



# Project Memorandum

May 11, 2021

To: Milwaukie Comprehensive Plan Implementation Project Management Team

From: Kimi Sloop, Barney & Worth, Inc.

Re: Community Engagement Spring 2021 Survey Summary

In March and April, community outreach was conducted for the Milwaukie Comprehensive Plan Implementation Project. This outreach included a series of meetings in a box and a virtual open house on the Engage Milwaukie site. The virtual open house was available from March 22 through April 15, 2021. In total, we received 121 completed surveys and 149 people either providing comments and/or completing the survey.

In an effort to encourage as many people as possible to take the survey, city staff facilitated ten virtual discussions about the project and the open house with each NDA at their regular monthly meetings as well as an open meeting via Zoom that was advertised on Nextdoor and the city's Facebook and Instagram sites. Additionally, staff facilitated two virtual small group discussions: one entirely in Spanish, and one with BIPOC community members. Also included in this effort were: bookmarks at the Ledding Library, articles in the Pilot, email blasts, and numerous posts on city social media outlets.

## Spanish language small group meeting

On April 14, city staff and a professional Spanish language interpreter, facilitated a virtual small group discussion for people who preferred to engage in Spanish. The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation (in Spanish) that summarized the project goals and process and the entire discussion was held in Spanish with city staff providing answers to questions in English, which were then translated into Spanish. Twelve people participated in the meeting, including a member of CPIC. The participants asked a lot of questions and shared many thoughts about housing in Milwaukie, and housing in general:

- Support for ADUs and multiple ADUs on properties for multigenerational or larger families
- Support for allowing a cottage cluster on the same property as a single-family home
- Duplexes and triplexes are very important for larger families
- Participants preferred to not have a parking maximum, as larger families may have multiple vehicles
- Access to trees and parks in all neighborhoods is very important
- The American Dream is to be a homeowner, and participants really want the opportunity to be able to how their own home. Affordability is a key concern because housing is so expensive in the Portland region.
  - Several comments included the lack of resources for first time Latinx homebuyers and those without documentation, such as credit or a social security number

- The participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear about the project, to share their thoughts, and that they could do so in Spanish

## BIPOC small group meeting

On April 1, city staff, including the city’s Equity Manager, facilitated a virtual small group discussion for BIPOC community members. The meeting included a PowerPoint presentation that summarized the project goals and process as part of a larger open discussion. Three people participated in the meeting. The participants asked many questions and shared many thoughts about housing in Milwaukie, and housing in general:

- Encouraged the city to provide an arborist assistance program for residents to help take care of the trees on their property.
  - Offering help will encourage people to preserve their trees.
  - Provide incentives to help plant more trees and help maintain the trees.
- Affordability is very important to the BIPOC community.
- The group encouraged the city to look at successful examples of where these kinds of codes have worked.
- The group encouraged the city to include deconstruction requirements like the city of Portland does.

The following summary provides the key takeaways from the community survey, demographics of survey respondents, and a summary of the input received.

## Key Takeaways

- When considering the trade-offs between housing, trees and parking, people appeared to prioritize trees and housing over on-site parking. People did not question the concept that trade-offs are required.

*“I strongly support allowing on-street parking to count towards parking requirements. Preserving lot area for trees and homes is a much more important use of space.”*

*“It seems a good compromise for human & tree living space”*

*“Maintaining trees, reducing concrete (high embodied carbon) and use of valuable site area with parking should be the top priorities.”*

- **Preserving trees, open space and yards is a benefit that resonates with people.** In the written open-ended comments, over 435 responses included the term “trees” or “open space.”

*“Trees are necessary infrastructure for communities and their preservation should be prioritized over aesthetic or convenience “*

*“Please save our trees”*

*“Trees provide more public benefit than cars and pavement for parking”*

- **Flexibility is important to encourage middle housing.** In the comments provided, many people mentioned that how development fits in to the existing neighborhood is important and that the application of the code should be flexible to encourage the right type of development in each neighborhood.

