

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2009
Time: 5:45 P.M. to 7:45 P.M.
Location: West Oakland Public Library

Residential Zoning: Group 1

Facilitator: Laura Kaminski
Note taker: Kelly Cha

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- For narrow lots, side setback should be wider
- Existing open space requirement for condominiums (need to be wider than existing requirement)
- Articulation – aesthetic factor need to be considered to make bulky buildings more interesting; in context with neighborhood
- Parking concern
 - Stacked parking
 - Number of parking space increases as more accommodation is made
- Issues with shade and shadows in the backyard from neighboring buildings
- Question on the inherited right to property owner, especially for high density

Scenario B:

- Allowed with Conditional Use Permit (CUP) – increase attractive uses in neighborhoods
- Stores increase viability in the neighborhood
- Concerns with restaurants and its alcohol sale (currently alcohol sale not allowed in residential zones and prohibited in Residential General Plan Categories)
- Retail stores are and/or could become community gathering places
- Building with historic character should be considered
- Should be allowed when it's desirable and appropriate in the neighborhoods
 - When there is a demand from neighborhood, it affects the city's decision on the project
- Corner retail should be allowed
- WANT – drycleaners, coffee shops, pet shops, flower shops
- AVOID – stores with power tools

Scenario C:

- Emeryville – if owned two lots side by side, the city allows to build the buildings side by side without any side setbacks in between
- Average setback (percentage)
- Narrow setback affects adjacent neighbors
- Allow continuation of existing setbacks
- Design review to consider the changes in setback

DISCUSSION 2:

Scenario A:

- Prefer articulation, but should have some limitations to avoid ugly over articulated buildings
- Majority requirements stay; tools are provided here to maintaining and enhancing purposes
- If a lot located in different location than the one provided for Scenario A (one in the middle of the block), then it should be considered differently (individual building situation should be considered)
- Every lot in R-50 is different – neighborhood context, historic pattern, etc.
- What to maintain and enhance? – with tools provided Mixed Housing Type general plan area could be enhanced
- Concerns on micro-zoning – some factors could be added to the standard zoning requirements
- Bulky buildings need to consider what’s next to them, especially height of the neighbors
 - Neighborhood context/size (overall mass in neighborhood)
- Limit on the percentage of height increase
 - Consider neighbors
 - Avoid drastic height change in between buildings
- Transition of neighborhood
 - Concern on how to require design qualities
- Each residential block should have at least one green/open space (i.e., use the vacant lots), and need wider sidewalks

Scenario B:

- WANT – café, grocery stores, small offices, low impact commercial (professional offices with limited number of customers; CUP should be required if not),
- AVOID – restaurant (time conflict, noise, etc.)
- Alcohol sale is not allowed currently
- All corners should be considered to be retail spaces if there is one existing retail in order to allow more demand if grouped together
- If the space is already commercial, then commercial use should be allowed
- Effort is needed to reduce vacancy
 - Impacts should be considered when it is filled

Scenario C:

- Continuation should be allowed without CUP, as long as it doesn’t go wider than the existing setbacks
- Sliding scale of setback should be considered
- If narrow side setback is allowed, then rear setback should be bigger (proportionality)

Residential Zoning: Group 2

Facilitator: Alisa Shen

Note taker: Holly Pearson

DISCUSSION 1:

Scenario A:

- “Envelope” is not independent – surrounded by existing buildings; the context is a starting point
- Generally residents prefer less density near their homes – what tradeoffs can help mitigate greater (e.g., medium) density
- No carports below dwelling units – “neighborhood killer”
- Courtyard approach is aesthetically positive – good fit with area (single family); green space in courtyard
- Considerations
 - How it looks, “street presence”
 - Light, green space, privacy
 - parking
- In future, MORE density may be desirable
- Parking requirements – should be more if dwelling units more than 1 bedroom
- Breaking up front façade is important for street presence

Scenario B:

- Limited to use that only serve neighborhood (not bring people in)
- Small-scale stores might have litter issues?
- Good to maintain neighborhood use in walking distance
 - Better to allow a few commercial uses – not just one isolated, so they have a better chance of succeeding

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A:

- Windows near property lines – noise issues?
- Maintaining consistency with existing development (especially in historic areas)
- Expand design guidelines to deal with multi-family buildings (especially regarding neighborhood context)
- Front setbacks should not be fixed, should be based on context (setbacks of adjacent buildings)
- Grass/garden strip at front makes new housing attractive and desirable
- Street tree requirement is good
- Courtyard option could create privacy issues
- Positive features – grass in front of property and in curb strip (sidewalk between)
- Requirement that parking be at rear can be negative (pave rear yard) should be allowed to raise house and park under (e.g., older houses)
- Should facilitate on street parking
- Parking ground level of building can be seismic risk
- Rear setback is critical – backyard, open space, light
- Code should encourage spaces that relate to street/public realm – encourage interaction

