

MEETING SUMMARY

GOLDEN TRIANGLE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION

Date: January 22, 2020
Meeting Info: January 16, 2020, 3:00-5:00 pm, Webb Building Room 4.F.6
Subject: Advisory Committee Meeting #5

Attendance

- **Advisory Committee**
 - Present: Kristy Bassuener, Chris Carvell, Pete Dikeou, Scott Johnson, Rhonda Knop, Anne Lindsey, Laura Liska, Cherry Rohe, Jeff Samet, Brent Snyder, Byron Zick, Liz Zukowski (CM Hinds, District 10)
 - Not present: Charlie Hunt, Chris Parezo, Adam Perkins, Susan Stanton
- **Public**
 - Dennis Humphries (Ratio Design), Angela Hygh (BHFS), Douglas Marts (resident),
- **City Staff**
 - CPD – Abe Barge, Lilly Djanians, Kristofer Johnson, Krystal Marquez, Fran Penafiel, Bridget Rassbach

Meeting Summary

- **Overview of Interim Report #2**
 - Serves as a summary of outcomes from recent outreach and evaluation of alternative zoning approaches
 - Five evaluation criteria used (Consistency, Effectiveness, Variety, Flexibility, and Predictability)
 - Evaluation matrix
 - Five categories (Zone Districts and Building Forms, Massing Tools, Street Level and Design Quality Tools, Parking, and Development Capacity and Incentives)
 - Tools that met 4 of 5 criteria were included for further study
 - Tools meeting less than 4 criteria were eliminated
 - Re: question regarding whether the Neighborhood Plan would be replaced by the zoning/DSG, staff explained the Plan will continue to live on and provide high-level policy guidance, whereas the zoning code and DSG are regulatory tools used to review specific development proposals. Zoning/DSG are intended to implement Plan recommendations but may still allow outcomes in conflict with the Plan. Future development will be reviewed against zoning/DSG and not the Plan.
 - Re: question regarding zoning tool on page 28 “Require Non-Residential Active Uses at the street level for all projects,” staff clarified Active Uses will be required on all projects, but not necessarily Non-Residential. Non-Residential Active Uses may still be required in certain locations or project scales.
- **Summary of Meeting #4 Outcomes**
 - Small Lot threshold at 125-foot width, but investigate additional category at 50-75 feet width
 - Require parking to be wrapped by Active Uses except on Small Lot projects that are 5 stories or less, also investigate situations where lots are less than 150 feet deep or on corners
 - Remove “stories” limit on General form and research height of Point Towers to achieve 12.0 FAR

- Need more information on incentives and where to set the “by-right” maximum vs. the overall maximum
- **Lot Size Thresholds and Design Tools**
 - Staff summarized the number of lot widths in the neighborhood at 125 feet or less, 75 feet or less, and 50 feet or less, and showed photo examples of existing buildings in GT that met these parameters
 - Note, the photo example of the 75-foot lot showed garage access at the street level. Staff explained that future Active Use requirements would likely not allow this type of configuration and parking access would come from the alley in most cases.
 - Comments from the committee indicated lots 50 feet or less may be too limiting and that setting an additional threshold at 75 feet or less was more appropriate. The photo example of the 75-foot size was considered a desirable outcome from a neighborhood scale perspective.
 - Staff provided an overview of several design tools that can be used to distinguish the various lot sizes in terms of larger projects needing to meet additional standards
 - Mass Reduction and Upper Story Setbacks
 - Some comments regarding 200-foot height limit on General form and whether a taller limit would allow greater flexibility for creative massing on larger buildings
 - Street Level Non-Residential Use Requirements
 - Street Level Open Space Requirements
 - Re: question regarding whether Open Space would be better as an incentive, staff noted a concern that it would need to be equally available to lots of all sizes and could result in small, leftover spaces on smaller projects which runs counter to previous comments from the Committee and public to ensure Open Spaces were large enough to be functional and safe. Staff is proposing to include this as a standard on the largest of projects (ie, 300’ wide or greater)
 - Re: concern that Open Space needs to be “open to the sky” and the architectural challenges that introduces, staff responded this is an existing definition in the zoning code and speaks to the desire to introduce more landscape, tree canopy, and other permeable surfaces especially in Downtown urban locations. Covered areas have difficulty achieving this goal. There would not be anything preventing a covered plaza area, but it would not qualify for the Open Space requirement.
 - Additional comments made that setback areas and landscaping in front of buildings is just as, if not more important, than unusable Open Space, especially along Speer Blvd or other streets where ROW dedications are being required
 - Parking Wrapped by Active Uses
 - Re: the requirement to wrap parking with an Active Use, there was a comment made that there could be an unintended consequence of making buildings bulkier because parking becomes less efficient and would require additional stories to meet the same demand. Staff noted this concern and responded hopefully by eliminating minimum parking requirements, this scenario could be minimized
 - Continued discussion about challenges of wrapping parking with Active Uses on lots less than 125 feet deep or on corners at the 125-foot width threshold
 - Committee commented and discussed the desire to screen lighting and encourage some level of architectural treatment on the alley side, especially for facades that will be highly visible for the foreseeable future
 - Summary
 - Avoid use of term “Very Small” lot, update language to be Small, Medium, Large or something more descriptive such as Traditional, Regular, Wide

