southern end is the shortest distance, the option with the walkway in the middle would be a "less lonely" pathway to 161st. The structure on the southern end would be in the pathway, and the owners were trying to retain the building to remodel it.

Don Etter is the property owner. He shared some [photos and comments](#). If the easement is on the south line, then you end up with too many fences. I think it's better serviced where the roadway is. He shared some photos of the property including images of the older, larger trees that may be cut to make room for the easement on the south side.

If we retain an easement, a walkway could still be move or placed elsewhere if the City requires that at the time of development. So retaining the easement gives the City the option to have it. If it seems like having the easement in the middle makes the most sense, that's where we should start; but it doesn't preclude the City from changing the path of the driveway when they do eventually come in for development.

Discussion

Commissioner Baugh: Is lighting required for the easement?

- Bob: We don't have requirements standard. Ideally it would include lighting. But we could require private lighting on the sides of the residence that would illuminate the pathway. Gresham would likely not object to a streetlight on 162nd.

Chair Schultz: What is the distance if you would leave the easement for the private street?

- Bob: About 100 feet.

Commissioner Rudd: How would people know about this? Is there signage?

- Bob: We can come up with a sign or plaque that says it's a public connection.

Commissioner Spevak: What's the tree impact?

- Bob: We can work around tree roots for pedestrian paths. We even have new techniques that can go over tree roots. We'd work with the City Arborist and private arborists.

Vice Chair Smith: Dedication is part of development. But with eminent domain, is there a program where they actually buy properties to make streets?

- Bob: We don't typically get planter strips or the niceties.

We'd get better connectivity in other places with the money that a jurisdiction would use here. But connectivity is a main issue we wanted to discuss this here instead of having this item on consent.

Vice Chair Smith: I forwarded an [email from TriMet](#) about 162nd having service next month.

Vice Chair Smith closed the hearing.

Motion

Commissioner Bachrach moved to approve the vacation. *Commissioner Houck* seconded.

Amendments and Discussion

Commissioner Baugh: I'd like to have the easement in the middle and north-south connection to 161st. We need appropriate lighting and signage (at the time of development) for a safe environment. And I'd add that we ask Gresham to put in a pole light at their intersection of the trail. *Commissioner Houck* seconded.

Commissioner Bachrach: The appropriate time for where and when the lighting goes should be when the applicant comes in to BDS and PBOT. They have the code to work with the applicant; I think we're jumping ahead if we accept this amendment. The starting location of the ped easement is less of an issue.

Commissioner Smith: What about putting these in a recommendation instead of a condition?

- *Commissioner Bachrach:* If that seems like an appropriate compromise, I could.

Commissioner Rudd: I'm clarifying that the vacation would happen once it is approved but any additional improvements would not happen until development and the City doesn't control when development would happen.

Don: We are setting up an EA for this partition now, so it's in process... it's just not quite ready yet.

Commissioner Larsell: I support the plan down the middle as it gets connectivity and feels safe. This is an easement that makes sense.

(Y8 — Baugh, Bortolazzo, Houck, Rudd, Schultz, Smith, Spevak, St Martin; N2— Bachrach, Larsell)

Vote to forward the street vacation request to Council including the amendment for lighting.

(Y10 — Bachrach, Baugh, Bortolazzo, Houck, Larsell, Rudd, Schultz, Smith, Spevak, St Martin)

Vision Zero

Briefing: Director Leah Treat, Dana Dickman, Matt Ferris-Smith (PBOT)

Director Treat introduced the project and team. This is about our actions and where we're headed, as well as areas we can use additional help. 2017 had 45 traffic fatalities, which is an upward trend. This happened after we implemented the policy of Vision Zero, so that was a really sad outcome; but it's not uncommon based on other cities' outcomes and implementation of Vision Zero programs. It will take all our City bureaus and regional partners to get to a true Vision Zero. Thank you to *Commissioner Smith* and Pete Chism-Winfield at BPS for the sideguard project. The Police Bureau is also one to thank, as are taxi services. There is so much more to Vision Zero than just street design or the loss of life. Interactions in our right-of-way impact communities differently, so we are talking more about how people are treated and all the disproportionate outcomes in some places and for some populations.