Scenario B:

- Should allow maximum flexibility to take economic considerations into account
- 2 sets of rules
 - Existing buildings – more flexible
 - New commercial uses – allow on limited basis (e.g., 2% of land area), no parking (so require walking to uses), and mixed use
- Promote public health and neighborhood environment (e.g., no junk food, liquor stores)
- Doctor and dentist ok
- Cobbler shop, neighborhood enhancing
- Yes on produce stores and “recession proof” businesses

Residential Zoning: Group 3

Facilitator: Alicia Parker

Note taker: Edward Manasse

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- Questions about the scenario:
 - What is the amount of parking proposed/required and what is the width of the driveway in front yard?
 - What are the buildings like around the lot?
- New development should reflect the neighborhood’s historic context and original fabric.
- A courtyard would be difficult on 50 ft. x 100 ft. lot.
- It is important to address the new building’s materials.
- How can usable open space be accommodated?
- Is it possible to have group parking for the neighborhood or the street on one lot?
- I prefer using building articulation, with no visible parking, to reduce bulk.
- Buildings can be sensitive to surrounding historic structures by reflecting the typical façade width in the area – use module in scale with area, reflecting the roof line of area and having compatible fenestration.
- It is important to include extra insulation/sound control in walls when houses are denser.
- Very tall walls with minimum separation should be avoided.

Scenario B:

- Only liquor stores are controversial – other commercial uses would be fine.
- Commercial uses are okay if they don’t create a neighborhood nuisance such as odor, noise, traffic, chemicals/vapors, alcohol, too large of a size.
- Commercial uses should be neighborhood-serving such as:
 - Drycleaner, daycare centers, live/work; restaurant IF venting is adequate and there are no parking issues.
- A restaurant could be a problem – and may not do well (lack of demand).
- Hours of operation need to be limited in neighborhood commercial uses.
- When commercial storefronts are converted to residential uses, the window treatment can be a problem if the large storefront windows are covered.

- It would be necessary to limit the size of commercial uses in residential areas.
- I support work/live and live/work.

Scenario C:

- Adjust existing lot size standards to reflect the lot size pattern found in neighborhoods in the R-40 zone.
- Additions to houses located on narrow lots should be reviewed according to context (i.e., would encroaching into the side yard setback be too close to neighboring property?, etc.).
- Allow additions to houses on narrow lots if you can put windows in it within the reduced side yard setback

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A:

- Refer to Oakland Preservation Element – respect the neighborhood’s historic context and be sensitive to the historic character.
- New buildings should not have to recreate historic styles.
- New buildings should be held to the context of the neighborhood.
- Utilize health standards in permitting new development (would the new development increase traffic, thereby affecting air quality?).
- Is affordable housing required as part of new development? (Inclusionary Zoning)
- Landscaping of new development is very important – trees, grass, etc.
- Variety of design in neighborhoods is important.

Scenario B:

- The appearance of the store matters when deciding to permit it in a neighborhood. Liquor stores should not be allowed.
- West Oakland is saturated with small, ‘mom-and-pop’ stores – there are just too many, especially liquor stores. These stores should be distributed throughout all Oakland neighborhoods.
- Artist space and live/work is okay in our neighborhoods.
- Commercial uses in residential areas should be evaluate based on compatibility and potential neighborhood impact.
- Small grocery stores are okay.
- We should allow an opportunity for small commercial, live/work space. The separation of residential uses and commercial uses is not necessary.
- Community services/neighborhood-serving commercial uses should be permitted.
- Control the lighting of commercial uses in neighborhoods and require the business to maintain the sidewalk.
- Working in a storefront should be okay.

Scenario C:

- Different standards should be applied to small lots – reflect difficulties of addition.
- It is important to protect neighbor’s rights.
- Consider the addition’s impact (such as shading) to potential solar installations.

