



CITY OF KIRKLAND
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 12, 2015

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jeremy McMahan, Planning Manager
Paul Stewart, Deputy Director, AICP
Eric Shields, Director, AICP

Subject: Study Session: 2013-2015 Comprehensive Plan Update,
Nelson/Cruikshank Citizen Amendment Request, File CAM13-00465,
#9

I. RECOMMENDATION

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

II. BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission's recommendation on the Nelson/Cruikshank amendments was presented to the City Council at its October 6, 2015 study session. The City Council gave preliminary direction that it was supportive of the Planning Commission recommendation on density for the subarea, but had concerns about the proposed reduced setbacks. The Planning Commission recommended that front setbacks be reduced from 20' minimum to 10' minimum and that side setbacks be reduced from 5' minimum/15' total to just 5' minimum. Rear setbacks in this zone are 10' and no change is proposed. The Council discussed the following three alternatives:

- Accept the Planning Commission recommendation, including setbacks
- Accept the PC recommendation, don't reduce the existing setbacks
- Accept the PC recommendation, provide larger setbacks where aggregation happens adjoining existing single family

The majority of the Council indicated a preference for the third option and asked staff to bring back options to the recommended setbacks, with a particular emphasis on addressing impacts to existing single family homes from larger, aggregated multifamily developments.

The City Council also requested input from staff regarding the potential for design review for future development in the subarea.

Options are presented below with a brief rationale, followed by the staff recommendation.

The aerial below shows the study area and highlights required front yards in orange. Of the 21 parcels in the study area, nine parcels abut two streets and would thus have two required front yards. The specified front setback would apply to both abutting rights-of-way.



Front Yards

As discussed at the October 6th study session, the required front yard helps establish the character of the area. Setbacks less than 20' are often used to create a more walkable and pedestrian friendly streetscape. This is achieved by pulling living spaces and front porches closer to the sidewalk as an alternative to parking lots and lawns.

A concern was expressed that if individual garages are only 10' from the front property line, cars parked behind the garages are likely to extend over the sidewalk and into the street.

Options:

1. Reduce required front yard from 20' to 10' but require that the garage door be setback 20' to provide space for cars to be parked between the garage and street.

- This would not be necessary for an entrance to a multifamily parking garage because cars would not be allowed to block the drive aisle into the garage.
2. Reduce required front yard from 20' to 10' as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Side Yards

As discussed at the October 6th study session, the required side yards create open space between adjoining properties and the width and arrangement of these setbacks can protect an existing single family home from a larger multifamily project. The concern expressed by Council on October 6th was the impact to existing homes from development where properties are aggregated to create a larger development. The options below provide a choice of how to measure the intensity of multifamily projects – the code could address greater setback protection based either on the number of units in a proposed project or the type of units in a proposed project.

Note that when required side yards are specified as 5' minimum/15' total, the developer is allowed to choose how to distribute the 15' total between the two sides (but not less than 5'). Given that the concern here is to offer additional setback protection for single family homes, staff recommends that this choice be removed and the larger setback should be placed abutting the single family home under either option.

Options:

1. Unit Count Threshold: Reduce required side yards from 5' minimum/15' total to 5' minimum; except - for developments containing four or more units abutting an existing single family home, the side setback for the abutting property line shall be a minimum 10'.

Rational: A four unit threshold is suggested because, based on the recommended density and existing parcel sizes, about one-half of the parcels are large enough for four units and one-half could have fewer than four. As discussed, higher unit counts and a larger development footprint would be the result of aggregating multiple parcels. In addition, the four unit threshold is used elsewhere in the Code as the trigger for affordable housing requirements.

2. Unit Type Threshold: Reduce required side yards from 5' minimum/15' total to 5' minimum; except - for projects containing stacked dwelling units abutting an existing single family home, the side setback for the abutting property line shall be a minimum 10'.

Rational: The stacked dwelling unit threshold is suggested because stacking of units increases the likelihood of multiple units abutting an existing single family home. For example, a townhouse style development (attached dwelling units) oriented parallel to the street may only have one residence abutting the single family home. However, it is possible that a townhouse development could be

oriented perpendicular to the street and result in multiple units abutting an existing single family home.

Design Review:

Regarding the potential for establishing a design requirement for future development in the subarea, the Council was concerned about ensuring appropriate fit and context for the subarea as redevelopment of this single family enclave occurs over time. A design review process could be established, but it would be appropriate to craft design guidelines first that address design objectives for the subarea. While some of the Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts (applicable to the CBD and other mixed use areas) may be appropriate, because this subarea is not mixed use and heights are limited to 30', these existing guidelines likely do not address the concerns at hand.

A decision on a design review process and design guidelines for the subarea need not be made as part of the current process. Adoption of this amendment and the Comprehensive Plan does not prohibit the Council from requiring design review in the future. Adding design review would be a zoning change following a public hearing. Staff recommends discussing this issue during the Planning Work Program evaluation in 2016.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Planning Commission recommendation with the Option 1 adjustments noted above for required front yards and required side yards.

- **Front** – reduce to 10' but require garages to be setback 20' to maintain a parking pad.
- **Side** – reduce to 5' but require 10' for projects with four or more units abutting existing single family homes.

Staff also recommends that Council provide staff with direction regarding the desire for future development of a design review process and design guidelines for the subarea. If Council wishes to proceed with that, staff could bring that back as part of the Planning Work Program to prioritize the project relative to the remainder of the Work Program.

IV. NEXT STEPS

October 20, 2015: City Council will give staff direction on the required yards.

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