



CITY OF KIRKLAND
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 12, 2015

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Angela, Senior Planner, AICP
Paul Stewart, Deputy Director, AICP
Eric Shields, Director, AICP

Subject: Study Session: 2013-2015 Comprehensive Plan Update, MRM Request, File CAM13-00465, #9

I. RECOMMENDATION

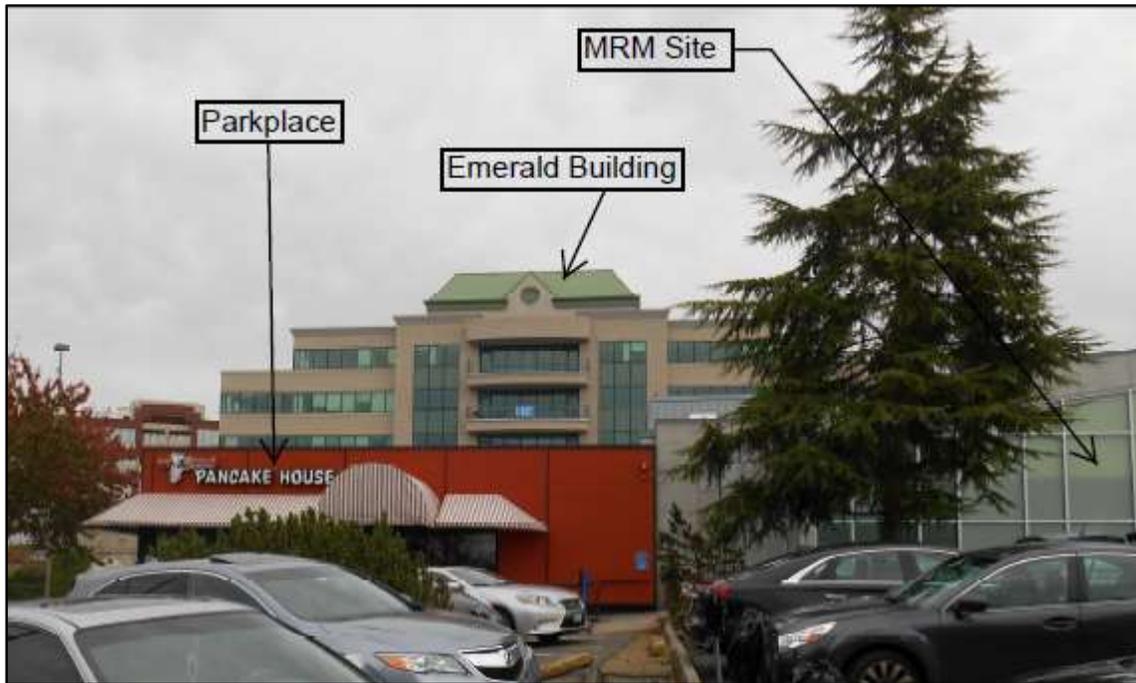
Provide direction on the MRM amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission in its memo dated September 10, 2015.

II. BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

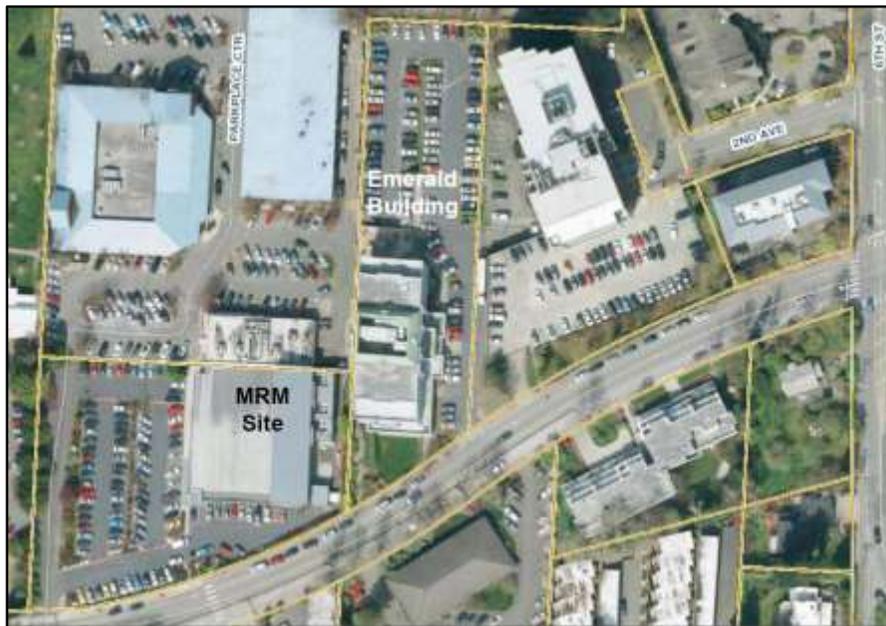
The Planning Commission's recommendation on the MRM amendments was presented to the City Council at its October 6, 2015 study session. The Council asked staff to look into the possibility of regulating the use of balconies on the east side of the MRM site to protect the adjacent office tenants in the Emerald Building from the impacts of the future residences on the MRM site (see photo on page 2 of the Emerald Building, Parkplace site and MRM site). The Emerald Building has existing balconies on its west elevation that faces Parkplace and MRM.

Staff contacted the Municipal Research and Service Center (MRSC) to see if it has any examples of local zoning and/or design regulations that have been adopted for this purpose - in other words, to protect office uses from adjacent new multi-family residential uses by placing limitations on the location of balconies that may detract from the view from the office uses. MRSC staff responded that they were not aware of any such regulations or design guidelines. They did state that the inverse situation of protecting adjacent residential from office buildings is likely the more typical situation.

Staff also reviewed the Zoning Codes for Bellevue, Seattle and Redmond and did not find any regulations protecting office from residential uses, although these cities do allow the two uses to occur adjacent to each other in mixed use zones. This was verified by staff at the City of Seattle and also at the City of Redmond. We have not heard back from City of Bellevue, but did not find any such regulations in the Bellevue Zoning Code. Staff could find no readily available information that the proximity of office space to residential space negatively impacted office vacancy rates.



As can be seen in the aerial photo below, the north portion of the MRM site overlaps the Emerald Building site by approximately 60 feet. The majority of the Emerald Building is adjacent to the Parkplace site.



III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the MRM amendments as recommended by the Planning Commission and that additional regulations for residential balconies not be added.

If the Council does choose to regulate balconies, staff recommends that the regulation be included as an addition to the Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Oriented Business Districts. This will allow the Design Review Board to have some flexibility in how it administers the guideline.

The Design Guideline would apply to all residential buildings adjacent to office buildings in Pedestrian Oriented Business Districts. The existing guideline relating to Architectural Elements: Decks, Bay Window, Arcades, Porches is shown below. The potential new wording that could be added if Council wants to regulate balconies is shown in italics and underlined at the end of the existing guideline.

Architectural Elements: Decks, Bay Windows, Arcades, Porches

Issue

Special elements in a building facade create a distinct character in an urban context. A bay window suggests housing, while an arcade suggests a public walkway with retail frontage. Each element must be designed for an appropriate urban setting and for public or private use. A building should incorporate special features that enhance its character and surroundings. Such features give a building a better defined "human scale."

Discussion

Requirements for specific architectural features should be avoided and variety encouraged. Building designs should incorporate one or more of the following architectural elements: arcade, balcony, bay window, roof deck, trellis, landscaping, awning, cornice, frieze, art concept, or courtyard. Insistence on design control should take a back seat to encouraging the use of such elements.

Guideline

Architectural building elements such as arcades, balconies, bay windows, roof decks, trellises, landscaping, awnings, cornices, friezes, art concepts, and courtyards should be encouraged. *Balconies on residential and office buildings should be carefully designed to avoid negative impacts on neighboring buildings.*

IV. NEXT STEPS

October 20, 2015: City Council will give staff direction on the residential balcony guideline.

December 8, 2015: City Council will take final action on the Comprehensive Plan Update, and map and code amendments.