



CITY OF SNOHOMISH

116 UNION AVENUE · SNOHOMISH, WASHINGTON 98290 · (360) 568-3115 · WWW.SNOHOMISHWA.GOV

MIDTOWN TASK FORCE MEETING #3 October 13, 2020

TASK FORCE MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

Alice Armstrong	Thomas Kreinbring
Gordon Cole	Ethan Martez
Ray Cook	Jeanette Pop
Mitch Cornelison	Kyle Stevens
Karl Houtman	Kat Thompson
Rio Ingram, Chair	Van Tormohlen

Task Force Members Absent: Paula Denney

There were 13 other meeting attendees from the public, City staff, and consultants.

POLICY, CODE, AND DESIGN STANDARD CONCEPTS

Consultant Bill Trimm went over proposed new Comprehensive Plan policies for the Midtown district. The policies would call for:

- Creation of a new zone called “Midtown” divided into two overlay areas with differing regulations regarding intensity of use and size of buildings.
- New design standards specifically for the Midtown zone.
- Encouraging multi-family developments and accommodating a range of housing types and densities in Midtown.
- Developing thriving commercial areas in Midtown with increased intensity over what is currently allowed in the area.
- Special treatment for the former County Public Works Yard site including requiring a development agreement prior to any development.

Mr. Cole suggested revising the policy regarding the County site to allow a wider range of uses, rather than limiting the site to something that is predominantly residential. He also questioned requiring a development agreement, which is approved by the City Council, because he did not want the development process to be politicized.

Consultant Bob Bengford went over proposed development regulation and design standard changes including:

- Prohibiting certain uses such as detached single-family residential, warehousing, adult entertainment.
- Increasing the allowed density above the current 18 dwelling units per acre.
- Allowing taller buildings.
- Establishing block frontage and front setback requirements.
- New streetscape design standards requiring wider sidewalks and planting strips.
- Building design standards.

The Task Force was asked to vote in several polls to evaluate support for various design proposals. Prior to and after the polling on each issue the Task Force had detailed discussions about building height, block frontage design, site design and open space, and building design. Following are the polling results.

Poll 1: What should the maximum building height be in the south overlay zone?

35 feet	42%
45 feet	58%

Poll 2: Building height in the north overlay zone

Should taller heights be applied uniformly in entire northern area; or	50%
Should taller heights only be allowed on larger sites?	50%
The maximum height should be up to 5 floors (55ft)	70%
The maximum height should be up to 7 floors (75 feet)	30%

Two members did not vote on Poll 2 because the poll assumed a new base height of up to 45 feet (current regulations allow up to 35 feet) and their preference was to leave the maximum height at 35 feet. If their positions are factored into the Poll 2 results the percentages would be:

Should taller heights be applied uniformly in entire northern area; or	42%
Should taller heights only be allowed on larger sites?	42%
Leave maximum at 35 feet?	16%
The maximum height should be up to 5 floors (55 feet)	58%
The maximum height should be up to 7 floors (75 feet)	25%
Leave maximum at 35 feet	17%

There was discussion regarding the difference between using feet or floors for establishing maximum heights.

Poll 3: Block Frontage Design in the south overlay zone, applying the Mixed Designation on Avenue D.

5 (best approach)	27%
4	45%
3 (neutral)	18%
2	
1 (unacceptable)	18%

Poll 4: Block Frontage Design in north overlay zone from Tenth Street to 14th Street.

The proposed design applied the Mixed Designation on Avenue D, the Landscape designation on 13th Street, the Storefront designation leading into the County Shop site, with through block connections on side streets throughout and a Highly Visible intersection at Avenue D/13th Street. 13th Street was also shown to extend through the Shop site.

5 (best approach)	33%
4	33%
3 (neutral)	8%
2	
1 (unacceptable)	25%

The Task Force discussed the proposed design. Mr. Bengford noted the Storefront designation can be flexible, so that developers can choose where the storefront is located on their site.

Poll 5: Block Frontage Design in north overlay zone from 14th Street to the roundabout, applying the Mixed Designation on Avenue D with a Highly Visible intersection at the roundabout.

5 (best approach)	8%
4	17%
3 (neutral)	17%
2	25%
1 (unacceptable)	8%

Poll 6: Building Design standards that would prohibit corporate architecture.

5 (best approach)	75%
4	
3 (neutral)	8%
2	
1 (unacceptable)	17%

When it became apparent that the presentation would extend beyond 8:00 p.m. the Task Force decided to continue the meeting to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 27.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Donna Ray, City Council alternate liaison, said she struggles with the concept of 75-foot-tall buildings. She understands the challenges of density and affordable housing, so if the Task Force thinks we should go in that direction she encouraged them to be careful where the tall buildings are placed so that the transitions are as graceful as possible.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. Pickus stated new Zoom log on information for the continued meeting will be created and distributed and the continued meeting will be publicized in the same way other meetings have been.

Mr. Pickus stated the next step will be for the consultant/staff team to develop in more detail proposed Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Development Code (zoning) amendments based on the results of this meeting and then hold a public open house to share those proposals. At this point it is unlikely that COVID restrictions will allow a normal open house, so the options are to halt the project until limits on how many people can physically meet are raised or try to come up with another idea. Staff has talked about the possibility of a hybrid approach that includes an online presence as well as an all-day in-person meeting which would limit the number of attendees at one time. Staff will continue to explore this and will bring more details for the Task Force to consider and discuss on Oct. 27th.

The Task Force's last meeting will then be to review public comments and then finalize detailed recommendations for the Task Force to forward to the Planning Commission, which the Planning Commission will then use as their direction for developing Land Use Development Code and Comprehensive Plan amendments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.