

Taskforce Meeting – March 30, 2009

TASKFORCE COMMENTS

- SFR, MRF, Commercial Development - Are we still going to cover these topics as listed in the contract?

Leslie Gould (LG): We will be addressing these topics in future meetings

- Do these guidelines apply to large parcels in Castro Valley? They don't look like they apply to large parcels in the hills of Castro Valley

LG: These guidelines apply to parcels that are zoned R-S. We will be addressing Single-family subdivisions and hillside developments in the next meeting.

TASKFORCE COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

DENSITY

- Is there any way to move more open space to the front of the unit? (See 70' Townhome example.) In the townhomes, the driveway should be in the rear of the units so you can drive into garage. For example, Olsen Company in San Lorenzo put more open space in the front of the unit and the driveway is in the rear of the unit and you can just pull into the garage.

LG: Private open space needs to be provided and if the open space is in the front of the units, there would be no private open space. People would walk through to get access to their units. Most people don't want to give up private open space

- What happened to 100' rule for density variable?

LG: The Density Variable (DV) zone still exists and the standard applies to parcels that are zoned DV. However, there are only a few lots zoned DV and we would need guidelines for other lots.

- Density ranges that you are recommending – do they exist now? Are you changing zoning/density?

LG: No, we are just assigning density ranges to specific types of development

- How do you build on 270+ lot without providing fire turnaround?

Rodrigo Orduna (RO): If the rear most corner of the rear most building is within 300 feet of the curb, then a fire turnaround would not have to be provided.

- Ownership of townhomes? How does that work?

RO: There are townhome developments where the owner owns the land, where you have individually owned parcels

- 22' wide building is not realistic. What do you do with that space behind the garage?

LG: What point are you allowed 1 unit versus 2 units?

- Will the configuration look like the 50'/55' diagrams? Can the rear building be pushed back?

LG: Fire requirements govern how close the building is to the curb.

- Is the 150 feet in ordinance form? Can't just be arbitrary from the fire marshal.
- Does fire department have requirement of how far to pull hose?
- Are you going to require special paving for 12' driveways?

LG: What determines paving? Is it the width of the driveway or number of units?

- What will be the results of the recommendations. Some of these recommendations should go into the zoning ordinance. Thought this project was more about guidelines?

LG: Dyett & Bhatia will create guidelines and recommend revisions to the zoning standards. Dyett & Bhatia will walk the County through the guidelines and staff will carry continue with zoning.

- If these recommendations do not pass as standards, this will just be a waste our time.
- What would be minimum lot allowed for single-family home? We were putting homes on lots that were 15-16 feet wide. Is there a minimum lot width? Can you subdivide a lot less than 50 feet? You can have a driveway facing the street and then a series of homes facing the street with varying setbacks.

LG: The minimum lot width is 50 feet. If you have an existing narrow lot, you can legally build on it.

HEIGHT

- Is the 25 feet requirement for extra height from all property lines?

LG: Yes.

- How do dormers reduce impact? How does it do that "for light and circulation"? It accommodates the interior of the building, but what about neighbor?

LG: Dormers are a way of doing a 3rd story without having the entire roof be a third story

- Dormers – apply after it is assumed that you are already allowed to build 3-story
- Are you allowed 3-story flat-tops?

LG: Yes. But you will have to conform to all setbacks still.

- Setbacks – no more zero lot lines

SEPARATION

- “Maintain and enforce” – Language implies that present standard is not enforced? If we move recommendations forward, where’s the teeth in enforcement? What is meant by “maintain and enforce”?

LG: Exceptions previously have been done through PD. Instead of a PD, the recommendation is that certain existing standards should be kept and adhered to.

- But there are problems with enforcement currently. There is not a lot of political will with the Board of Supervisors.
- When we move the recommendations forward, we should have an overview statement: “key is enforcement/maintenance of product”

LG: We can put a preface in the document. This document will help change the way that the County does business. Most jurisdictions do not allow planning applications to go all the way to the Board of Supervisors. They should go to the Planning Commission.

- It has been recommend by the Governance Committee that variance appeals go to the Planning commission.
- Sometimes when planning applications go to the Board of Supervisors, there are new facts. If there are new facts, the application needs to be bumped back to the BZA to review.

DRIVEWAY WIDTH

- “Superseded” by fire. What does it mean? Does that mean it is arbitrary?

LG: The Fire Department can require additional standards under Fire Code depending on where the lot is located.

- Where did you get 15 units for the pedestrian walkway requirement?
- What about public works requirement?
- Is the 35% decorative paving overall?

LG: The 35% is the governing standard. And the following are suggestions of where it should go. We will refine the language

- Too cost prohibitive. Why do stamped concrete in the back? Should do it where you can make it a more visual impact. Think it is better to tell us where to put it instead of requiring 35%.
- How about previous pavers? Need to define decorative paving.
- Have to be careful about pavers. For example cobblestones are not user friendly. Problems for elderly if land is not flat.

LG: It will have to meet ADA requirement.