*“We need more flexibility to accommodate new housing options”*

*“I think its most important to make parking, height and yards sizes requirements as flexible as possible to maximize tree protections.”*

*“Let’s allow more flexibility for individual applicants that are trying to help the City meet its middle housing goals on a micro level, rather than heavily favoring developers on a macro level.”*

*“Flexibility is key to successful growth. Allowing for taller buildings and a variety of styles that can consume up to 35-75% of a lot and be able to provide affordable housing.”*

- People generally support a change in the existing parking location requirements, but not necessarily a significant change in the number of parking spaces required. There are concerns that the existing car ownership trends and available transit do not support a reduction in parking spaces required.

*“Most Milwaukians have to drive for work, shopping, family activities. Most families have 2 or more cars”*

*“People need their own space for their cars, and is best if it is on their own property (rented or owned) so that there is no competition for public parking space”*

*“I don’t believe that Milwaukie currently has the public transportation infrastructure to support less than one parking space per dwelling unit”*

*“I am in support of a future with less cars and more human-propelled transportation, but we are not there yet.”*

- **Counting on-street parking as part of the required parking has mixed reviews.** Some people are in support of counting the on-street parking if it means that the site can be developed with more efficiently. Many have concerns about neighborhood aesthetics and pedestrian and bicycle safety with on-street parking, in addition to the logistics of on-street parking for residents and visitors.

*“Too crowded, not safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, children.”*

*“I don’t want to live in a neighborhood where everyone parks on the street”*

*“As a previous renter (and female), that can create a potentially dangerous situation with street parking”*

- People seemed to prefer the opportunity for creative design with multiple buildings on a site for multi-plex middle housing rather than having one long and skinny structure. Key benefits cited include privacy and autonomy for residents as well as neighbors, preservation of trees and the ability for buildings to blend into the neighborhoods more seamlessly.

*“The ability for multiple stories and multiple buildings per lot allows for greater variation in design. It also allows for more space for gardens, green space, trees, etc.”*

*“I really think smaller detached homes is the way of the future. It provides more feelings of autonomy for those who live in them. Aesthetically the preservation of trees makes a neighborhood feel more protected.”*

*“Multiple buildings and more trees is nicer for the trees and those living in those homes – more privacy, more trees, more interesting shape.”*

## Survey Demographics

- There were 121 completed surveys, including one Spanish survey and one paper copy.
- Of the responses, 81 people stated that they live in Milwaukie, 79 people stated they own a home in Milwaukie while 9 people stated they rent a home in Milwaukie. Note that people could select more than one response or could choose to select just one response.
- The neighborhoods with the most responses included Ardenwald-Johnson Creek, Lake Road and people who live outside Milwaukie (Oak Grove, unincorporated Clackamas County and Portland). Eighteen percent of the respondents did not specify the neighborhood they live in.
- The age of the participants was well spread out: 11% under the age of 34; 26% between the ages of 35 and 44; 17% between the ages of 45 and 54; 13% between the ages of 55 and 64; and 26% over the age of 65.
- Approximately 84% of the respondents self-identified as Caucasian, 12% as people of color and 3% as other.

## Survey Responses

### *Parking Questions*

Survey responses and comments related to parking indicated a clear preference for modifying the current parking requirements. There was not clear direction on whether fewer parking spaces should be required.