Dana introduced the presentation. Vision Zero is the goal to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries in Portland by 2025. Portland had our worst year in 2017 since 2013, which matches the trend in many other US cities. But in NY and SF, which have had Vision Zero policies in place for a number of years, they have begun to see traffic fatalities come down. So I don't think more trips needs to equate to more deaths on our streets.

The 2017 crash summary is given on page 9 of the presentation. About 70 percent of our deaths happened on about 8 percent of our streets. October and November are the deadliest months, so we're focusing on lighting to help work on that. Males continue to be disproportionately represented in fatal crashes.

Fatalities are happening in East Portland, which reinforces where we want to spend our time and investments. 2017 was a year where we started building a foundation for Vision Zero. Street design is highly important; in the 2018 construction season, we'll see significant improvements on many high-crash corridors.

Policy changes are also happening including an enforceable distracted driving policy (HB 2597); HB 2409 allows red-light speed detection cameras; HB 2682 gives Portland to drop the residential speed limit to 20 miles per hour.

We'd also received funding to support safety improvements including HB 2017; Fixing Our Streets funds; the 3 percent local tax on cannabis; and Council's 2017 decision for \$1.46 million annually for Vision Zero actions.

Dana highlighted safety projects that were done in 2017 as well as work that has been done on speeding safety with cameras and street design. Safe Ride Home and Street Teams are other ways PBOT is working

with other partners and the community to implement Vision Zero actions. Our partners have expanded to many community organizations, particularly in East Portland.

Commissioner Houck: Jonathan Nicholas and I have been looking at the gaps on N Marine Drive, so we'd like to work with you on planning our next Policy Makers ride, which can focus on that. There was a national report that distracted driving is responsible for many deaths... but that's totally different from my experience. Is there data specifically for Portland?

- Dana: We don't have good data in part because it's hard to confirm this after a fatal crash. We might be able to have better data in the future.

Commissioner Spevak: It seems like the policy responses to drunk driving are very different from distracted driving.

- Director Treat: Police will note that distracted driving is hard to enforce but a clear contributor.
- Dana: The Police have a challenge with whether or not that data makes it into the crash report. So we don't have the data going back. They are working on getting new technology to look at the crash site to see if a phone was in use, but that's brand new technology.

Commissioner Smith: Thank you for this briefing, particularly to Director Treat and your leadership on this. An equity element I want to highlight is the use of cameras. I think we're leading the nation on this, and I appreciate it. Also, our theme at the PSC this year is housing. Are there opportunities that could reinforce some of our Vision Zero goals as we look at housing projects and options?

- Dana: The connection between land use and this is largely an equity question. With major street design changes, those investments can increase property values. Could Vision Zero and housing be working together in these corridors? We're doing some of that, but we can be thinking more strategically as well. The other part is the work you're already doing around centers and corridors and investing in places where people don't have to take more or longer trips to access services. We know more people mean more trips. So to combat that trend, healthy connected neighborhoods is a nexus.

Commissioner Smith: In terms of infill housing, if we're infilling where there is good infrastructure and safe streets, this is a good thing.

Commissioner Baugh: You mentioned that an improvement could cause gentrification. What would that be?

- Dana: For example on outer Stark, the pavement quality needs to be rebuilt, and it needs more crossings and bike lanes. To see all the things the street may need, we're looking at a huge investment and changes to the existing road is what I'm thinking of.

Commissioner Baugh: If TriMet puts a bus there, that does make sense. Street improvements do help, but bus lines certainly do. In NY and SF, we see they're doing something right. What are their top 3 investments, and are they what we're trying here?