Commercial Zoning: Group 1

Facilitator: Christina Ferracane

Note taker: Ulla Jonsson

- Meeting time not convenient
- Concerned about West Oakland
- Housing not affordable
- West Oakland – cover up BART – too noisy to have commercial i.e. café there
- Interested in 7th Street, too many trucks on 7th – truckers no bathroom
- What is acceptable as new development depends on what was there before; it may not be good for residential uses, could have toxic soil
- In North Oakland, lots of corridors – would destroy neighborhood to have 4-5 story buildings
- Consider historic preservation
- Came to Oakland because it's a city of neighborhoods
- Everything is scattered, not on corridors so people don't come to corridors to shop
- Like all your needs together - restaurant, barber shop, grocery store, all in 1-4 block radius
- Lives in Temescal, European style – concerned with tall buildings
- Rear setback is rarely enough
- Interested in requiring or limiting uses that occur at back of building
- Interested in requiring or limiting uses that occur on different floors
- Interested in placing higher FAR and height at intersections
- Parking can be in rear of building or below grade to allow for more landscaping and walkways
- Storefronts could also be located in interior courtyard
- Building height should be reduced as you move farther away from street corners
- What buildings look on their back side is important
- New development should have a human scale next to an existing house
- 'push' people toward interior courtyards
- Height ok but sometimes monolith on corners lead to other monoliths and doesn't fit with Oakland
- Certain neighborhoods (historic) should be preserved and others should be developed
- Lives 1/ 2 block from Telegraph
 - Envisions wall of 5-story buildings on corridors – doesn't want that
- In vacant neighborhood – look at what's good for city – if only 1/3 people against a use, pay those people off and move on
- Want a variety of uses to serve a variety of neighborhood needs – not just a big Chevy's
- Look at existing uses in surrounding areas to determine what new uses are appropriate
- Can have tall buildings if rooflines are staggered, like near Lake Merritt
- People who live behind Lakeshore Avenue may live behind tall buildings, but that may be okay because they may like being close to the shopping (which is possible because of higher population density nearby)
- Concerned about industrial uses that are in run-down buildings causing other buildings to run-down on the corridors

- Don't want industrial to sneak into residential – live/work should not be located in industrial areas

Commercial Zoning: Group 2

Facilitator: Neil Gray

Note taker: Kassie Dumlao

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- With step back, are you considering solar panels?
- Parking is salient for more intense developments
- Refer to Emeryville for good examples of vertical articulations and rear articulations
- Areas that need more attention are those with less power (under-represented communities)
- Community and historic context should be considered
- Should be more nurturing in certain areas
- 14th street is a bad example of ground floor treatments.
 - Fire and utility service doors (like massive roll down doors) are not appealing on the ground floor
- 35th and MacArthur displays another bad example of ground floor treatments (Again, utility service doors on the ground floor are not appealing)
- Like to see the city drop the 1-to-1 parking requirement
- Should consider breaking up large lots

Scenario B:

- Green building be integrated
- Discourage open parking lots
- No consulting services on the ground floor with the exception of banks
- Should require chain stores to make signage fit the rhythm and pattern of the neighborhood
 - Prohibit big signs in smaller, local neighborhoods

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A:

Ideas for Height

- Restrict a minimum height; not just a maximum height
- Should be a spectacular design requirement, especially for higher buildings
- What about green space and parking?
- Should be higher density developments near public transportation
- Should step back to adjacent height limits

Ideas for ground floor treatment

- Wider sidewalks, trees, street lamps, café seating
- Café seating restrictions need to be planned and not to take over

Ideas for Upper Floor treatment

- No more window patterns like image #2
- More oversight on development – guidelines for retail construction for housing developers

Ideas for Ground Floor treatment

- Bus shelters take up lots of sidewalk
- Bus shelters are needed
- Housing on the ground floor as long as retail can be switched in easily
- If housing on the ground floor, consider your bedroom near the sidewalk, would you like that?

Scenario B:

Activities to allow on ground floor

- Local vs. national chains
 - Supporter of local
 - Exception like Safeway

Commercial Zoning: Group 3

Facilitator: Devan Reiff

Note taker: Pete Vollman

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- City should acquire cheap vacant land on commercial corridors for civic uses, like sculpture garden, more pocket open spaces
- New residential developments should have more group open space, and require landscaping between street and residences.

Height

- Street width is a good measure for height limits—the wider the street, the higher the buildings could be
- Height limits should be developed after taking in account the existing prevalent height of the corridor; for example, a corridor with 2 and 3 story buildings might have a 4 story height limit, and require public review (CUPs) for heights above that limit. ‘
- Limit height as a way to limit new development in established historic areas.
- Don’t restrict height too much—support more density on our commercial corridors.

- Height restrictions are necessary to preserve existing neighborhood character.
- There should be no abrupt transitions between new buildings and existing buildings. “Gradual” changes of height should be encouraged.

FAR/Density

- Allow more FAR in a building when there is less use of cars (lower parking ratios), or access to transit
- Before higher density buildings are permitted on the corridors, there should be proof that safe/adequate transit exists (AC Transit was not considered by the speaker to be a viable business, perhaps this comment applies more to areas around BART stations). There should also be 2 parking spaces per new unit required.

