



Better Housing by Design: Worksheet for PSC Work Session on November 27, 2018

Topics: Building and Site Design

ITEM	PROPOSED DRAFT PROPOSAL	POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS	PSC AND STAFF COMMENTS
1	<p>Disallow parking from being located between buildings and streets</p> <p>The BHD proposals would not allow vehicle areas (surface parking and driveways) from being located between a building and any street.</p> <p>Related proposals also limit vehicle areas from occupying more than 40% of the frontage of a site. Surface parking and driveways could occupy up to 40% of the width of the frontage of a site, but no building could be located behind these vehicle areas (exemptions are provided for driveways providing a connection into structured parking).</p> <p>The intent of these regulations is to implement policies that call for pedestrian-oriented street frontages.</p>  <p><i>Proposed regulations are intended to prevent parking from being located in front of buildings (as in above images) in order to foster pedestrian-oriented street frontages.</i></p>	<p>Option 1: Disallow vehicle areas from being located between any building and a street.</p> <p>This is the current proposal. <u>A potential minor amendment could apply the front parking limitation only to primary structures</u>, so that accessory structures, such as sheds used for bicycle parking, storage, or garbage/recycling could be located behind a parking area.</p> <p>Option 2: Disallow parking in front of buildings on small sites (up to 10,000 sq. ft.), but on large sites allow some buildings to be set behind parking when located at least 100' from the front property line.</p> <p>Parking areas would still be limited from occupying more than 40% of the frontage of a site, so it would only be this 40% of frontage that could have buildings set behind parking on large sites.</p>  <p><i>Above: large site developments with building behind parking (left) and with no building behind parking (right). On deep sites, whether or not there is a building behind a parking lot makes little difference visually when viewed by pedestrians from the street.</i></p>	<p>PSC Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think existing landscape screening requirements might be sufficient without adding in the requirement that a building serve that purpose (of screening the parking). All things being equal, I agree it's better to have building(s) up front at the street from an urban design perspective. But if a building <i>has</i> to be at the front, that means longer driveway length and an increased likelihood that the builder puts parking in an area between the buildings that might otherwise have been a nice courtyard for residents. Also concerned about how this will work for large or deep sites, where it may not make a difference visually if there is a building located behind parking, compared to a parking lot occupying the side of a deep site with no building behind it. (Spevak) <p>Staff Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff supports either Option 1 or Option 2. Note that the proposed regulations would not require buildings to always be located in front of parking areas. The regulations allow parking to be located to the side of a building (separated by 5-foot landscaped screening from the sidewalk), as long as this parking area occupies no more than 40% of the frontage of the site and no buildings are located behind the parking. Option 1 includes a potential amendment to allow accessory structures (such as storage sheds) to be located behind parking, as the regulations as currently written do not allow buildings of any type from being located behind parking. The Option 2 allowance for some buildings on large sites to be set behind parking is intended to provide flexibility for site design on large sites, while retaining limitations on front parking on small sites (where no off-street parking is required). The 100-foot distance for buildings set behind parking is intended provide flexibility for areas of sites that are not very visible from the street. <p><i>Note: the topic of regulations limiting front garages and parking for duplexes, triplexes, attached houses and townhouses will be discussed during the December 11th PSC work session. This topic relates to both the BHD and RIP proposals.</i></p>