- Leah: With NY, they are really heavy on enforcement and have a citywide speed limit of 25 mph.
- Dana: In SF, it's similar. But these are very different cities... they don't have an East Portland grid anyway. Street design and outreach has been very successful and helpful, but in NY for example, this comes with heavy enforcement. Here we're not implementing the enforcement at this point.

Commissioner Rudd: I saw in the written materials that education and outreach here includes everyone, not just drivers. I was happy to see this and think about how everyone can partner to make our streets safer.

Chair Schultz: Are some of the stats tied to more people walking and biking? Or are the fatal accidents really car-on-car?

- Leah: We have unfortunately seen lots of car-on-pedestrian fatalities. It's particularly stark in East Portland. Our bicycle fatalities are fairly low. We have seen an uptick in motorcycle fatalities, but not yet a trend. Speed and impairment are huge factors.

Susan: When I saw Chris' request to have this briefing, I really wanted to get Leah here. I want her to have the connection to the PSC. She talked about Vision Zero since she started here in Portland. Council now gets it, so we're happy to partner with PBOT on this and lots of projects. We often think a fix is to invest in infrastructure, but we have found out that outreach and education can have as much or more of an impact.

Thank you for your work and today's briefing.

Residential Infill Project: Background

Briefing: Sandra Wood, Morgan Tracy, Tom Armstrong, Eric Engstrom

Sandra gave an overview about the project and the briefings that we have scheduled for the PSC about the Residential Infill Project. Today's briefing is to provide you with background about single-dwelling zones and the work we've done in the past 2 years. The project has had considerable public interest and seems to be a landing field for housing and affordability issues and questions, so Eric and Tom will first give an overview of the City's housing efforts and roles in providing housing.

Eric talked about BPS' role in housing: growth management is our main leverage point, but we'll also review what the City is doing relative to housing and how it ties together.

As we talk about affordability, we're striving for a 30 percent or less spending on housing; more than that is considered cost-burdened. The other piece is that affordable housing (permanent regulated housing) has a covenant that requires the affordable for 60 percent MFI or below. This includes both units managed by Home Forward and CDCs, non-profits and others where City, State and/or Federal funding in the project guarantees the affordability permanence. The affordable housing makes up about 8-9 percent of units in the city. 40-45 percent are considered low-income (less than 80 percent MFI), but these are "naturally-occurring", which are most at risk of displacement.

Eric walked through the elements of the Comprehensive Plan that touch on housing: needs analysis; development capacity and allocation; and policies.

We have enough zoning to accommodate the expected housing growth through 2035; but that doesn't mean we have adequate housing supply in terms of location and distribution of housing.

Our different projects are dealing with different types of housing: Mixed-Use Zones is on the commercial/high end; Residential Infill is in the single-dwelling zones (scale and number of units); and the Better Housing by Design project is in the middle (regulation more by scale, particularly in R1, R2 and R3 zones).

Looking at how we provide affordable housing, it generally falls into four areas (mostly in PHB's realm):

- Adding more regulated affordable units
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Tenant services and protections
- Other strategic actions (for example the SW Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy)

Commissioner Bachrach: On the list of funding sources, it seems to be missing Federal Tax Credits. This has been by far the largest funding source over the last 20 years, and we know that's in question now.

- Eric: Yes, we know that will be a big impact if it dwindles and that projects are having more trouble getting this larger funding.

Commissioner Spevak: The regulated affordable housing is not really happening at all in single-family zones, and I think there is good rationale for that. I think it's great to see the affordable housing spread throughout the city, but we know it's hard to have it in single-family neighborhoods.

- Eric: Yes, and this is where RIP can come into play.

Commissioner Bachrach: There have been discussions at the federal level looking at the regulatory side to overall lower the cost of housing. At a policy level, we should look at what City bureaus can do in terms of regulations. This is a cost-benefit analysis to look at and keep in mind.

- Eric: This has been a question the DOZA project is looking at too. And some of the things they're looking at in California now are things we already do here.

