


PSC Questions and Staff Responses – Better Housing by Design Proposed Draft

November 21, 2018

	PSC Question	Staff Response
1	<p>Would like clarification on what BHD standards are based on mixed use zone standards. (Spevak)</p>	<p>The following BHD proposals are based on regulations in the commercial/mixed uses zones (Chapter 33.130):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowances for reduced parking requirements on small sites. • Basing development intensity limits on building scale (FAR) instead of unit density. • Requirements for high-density residential development to include outdoor/recreation space and options for these requirements to be met by indoor recreation/community spaces. • Requirements for building entrances to be oriented to streets or to courtyards. • Requirements for building height to step down adjacent to single-dwelling zones (for more detail, see item 3 below). • Requirements for large building facades to be divided into smaller components (“façade articulation” standards). • Allowances for parapets and railings to extend above maximum building height limits. • Ground-floor window coverage requirements for commercial uses. • Requirements for Transportation and Parking Demand Management (TDM) in areas with frequent transit service.
2	<p>Would like clarification on how front entrance requirements vary between the BHD and RIP proposals. (Baugh)</p>	<p>Both the BHD and RIP proposals share requirements for at least one main entrance for each structure to be located close to the front of the building and to face the street or open onto a porch. However, the BHD proposal differs in that it also provides an option for multi-dwelling structures to have entrances that instead front onto a courtyard connected to a street. This is intended to allow for the continuation of Portland courtyard apartment arrangements that feature entrances accessed from the courtyard (see image), rather than being located on the ends of building wings close to the street.</p>  <p>Both the BHD and RIP proposals require the main entrances of houses, attached houses, duplexes and other small plexes to be raised no more than 4 feet above the adjacent grade. However, the BHD proposals do not apply this</p>

		<p>standard to multi-dwelling buildings, because this requirement would be problematic for some types of multi-dwelling buildings that have exterior entrances for upper level units (stacked above ground-level units).</p> <p>The RIP proposal does not allow exterior stairs or fires escapes providing access to an upper level from being located on a street-facing façade. The BHD proposals do not include this limitation, as disallowing exterior stairs from accessing upper levels would be problematic for some stacked-unit multi-dwelling housing types, especially on corner lots.</p>
3	<p>Would like more information on building height step downs. (Schultz) Questions include:</p> <p>A. In what situations are there requirements for building heights to step down in the commercial/mixed use zones when next to multi-dwelling zones, and are height transitions required to the RM3/RM4 multi-dwelling zones?</p> <p>B. How do the multi-dwelling zone height step down requirements compare to the commercial/mixed zone requirements?</p> <p>C. How often are multi-dwellings zones adjacent to single-dwelling zones, and would thus require height step downs?</p>	<p><i>(Staff will provide graphics illustrating building height step down requirements during the November 27th work session)</i></p> <p>A. Chapter 33.130 limits building height in the commercial/mixed use zones to 45 feet for properties abutting the R3, R2, and R1 zones (new RM1 and RM2) zones, within a 25-foot distance of abutting property lines. This height stepdown requirement has relatively little impact in the CM2 and CE zones, where building height is generally limited to 45 feet, but has more impact on the CM3 (formerly EX) zone, where 65-foot high buildings are allowed. No height step down is required for mixed use zones that abut the RH (RM3/RM4) zones.</p> <p>B. Both types of zones would require buildings to step down in height (to 35 feet) adjacent to single dwelling zones. However, this is the only situation in the multi-dwelling zones that would require a step down, while the commercial/mixed use zones also require step downs in height to some multi-dwelling zones (see above). For both types of zones, the height step down requirement to single dwelling zones applies to situations where properties directly abut single-dwelling zoning (where the 35-foot height limit applies for a 25-foot distance), and when located across a local service street from single-dwelling zoning (where the 35-foot height limit applies for a 15-foot distance from the street lot line).</p> <p>C. The percentage of lots in multi-dwelling zones that are adjacent to single-dwelling zones and would be subject to height step-down requirements are: RM2: 30% (2,350 lots) RM3: 3% (50 lots) RM4: 12% (70 lots)</p>

	D. How does the proposal address concerns about rear setback step downs?	D. The previous Discussion Draft of the BHD code amendments had proposed both a building height step down and a deeper setback (10 feet) adjacent to properties with single-dwelling zoning to provide a transition to these lower-density zones. The current proposals respond to concerns about impacts on development by eliminating the 10-foot setback requirement, and instead requiring only the proposed standard side/rear setback of 5 feet. A 35-foot tall building (three stories) would therefore not be constrained by requirements for height or setback transitions adjacent to single-dwelling zones. Retaining a requirement for taller buildings to step down in scale to 35 feet adjacent to single-dwelling zones is consistent with standards that apply in the commercial/mixed use zones.
4	Would like more clarity regarding setbacks in the CM zones adjacent to the multi-dwelling zones. (Schultz)	The commercial/mixed use zones require a 10-foot setback adjacent to properties with residential zoning (RF-RH), including the multi-dwelling zones (except for RX), to provide a transition to residential zoning.
5	Would like clarification regarding the value of side setbacks, what is required by the building code/fire codes, and what is adjustable, particularly on Civic Corridors. (Smith)	<p>The intent of requiring side setbacks is to respond to characteristics of multi-dwelling zone residential areas, which typically feature residential structures with side setbacks, as well as to facilitate access to light and air. These residential areas have a less continuous street wall of buildings and a more landscaped character than commercial areas, which the setback and lot coverage regulations help continue.</p> <p>Staff considered the idea of allowing for development to be built up to the side property lines in the higher-density multi-dwelling zones but rejected this due to the impact this would have on existing development (57% of current development in the existing RH zone consists of houses or duplexes; this percentage is 68% in the R1 zone). The Building Code allows buildings to be built next property lines, with firewall construction and no window openings. Side setback requirements could be eliminated in the multi-dwelling zones, but this would mean that existing housing would be flanked by blank walls when adjacent new development is built up to property lines. This is less of an impact in the commercial zones, where existing housing is less predominant and there is more of an established pattern of commercial buildings built adjacent to each other. The building code allows window openings when buildings are located at least 3-feet from property lines, although this distance provides compromised access to light and air (in the commercial/mixed use zones, 5-foot setbacks are required for the walls of dwelling units whose only windows face a side or rear property line).</p>