

Staff Report

File #: 20-50**Version:** 1**Date:** 2/10/2020**Item #:** 4.a.

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Norman Wright, Community Development Director

SUBJECT:

Supplemental report for Multifamily Housing Design project.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance; Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe Community; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council;

- 1) Engross ordinance bill no. 1-20, amending the Salem Revised Code to update design standards for multifamily housing, and advance the engrossed ordinance bill to second reading for enactment, or
- 2) Refer the ordinance bill back to staff to incorporate one or more of the options set forth below in the facts and findings?

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer the ordinance bill back to staff to incorporate one or more of the options set forth below in the facts and findings.

SUMMARY:

The City Council voted on January 27, 2020 to continue the public hearing on the proposed code amendment for the multifamily housing design project, Ordinance Bill No. 1-20. The City Council raised several issues related to parking requirements, balconies facing single-family zoned properties, bike storage requirements, and picnic tables. Staff has provided information for each issue with options for consideration. Staff generally supports any of the options below.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. Minimum Parking Requirements for Multifamily Housing

Councilors discussed the idea of eliminating minimum parking requirements for multifamily projects. There has been research and articles that have supported doing this in some form (see below). Staff generally supports reducing parking requirements and considers the options below as a first step toward considering further reductions in the future.

- **Planning Magazine, October 2018:**

- [<https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking/>](https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking/)

Ideas for consideration

a) Continue with current proposal

- This option would reduce but not eliminate parking requirements for multifamily projects. Specifically, it would reduce the minimum parking requirement to one space per unit for housing with three to 12 units and would calibrate parking requirements according to the type of units in developments with 13 or more units. Staff also recommended allowing a reduction in parking requirements under certain circumstances (e.g., providing affordable housing, being located near transit, and providing additional covered bicycle parking or a shared car/van service on site).
- This option would make it easier to develop multifamily projects, particularly smaller projects where sites tend to be constrained and space for parking under existing regulations is challenging. It would also encourage the development of lower-priced housing and the use of alternative forms of transportation.

b) Eliminate minimum parking requirements for multifamily projects in the Central Salem Development Program (CSDP) area

- The CSDP area is generally located between Hood Street NE to the north, Mission Street SE to the south, the Willamette River to the west, and 12th Street to the east (Attachment 1). In this area, parking requirements for housing are already reduced to 1 space per unit.
- Salem's downtown is more likely to support multifamily units with little to no parking than other locations in the city. It is an urban environment where goods, services, and entertainment are generally within walking distance, and there are multiple options for alternative forms of transportation, including frequent transit service. There are also City-owned parking facilities in the downtown that could provide additional parking spaces to residents that want to lease an off-street parking space. (Eugene and Springfield have eliminated parking requirements in their downtowns.)

c) Eliminate minimum parking requirements for multifamily projects within ¼ mile of Cherriots'

Core Network (**Attachment 2**)

- The Core Network is a network of bus service corridors where frequent service is prioritized. The corridors include, in part, Commercial Street SE, Liberty Street SE, Lancaster Drive NE, Market Street NE, Center Street NE, State Street, Edgewater Street NW, and Salem's Downtown. Reduction or removal of service in the corridors cannot occur without the Cherriots' Board of Directors holding a public hearing and taking action.
- Eliminating minimum parking requirements in the Core Network would encourage transit-oriented development by incentivizing multifamily housing near frequent transit service. The Core Network is also generally located along major corridors in Salem where goods, services, and jobs are located, so encouraging multifamily housing near these corridors could potentially reduce the demand for off-street parking spaces. (Portland has eliminated parking requirements for housing projects with up to 30 units that are located near transit stations or frequent transit service as well as for any affordable housing projects near transit stations or frequent transit service.)

2. Minimum Parking Requirements for Room and Board facilities

Staff received a formal letter from the Salem Housing Authority (SHA) supporting the proposed code amendment and specifically calling out the benefit of reducing parking requirements. The SHA included in its letter the example of Redwood Crossings, which has 36 single room occupancy units (SROs) and one 1-bedroom unit. This code amendment as currently proposed does not reduce the parking requirement for SROs, but it is timely and relevant to address this issue alongside parking requirements for multifamily housing. Reducing barriers to the development of SROs advances the goal of the Multifamily Housing Design project, which is to help meet Salem's housing needs.

- SROs are considered Room and Board facilities in the Salem Revised Code. These facilities rent out rooms with shared kitchen and/or bathroom facilities. Most Room and Board facilities are homes that have been converted from single-family dwellings. The majority of these facilities have five or fewer guest rooms; the code currently requires one parking space per guest room. As part of this code amendment, the parking requirement for Room and Board facilities could be reduced or eliminated. (Portland does not require off-street parking for Room and Board facilities, while Eugene requires one space per four bedrooms.)

3. Balconies

Councilors asked for further discussion of the proposal to limit balconies next to single-family zoned properties.

Ideas for consideration

a) Continue with current proposal

- This option prohibits balconies on building facades that are within 50 feet of a property zoned

Single-Family Residential (RS) or Residential Agriculture (RA). This was done to enhance compatibility with existing buildings on abutting sites, while still providing flexibility in site design. For example, buildings with balconies facing an RS-zoned property would be required to be placed at least 50 feet away, but buildings without those balconies could be placed closer to an RS-zoned property. The staff recommendation also allows 80 percent of the dwellings to be constructed without balconies which will also help with site design flexibility.

