LID Community Workgroup Meeting #6

Notes

Thursday, Jan. 28, 2016 – 10AM-Noon
Thurston Regional Planning Council – 2424 Heritage Ct. SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA
Conference Room A (first floor)

Attending: *Mike Burnham and Paul Brewster -- TRPC; Allison Osterberg – Thurston County. Blair Prigge, Donna Weaver, Whitney Holm, Richard Davis, Mark Kitabayashi, Tom Holtz, Ben Alexander, Jeff Glander, Rich Davis, Ron Thomas, Joshua Deal*

Brewster began the meeting with a greeting and review of the agenda. He then asked workgroup members to introduce themselves.

Burnham ensured workgroup members had collected handouts for their binders. Among the handouts were: Issue Paper 3—Native Vegetation, and Issue Paper 8—Bulk & Dimensional Considerations.

Bulk & Dimensional Considerations

Osterberg introduced Issue Paper 8 (Bulk & Dimensional Considerations) and discussed the Ecology Toolkit questions, current Thurston County Code requirements and the County LID Workgroup's draft recommendations. Below are highlights from Osterberg's PowerPoint presentation about Bulk & Dimensional Considerations. Workgroup members' questions and comments follow:

Overview:

- Zoning regulations include limitations on the size and location of structures within a parcel

    ➢ Setbacks

    ➢ Height Limits

    ➢ Lot widths

- Standards are in place for either safety reasons or aesthetic preferences

- Allowing more flexibility can help when utilizing LID site designs

Questions:

- Can setback distances be minimized to increase flexibility in regard to house or building location?

- Can the maximum building height be increased if building footprints are reduced?

- Can code be revised to incentivize or encourage minimizing building footprints?

Recommendations:

Building Type	Arterial, State Highway and RR ROW	Collector, Local and Private Roads	Side Yard	Rear Yard
a. Commercial, industrial and other nonresidential	35' from right-of-way easement or property line; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	25' from right-of-way easement or property line; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	10'	10'
b. Residential exceeding two units per structure	30'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	20'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	10'	10'
c. Single-family and two-family structures	30'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	20'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	6'	10'
d. Buildings housing animals	50'	50'	35'	35'

Building Type	Arterial, State Highway and RR ROW	Collector, Local and Private Roads	Side Yard	Rear Yard
a. Commercial, industrial and other nonresidential	~~35~~20' from right-of-way easement or property line; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	~~25~~10' from right-of-way easement or property line; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	~~10~~6'	~~10'~~6'
b. Residential exceeding two units per structure	~~30~~25'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	20'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	~~10~~6'	~~10~~6'
c. Single-family and two-family structures	~~30~~25'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	20'; 10' from right-of-way of a flanking street	6'	~~10~~6'
d. Buildings housing animals	50'	50'	35'	35'

- Maintain larger setbacks in agricultural/resource districts
- Shrink setbacks for industrial and some commercial zones (PI, LI, RRI, NC, RCC)
- Retain larger front setbacks in Arterial Commercial and Highway Commercial zones
- No change to height limits

Comments:

Thomas said he does not want LID excluded as part of a setback area, including the right-of-way. There is plenty of opportunity below paved roads (infiltration cells).

Alexander said most neighboring jurisdictions have lower setbacks commercial and industrial areas, so he questioned why Thurston County should have higher setbacks.

Kitabayashi suggested having rear setbacks at 5 ft. instead of 6 ft. Thomas echoed Kitabayashi; 5 ft. would be more consistent with other jurisdictions' setbacks, Thomas said. Osterberg said local fire officials suggested 6 ft. She will revisit this issue with fire officials.

Alexander said front setbacks are more apt to have LID facilities due to the greater size. He questioned whether such a large setback is needed when rural municipalities have smaller setbacks. Is there evidence of safety issues where front setbacks are smaller along roads with higher speeds?

Holm said he supports reducing front setbacks to 20 ft. from 25 ft. for residential properties.

In response to Holm, Kitabayashi said he advises builders to have at least 25 ft. of front setback to accommodate a driveway sufficient for a large vehicle; fewer people park in their garages and use their driveway as a parking spot.

Native Vegetation

Osterberg presented a PowerPoint with an overview of LID questions, concepts and recommendations relating to native vegetation. Below are excerpts from the presentation:

Background:

- Native vegetation and soils provide natural stormwater management and pollutant removal
- Trees and native vegetation intercept 40-50% precipitation; once removed, the ground has to infiltrate much more water

Questions:

- Are there regulatory controls over tree clearance and removal of mature trees/forest stands?
- Is there an existing ordinance that requires or encourages the preservation of vegetation?
- Can the code be revised to place greater emphasis on preservation of conifers?
- Can the code include strategies to orient retained vegetation and open space to disconnect impervious surfaces?
- Is wholesale clearing of sites prohibited or limited?

Options:

- Increase tree preservation above 5% in UGAs
- Require tree preservation area for forest conversions outside North County UGAs
- Require cluster-style developments in certain zones
    - ➢ Include resource parcel specifications for R 1/20, R 1/10
- Develop a tree/vegetation preservation ordinance that applies for areas outside UGAs
- Allow other code changes to incentivize native vegetation protection

Discussion:

- What barriers do you see for protecting vegetation during site design?
- Are there incentives that could better encourage retention or replanting of native vegetation?
- Other thoughts and comments?

Glander asked: On parcels that are overgrown with invasive species, how would the code changes apply? Osterberg said the code would require replanting with native vegetation if a development were to occur.

Glander suggested a code provision that requires developers to replant the canopy understory with native vegetation, too.

Holtz said the SSWAB is considering recommending to the BOCC approval of the so-called 65-10 rule, which would provide little room for such code off-ramps for developers. Osterberg recognized that this is an alternative option that could be considered.

Alexander noted that optional tree preservation does not work. Considering canopy preservation – as opposed to preservation of individual trees – is a better option. Having multiple layers of vegetation to intercept and slow rainwater is critical.

Alexander added that areas of preserved native vegetation must be kept off-limits during construction, so the soil is not compacted and vegetation damaged.

Davis suggested having tax incentives to encourage property owners to preserve trees (e.g., tax increases for property owners who remove trees illegally). Holtz seconded this idea.

Holm said she supports the cluster concept noted above. It's an ideal way to preserve large green spaces. She also supports density bonuses.

Deal said he wants a "private-sector" option for larger development projects that would enable a developer to hire his own firm to create a tree-preservation plan (as opposed to the County creating such a plan). Osterberg underscored that the County does not – nor will not -- have the capacity to create such plans, so it will be up to the private sector anyway.

Osterberg noted that she will use the March 31 meeting – the workgroup's last – to summarize how she incorporated the workgroup's input into recommendations for policymakers.

Workgroup members said they would like to review Tumwater's draft LID code edits during the February and March meetings. Burnham said Tumwater Planning Manager Paula Reeves would present the code recommendations and elicit input.

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