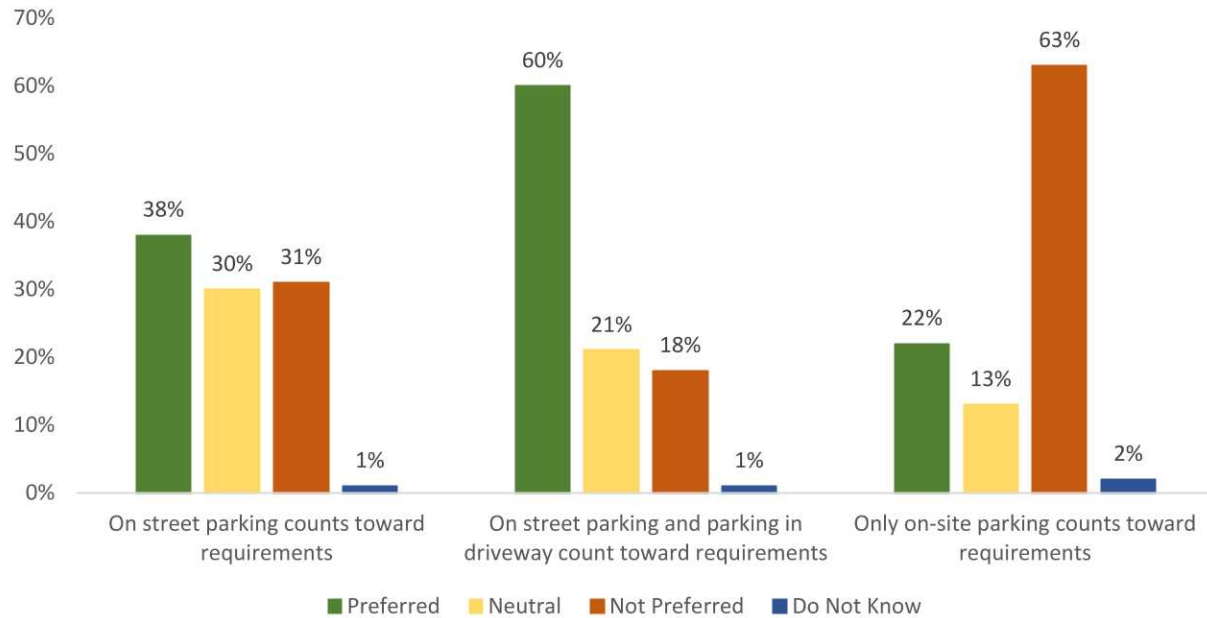
### *Location of Parking*

When asked about preferences for parking, three options were given:

1. On-street parking counts toward requirements
2. On-street parking and parking in the driveway count toward requirements
3. Only on-site parking counts toward requirements

Most respondents preferred being able to include on-street parking and/or driveways as part of the parking requirements. The current code requirement of only counting on-site parking was significantly the least preferred.

### Preferences for Parking Location Requirements



Respondents mentioned the following reasons why either on-street parking and/or parking in driveway should count toward the parking requirements:

- protect greenspace and saving trees
- create more livable spaces on the lots, increase the efficiency of space
- increase the flexibility for developers and site development (assuming that developers are not prohibited from building more parking spaces on site if they want)
- provide options for people who do not drive

Concerns about on-street parking and parking in the driveway followed several themes:

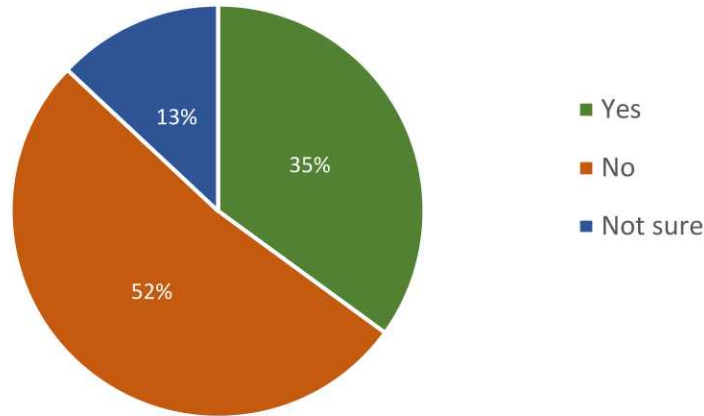
- access to properties – cars on the street blocking driveways
- pedestrian and bicycle safety – cars blocking sidewalks, unsafe walking environment next to street edge, reduced visibility for both drivers and pedestrians
- aesthetics – streets being lined with cars
- daily logistics of parking – distance of the on-street parking space to the home, challenge of parking in a different on-street location each day, electric vehicle plug-ins, safety of walking from parking to homes, visitor/guest parking

The flexibility to provide different parking standards in different locations was also mentioned in the comments. For example, allowing on-street parking to count toward parking requirements in areas near transit, or requiring off street parking where sidewalks do not exist.

### *Number of Parking Spaces*

When asked whether they support less than one parking space per dwelling unit, 52% said that they would *not* support less than one parking space per dwelling unit. Thirty-five percent said they would support less than one parking space per dwelling unit.