- Under existing regulations, landscaping and screening is required to buffer between multifamily housing and abutting RA and RS-zoned property. The landscaping requirement is at least one tree for every 30 feet of abutting property width, and in addition, a six-foot-tall decorative, sight-obscuring fence or wall is also required. This existing regulation is proposed to remain under the staff recommendation.
- b) Remove the proposed restriction on balconies on buildings facades facing RS and RA-zoned properties
 - This is what the Planning Commission recommended. It would allow balconies on buildings regardless of the zoning of abutting properties. It would not address compatibility concerns that were raised during outreach but would allow the most flexibility in site design. Staff does not recommend this option.
- c) Require balconies on buildings facades facing RS and RA-zoned properties to have fully sight-obscuring railings
 - This option would provide some screening between the multifamily unit balconies and abutting single-family zoned properties. This would help enhance compatibility with abutting residential properties without restricting where buildings could be located on a site. This could be required in lieu of the staff proposed 50-foot setback.

4. Bike storage

Councilors asked to discuss the idea of requiring secured, sheltered bike parking for multifamily housing projects with 13 or more units.

Ideas for consideration

- a) Continue with current proposal
 - The staff recommendation did not require any bike parking to be sheltered. The Unified Development Code (UDC) has bike parking standards that regulate the number of spaces required as well as the design and location of spaces. (The code requires four spaces or 0.1 spaces per unit, whichever is greater.) It does not, however, dictate how many spaces need to be sheltered versus unsheltered. Sheltered bike parking is typically associated with long-term bike parking and is typically located indoors or in bike lockers.

- Staff has discussed the idea of revising the UDC to have short-term and long-term bike parking requirements and intends to pursue this as a broader update to the UDC. This work would include proposing minimum number of short- and long-term bike parking requirements for each use and developing design and locational standards for long-term bike parking. Staff anticipates doing this code update within the next year or two.
- b) Require a minimum of at least 50 percent of bicycle parking spaces to be indoors, in bike lockers, or secured covered areas.
- This option would ensure at least half of all required bicycle parking spaces would be secured and sheltered from rain. These spaces would be required to be provided outside of individual dwelling units in bike lockers or in lockable rooms such as a common storage room or a separate structure. They could also be in a covered outdoor area (e.g., overhangs) that are fully enclosed by a fence or wall. The spaces could be further away from a building's main entrance(s) than currently allowed for bike parking (e.g., 50 feet) if located on the same site.
- Other cities in Oregon have provisions for short-term and long-term bike parking, with different minimum parking requirements and design and location standards. Portland requires most bike parking for multifamily housing to be long term (1.1 or 1.5 long-term spaces per unit) versus short term (2 spaces or 1 per 10 units). The long-term parking, however, can be in racks or lockers, and only 50 percent need to be covered and secured. Eugene, for example, requires all bike parking for multifamily housing to be long term, and the spaces must be in a lockable garage, room, enclosure, or bike locker.

5. Picnic tables

Councilors asked for further discussion of the proposal to allow a picnic area with at least two picnic tables to double count toward the open space requirement for multifamily housing. The other options provided in the code amendment include a covered pavilion, ornamental or food garden, children's play area, sports court, and swimming pool. This proposal to double count certain amenities was recommended to incentivize the development of active recreational space.

Ideas for consideration

- a) Continue with current proposal
- The current staff recommendation is to allow the provision of a picnic area with at least two picnic tables to double count toward the open space requirement for multifamily housing projects. The purpose is to encourage the development of active recreational opportunities in multifamily projects.
- b) Eliminate the picnic area option from the list of possible active recreational opportunities that can be double counted toward the open space requirement for multifamily housing projects
- Staff supports eliminating the picnic area option. As was discussed at the City Council public

hearing, the picnic area option is not as substantial - and potentially not as permanent - as the other options. A picnic area could still be provided, but it would not be double counted.

Summary of Options Discussed Above:

1. Minimum Parking Requirements for Multifamily Housing
 - a) Current proposal
 - b) Eliminate minimum parking requirements for multifamily projects in the Central Salem Development Program area
 - c) Eliminate minimum parking requirements for multifamily projects within ¼ mile of Cherriots' Core Network
2. Minimum Parking Requirements for Room and Board facilities
 - a) Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for Room and Board facilities
3. Balconies
 - a) Current proposal
 - b) Remove the proposed restriction on balconies on buildings facades facing RS and RA-zoned properties
 - c) Require balconies on buildings facades facing RS and RA-zoned properties to have fully sight-obscuring railings
4. Bike storage
 - a) Current proposal
 - b) Require a minimum of at least 50 percent of bicycle parking spaces to be indoors, in bike lockers, or secured covered areas.
5. Picnic tables
 - a) Current proposal
 - b) Eliminate the picnic area option from the list of possible active recreational opportunities that can be double counted toward the open space requirement for multifamily housing

BACKGROUND:

This code amendment implements recommendations in the Salem Housing Needs Analysis (HNA). The HNA found that Salem's portion of the urban growth boundary has a projected 207-acre deficit of land designated for multifamily housing (2,897 units) based on a 20-year population forecast. In 2016, the City Council directed staff to implement the HNA Work Plan to address the projected deficit. This code amendment is one of the projects identified in that work plan.

Eunice Kim
Planner III

Attachments:

1. Central Salem Development Program map
2. Core Network map

