

Expanding Opportunities for Affordable Housing update

On March 10, the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) voted to recommend to City Council the package of Zoning Code and Map amendments proposed with the project Expanding Opportunities for Affordable Housing. The proposed code and map amendments are intended to help remove regulatory barriers for faith and community-based organizations that are hoping to develop affordable housing in the future. The March 10 vote followed a public hearing before the PSC on February 11, to a room packed with supporters for the Zoning Code and map changes proposed. At the February hearing 33 individuals, many representing faith and community-based organizations, testified in support of the code changes that will exempt conditional use sites from the Conditional Use review when housing is proposed on those sites. In addition to the code changes, staff initially proposed Zoning map changes to 10 sites, and during the testimony period requests were made to change the zoning on an additional 11 sites, most of which are in the ownership of faith or community-based organizations. In addition to the testifiers at the public hearing, 100 pieces of written testimony were submitted, all in support of the code and map changes, some urging the PSC to further liberalize the proposed code changes.

In their deliberation on March 10, the PSC voted to recommend all of the proposed code changes, and added amendments to expand on those changes to allow exemption from Conditional Use review to use up to 50 percent of the parking area on conditional use sites in any location, [rather than on sites close to frequent transit, as proposed by staff]. [The PSC also made minor exemptions to the Property Line Adjustment regulations for conditional use sites.]

Of the 21 proposed Zoning map changes, the PSC recommended approval of 20 of the sites. [The single exception was to a property in individual ownership, which the PSC decided did not meet the community benefit criteria; however, they encouraged that request to be made to City Council, which has a broader purview in making such changes. Several commissioners agreed that BPS should do map changes on a regular cyclical basis and will encourage City Council to pursue this as a budget item.]

With the PSC vote, the project moves to the Recommended Draft stage. Staff will release the *Recommended Draft* in early April, when testimony will open. At this time, the project is scheduled for a hearing before City Council on May 14.