Do you support allowing less than one parking space per dwelling unit?



Reasons cited for not supporting fewer than one parking space per dwelling unit included:

- lack of available transit throughout Milwaukie
- perceived current car ownership trends of people owning more than one car per dwelling unit – cars would have to park on the street
- perceived street conditions, aesthetics and safety of cars being parked on the streets
- perceived lack of available parking for visitors, care providers, etc.

### *Building Form*

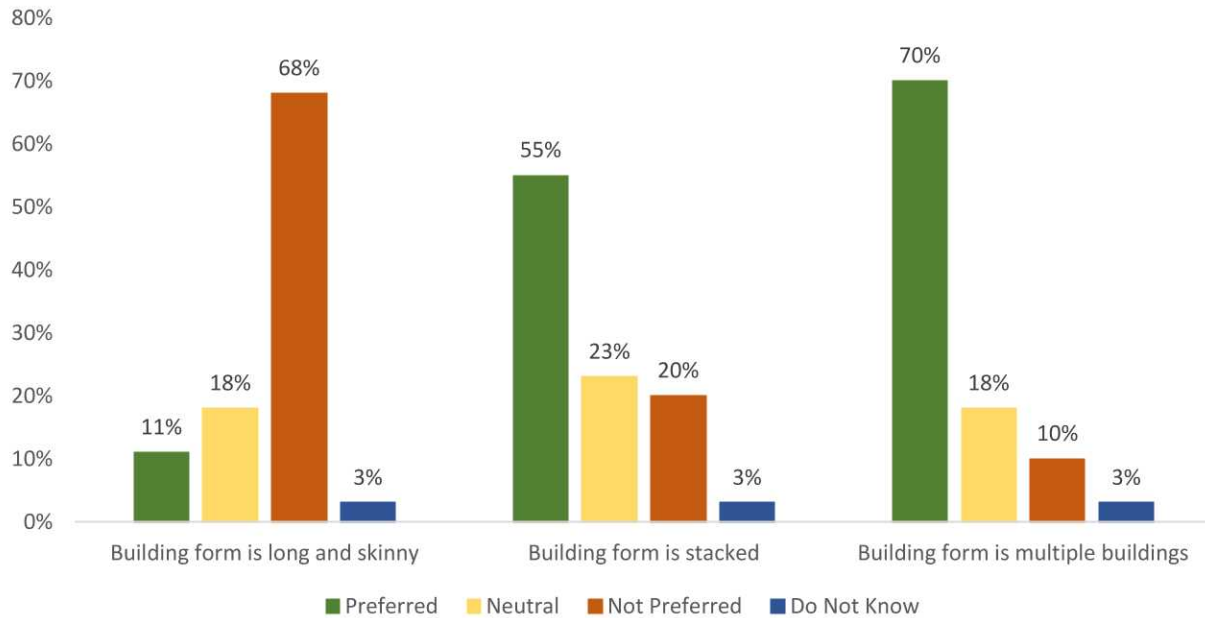
Survey responses and comments related to building form indicated a clear preference for stacked or multiple buildings on a lot. They are not supportive of long skinny buildings.

#### *Building Form on Sites*

When asked about preferences for building form, three options were given:

1. Building form is long and skinny
2. Building form is stacked
3. Building form is multiple buildings

### Preferences for Building Form

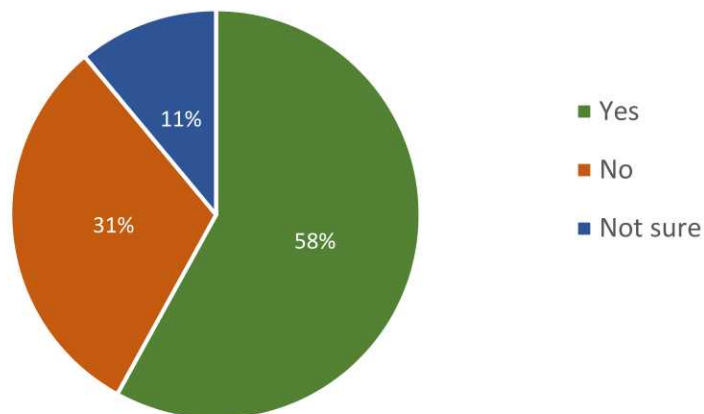


The primary reason that people preferred stacked buildings is the ability to preserve and maintain landscaping, green space, and trees. People preferred multiple smaller buildings because it provides privacy and autonomy for residents, better quality of life with not having another dwelling above or below your unit, creative use of space and design, preserving trees and green space, and blending in better with the neighborhood.

