

Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session Minutes
January 9, 2025
Conference Room 1A & 1B - 1st Floor City Hall

Call to Order

Commissioners Present –Geuea Jones, Loe, Placier, Stanton, Walters, Williams, Wilson
Commissioners Absent – Brodsky, Ortiz
Staff Present – Anderson, Craig, Halligan, Knight, Kunz, Teddy, Zenner

Introductions

Mr. Zenner introduced the guest in attendance at the work session. Allision Anderson with the City's Public Works Department and Jacque Knight with CMT Consultants were present to discuss the City's efforts relating to its update of the "Complete Streets" policy.

Approval of Agenda

Meeting agenda adopted unanimously

Approval of Minutes

The December 5, 2024 work session minutes approved unanimously

Special Items

A. Complete Streets Policy Presentation – Jacque Knight, AICP & Project Manager, CMT Consultants

Ms. Knight was introduced and the meeting was handed off to her to make a presentation about the City's on-going consultant-led efforts to update the City's Complete Streets Policy. Ms. Knight provided a PowerPoint presentation (attached) that gave an overview of what services her company, CMT, was contracted to complete by the middle (May-June) of 2026. Ms. Knight indicated that the Planning Commission was one of several Boards and Commissions that would be receiving this presentation as an introduction to the multi-year and multi-faceted project. She noted that the project that would be described was being administered by Public Works through an awarded grant and that CMT would be back before the Planning Commission several more times to provide progress reports with respect to findings and proposed policy changes that would be recommended.

As part of her presentation, Ms. Knight noted that there would be significant public engagement and interaction with under-represented segments of the location population as it related to mobility needs. She further noted that several "audits" and "best practices" papers would be prepared to assist in supporting CMT's recommendations on potential policy changes with respect to complete streets. She shared examples of what a complete street looks like and the areas of interaction between various modes and types of users to whom the study would be geared. Ms. Knight clarified that the work of CMT would be focused on complete street policies and not specific projects. It was discussed that as part of CMT's work it may be possible that current street cross-sections within the UDC's appendix would be modified to help facilitate policy objectives, but any changes would be effectuated within new developments or through possible City-initiated capital projects with the intent of creating a more connected community.

There was discussion of several specific areas of expertise and knowledge that the Planning Commission has at it related to development and the challenges of promoting complete streets. Specifically, the Commission identified concerns with sidewalk variance requests and how such actions can disrupt overall mobility continuity. Ms. Knight noted this concern and indicated that in more focused "stakeholder" discussions it was possible that Commissioners input would be sought. There was also a question about what new "technologies" have come into the complete streets discussion over the last approximate 20 years the City has had its own policy. Ms. Knight answered this inquiry by providing several verbal as well as graphic (within her presentation) of "advancements" that have occurred and would studied to see if they would be appropriate in Columbia.

She continued by noting, that while comparison of "peer" cities would be used to determine what may be appropriate for Columbia, the use of other cities efforts that are on the leading edge of mobility/connectivity would be evaluated as well. Additionally, several national organization "factbooks"

and “design guidelines/best practice” manuals would be consulted to ensure a holistic approach was taken as new policies were considered for Columbia.

Ms. Knight concluded her presentation by presented a detailed timeline of upcoming activities that would occur with respect to the project and reiterated that she would be back to present in the future. There was a request that updates to CMT’s findings with respect to engagement and other interim activities be posted in a manner that the Commission could follow the project’s progress. Ms. Knight indicated that she and Ms. Anderson would work toward ensuring that type of communication was made possible. Once possible option would be to use the City’s BeHeard engagement portal or potentially the Public Works webpage of the City Website.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Knight for her presentation and looked forward to her return as she and CMT moved forward with the project.

Old Business

A. Residential Lot Analysis (Follow-up)

Mr. Zenner noted that Mr. Kunz would present this topic; however, asked that the Planning Commission consider this presentation as being the last on this topic given that progress on moving forward with the actual UDC text amendment relating to small lots was being impeded. With those comments, Mr. Zenner noted that the analysis to be provided was a continuation of the research requested during their November 21, 2024 work session.

Mr. Kunz provided an overview of the data and went into detail with respect to the findings displayed on each map. He noted that there were some modifications made to the data such that more accurate information was being presented and outlier parcels were eliminated. He went through each set of maps and described how they presented the lot inventory throughout the City, at the neighborhood level, and based on total lots within “the loop” and outside it. He also described what the color coding of the lots was to represent.

There was general Commission discussion. It was stated that the purpose of the additional analysis was to ensure that the proposed text changes would facilitate the underlying intent for why the project was begun – namely to encourage small lot development “by-right” without having to seek Board of Adjustment approval. Mr. Zenner noted that the data showed that there was an abundance of opportunity to facilitate small lots there would be other limitation. These limitations generally included the necessity to obtain approval of a replat anywhere a lot that was capable of being divided (a Council action) and the fact that if a lot were capable of being redeveloped using the small lot standards, but was improved with a functional structure would that structure be removed to allow for new smaller structures to be built.

There was also discussion of the impact that launching the new small lot standards would have on existing lots that are presently considered “substandard”. Mr. Zenner explained that while the small lot provisions would have some impact on this segment of lots, previous UDC amendments that occurred prior to the Commission engaging deeply into the current text amendment reduced the need for consolidation platting to make those lots legally capable of being redeveloped. The small lot standards would make such redevelopment easier and more clearly understood in redevelopment or central city locations, but would also create opportunities for more innovation in “greenfield” housing.

The Commission requested that staff further investigate, as time permits, the number of lots that would truly benefit from the small lot regulatory provisions – primarily those lots within the “loop” as defined in Mr. Kunz’s research. Mr. Zenner noted staff could seek to identify these lots. He; however, cautioned that to consider the value of the amendment based on how many “inside loop” lots would benefit appeared to overlook the value that such amendment would create on “greenfield” sites which is were much of the small lot development is presently occurring.

Given work session time had been exhausted, the Commission thanked Mr. Kunz for his research and requested that Mr. Zenner move forward with developing the remaining use-specific standards and his analysis of the subdivision requirements of the UDC. Mr. Zenner noted that he would have materials to consider at the upcoming work session.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Actions taken:

Motion made to approve the agenda as submitted by Commissioner Loe and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. Motion made to approve the December 5, 2024 work session minutes as presented by Commissioner Loe and seconded by Commissioner Wilson.