Adjacent Residential areas

- Shadow studies should be required of every new building to see the effect new taller buildings will have on neighboring property.
- No parking entrances to new buildings on the residential side streets. The effects of new cars using the new building should be limited to the corridor side of the building.

Ground Floor treatments

- On the commercial ground floors, require design elements that make the business and the commercial corridor inviting to shoppers and pedestrians: good glazing (i.e. tile entries), good landscaping on the streets in front of the shops; bike parking.
- Preserve historic facades (fronts) of commercial buildings. Make new buildings line up with the existing commercial structures.
- Limit “non-active” uses on the ground floors of new buildings in areas where there is established commercial activity. For example, prohibit offices, or non-retail/restaurants establishments.
- Encourage mixed-used buildings on the corridors.
- Encourage outdoor seating where possible—and add to the pedestrian amenities – streetscape improvements like benches, planters, street lights.

Upper Floor Treatments

- Articulate the massing of the building—break up the bulk of a new building by designing several different setbacks. Make sure new buildings match the existing setbacks of the existing buildings.

- No large buildings should be allowed without breaking the building's bulk up into different facades—make the building appear to be several buildings instead of one large building.
- New buildings should use similar exterior materials as the existing buildings on the corridor.
- Colors should not be “garish.” They should come from, and be appropriate to, the existing neighborhood.

Uses/Activities

- If there are areas on corridors which are predominantly commercial on the ground floor, then no buildings with residential ground-floor uses should be allowed in those areas. This will prevent the commercial cluster from being “broken up” with buildings that don't have commercial activities on the ground floor.
- Fewer Liquor Stores
- More General food Sales businesses: more produce/grocery stores and more cafes
- On College Avenue, there is an over concentration of restaurants. There should be limitations on when a new restaurant can open in commercial areas (similar to our limitations on new alcohol-beverage sales).
- Certain commercial areas should have protections for small, entrepreneurial businesses, and chain stores should be prohibited from those areas. Similar to Valencia Street in San Francisco.
- “over concentration” shouldn't limit businesses from locating where there is similar business. For example, some commercial streets are known as the place to select from several places to eat—over concentration to some is “variety” to others.

Miscellaneous

- Street wall of the existing buildings should be respected—new buildings should have to line up with other existing buildings.
- No overwhelming signs on the corridors.

Date: Saturday, February 28, 2009
Time: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Location: Bella Vista Elementary School
1025 E. 28th Street

Residential Zoning: Group 1

Facilitator: Laura Kaminski
Note taker: Jessica Look

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A

- A box building is cheaper to build, like idea, but we need development.
 - How do we not hinder development?
- Buildings last long time
- Façade treatments
- Larger units can attract buyers
- Design regulations can help
- Courtyard doesn't give a good urban experience – can be unsafe
- It is more expensive to do 2 buildings (courtyard)
- More articulation = more cost \$\$
- Define open space? How does it affect surrounding neighborhood? Vacant lots/buildings
 - City requires a certain amount of open space on a lot that has 2 or more units
- District 6 – we need more business
- Camdon and Brand – R36, not R50. We have existing backyards right by Foothill
 - Laura – We will look at these areas
- Push for limited lot coverage
 - Want to get away from 60's buildings
 - Privacy issues
- 15' too little for backyard
 - More space
- Storm water paving over backyard
 - Limiting % of paving??
- Need lots of trees and wide 15' sidewalk
 - Trees make neighborhood
- Does code allow to put a patio on garage?
 - Laura – Code allows deck over garage, the City currently requires new street trees to be planted when an addition or new house is built
- Neighbors – side yard should restrict paving as well

Scenario B

What kind of commercial uses would you like in a residential neighborhood if any?

- No auto use in residential
- No alcohol
- Restaurant can be ok but not on small street, should be more on thoroughfares
- Like coffee, restaurants

- Should be 'by right' more personal type services good, especially can walk
- Gas stations – don't like near residential
- Restaurants near public transit
- Parking is issue. People should take transit near restaurant
- Restrictions on signs/billboards
- Liquor – greater regulations and what they sell, don't allow glass tubes = drugs
- Liquor – selling beer/corner stores is ok if limit % of liquor sales
- CUP = limits
- Pet stores, pet supplies are okay
- Barber shop is okay
- After school activities
- Allow uses – neighborhood serving not regional
- Can these buildings allow just residential?
 - Laura – they can, but it is not always an easy conversion
- Have more design review especially in commercial areas
- Grandfathering in of existing signs
- Grand Avenue
- Fire concerns
- Parking issue – don't want to encourage more traffic
 - Look at transit

Scenario C

What do you think of how to deal with narrow lots?

