

Notes - Jade District Multi-Dwelling Residential Area Walk

October 28, 2016

The purpose of this walk with community stakeholders was to explore how zoning code development regulations can be improved to help achieve better multi-family development outcomes and street connections, using the Jade District residential area as a case study.

Community Participants:

Todd Struble (Jade/APANO)
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Nick Sauvie (ROSE CDC)
Eric Pattison (ROSE CDC)
Ken Yu (Developer)



Summary of ideas from the walk:

- Need to be mindful of the impacts of regulations on small-scale developers and minimize regulatory complexity. Development by small-scale, locally-based builders is a good thing that Zoning Code regulations should accommodate.
- Would be good to identify regulatory approaches that include community-supportive requirements.
- Pedestrian connections to commercial areas are important, but we need approaches that address security concerns.
- Having development include usable outdoor space and have features that support community interaction is good.
- Consider alternative approaches to street design that provide more efficient opportunities for parking (such as angle parking), so that less parking needs to happen on site (leaving more space for outdoor areas for residents).
- Need to find ways to create incentives or reduce burdens for projects that include pedestrian or street connections, as the costs can be a disincentive to development.
- Allowing small business as part of multi-dwelling zone development on busy street corridors is a good idea.
- When talking to the community about design approaches, it will be important to use graphics and present alternatives to support this discussion.
- Some of the important issues in this area are about the need for investments in things like public parks and street improvements, rather than Zoning Code development standards.

NOTES:

Pre-walk conversation:

- This is a park-deficient neighborhood. We have a high number of youth in areas where they have to cross dangerous streets to go play somewhere.

- Want to encourage small-scale, locally-based developers. Concerned that more regulations could make it harder to develop, especially for small-scale developers. Adding regulations add costs and complexity. Community-minded requirements attract small scale local developers.
- Regulations are complex and confusing. Interpretation of regulations differ between City staff. Paid for early review in a project, yet still had to make changes.
- Concerned that code update project could add more complexity. Need to avoid this. How can a small developer understand such a complex code?

Stop 1 (Wing Ming Market parking lot – 2738 SE 82nd Ave.)

Behind this parking lot, a residential development driveway and walkway nearly reaches the commercial area, but is separated by fencing (there are no public pedestrian connections to the 82nd Avenue commercial corridor between SE Clinton and SE Brooklyn, a distance of about 1,000 feet). Questions:

- Where connections are needed, should the City require new development to provide public pedestrian connections between the residential and commercial areas?
- What concerns would you have about these pedestrian connections?

Comments:

- Concern that connection would result in cut-through auto traffic.
- Security concerns at night. Place changes at night. Parking area is locked up because of this.
- Used to be a connection here to the residential area, but developer of the new housing had it closed because of security concerns.
- More lighting would make a connection safer. Connections to houses is good for businesses. Brings customers!



Stop 2 (2767 SE 84th Ave., R2 zone: detached houses on street-like driveway [condominiums])

Detached houses or townhouses on a shared lot, such as this, are a common development type in East Portland.

- Detached house projects in the multi-dwelling zones tend to have little substantial usable outdoor space (minimum requirement is 48 SF per unit). Should regulations require larger amounts of outdoor space, or require units to be attached or in the form of multi-family housing so that outdoor spaces can be grouped into more usable dimensions?
- Should more be done to require street or pedestrian connections as part of this type of development? Should street-like driveways be required to have street trees?

- Looking south on SE 84th, what are your thoughts about providing pedestrian connections to abutting commercial sites (Fubon, in this case)?

Comments:

- In favor of attached housing units (instead of detached) to leave more room for increased usable outdoor space.
- Any connection is better than no connection
- More people brings more security.
- Private drives like these are used as communal space, play space for children.
- PBOT Cheap and Skinny Streets program was a good approach.
- Provide incentives to developer for providing connections.
- Alternatives to front garages and driveways would be good, if can mean less paving.



Stop 3 (8527 SE Clinton St., R1 zone: apartments fronting small courtyard)

This project was not required to have off-street parking due to proximity to frequent transit on Division. This allowed for a play area and community amenities, in contrast to otherwise similar projects that have the majority of unbuilt space used for vehicle parking areas.

- Should greater flexibility be provided in more locations for outdoors space to be provided instead of off-street parking?
- What are your thoughts about trade-offs between providing parking versus outdoor space?

Comments:

- Should encourage usable outdoor space.
- Has seen other examples of entries oriented to shared outdoor space- works well to create community.
- Jade District not even near capacity for on-street parking, so OK now to not always include off-street parking.
- I'm a big fan of green winning out over cars.
- Consider other on-street parking arrangements, such as angle parking. Provides more parking that could substitute for parking lots, and could mean not having to devote so much site area to parking.