Commissioner Houck: The question of expanding the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) seems to be out there, but I think it's absurd based on what we see in the data. The increased cost of housing is due to the rapidity of growth, not lack of places to build within the UGB.

Susan: We've talked about having Metro join us, which we can do as they get closer to the discuss about the UGB this summer. Looking back at the continuum of housing projects and options, we are looking at everything in pieces by each project. Conversations in the community about RIP seems to be on affordability, but a big focus is on increasing choice.

Commissioner Oswill: I appreciate the concept of housing choice. Something we regularly hear at PHB is that everyone, no matter affordability level, wants choice. So I applaud RIP but continue to think about choice and who actually has the choice.

Sandra noted RIP is about how we carry out our values and goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the vision for 2035. We began working on this project in 2015. It was initiated to address several community concerns including increase in demolitions; size of new houses; narrow lot development compatibility; limited diversity in the range of housing options that are available; and general concern over affordability of housing in Portland.

Of course, all Portlanders are concerned about affordability. Our goal for this project is to update Portland's single-dwelling zoning rules to better meet the changing needs of current and future residents.

We have multiple goals that we'll need to balance in this project, and we have organized our work into three main topics:

- Scale of houses: What's the right size?
- Housing opportunity: What types of housing? Where? Should the number of units depend on providing another public good?
- Narrow lots: How do we address historically pre-platted lots? Require, allow or prohibit parking?

There are many other topics that are related to this project like design review, other codes, fees, land use process changes or land division regulations, but they are outside of the scope of the project's work.

Commissioner Smith asked about the “where” question: if we limit this to geographic areas, that is an equity issue.

- Sandra: We’ll get a bit into this today, but we’ll have a further discussion about this on March 13 in terms of social equity and displacement risk.

Commissioner Baugh: Is “public good” a value statement or is it in terms of dollars?

- Sandra: We’ll show this in the presentation, and we can discuss.

Public Process and Engagement is really important, and we’ve heard so much already. We’ve had over 10,000 comments thus far.

Process

- Concept phase (developing the proposal)
 - 26-member SAC and outreach via an online survey.
 - After developing the proposal, had numerous community conversations.
 - December 2016 Council Hearing.
- Legislative phase (currently)
 - Discussion Draft.
 - Office hour sessions.
 - 3700 comments through outreach.
- Staff is now incorporating feedback into the proposal, which you’ll see and have hearings on this spring.

There is generally more agreement around the scale of housing and less agreement on the housing opportunity and narrow lots proposals. There is more disagreement on where new housing types and development on narrow lots should occur.

Affordability was a prominent theme. Many people suggested different variations on the affordability bonus we proposed.

We heard support for narrow lot development as a more affordable housing option. Others mentioned parking requirements as contributing to the increased cost of housing.

Some people thought visitability requirements were unnecessary or would stifle development; others thought they didn’t go far enough. Same with historic preservation.

We’ll discuss this at our next meeting, but virtually no one agreed with the proposal to exclude areas with populations at greater risk of displacement from housing opportunities. Many called for programs to mitigate the risk of displacement rather than not providing more housing types in a neighborhood.

43 percent of the city is zoned single-dwelling, which is in sharp contrast to the 7 percent multi-dwelling coverage. We are talking about the densest single-dwelling zones in this project (R7, R5 and R2.5).

Morgan provided further background and posed questions to think about each theme.

If houses being built are too big, what is the right size? We have policies about development and design as well as tools and regulations and codes that relate to residential zones. There are a range of housing sizes being built on the same sized lots. Morgan gave the example of a 5,000 square foot lot ranging from 1,500 to 6,500 square feet.

In other zones, floor area ratio (FAR) is used to control bulk. FAR is the relationship between building square feet and the site area. FAR is flexible and works in concert with building coverage, height. And setback requirements to establish an overall limit on bulk – but it is also flexible. For smaller scale buildings (like houses, duplexes, and triplexes) there are some additional considerations for calculating FAR. Shallow basements and daylight basements also pose interesting questions as to how much visible bulk is being added. Attics or “half-story” spaces can have tricky angles and headroom to consider. Other cities have used FAR rules for houses.