- Owner probably wants to build closer to rear lot line. Perhaps have a special review.
What about nearby neighbors?
- What is next door becomes critical
- What is on the side?
- Sun exposure
- Fire code regulations – look at
- Should not be able to do it

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A

- Images – do they have different square footage?
- In existing single family neighborhood?
 - No it is a mixture
- Put higher density in corners.
- Funny games – overbuilding. In middle in block.
- Perhaps merge 2 lots? These were existing single family.
- Look at existing building lot when you do mixed residential don't put taller building
- Tool: Look at existing limit lot coverage based on neighbor's lot.
- Scenario happens a lot
- Like limited lot coverage
- Some General Plan made areas too dense
- Look at immediate lot and mix of block (in determining lot coverage)
- Let's control it

- In new condo development. How do we limit development appropriately?
- Likes space for light and air. No straight walls
- Combining minimum set backs and FAR that is less – having varied side setbacks, courtyard example respects neighbor’s
- Not usable space on roof and require green roof
- No amenities required now – just blank
- Design standards good but not adequate property maintenance.
- Code says ‘maintain in perpetuity.’ But interpreted as 2-5 years should be life of building!
- Limited lot coverage but look at adjacent lots.
- Solar orientation/shade
- South facing 20’ setback
- 4’ maybe wasted space
- Provisions for green space?
- 0’ lot line problematic when there are existing buildings next door and with fire code

Scenario B

- Live/work
- Artist – Use can liven neighborhood
- Flexibility
- Not motorcycle shop
- Beautiful restaurant storefront. ASMA (?) Center
- Laundromat/restaurant converted to residential – façade done well
- Maybe convert to live/work designation
- Live/work solution good one
- Wouldn’t want to encourage building new – like existing building
- Small commercial hard to compete with big box
- Alcohol sales – no
- Limit hours – CUP
- Nail salons – need ventilation
- Housing/nail salons – not good mix

Scenario C

- Mix and match setbacks surrounding
- If the house is lower in back can have reduced side yard setbacks
- Can make housing more affordable if allow reduced setbacks

Residential Zoning: Group 2

Facilitator: Alisa Shen

Note taker: Holly Pearson

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A

- New building needs to be functional and aesthetic – not massive
- Courtyard option uses space well and creates nice place to live

- Preserving green space livable
- Limitation of required front setback
 - That may not be consistent with existing nearby setbacks
 - Flexibility exceptions to design and create financially feasible project to experiment with multiple scenarios
 - Garden space, green space is priority. Zoning should require
- Allow creative design options e.g. green roofs, communal spaces
- Suggestion for developer fees that could be used for public amenities
- Tear down buildings and create community garages!
- May be essential to grow food in urban areas in near future (economic conditions)
- Front of property is most important – how it looks
- Parking / paving concerns – impacts to water quality from runoff from cars
- Idea to charge residents who have more than one car
- Affordable housing requirement in zoning!
- Common trade off for preserving green space is greater height – gets contentious
- Flexibility about height limits, and/or more height allowed by right

Scenario B

- No liquor stores, auto repair
- Day care, tutoring, family – neighborhood serving +
- But day care can be controversial traffic, noise
- 1 year limit grandfathering is too rigid to increase viability of these community spaces, e.g. external
- Incentives + uses e.g. fresh produce
- Restrictions regarding retrofitting these spaces (insure seismic safety for residential above)
- Nail salons (-) – fumes/pollution to residents above
- Be more protective/permissive with existing non-conforming commercial uses

Scenario C

- Application of zoning regulations
- Depends on context – what’s on either side?
- Look at distance between existing and proposed. Look at adjacent conditions

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A

- 60s/70s design – blank walls – awful
- Articulation, different building planes much more interesting and attractive
- More landscaping helps
- Courtyard option limits how much of the lot can be used
- Suggest looking at average lot coverage in area to determine allowable envelope
- Buildings in back of residential lots good – increase housing supply
- Density doesn’t have to be imposing or negative – use of good zoning tools can make it possible
- Opposed to large boxy buildings in neighborhoods like this. Very important to preserve neighborhood (Example – Bella Vista)

Scenario B

- Community uses allowed should be based on neighborhood need
- Some uses are problematic – e.g. loitering, litter, traffic
- No alcoholic beverage; no cigarettes
- No more storefront churches but better than vacant
 - Increase traffic; not attractive
 - Not generate tax revenue if on commercial corridor
- Need to require trash receptacles for commercial uses/areas
- Zoning regulations should not allow halfway houses – or, at least there should be discussion with neighborhood

*Need more open, accessible means of community input (multilingual)