Stop 4 (2743-2781 SE 85th Ave., R2 zone: narrow lot houses and rowhouses)

The first two narrow-lot houses have rear parking, while the attached houses have front garages.

- Should front garages be limited in the multi-dwelling zones, as they are in other types of zones, in order to limit interruptions to the pedestrian environment of the street frontage? (garages cannot occupy more than 50% of building facades in the single-dwelling zones).
- Note the backyard infill across the street (narrow houses) and large proportion of paved area – what are your thoughts about backyard infill development (common in East Portland)?

Comments:

- Pay attention to how people use space.
- Some people will park on the grass in the front yard.
- Cooper Street Bungalows (oriented to green common spaces) are a good alternate model.

Stop 5 (SE 85th Ave., behind Fubon)

This stretch of SE 85th features curb and stormwater facility improvements, and includes a pedestrian connection to Fubon.

- What works well or not-so-well about the street improvements here?
- Is the pedestrian connection to Fubon important to have?
- How could this connection, or future connections to other commercial destinations, be improved?

Comments:

- Important to have safe connections.
- This connection is on a greenway, yet the connection to Fubon is not bike-friendly, not accessible, and hidden.
- Safety is subjective, based on individuals' perceptions.
- It could feel safer with lighting, being more open.



Stop 6 (2866-2916 SE 85th Ave., R2 zone: flag-lot fourplexes behind houses)

Some community members have raised concerns about higher-density backyard infill development because of privacy impacts on adjacent properties, and there are also concerns about the amount of paving for vehicle access and parking.

- What are your thoughts on the appropriateness of flag-lot type development in the multi-dwelling zones?

Comments:

- What are the alternatives? People need to know what the choices are.
- Are you going to tell property owners they can't develop the back of their property?

Stop 7 (8423-8451 SE Brooklyn St., R2 zone: townhouses oriented to paved vehicle area)

In East Portland, multi-dwelling projects with large portions of site area devoted to vehicle area paving are common.

- Given policy objectives for minimizing impervious surfaces and urban heat island effects, should there be limitations on the amount of area that can be devoted to paved surfaces?

- What alternative development configurations could help minimize the amount of paved vehicle surfaces?

Comments:

- Other approaches with less paving would be better.
- Talk to developers who do this pattern/model, what are the reasons?
- Illustrate alternatives when discussing this topic with the community.



Stop 8 (8307 SE Brooklyn St., R2 zone: new apartment development)

- What are your thoughts about this development?
- What works well or not so well about its design features?

Comments:

- More of a sense of community would be provided with a central courtyard.
- ADA accessibility improves with stacked flat configuration.

Stop 11 (SE 89th Ave., adjacent to BES Property)

This area includes a BES property and several large partially vacant properties, along an unimproved street.

- If this land (BES property and adjacent partially-vacant property) were to become a public park, what are your thoughts about allowing greater densities on neighboring properties to allow more residents to be in close proximity to the park?
- Looking at the properties on the west side of the street, what design approaches could be used so that new development responds to the positive characteristics of the area, the Jade District, and/or East Portland?
- What thoughts do you have about the design of improvements to SE 89th Avenue – are there street design approaches that would be especially suitable to this area or East Portland in general?

Comments:

- BES asked us to stop saying this site can be repurposed. But at the very least, can there be something besides chain link fencing?
- Not many examples of density around parks in Portland.
- This area not developed because of street improvement requirements. Costs deter potential developers.
- Invest in robust community engagement, appropriateness determined by community.



- We are asking the community about a lot of things. There is a certain level of fatigue. Need to be strategic with project outreach.
- Need coordination amongst bureaus. Maybe Housing Authority could buy this land.
- Would be good if large property next to BES property could be a park. If could be, then zoning allowing more housing across the street would be good. Combination of City park improvements, plus greater development potential across street, could make it possible to do street improvements. Harney Park is good example of coordination on street improvements.
- Why could parks be included in the Pearl District, but not here?
- When talking to the community about potential design approaches, need to use visuals of various options. Residents don't even know what a flag lot is.
- Parking drives site plans.

Stop 12 (SE 89th Ave. & Division: live-work rowhouses)

The rowhouses fronting SE Division were originally designed as a purely residential development, but now include small commercial spaces.

- What do you think about the possibility of allowing live-work units or other small commercial spaces along major corridors in the multi-dwelling zones, as a way of responding to the context of these streets and providing residents with positive opportunities?
- What ideas do you have for how rear alleys could be improved or made to be more multi-functional?

Comments:

- Good to allow small businesses on busy streets.
- Allowing alternative arrangements is good to avoid monoculture.
- Small commercial nodes are a Portland pattern.
- Let happen what is already happening organically.
- Would be good to know if alley and rear balconies encourage socializing between residents.