### Building Height

When asked if they would support the building height going up to three stories if it meant a tree on the site could be preserved, 58% said that they would.

Do you support allowing a three story building to preserve a mature tree?



People are generally supportive of taller buildings to preserve mature trees, with many comments related to the importance of preserving trees. Concerns about the building height noted were:

- impacts to view corridors and sight lines
- privacy of adjacent neighbors
- solar access on adjoining lots
- consistency with neighborhood style and feel

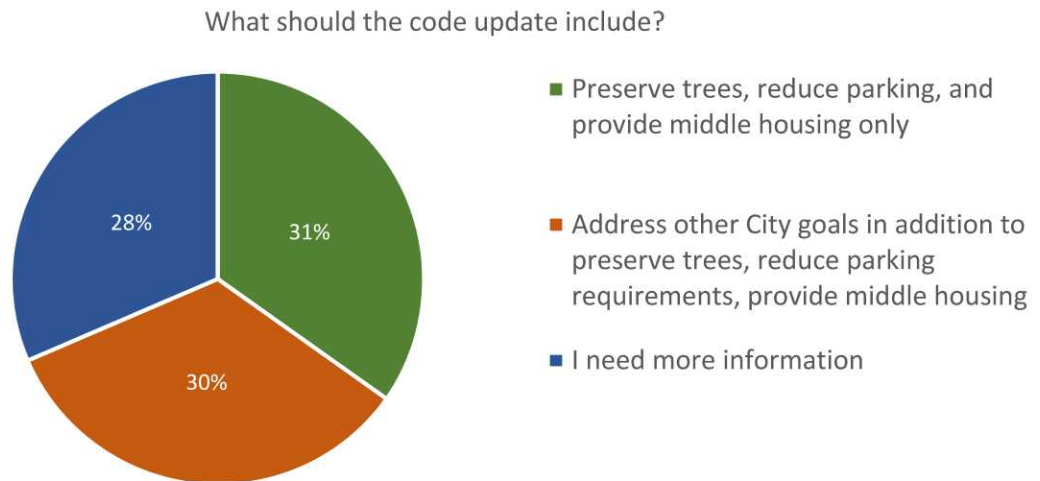
Comments were also made regarding the ability to count the basement as a third story and allowing three stories based on specific location and consistency with the existing neighborhood feel.

### *Code Flexibility*

Survey participants were asked to weigh in on what the code update should include:

- Option 1: Flexibility to preserve trees on site and reduce parking requirements in addition to the state mandated middle housing requirements, only when certain conditions are met.
- Option 2: Flexibility to address other City goals, in addition to providing middle housing, preserving trees, and reducing parking requirements, only when certain conditions are met.

Responses were split evenly between the two options and needing more information to give an opinion.



When asked what conditions needed to be met, many of the responses related to conditions to allow for parking reductions. People suggested that parking reductions could be granted if the following conditions were met:

- increase in outdoor space
- cohousing situation with access to car sharing
- near transit, specifically high frequency transit
- near neighborhood greenways, bikeable/walkable area
- provision for bike parking/facilities
- parking study that adequate street parking is available
- preservation of trees



- addition to the social/ecological well-being of the community (i.e., bioswale, community garden)
- specialized housing for those who may not drive

Respondents identified the following topics as other City goals that could met by the code update related to middle housing, parking, and trees:

- green building practices (i.e., solar panels, stormwater treatment)
- affordable housing
- walkability
- passive house design
- sidewalk and street frontage improvements

### *Envisioning Your Neighborhood*

To get a better understanding of the elements that are important to define the look and feel of neighborhoods, the public’s input on the importance of certain site design features was sought. The following includes the percentage of respondents who noted each photo as being important for their household.