The average FAR is between .2 and .3 in the single-dwelling zones. Some of the highest FAR are higher than what we’d allow in multi-dwelling and mixed-use zones.

In terms of scale, this concept received the most support. Many people wanted basements and attics to be included in FAR, but some did not. Some people wanted more FAR for detached accessory structures; others wanted none. Others called for additional FAR for green building features, such as highly insulated walls and roofs/additional wall depth for added insulation.

Housing opportunity proposal questions include:

- How many units?
- Where?
- Should the number of units be dependent on providing another public good?

We have many goals and policies that relate to this, but one relevant goal is 5.C: Healthy Connected City. Portlanders live in safe, healthy housing that provides convenient access to jobs and to goods and services that meet daily needs.

Generally, single dwelling zones mean one house per lot. But there are already some exceptions to this: In addition to a single house, code allows a house plus one ADU, and duplexes on corner lots and next to commercial zones. The proposal would increase this range in select areas by bumping up one unit: house with two ADU’s, duplex on all lots, duplex with an ADU, and triplexes on corners. But the key caveat is that the size of these structures does not get any larger than what would be allowed for a single house. Note that while the number of households vary in each of the above examples, the size of the structures is all the same.

We counted the number of duplexes and attached houses that currently exist and found 3.5 percent of corner lots overall with 5.5 percent of corner lots near transit and centers. 35 percent of houses demolished on corner lots resulted in 2 or more units (60 percent were a 1:1 replacement).

Commissioner Spevak: In Oregon, to my knowledge Portland is the only jurisdiction to allowing double the density on corner lots in single dwelling zones.

It’s not impossible to go to a 4-plex here, but we’re trying to get the size and relationship to the size of the lot right. So a 4-plex could impose on the relationship or have extremely tiny units. We also had the relationship to the multi-dwelling zone, and we don’t want to be more dense than those zones in single-dwelling zones. The idea is to incorporate additional missing middle housing types into single-dwelling zones.

Now that we’ve talked about the “what” i.e. what types of housing options. We need to look at “where”. We developed a conceptual boundary comprised of:

- Quarter-mile buffer around centers, frequent bus corridors and MAX stops.
- Housing Opportunity Areas identified in the comp plan and derived from the complete neighborhoods map from the Portland Plan.

Our proposal is based on the concept boundary. There are arguments on both sides of the expand/retract the boundary question. Again, we have a number of policies from the Comp Plan to refer to, which will be discussed in more depth at the March 13 meeting.

In terms of providing another public good, there are a number of options. Each presents a potential disincentive and/or cost, so we need to weigh these in conjunction with other goals for the project.

- Affordability
- Accessibility / visitability
- Passive house
- Tree preservation
- Design standards
- Family-sized units

Commissioner Spevak: Should building large, expensive homes (not just those with more units) also trigger 'public good' requirements? This could follow the logic of Oregon's "reach" building code, which would require higher levels of insulation for really large homes.

Commissioner Bachrach: I'm assuming we want more multi-unit buildings in these zones. Or is this not necessarily true?

- Morgan: An aspirational concept is an incremental increase in duplexes and triplexes in these zones.
- Sandra: We want more, particularly if there is a vacant lot. We also want all these other options for additional public goods... in an ideal world.

Commissioner St Martin: What we want is opportunity and choice to be available to property owners to do what they think they need to do with more flexibility than they have now.

Susan: This isn't new. We already can have ADUs and can have a duplex on every corner. We haven't seen that yet, so it will be incremental. That depends not only on zoning but on many other things.

Commissioner Spevak: Most of Portland wasn't single-family zoned when many of the houses in the existing stock were built pre-WWII. At the time, builders typically had the choice of building single family homes or small plexes. With this latitude, we got a mix of both, but primarily single-family homes.