<p>2</p>	<p>Side setbacks along corridors</p> <p>The BHD Proposed Draft proposes standardizing minimum setbacks to a 5-foot depth from side and rear property lines (current minimum setbacks range from 5 to 14 feet, depending on the size of the building wall). This 5-foot setback applies regardless of location or abutting zoning.</p> <p>This differs from the commercial/mixed use zones, which require 10-foot setbacks from property lines abutting properties with residential zoning (including the multi-dwelling zones). The commercial/mixed use zones do not generally require setbacks from property lines shared with other properties with commercial/mixed use zoning, which allows buildings to be built up to side property lines long commercial corridors, allowing for a continuous street wall of buildings, in keeping with established main street patterns.</p> <p><i>(See Map 1 – Multi-dwelling Zones Abutting Civic and Neighborhood Corridors)</i></p> <p><i>Mix of multi-dwelling and commercial/mixed use zoning along SE Division.</i></p>	<p>Option 1: Keep proposal for 5-foot side and rear setbacks, regardless of location.</p> <p>The current proposal for 5-foot side and rear setbacks, regardless of location. There would also be no change from existing commercial/mixed use zone regulations that require a 10-foot setback from property lines abutting residential zoning.</p> <p>Option 2: Do not require side setbacks where multi-dwelling zoning (RM2, RM3, RM4) abuts commercial/mixed use zoning along major corridors (Civic or Neighborhood Corridors). The RM1 zone would still require a 5-foot setback. There are two components to this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. In the multi-dwelling zones, do not require side setbacks on sites abutting properties with commercial mixed use zoning along major corridors.B. In the commercial/mixed use zones, do not require side setbacks for sites abutting properties with multi-dwelling zoning located along major corridors. This would be a change from the 10-foot setback that currently applies. <p>Option 3: In addition to the changes in Option 2, do not require side setbacks between multi-dwelling zone properties located along corridors, when these properties are in areas where multi-dwelling zoning is interspersed with commercial/mixed use zoning.</p> <p>This option would allow a continuous frontage of buildings (with no side setbacks) in both commercial and multi-dwelling zones along corridors that have a pattern where the two types of zones are interspersed (examples include inner southeast Belmont and Division, as well as North Lombard).</p>	<p>PSC Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interested in reconsidering side setbacks and other ways MD does or doesn't match MU along main streets where zoning jumps back and forth between MD and MU. Consider exemption to side setbacks along Main Streets where abuts CM properties (per testimony received). (Spevak) <p>Staff Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff supports either Option 1 or Option 2.• An issue with Option 3 is code complexity, as it can be difficult or arbitrary to define what is meant by multi-dwelling zoning that is "interspersed" with commercial/mixed use zoning. Qualifying sites could potentially be defined by distance from commercial/mixed use zoning (within 200 feet?) or location on the same block as commercial/mixed use zoning.• With either Option 2 or Option 3, staff recommend that allowances for no setbacks not apply to the RM1 zone, which is intended for a greater degree of continuity with the characteristics of single-dwelling areas than is the case with the other multi-dwelling zones. Also, the RM1 zone (current R2 and R3) is not often located along corridors that have established main street patterns (RM2 is the typical multi-dwelling zoning along inner main streets), and is more commonly located in Eastern and Western neighborhood pattern areas. <i>(See Map 2 – Proposed RM1 Zoning Abutting Civic and Neighborhood Corridors)</i>• BDS staff have raised concerns about the code complexity of both options 2 and 3 (especially the latter), as this departs from a simple regulation for setback dimensions, to now vary according to location (corridor) and proximity to another zone.• An issue with allowing no side setbacks in the multi-dwelling zones is that these areas typically feature housing with side setbacks, in contrast to commercial main street areas that already have an established pattern of commercial buildings built side-by-side. Allowing no side setbacks in multi-dwelling zones in these locations could result in new buildings with blank walls built up to property lines next to existing housing, much of which will likely remain in place for the near- to mid-term future. In some cases, such as described in the <i>Division Green Street/Main Street Plan (2006)</i>, an intention was that there be differences along corridors between the characteristics of busy commercial nodes and the quieter and often greener multi-dwelling residential areas between them.