Scenario C

- Consider what the appearance would be – a 15’ wide portion of a building
- Need to look at context
- Clear cut rules are more predictable, take less time BUT ends up that rules don’t make sense in a lot of situations
- For narrow (small) lots, suggest more flexibility in zoning than on large lots

Residential Zoning: Group 3

Facilitator: Alicia Parker

Note taker: Edward Manasse

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A

- Boxy, boring buildings, with long blank walls and parking in the front should be avoided.
- An additional tool (not presented in the scenario) is zero setbacks. Zero setbacks allow for continuity along the streetscape.
- Features of good buildings include detailing, buildings similar to historic neighboring properties (window sills, etc.), entrances near the street and prominent entry features (arch, etc.).
- Courtyards used as walkways work well.
- Avoid flat roofs – I prefer pitched roofs.
- Avoid wood roofs in hill area – fire danger.
- Orient roof to allow/encourage solar panels.
- Building designs should reflect our age and modern life.
- Articulation that overhangs the street should be avoided.
- Design guidelines should not be ‘one size fits all’ but should allow design/style flexibility.
- Buildings should have a real entry on the street; porches should be encouraged.

Scenario B

- Commercial uses are okay when use is compatible with neighborhood – grocery store, etc. The neighborhood should be consulted to determine what they need/want.

- Keeping all commercial uses out of neighborhoods not conducive with modern mixed use zoning.
- Hours of operation, smells and parking availability and location are important to consider when deciding upon having commercial uses in neighborhoods. (Commercial uses are not appropriate everywhere).
- Commercial uses must have windows in the front for safety purposes.
- Grocery stores (no liquor), cafes, coffee shop, and places that creates good jobs are appropriate for neighborhoods.

Scenario C

- Allow different regulation for small lots.
- Allow flexibility and consider specific situations, such as proximity to adjacent driveway when potentially allowing reduced setback.
- Criteria to review additions on narrow lots should be the potential impact to neighbors. Reduced setbacks are okay if no impacts and approval of neighbors.
- Shading impacts from new additions on neighboring properties should be avoided.
- Size of setback depends on topography.

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A

- I do not want to encourage the style of construction that occurred in buildings of bad mid-century construction.
- I want to avoid featureless buildings.
- New buildings must respect the existing neighborhood context.
- Buildings occupying less lot coverage are good.
- Examples of features of good apartments include: arched doorways, less boxy, distinct architecture style, have exterior landscaping (lush looking), building set back from street, design building so it doesn't appear too large, emphasize landscaping on lot as a way to minimize lot coverage and have it fit in.
- Limited lot coverage will also help to maintain privacy for neighbors and prevent overbuilding of existing lots

Scenario B

- Avoid exclusive zoning – loosen up rules to allow small commercial in neighborhoods.
- Zoning should be flexible to allow conversion of residential to commercial/commercial to residential.
- Little restaurants are okay if they are well insulated, but may not do well as business (how much demand is in the neighborhood?). Small, neighborhood serving grocery stores and coffee shops are okay.
- It is okay for a commercial use to go into an existing commercial space, however, we need to limit expansion opportunities.
- Parking is a concern. Avoid auto-intensive businesses and open storage of materials.

Scenario C

- It is okay to have different standards for small lots.

- Reducing side setbacks is unfair to neighbors – privacy/bulk impacts/infringes on quality of life.
- Sliding scale for setback is okay; additions would work better with existing house.
- Extending line of existing house (thereby encroaching into side yard setbacks) is okay.
- Flexible setbacks to allow additions is preferable to allowing a new house in the rear of an existing house.
- Setback could also be based on context/setback of surrounding lots – but don't repeat mistakes of past.

Commercial Zoning: Group 1

Facilitator: Christina Ferracane

Note taker: Ulla Jonsson

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- Example on 40th Street: ugly upper floor treatment – overhang, too heavy, railings to solid – only good thing is that the ground floor is transparent
- Example on 40th Street: design is trying to respond to industrial uses nearby
- Don't like storefronts that try to look Industrial.
- New buildings should take a neighborhood's aesthetic value into consideration
- Consider historic design (existing)
- Ground floor uses – market decides what use will locate here, despite best plans
- Ground floor can be built with flexible structure that would allow different uses (commercial or residential)
- Portland example successful – step up to residential use
- Uptown example – balcony but no streetscape makes it bare
- Manufacturing increases truck traffic, so it is not good use for a neighborhood commercial district like Piedmont Avenue (Example: when Fenton's started manufacturing ice cream for off-site sales)
- Don't change existing light industrial uses
- What does General Plan say about preserving historic buildings?
- Broadway/12th Street proposal – don't like new building next to historic building
- Not everyone feels that way about the new building proposed for 12th and Broadway
- Building at 12th Street and Broadway will be a LEED-rated building partly because it is preserving the existing historic building
- Don't want us to look like SF
- Parking should not be included in Floor Area Ratio
- Shouldn't allow parking in buildings in Downtown, especially when you have BART there
- State mandate to reduce Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- New storefronts should not be allowed to come in with their own signature tiles