Commissioner Baugh: The real question is in R5 that we would be proposing to increase density on those lots. That's what I see as the covenant we're "breaking" with the neighborhoods.

- Morgan: When we started talking about housing types and density, we were struggling with this. What gets lost is the proposal around scale reduction. What we're really talking about is a 2/3s reduction in square footage with more household units in a smaller "box". It's a shift from units to square footage, and we're imposing a cap in single-dwelling zones.

Chair Schultz: Back when a house was built, it also had lots more people in it (generally). That seems to be the balance here, and we're trying to get back to this type of standard.

Commissioner Baugh: You're equating smaller with cheaper. Show me some data how that works, because that's not what's happening downtown. This is a volume issue.

- Morgan: One thing that isn't represented in the data yet is cost per square foot. We see that smaller units are more expensive per square foot, but overall it costs less.

Commissioner Smith: There is a difference between cost and price. Access premium is about location. Part of the price is also proportional to the square footage. In terms of the "covenant", is it about a certain

uniformity and scale? It's not about how many neighbors you have. What's different than the past is the WWII auto-ownership ratio is much different. Do you have a sense of what proportion of the push-back is about fear of parking? A way to make a unit more affordable is to build without parking rights.

Commissioner Larsell: Can you elaborate on opportunity geography?

- Morgan: We use the opportunity areas map as part of our methodology for looking at where we're looking at a buffer for the overlay proposal. The other aspects of the geography are around centers and also frequent transit. We took all the maps and layered them on top of each other to create the housing choice map, which is the base for the proposal.
- Sandra: We're trying to be true to the Comp Plan proposal of focusing our growth in centers and corridors. This makes for a lower cost of living since people are closer to services.

Narrow Lots are a subset of the housing opportunity options. While most parts of inner Portland were platted with 50-foot wide by 100-foot deep lots, like the lots on the left in slide 74 of the [presentation](#), surveyors in the early 1900s sometimes platted lots that measured 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep – like the lots on the right. The blue lines are additional lot lines running underneath the houses.

These are what we are calling “historically narrow lots.” They were often sold in bundles of 2 or 3, depending on the buyer's preference. For example, take a look at the house at 7016, which house straddles the blue (underlying lot line) and occupies two 25'x100' lots. It looks the exact same as the pattern across the street. Both the left block and the right block are zoned R5. In the R5 zone, current rules allow 1 lot per 5,000 square feet of site area. So, the lots on the left block cannot be divided. But because the ones on the RIGHT were legally created prior to the current zoning requirements, they must be recognized by the City. While we have to recognize them, we can decide whether or not to allow them to be developed individually.

Regulations affecting these lots have changed over time. The last major changes for these lots was adopted in 2003. City Council was concerned about demolitions when they decided to allow development on lots at least 3,000 square feet and 36 feet wide. This matches the minimum lot size for new lots being created in a subdivision. They provided an exception for lots that are vacant. This “vacant lot provision” allowed development on lots that are vacant but were too small. This was intended to capitalize on the development potential of already-vacant sites, without prompting a demolition. Developers often call this the “five-year moratorium,” because if a house is demolished, a new house can't be built in its place for five years.

Historically narrow lots are unevenly distributed throughout the city due to platting decisions made by developers in the early 1900s. There are almost 16,000 tax lots containing historically narrow lots. Most – about 95 percent – are in the R5 zone, while less than 1,000 are in the R2.5 zone. Staff hand counted how many vacant lots there were in three pockets of R5 narrow lot plats (St Johns, Montavilla and Kenton) and found that roughly 5 percent of the 3,500 total lots (or about 170) were vacant. So if we keep the status quo, this is what can be developed in these areas.

There are arguments for allowing development on narrow lots, but of course there are also arguments against this. Our proposal is to rezone some lots to R2.5, but there was concern about demolitions, they're randomly platted, they aren't evenly distributed and on-site parking can often create less on-street parking.