- Don’t see connection between decorative paving and walkability

- New development should open up to the street.
- If you can't fit a pedestrian walkway from the public sidewalk – how is “walkability” addressed?

LG: The decorative paving is intended to indicate shared space. How else should it be addressed?

- Stamped concrete in different color, would be better than nothing. It's something. Space for pedestrians should be clearly delineated.
- Should be stamped/decorative treatment that could extend to the public sidewalk.
- 4-foot wide pedestrian walkway on driveway. Not sold on that. It tells pedestrians where they should walk. A Landscape Architect should be able to do something better. For example, squares, or zebra print. Should have more flexibility for design.

LG: What are your recommendations?

- Have to spend the money to have decorative pattern on driveway so it's not one long strip of asphalt.
- 4-foot wide pedestrian walkway is a liability. Makes pedestrian feel tied to part of the driveway.
- Still needs sidewalk/pathway in front of homes
- It does not matter how you delineate it, it is needed.

LG: Diagrams will be updated to show what 35% will look like.

- Decorative paving should not be concentrated in the first part of driveway. Should allow for flexibility.
- Mistake to give up 5 feet of landscaping between the driveway and adjacent property. There should be a happy medium. Even 3 feet of landscaping makes the project look better.

LG: Should townhomes be allowed on lots less than 70 feet? No townhomes less than 65 feet? If you can meet minimum standards – would you allow it? (split vote)

- There are options, but need to show that minimum standards can be met.

OPEN SPACE

- What is the minimum dimension for open space? “Distance in any direction” is better wording
- Minimum 30' is very restrictive
- Play area should be in the “common open space”
- What about senior developments? Would you still need tot lots?

RO: Usable can a place someone can use to sit, tot lots are not mandated for every development.

- 600 square feet/unit of open space is okay, 300 square feet/unit of private open space is okay. 300 square feet/unit is low, but 15' rear yard will make it higher.

LG: Should common open space be required? Should there be a size threshold?

- Need passive parks – where people can go and sit
- 600' square feet/unit of open space okay
- Is minimum 1,000 square feet of common open space too small?
- Maybe we can establish neighborhoods again

BUILDING LENGTH

- Do we have Site Development Review now?

RO: There is no Site Development Review for 4 or fewer units. There is no Site Development Review process unless there's a variance or rezoning.

- If we have an exception, then will we have to have Site Development Review?
- What is the difference between a Conditional Use Permit vs. Variance?
- A CUP means we are going to throw the zoning ordinance out and we are back to where we are now. Why do we need an exception? Should have standard.
- Doesn't a CUP have to be re-applied for?

RO: A CUP has a time limit.

- Should be variance
- Don't allow special way to get exception – Do variance

PRIVACY

- The driveway to house defines the front of the house
- What is the front versus rear?
- On long narrow lots. Looks like 10-foot front yard.

RO: Will need to define what is front and back of the unit.

- "Offset" term – need to clarify that it is from one window to neighboring window.
- Liberty Pointe – driveway too long
- No stucco trim on stucco? What else would you use? Why would you prohibit trim?

LG: What would you use instead of stucco?

- Wood on stucco – setting up dry rot condition

- Would go for deep recess rather than go for wood trim
- Variety in materials – variety overall?
- Make it 2-3 requirements instead of 3-4 requirements
- There is a foam product that looks different than stucco
- Has stuff that looks like rock/stone
- 2 different approaches: You have higher-end homes that look like a museum and you have lower-moderately priced homes where the stucco, trim is just planted on without sense of design
- Don't want prohibit stucco trim on stucco.

LG: take out “stucco trim discourage”

- Should say “Have trim”
- Underlying idea – want something other than decoration/applications
- Diagram of electrical panel not going to work
- Only 3 90 degree bends (PG&E requirement)
- Gas and electric meters need to be separated
- Electrical panel shouldn't be a projection, it should be part of house footprint. Should have side door if it is a projection?
- Build electrical panel into building foot print, with door on the side is the best configuration
- Put the electrical panel in the garage. Small cubby off the garage, opens onto the sidewalk

PARKING

- “Preserve on street parking?” What does that mean?
- Bus service 15 minutes apart as “transit corridor”? 15 minutes is too close. Don't have buses every 15 minutes in Alameda County.
- Would E. 14th and Castro Valley qualify as a “transit corridor”?
- No because they don't have buses every 15 minutes
- Check with AC transit
- Visitors will be parking on the street. Should address how parking is a major issue
- Parking standard will not be changed
- Shouldn't count street as guest parking
- If you have a single family house, there barely sufficient parking. If you have more than 1 unit, where will parking be?

- No aprons on narrow lots
- When you have that many families, you will need more parking.
- Should not count street parking as designated guest parking for that unit
- Should have one visitor parking on premises
- Can't solve the problem of parking. If you provide enough parking, it will cut out units
- Need to acknowledge impact on street parking

LG: should count on street as guest?

- What about guidelines on landscaping? Is it going to be part of the plan?
- Hayward – has checklist that went to City Council
- Level of detail regarding landscaping

NEXT MEETING

- Tuesday, May 26 – 7:00pm