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<p>3</p>	<p>Front setbacks</p> <p>The BHD Proposed Draft proposes 10-foot front setbacks in the RM2 and RM3 zones (instead of the 3-foot and zero setbacks currently required in the existing R1 and RH zones). The proposed 10-foot front setbacks are intended to better integrate new development with the characteristics of residential areas, limit privacy impacts, and provide space for landscaping and small trees that contribute to greener street environments and help limit urban heat islands.</p> <p>The proposals provide flexibility with allowances for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller setbacks to match adjacent existing building. • Ground-floor commercial can have no front setback. • Buildings with street-facing courtyards can have building wings with no front setbacks. • Buildings with ground floors raised at least 2 feet above sidewalk level can have front setbacks reduced by 5 feet. <p><i>For full code detail on these setback provisions, see BHD Proposed Draft Volume 2 (pages 76-79).</i></p>	<p>Option 1: Support the staff proposal. Keep the proposal for 10-foot front setbacks in the RM2 and RM3 zones, along with the allowances for smaller setbacks in specified situations.</p> <p>Option 2: Decrease the minimum front setback requirement in the RM2 and RM3 zones to 5 feet. This smaller setback would <i>not</i> include requirements for ground levels to be raised above street level, but could still provide options for further reduced front setbacks for ground-floor commercial, courtyard buildings, and to match setbacks of adjacent buildings.</p>  <p><i>Development in the RH (RM3) zone, with and without front setbacks.</i></p>	<p>PSC Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This and other ‘raised ground floor’ requirements run counter to accessibility/visitability goals. I’m inclined to allow reduced setbacks without requiring grade change. Even though 2’ could in theory be handled by ramping, that’s a lot of ramp without much room to place it (since the presumption is that the building might have a small front setback). (Spevak) <p>Staff Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff remains supportive Option 1 and the proposal for 10-foot front setbacks in the RM2 and RM3 zones. The 10-foot front setback provides greater continuity with existing residential neighborhood characteristics, provides more useful space for green features and privacy than provided by 5-foot, while the exemptions accommodate courtyard housing and allow for smaller setbacks in locations where this is the established pattern. • Staff recommends retaining the RM4 zone proposal for 5-foot front setbacks, which allows zero front setbacks when ground floors are raised 2-foot above sidewalk level. This provides consistency with commercial/mixed use zone regulations for ground-level residential units (which similarly must be set back 5’ from the street or raised 2-foot above sidewalk level). The RM4 zone setback approach responds to Design Commission and BDS staff interest in preventing ground-level units from being built with no setbacks from sidewalks, unless raised above sidewalk level to limit privacy impacts. • Note that in the case of corner lots, the narrower dimension of a lot is considered to be the “front” of the lot, while the longer dimension is considered to be the “side.” On a typical 50ft x 100ft corner lot in the RM2 zone, townhouses would typically face the longer “side” street lot line with 5-foot setbacks required along this frontage (they would need a 10-foot setback from the narrower, 50ft wide street lot line).
<p>4</p>	<p>Accessory structures</p> <p>The BHD proposals, as requested for modification by PSC, would allow for accessory structures to be located in required side and rear setbacks for small sites up to 10,000 sq. ft. in size.</p> <p>Detached accessory structures include covered structures such as garages, storage buildings, bike sheds, covered garbage/recycling facilities, and accessory dwelling units. These accessory structures would be allowed in required side and rear setbacks of small sites, when no taller than 15 feet and with dimensions no larger than 24ft by 24ft. This allowance is intended to reduce barriers to compact development on small sites. As proposed, accessory structures would not be allowed in the side or rear setbacks of larger sites, which are less constrained than small sites.</p>	<p>Option 1: Retain the proposal to allow accessory structures to be located in required side and rear setbacks on <u>small sites</u> (up to 10,000 sq. ft.).</p> <p>Option 2: Allow accessory structures to be located in required side and rear setbacks, <u>regardless of site size.</u></p> <p>Option 3 (<i>stand alone – could be applied to either option 1 or 2</i>). Limit all accessory structures outside required setbacks to a maximum height of 20 feet.</p> <p>Existing regulations apply this 20 foot height limit to detached structures that are accessory to houses, duplexes, rowhouses. For multi-dwelling buildings and development, accessory structures outside required setbacks are subject to the base zone height limits (such as 45 feet in the RM2 zone). Accessory structures within required setbacks are limited to 15 feet in height.</p>	<p>PSC Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it’s probably fine to allow small detached accessory structures on MD sites, regardless of size). Given everything that has to squeeze into MF sites (minimum density, parking that typically ends up needing to be surface, internal circulation requirements...), even larger sites still end up feeling quite constrained. (Spevak) • Simplify: “The maximum height allowed for detached covered accessory structures is 20 feet”. I can’t see why there’d need to be taller detached accessory structures than this. (Spevak) <p>Staff Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supports either option 1 or 2. Staff does not support Option 3, as there is no evidence that accessory structures more than 20 feet tall have become a problem or are often built. The height limit of 20 feet would apply <u>outside</u> required setbacks, as accessory structures within setback areas are limited in height to 15 feet. Staff is not aware of multi-dwelling projects that have had accessory structures more than 20 feet tall (types of structures that could conceivably be limited by this height include multi-level parking structures or large community buildings that are more than a single-story in height).

