

Richmond Neighborhood Association

c/o Southeast Uplift
3534 SE Main
Portland, OR 97214
Phone: 503/232-0010



<http://richmondpx.org/> RNAnewsletter@gmail.com richmondna@yahoo.com

March 12, 2015

Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 7100
Portland, OR 97201
psc@portlandoregon.gov

Barry Manning
Senior Planner
Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
1900 SW 4th Avenue #7100, Portland, OR 97201

Re: Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Issues

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commission and Mr. Manning:

At the Richmond Neighborhood Association's (RNA) regular monthly meeting on March 9, 2015, the RNA continued its discussion of zoning issues and the Comprehensive Plan Update process. It voted to take a position on the following issues:

3-Story Height Limit on SE Division St.

The RNA Board voted to request the city to place a three-story height limit on SE Division for those properties that are not already four-stories, but the RNA left open the issue of whether a fourth story should be allowed through amenity bonuses. The RNA will likely address the latter issue at its April meeting when Barry Manning will give a presentation on the Mixed Use Zones Project.

The impetus behind this issue is the significant community backlash against the extensive development that has changed the look and feel of SE Division in just a few short years. There have been eight 4-story apartment buildings built the past 2 years between SE 31st Ave and 39th Ave/Cesar Chavez Blvd and a new 27-unit, 4-story apartment building (without parking) is planned for 3021 SE Division. In addition, a 72-unit building, without parking, was recently completed at SE Division and 48th Ave. and a 120+-unit building, with parking, is planned for SE Division and 50th Ave.

This backlash has been frequently expressed at RNA meetings, including Land Use meetings, and has been voiced through an online survey created by the Division Design Initiative ("DDI").¹

¹ The DDI is a project of the inter-neighborhood Division Design Committee (DDC), initiated to make recommendations for addressing community design concerns and to inform future

The Division Design Committee, in partnership with Portland State University students, developed a “Division Perceptions Survey” (<http://divisionperception.suprmap.org>) to get a “better understanding on how the residents along the Division Street corridor feel about the rapid changes that have taken place in the last 18 to 24 months, design preferences, and their vision for the future of Division.” In the survey, 83% of respondents expressed a preference for 2 and 3 story buildings, while 90% overall stated a preference for “smaller” buildings. A summary of the survey results is attached.

The RNA’s motion did not pass unanimously. Three board members opposed the motion, stating a concern that a 3-story limit would prevent people from living closer to the central city and it would require people to commute farther. However, as one board member commented, not everyone who moves to Portland needs to live on SE Division, which has reached its density saturation point. Further, as Commissioner Fritz has noted in Council sessions, Portland’s current zoning capacity is more than adequate to meet the projected population influx over the next 20 years.

The RNA’s vote specifically left open the issue whether the Board will recommend that the city should adopt the amenity bonus framework being considered by the Mixed Use Zones Project, which would allow extra stories above a base height level. The RNA felt it was premature to vote on this issue since the MU Zones Project has not yet finalized the amenity bonus framework or the menu of qualifying community benefits. Next month, Barry Manning, the Project Director of the MU Zones Project, will give a presentation to the RNA on the Mixed Use Zones Project and the amenity bonus framework.

Approval Criteria for Zone Change Requests from CM2 to CM3

The RNA voted unanimously to support having approval criteria for zone change requests to up-zone from CM2 to CM3 zones.

The RNA was unable to settle on the appropriate criteria, as it needed more information on the proposed set of criteria listed in the Draft Zone Application Locational Criteria in the Mixed Use Zoning Project: Draft Revised Zoning Concept Information Sessions, February 25-26, 2015. For instance, the RNA was unclear on the proposed distance for the criteria “Near high-capacity transit stations and on streetcar corridors.” Other ideas for additional locational criteria that were stated at the meeting include: adjacent to 4-lane streets, not being placed next to R2.5 or R5 zones, neighborhood notification, and meeting heightened sustainability criteria.

development patterns and planning along Division. Formed in Spring 2014, the DDC includes representatives from key neighborhood and business organizations in the inner SE Division community (RNA, HAND, Division Clinton Business Association, SE Uplift, South Tabor Neighborhood Association, and Sustainable Southeast). The DDI is currently drafting design guidelines for SE Division from SE 11th Ave. to SE 60th Ave. This project furthers the work of the Division Vision Coalition and the 2006 Division Main Street/Green Street Plan. The design guidelines are expected to be completed by Summer 2015.

Planning and Sustainability Commission

Barry Manning

March 12, 2015

Page 3

The RNA will look to Mr. Manning's presentation in April to elaborate on the proposed approval criteria.

Sincerely,



Allen Field

Chair

Richmond Neighborhood Association

cc: Susan Anderson, Director, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Joe Zehnder, Chief Planner, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Marty Stockton, Southeast District Liaison, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Mayor Charlie Hales
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Steve Novick
Commissioner Dan Saltzman

Division Design Initiative Update

Division Perceptions Survey

Survey Background and Purpose:

During the spring of 2014, the Division Design Initiative along with a Portland State University student undertook a survey called “Division Perceptions” to get a better understanding on how the residents along the Division Street corridor feel about the rapid changes that have taken place in the last 18 to 24 months, design preferences, and their vision for the future of Division.

Survey Outreach & Dissemination:

The survey was distributed and advertised via social media including Facebook, Twitter, the Division Design Initiative email list, RNRG, the Richmond Neighborhood Association, the Richmond Association newsletter, the Hosford-Abernathy Neighborhood District, the Oregonian and Southeast Uplift. Survey cards were distributed by businesses on Division Street, tables set up at the Hawthorne and Division – Clinton Street Fairs, and during a Movie in the Park event.

Survey Demographics:

- Total Respondents: The survey had 253 responses as of 10/1/14
- Age & Gender: The average age of the respondents was 47. Of those who identified gender there were 117 female and 101 male responses.
- Location of Respondents: 236 respondents identified themselves as living in southeast, 141 living directly within the affected area along with 37 living within 10 blocks of the corridor.
- Business Owners: Forty-eight of the respondents identified that they were small business owners with half of those saying that their business was directly located on the Division Street corridor, 16 of those were home based businesses and the average amount of time they have been in business was approximately 11 years.

Initial Survey Takeaways:

The Division Perceptions survey will remain open through October, however initial analysis of the survey data indicates some commonly expressed themes:

- **Preference for smaller buildings on Division.** For design preferences, 112 respondents noted scale/or building height. Of these respondents, 83% specifically expressed a preference for 2 and 3 story buildings. This number is larger (90%) if including those noting a preference for “smaller” buildings.
- Many respondents noted a **desire for preservation of buildings with special architectural, historical or cultural value** and there were many positive comments of recent retrofits of existing buildings such as D-Street Village and Roman Candle Bakery, and many responses noted positives to increased vitality to the street and addition of new businesses.
- Many respondents noted a **desire for more retail and concerns over increased parking issues, safety, and loss of local businesses.**
- Many comments noted that recent new construction on Division is perceived to be too “box-like” in design and many cited a **desire for more articulated architectural character and materials to match that of the existing neighborhood character.**
- Also commonly expressed was a **desire for more open space, landscaping and public gathering spaces on Division.**
- Respondents also frequently noted **concern for the lack of affordable housing and a desire for more diversity of unit types and family-friendly housing and amenities.**