#### Size/width of yard (front, back, side setbacks)



37%  
Small yard



79%  
In between small and large



19%  
Large yard

#### Location of parking



42%  
In the front of the house



53%  
In the front of house & on-street



64%  
In an alley or behind the house

The amount/ size the building takes up on a lot (lot coverage)



24%

Building covers over 50% of lot



72%

Building covers 35% - 50% of lot



43%

Building covers 35% of lot

Height of building(s)



50%

Maximum two and one-half stories (current code)

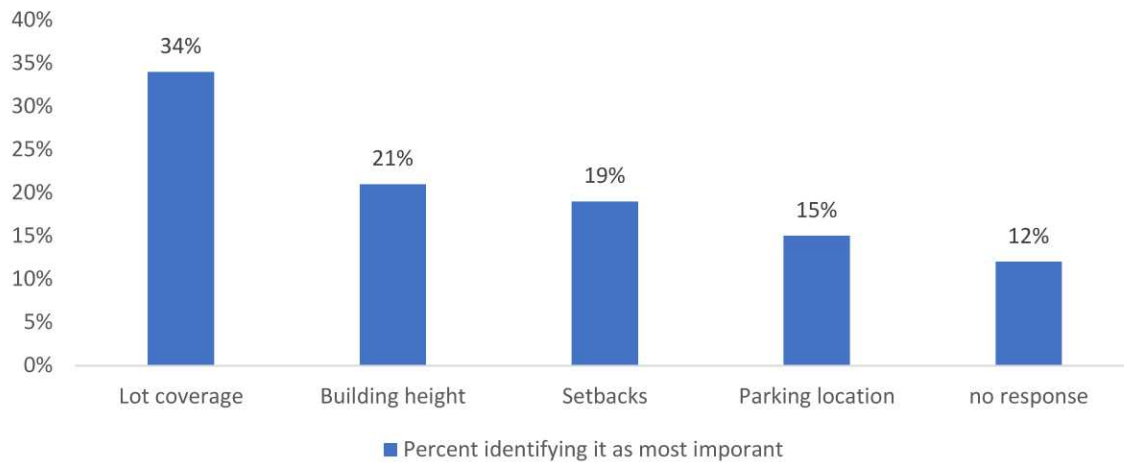


57%

Maximum three stories

Participants were asked to identify their most important design feature. Overall, lot coverage was the most important design feature to people. Many people also noted that, regardless of the design standards, it is the quality of design and the ability for the building to fit into the aesthetics of the neighborhood that is most important element.

Most Important Design Feature



## Individual comments

People who viewed the virtual open house had the opportunity to provide comments through the community survey or within each station of the open house. In addition to the over 450 open ended survey responses received, there were over 130 station comments. The themes of the comments included:

- Clarification of the middle housing requirements in Oregon HB 2001
- Role of the City regarding tree regulation on private property, including replacement and maintenance
- Areas within Milwaukie for future development
- Development review process, including the difficulty of developing middle housing currently and public review of plans
- Loss of green space around the city due to development and need for more green space
- Housing needs and types of housing in Milwaukie, including affordable housing and home ownership
- Examples/discussion of housing developments that people like or do not like
- Concerns about higher density housing, Airbnb use, etc.
- Importance of the Vision and Comprehensive Plan and relationship to other City goals
- Importance of linking the transportation infrastructure (transit, biking, and walking) to housing
- On-street parking, existing street improvements and parking requirements
- Design features of middle housing
- Neighborhood livability
- Green buildings
- Need for regulation and flexibility (both in support and opposition)
- Appreciation for communication, open house materials and survey
- Technical difficulty related to the survey and open house (note: staff responded and fixed the issues immediately)

## Next Steps

The information from the community survey has been reviewed and discussed by the Project Team. The feedback, along with the CPIC direction and city priorities, will be reflected in the recommendations presented to the CPIC for the code update.

Before the code amendments are presented to the Planning Commission in July, the public will be given an opportunity to review the draft amendments. The public will have an opportunity to comment through the code adoption process.