<p>5</p>	<p>Pedestrian standards</p> <p>Existing regulations require that pedestrian pathways be at least 5 feet wide, except that segments serving no more than 4 residential units can be as narrow as 3 feet wide.</p>	<p>Option 1: Keep existing standards. Minimum widths for pedestrian connections are 3 feet for segments serving up to 4 units, and 5 feet for segments serving more than 4 units.</p> <p>Option 2: Modify pedestrian standards with variable standards to require pedestrian connections to be a minimum width of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 feet when serving up to 4 units • 4 feet when serving 5 to 20 units, and • 5 feet when serving more than 20 units. 	<p><u>PSC Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease hard surface circulation path width from 5 feet to 4 feet. Leave the 3 feet threshold intact for paths serving 4 or fewer units. Note that these code provisions impact cost/scope of ramping for visitable units. I think the market would probably provide sufficient width no matter what zoning says. But if there's a concern about that, I'd be fine requiring 4 feet for 5-20 units, then 5 feet for paths serving more than that (or some other threshold that makes sense). (Spevak) <p><u>Staff Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supports keeping existing standards (Option 1). A 5 foot minimum pathway dimension better ensures space for pedestrians and people in wheelchairs to pass each other. Also, Option 2 presents code and administrative complexity, as it can be difficult for plan reviewers to determine which pathways serve what specific numbers of units, especially with three different unit number categories.
<p>6</p>	<p>Ground-floor window requirements for commercial uses</p> <p>The BHD proposal calls for a minimum window coverage requirement of 25% for the street-facing walls of ground-floor commercial uses in the multi-dwelling zones.</p> <p>This percentage corresponds to the minimum window coverage requirements along secondary street frontages in the commercial/mixed use zones, but is less than the 40% window coverage requirement that applies in those zones along primary street frontages (such as along transit streets).</p> <p>This lesser required amount of ground-floor window coverage for commercial uses in the multi-dwelling zones is intended to respond to the differing characteristics of residential zones, which do not typically have the large storefront windows of commercial areas, and to accommodate a range of live-work building design options that do not necessarily feature large storefront windows.</p>	<p>Option 1: Retain the proposal for minimum ground-floor window coverage requirements of 25% for commercial uses.</p> <p>Option 2: Increase the window coverage requirement for commercial uses to 40%, when located closer than 5 feet to street lot lines.</p> <p>For projects with ground-floor commercial uses built close to the sidewalk, this would bring alignment with commercial/mixed use ground-floor window coverage requirements. This option would retain the lesser 25% window coverage requirement for buildings with commercial uses set back 5 feet or more from the street, allowing options for building design that is more in keeping with the characteristics of residential areas.</p>	<p><u>Staff Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supports Option 2, changing the proposal to require 40% ground-floor window coverage for commercial uses when located closer than 5 feet to a street lot line. This matches ground-floor window coverage requirements for commercial uses in the commercial/mixed use zones, and responds to BDS testimony requesting greater consistency in the window coverage requirements in these two types of zones. • The 25% percent window coverage requirement that would apply for commercial uses set back 5 feet or more from the street matches the window coverage requirements that apply in the commercial/mixed use zones for ground-level residential units set back 5 feet or more from the street and to the minimum window coverage required for commercial uses along secondary street frontages.