

City of Milwaukie - Code Assistance Phase 2 Stakeholder Meeting #4 Summary

July 20, 2011

City of Milwaukie Planning Department

Overview

The purpose of this meeting was to explore options and gather feedback from Milwaukie residents on desired multifamily housing types and multifamily development and design standards.

Attendees

- Susan Shanks, City of Milwaukie Senior Planner
- Marcy McNelly, Urbsworks President and Project Consultant
- Paul Hawkins (Lake Road NDA)
- Mary Weaver (Hector Campbell NDA)
- Mark Gamba (Historic Milwaukie resident & Project Steering Committee member)
- Gary and Tracy Hubbard (Lake Road residents)
- Jean Baker (Historic Milwaukie resident & Project Steering Committee member)
- Linda Hedges (Hector Campbell NDA)
- Dion Shepherd (Historic Milwaukie NDA & Project Steering Committee member)
- Ray Bryan (Historic Milwaukie NDA)

Summary

- Susan provided an overview of the Residential Development Standards project and explained the meeting's focus on multifamily development and design standards. Susan explained that no rezoning or density increases were included as part of this project.
- Marcy gave an overview of national trends in household size, and impacts on the housing market of the current recession, the baby boomer generation, and immigrants and their families.
- Marcy also provided an overview of the City's current development standards and an introduction to four possible multifamily building types, i.e. row house, cottage cluster, 4-story apartment building, single-story apartment complex.
- Participants were asked to consider the question: How can Milwaukie achieve the City's goals for compatibility without dissuading development of high quality multifamily housing? They were also asked to share their thoughts on the kinds of multifamily developments they did and did not like and why.

The following is a summary of participant responses:

- There was general consensus that multifamily residential (MFR) development should look as “house-like” as possible in order to blend in with existing single-family residential (SFR) development, i.e. peaked rather than flat roofs, human-scaled details, many smaller structures rather than one large structure, same number of stories (e.g. 1 – 3) as typical SFR house, etc. One participant felt that 4-story buildings would be out of scale in most of Milwaukie’s existing neighborhoods.
- There was general consensus that vegetation was very important for both the neighbors and the residents of MFR developments. Vegetation was seen as providing a number of benefits, such as screening views, softening hardscape elements, minimizing building bulk, providing active and passive recreation opportunities, providing garden space, accommodating storm water runoff, etc. A few commented that it was very important to have vegetation in the front yard area and that buildings shouldn’t be built right on the front property line.
- There was general consensus that cottage clusters were very desirable as a multifamily development type. Comments in support included being a good fit for Milwaukie, reinforcing community, and providing a good home ownership option for those who did not want, need, or could afford a larger home. One participant asked whether cottage clusters should be allowed outright or subject to a land use review process, such as a conditional use or planned development review. Some would like the City to develop good standards and allow them outright, but others were concerned about unanticipated consequences if we didn’t get the standards right.
- Other multifamily development types were generally considered acceptable as long as they were well designed. There was general consensus that a range of housing types was both desirable and necessary in order to provide residents with a range of housing choices given the wide variety of housing needs and preferences out there.
- There was general consensus that big, bulky, flat, boxy buildings should not be allowed. Buildings should not present a blank façade to the street. Street facing facades should have windows and nicely defined entrances. They should be designed with the comfort and safety of the residents in mind. Care should be taken as to what people see out their windows, e.g. no views onto parking lots, and outdoor play areas should be provided that are easily surveyed by residents for safety and security reasons. MFR developments should also be built with good quality and durable materials.
- There was some disagreement about how much parking was appropriate for MFR development, but there was general consensus that parking should not be located between the building and the street.
- There was general consensus that development standards should facilitate home ownership where possible, i.e. allow for fee simple lot creation especially with cottage clusters and row house developments.
- Other individual comments included: (1) allow manufactured homes in MFR developments, e.g. cottage clusters, (2) allow alternative structures, e.g. repurposed shipping containers, (3) require wider sidewalks now to accommodate future density, and (4) encourage residents to maintain the city’s existing housing stock.