- By introducing a new Small Lot threshold, increase the Medium Lot limit from 125 feet to 150 feet to address shallow and corner lot concerns
 - Small Lot = 75 feet or less, Medium Lot = 150 feet or less, Large Lot = greater than 150 feet
 - Committee asked staff to investigate whether Small Lot should have a lower height limit or some other mechanism to encourage a range of project scales, especially smaller and medium size, on these lots
- **Relationship of Point Tower Height and FAR**
 - Staff reviewed testing of various lot sizes to show the relationship of buildings at full entitlement of 12.0 FAR and height required to reach the maximum
 - Smaller lots (up to about 200 feet wide) have no issue reaching full entitlement of 12.0 FAR within the proposed 300-foot height limit. Lots 250 feet wide begin to be restricted by the height limit, but can still achieve FARs greater than the General form (10.2 vs. 9.0). Lots 300 feet wide and greater are restricted substantially, but are also large enough to accommodate two towers with at least 120 feet separation. Two towers allows full entitlement of 12.0 FAR up until the largest of lots (~500 feet wide).
 - Re: questions about why we should limit ourselves to 300 feet, staff explained taller limits may be challenging to show consistency with Neighborhood Plan recommendations and gain enough community support to pass Planning Board and City Council. Staff agreed the visual difference from the street level between 300 and 350 feet is difficult to discern.
 - Committee members suggested staff explore whether a building could exceed 300 feet in exchange for preserving a smaller scale building elsewhere in the neighborhood
 - Suggestion to also explore whether it would be possible to cluster towers near the center of the block
 - Committee asked questions about required tower spacing and whether a project on one site could restrict the ability to build a tower on an adjacent lot across the alley or street. Staff explained the desire for substantial tower spacing to preserve sun and sky access, especially from the street level, and that Planning Board and City Council would likely be looking for spacing requirements at least as wide as, and likely greater than, CPV-Auraria (120-foot minimum). Under the current system, it would be possible for a project to eliminate the Point Tower option from an adjacent property if it could not meet the minimum separation standard.
 - Staff and committee discussed the need for an Upper Story Setback to define the podium and tower and whether a tower could come directly down to the street. Committee agreed there should be a setback applied to the entire frontage. Note, this standard is proposed as a “setback” and not “stepback,” so a tower could conceivably come down to the street if the podium also met the required setback distance and provided additional space at the street level.
 - Some committee members expressed concern about tower size limitations at 11,000 sf and the desire to increase this to 12,000-12,500 sf. Staff explained 11,000 sf limit is used elsewhere and would require a change in policy to increase the size limitations.
- **FAR Maximums and Incentives**
 - Staff explained the challenge with offering too many incentive options including diluting the most important city/neighborhood goals and difficulty calibrating all of them to provide equal value
 - Use-based incentives can be problematic because they often result in the FAR bonus being conveyed during permitting and before a tenant has been secured. This requires the developer to then negotiate a development agreement with the City to guarantee the desired use will be provided.
 - Parking-related incentives may run counter to current city policies that encourage different modes of travel

- Committee members pointed out that due to the regional draw of many cultural amenities in the neighborhood, publicly-accessible parking is very important and asked if staff could explore if this could be incentivized in some manner.
 - Staff noted that the market-rate residential incentive achieved the desired outcome of adding residential uses to GT, but now is no longer needed and in fact poses a barrier to the desire for an eclectic mix of uses in the neighborhood
 - Propose that incentives be limited to
 - Affordable Housing
 - Neighborhood Preservation
 - Landmark Designation
 - Character Building
 - Public Art
 - Comment for staff to explore if Live/Work or affordable artist spaces could be incentivized to support the cultural arts identity of GT
 - Re: question about if Public Art could be provided indoors, staff responded the incentive is intended to support art in the exterior public realm and not art provided interior to a structure
 - Request from the committee to provide information on incentives in advance of the next meeting to facilitate additional testing and consideration by committee members. Staff agreed and committed to providing follow-up information in February.
- **Next Steps**
 - Additional zoning and incentives testing information to Advisory Committee (Feb)
 - Public Open House #3 (Feb/Mar) - tbd
 - Preliminary Preferred Alternative (building forms, lot sizes, etc.)
 - Advisory Committee Meeting #6 – Thursday, March 19, 3:00-5:00 pm, Webb Building Room 4.F.6
 - Summary of Draft Preferred Alternative
 - Design Guidelines update
 - Interim Report #3 – Preferred Strategy (Mar/Apr)

Action Items

1. Staff to post Interim Report #2 to project website
2. Staff to continue to test zoning and incentives options based on meeting discussion
3. Staff to provide interim testing information in February for review and comment