In 2004, the City sponsored a design competition to facilitate the construction of architecturally compatible infill housing on narrow lots. The competition received 426 entries from 22 countries and resulted in two publications that catalogued designs and site plans. A year later, the City selected these two designs and worked with the architects to develop ready-to-build plan sets for use in a new program in which developers could build these “permit-ready houses” through an expedited approval process. But unfortunately, the program ended in 2009 due to recession. Eleven houses were built through the program.

The better outcomes are largely due to the changes made by City Council in 2003. They added development standards for historically narrow lots. And there were other standards about new narrow lots. So this is one of the things we're fixing in this project so there is one standard for all narrow lots.

Sandra gave an overview about garages and noted we expect to hear lots of testimony about parking and garages with this project. While garages provide the residents with convenient access to parking or more storage space, there are several impacts that make providing parking on narrow lots more problematic than on wider lots. Allowing for parking in front of the house is often mentioned as a solution to providing a garage. The problem is that a driveway eliminates one on-street parking space that's available to everyone for one off-street parking space that's available to only the resident. So it takes a public space and makes it private.

When you talk about regulatory options, we have four options:

- Require parking
- Allow parking / garage
- Don't allow parking / garage
- Prohibit parking / garage

We have developed this parking hierarchy to help us with decision-making. The top option – No parking – addresses the most concerns. The bottom – at-grade attached garage – raises the most concerns. You may find discussing this hierarchy helpful in your deliberations.

- No parking
- Alley access (pad or garage)
- Detached garage in rear
- Parking pad in front
- Tuck under garage
- At-grade attached garage

Next up for the RIP at the PSC:

- March 13 Social Equity Investment Strategy and Displacement Risk Analysis briefing
- April 24 project briefing with the full proposal
- May 8 hearing #1
- May 15 hearing #2

Commissioner Oswill: On the map, I was wondering if I can get your input on the concept of building where transit comes to rather than transit coming to areas with sufficient demand. Transit needs density to be successful.

- Morgan: This is a bit about a horse-and-cart issue. To obtain the 16-unit per acre density, it's more in line with a mule-dwelling zone. So we can't rely on RIP to get to transit densities, but we'd like to put more houses closer to transit as much as we can.

Commissioner Oswill: I assume some of the areas that have been left off might also be areas where land cost is lower. Is there thought about using RIP in those areas that may differ from areas where land cost is higher?

- Morgan: In areas of East Portland, we see this but we also have to couple this with concerns about displacement.
- Sandra: In talking with non-profit developers, we hear they can afford more farther out... but then people are paying more for transportation. This is definitely part of the debate you'll have to consider.

Commissioner Oswill: In terms of the affordability map, I'd be curious to see a direct connection to residential infill you think that will change the map going forward.

- Sandra: If a duplex is built, the sales doesn't really get to this if one person owns both sides. This could also be two condos. So it's not an easy answer.

Commissioner Oswill: Sales price by square foot: I'd be curious what this is for new construction and if it looks different.

- Morgan: We're contracting with Jerry Johnson for some economic feasibility testing. The pro forma tables do include cost per square foot and residual land values across the city.

Chair Schultz: Let's get the questions out from commissioners, then staff can respond via email.

Commissioner Bortolazzo: On the housing form, I was surprised to see the number of comments that challenge this notion of size. Perhaps this is something to be revisited allowing if other things happen (e.g. cluster housing). Is this a topic that's still in discussion and on the table?

Commissioner Spevak: On the narrow lot question, I'm still not clear if there is a legal issue if the City says you can't conform the property line. Would this go to a lawsuit? Are there clear boundaries on what we can do?

Commissioner St Martin: Thank you for all the work you've been doing. It's super important to reflect all the concerns and comments you receive, and we're here to help you with that. No one will be happy with everything we do.

Commissioner Oswill: I was focusing on the market price because the hinge point is about what cost the new unit comes back on the market as.

Adjourn

Chair Shultz adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.