Scenario B:

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A:

- Park Street in Alameda – I don't go there, because I don't understand where the parking is located
- 40th Street example, not example of great architecture
- Like different examples of 'interaction w. low density'
- Lincoln family homes bad
- Hate ground floor treatment of new cathedral, and windows on ground floor don't offer privacy to users on the inside of the building
- Like setbacks from the corridors
- Should have both residential and commercial uses on the ground floor
- Would like to see Portland example on ground floor rather than big boxes
- Do not like 40th Street example
- Like buildings to be set back w. landscaping
- If existing building has commercial don't change to residential: In some places (E 24th Street) it works
- Like variety in façade of buildings on corridors, stagger elevation/façade

Scenario B:

- In some neighborhoods don't have grocery stores; they are underserved
- Some old buildings on commercial corridors converted into churches – would like those uses to have to get Conditional Use Permit because they take away retail (like grocery, clothing, sewing materials) and the site is empty during most of the day.
- 50 million churches on Foothill and we don't need more nail salons
- We restrict # of bars, can we do the same with nail salons?
- Want to encourage diversity of uses
- Want some large retail uses
- Districts, like auto row make sense
- Rockridge was able to throw out cigarette store

Commercial Zoning: Group 2

Facilitator: Neil Gray

Note taker: Kassie Dumlao

DISCUSSION 1

Scenario A:

- Are there examples of step backs?
- Maintains integrity of neighborhood
- Example: Broadway and 22nd (Yellow building) – Horrible example because housing is right on ground floor street front
- Should at least go to 3 stories on MacArthur
- Who in the City collects the commercial vacancy rates?
- Laurel District has good examples of 3 storey live/work lofts

- Masterson near High Street – a new development – good example
- Certain uses are nuances (porn shop, Pussy Cat Bar)
- If it's a good retail business that's not a nuisance (i.e. MD, DDS office) then it should not be restricted in certain areas
- Auto use regulations are oftentimes infrequently enforced
- MacArthur and McGee (35th and McGee) where cars can be stored – resident likes it for its convenience
- Parking – some places have oil leakages
- Pro-density – but who is housing serving?
- Set backs for high density not attractive
- Density can go as high as it goes as long as there's access to sunlight
- Are churches commercially zoned? No problem, just curious
- Connection to the street: Image #2 is a very good example of ground floor treatments

Scenario B:

- Is there a distinction between what areas (i.e. Rockridge and Laurel) have regulated activities/uses?
- Would we want to say certain uses can go in certain areas?
- Concern – take a good idea and try to regulate it
 - Over zealous in what does/does not activate the street
- Saw her neighborhood pick up and thrive when certain uses/activities were regulated in the neighborhood
- What kind of communication does the City have with AC Transit?
- Would zoning 'police' enforce buildings to be GREEN and have solar panels, materials, etc?
- What about open space regulations for commercial areas?

DISCUSSION 2

Scenario A:

- West of Eastmont Mall used to have businesses in that area - what happened?
- Lots of traffic and parking with big lots
- We need more commercial spaces (i.e. restaurants, places to shop, etc)
- We have more than enough residential
 - Many condos and apartments are vacant
- We need more economic infrastructure to shop, work
- Likes mixed use
- Mixed use to have commercial on ground floor and on higher levels (good views)
- Good core tenant (Trader Joes, Walgreens)
- Refer to Emeryville for mixed use and commercial shopping
- Parking is very important
- Keep parking for businesses separate for tenants
- Encourage small businesses with current economic state
- If 8 storey structure – break it up or make trees in the middle of boulevard
- Taller on International and step back on residential
- Control what type of businesses go into these buildings so they do not disrupt nearby residential

- Assault on neighborhood when erect building like Kaiser Hospital
 - More important things than money – quality of life
- What about sun-dependent backyards?
- Tree or building – one or the other can block sunlight; therefore not just buildings
- Can we discourage the punched out window patterns?
 - Can you require trim or depth, consistency and scale
- Chicago provides a good example of varied architecture where every building doesn't look like its neighbor
 - It's okay if it's different as long as there is some relationship to its neighbor
- International and 28th office building
- Include a bowling alley
- Nice example has landscaping, old cobble stone Gothic buildings at Pleasant Court (businesses)

Scenario B:

- Be more flexible with activities – allow change in neighborhood makeup (out migration; in migration)
- Tired of residential in neighborhood; need more commercial
 - Took away lots of commercial spaces out of District 6 – we want those
- We want more significant stores (i.e. Toys R Us, Mervyns, etc).
 - We don't want small (tune up places)
 - Discourage mom and pop stores in District 6
- Nothing in West Oakland
- Nothing in East Oakland
- Wasted sidewalk space

Commercial Zoning: Group 3

Facilitator: Devan Reiff

Note taker: Aubrey Rose

Activities/Uses

- Too many alcohol establishments. Over concentration of liquor stores. Bars should be regulated differently, because they offer a social, gathering place.
- Bars should be required to serve food, like in Portland, Oregon.
- City should encourage restaurants
- Too many Laundromats, on Park Blvd, near the Parkway Theater. They take up vital commercial real estate that could be restaurants or shops. Laundromats should have operational standards, like requiring on-site staff.
- Planning Code should encourage combination of principal activities, such as a Laundromat and a café, as in San Francisco. Use commercial space efficiently to house more than one business in the same space, if the shops are complimentary.
- Encourage specific permitted uses, and conditionally permit those businesses where there is already an over concentration in certain corridors in part to protect most desirable uses from being “priced out”

- Auto-servicing impacts neighboring pedestrian-oriented businesses—make non-conforming. E.g. the Kragen Auto Parts and repair shop on Park Blvd near the Parkway Theater. Would like to see more commercial vitality and restaurants in this neighborhood.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented neighborhood uses.
- Discourage auto-oriented uses, and big box site design: force national retailers to put parking in rear of lot, and buildings should be built with little set-back from the street.
- There should be fewer franchises and national chain stores in the commercial corridors, and more entrepreneurial stores. There should be limitations in the Zoning on chain stores.
- Zoning changes should create more employment for Oakland residents. Allow national chains, as a part of a sustainable employment and business mix within neighborhood commercial districts.
- Diamond and Laurel were examples of complementary commercial areas that serve several residential neighborhoods well.
- There is a over concentration of certain businesses on Lakeshore Blvd—nail salons and cell phone stores. Cell phone stores shouldn't be considered General Retail Sales, they need stricter regulation—possibly given their own code category, as with Fast Food.
- Single-family houses on commercial corridors (which are rare) are a special concern.
- There should be more civic uses on the commercial corridors, which sometimes is complicated by Building Code regulations about large gathering places.
- Ground floor uses should be “sustainable”—instead of mandating retail space which stays empty in new buildings, allow live-work and work-live activities. It doesn't have to be artists necessarily, could be a home office or a law-practice.
- Industrial areas that have commercial character need special treatment in the rezoning. The character of the Central Estuary is being fought over now, will be determined after the Specific Plan process is completed.
- There is resistance to more urbanization and residential density among people in commercial corridors.
- The transition on the commercial corridors from commercial uses to residential uses adjacent and to the rear is very important to regulate correctly.

Design Standards

- Quality of materials is important (7th Street development materials look inexpensive and flimsy-don't look attractive or durable).
- Facades (building fronts) should be articulated (broken into different forms)
- Buildings should have a human scale
- Uses permitted on the ground floor should be as varied as possible—office, civic, general assembly (like non-profits which have public activities), residential, live-work and work-live.
- Require ground floor heights by zoning standards
- Zoning should be flexible on ground floor uses—examine parts of Building Code which are prohibiting or making too expensive the conversion of ground floor space to varied uses. Example given of a community center that used to rent an upper loft space to artists for studio space, but when the City took over operation of the center, Building codes were used to force the space to become storage, instead of space that artists could use cheaply.

- The City should use economic incentives, especially in Redevelopment Areas, (but not exclusively there) to beautify parking lots with storm water improvements (i.e. permeable paving or swales), continue to grant funds to owners for façade improvements.
- Tall buildings belong in downtown, but not on or crowding out open space (such as Lake Merritt or the Estuary).
- Design review manuals or guidelines should distinguish between “bad” stucco used on many new buildings and “good” stucco, which was used on buildings in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Should also mandate a variety of interesting materials on the ground floor storefronts of new buildings.
- To create more pedestrian-friendly commercial corridors, there should be easier encroachment permitting for sidewalk cafes, especially on Grand Avenue, where the sidewalks are wide.
- Revise the high-density design guidelines to permit more private open space, not with views of parking lots or other units. Allow balconies to have views of the Hills and the Bay.
- The HBX zoning is very innovative and “progressive” and many of the standards there for live-work uses and blending commercial uses in to existing structures should adapted for the new commercial corridor zones.