



Meeting Notes
September 7, 2021

Call to Order

Recording started by Teresa Geisheker.

Sonny Garza, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Welcome by Co-Chairs

Ms. Wallace Brown, Director, Planning & Development took the roll and Mr. Sonny Garza, Co-Chair, presented the speaker rules. 14 committee members were present during roll call. There were 85 participants.

Director's Report: Margaret Wallace Brown, Director, Planning & Development Department welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced Neal Dikeman as a new Steering Committee member—replacing Meg Lousteau—and announced that the Livable Places Action Committee meetings will continue in a virtual format with potential in-person attendance at 611 Walker Street if there's interest.

Suvidha Bandi: Today's discussion points are:

- Recap of August meeting
- Continue discussion of number of units on a lot
- Design Scenarios for multiple units on a lot
- Homework activities and expectations for the next meeting
- Public comments at the end

The purpose of today's meeting is to review the design scenarios, discuss the preliminary idea that was presented during the last meeting and agree on the overall concept so that we can take the preliminary idea to the Technical Advisory Group to work through the details.

During the previous August meeting we discussed:

- Allowing 3-4 units on a lot without triggering the multi-family requirements
- Increasing ADU sizes or keeping them capped at 900 SF
- ADU parking requirements
- Parking trends and multimodal transportation in Houston

The purpose of the Livable Places Action Committee is "creating opportunities within our development standards that encourage housing variety and affordability". I want to emphasize that the scope of our work is focused on development standards only. If there are topics that come up that are outside the purview of the development standards, we may not be able to address them.

The problem statement for the current topic that we are discussing is to right-size development regulations associated with infill development in neighborhoods not restricted by single family residential deed restrictions and promote naturally occurring affordable housing. The goals of addressing this topic are to:

- Encourage a variety of housing options (triplexes, fourplexes, etc.)

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- Increase affordability
 - Promote urban infill development
 - Incentivize naturally occurring affordable housing
 - Encourage other transit modes related to what we can reasonably regulate

Defining single family residential lot types:

- Active single family residential deed restrictions
- No more than 2 units allowed per lot
- Attached or detached units
- Detached unit (only an ADU) is capped at 900 SF

Defining unrestricted lot types:

- No active single family residential deed restrictions
- Multiple units already allowed per lot
- Attached, detached or a combination of both
- No limit on unit sizes (additional units are not considered ADUs)

We are NOT proposing multiple units on these single family residential restricted lots. We are ONLY discussing development regulation changes for unrestricted lots. This only impacts the current multi-family permitting review process.

Single Family Residential Lot Questions? Comments?

Ron Lindsey: What's the significance of the 1999 date?

Suvidha Bandi: In 1999, starting from that time, the single-family restrictions became plat restrictions. So, when we plat lots, we used to put the single-family note on the plat and that's how all the lots platted after 1999 are restricted on the face of the plat to single family residential.

Current Development Regulation Hurdles

Suvidha Bandi: Here is how development regulations currently work in Houston.

Graphic flow chart diagram illustrating the current regulations for lots without single family residential restrictions. 3 or more units are considered multi-family residential. 1-2 units are considered single family residential as long as the second unit is not larger than 900 SF: See recording.

A couple of hurdles associated with the multi-family regulations:

- When the density proposed is less than 30 dwelling units per acre, a 28' private street is required if even the property is fronting a public street
- The one size fits all parking requirements may create some development limitations if the property is a standard 5000 SF lot. (i.e. a 4 unit development will struggle to fit all the required parking)

These multi-family developments are already allowed on unrestricted lots per the current ordinance, and they could be developed as detached, attached or a combination of both.

Graphic showing multi-family development configurations on a site: See recording.

Photographic examples of multi-family (4 units) developments built in the 1930s and 1940s on standard lots that we would like to encourage. Parking is in the back: See recording.

Photographic examples of multi-family (6-8 units) developments built in the 1930s and 1940s on standard lots with reduced parking. This shows what could be achievable on a site if less parking is required: See recording

Photographic examples of multi-family developments with different densities on a 6000 SF lot. One example shows an older 2-story building with 4 smaller (790 SF average) units with parking in the back. The other example shows a newer 7-story building with 6 larger (2500 SF average) units with parking on ground floor. The rules already allow the 7-story building example and discourage the 2-story building: See recording.

Information about current vehicle ownership trends in Houston (Source: American Community Survey 2010 – 2019):

- Car-free households are more common in densely populated areas and moderate-income neighborhoods where residents can't afford vehicle ownership.
- Research suggests that younger families and 1-person households are more likely to not own cars.
- Car ownership has remained flat over the past 10 years even as the city's population and density has increased.
- There are more renter-occupied households with only 1 car.
- The need for parking may be low for smaller rental units.

Housing Affordability in Houston

Suvidha Bandi: Houston faces a decreasing supply of affordable housing. Rents are increasing due to high demand. Residents are also spending more on transportation costs due to increasing costs of car ownership and commute. (Source: Kinder Institute and Link Houston)

Map showing census block groups in the region where households are spending less than 30% of their income on housing (dark green) versus census block groups where households are spending more than 30% of their income on housing (light green). The region seems relatively affordable: See recording.

Map showing census block groups in the region where households are spending less than 45% of their income on housing and transportation (dark green) versus census block groups where households are spending more than 45% of their income on housing and transportation (light green). Factoring in transportation costs shows a much less affordable (cost burdened) region: See recording.

Map showing census block groups in the region related to affordable housing and access to multimodal transportation. (Source: Rice University and Link Houston): See recording.

Parking Questions? Comments?

Curtis Davis: I recommend that we refer questions to both the Transportation Department and our transportation expert partners like the Kinder Institute and Link Houston. One of those questions is a potential survey to large landlords who rent units within these various typologies of affordability (slide 17). This could even be just one large property owner, like Camden Properties to see if they could provide information about car ownership trends of their tenants. Are they seeing more tenants with fewer cars, or has it stayed the same? This could even just focus on the downtown or transit accessible areas. It would be harder to get this kind of

information from smaller landlords. It would be helpful if the Committee could make a request like this which goes back to staff to use as you go forward in your planning considerations.

Suvidha Bandi: That's an excellent point. I would request our director to address that. The purpose of sharing this information is to show, for example, that yellow areas (slide 17) are costly but connected. Maybe these areas could be where these new development types could be triggered to provide more affordable housing options—especially because they're already well connected.

Margaret Wallace Brown: Yes, we might want to do this type of survey. There's a lot of research that's been done on car ownership—particularly for multi-family units. Probably the largest determinate of car ownership for a tenant is proximity to transit and whether additional parking is free or if there's a charge for it. A number of large-scale property owners across the nation have started to decouple the price of an apartment from the price of parking—reducing the cost of the apartment and adding an additional fee for using a parking space. They've been using that as a trial way to reduce the parking that they build. Structured parking is very expensive (more than \$20,000 per space)—many larger developers/operators are looking for ways to reduce the number of spaces they need to build. Decoupling it has gotten a lot of traction across the nation. We have not done a survey and I would like to see the results. It's something we would consider.

Multi-family Residential Prototypes:

Colin Scarff: Regarding the parking discussion, we've seen developments that include one parking space into the rent and if a tenant wants an additional space, that costs additional money. This is a way to reduce the parking burden.

We were asked to do some prototypical modeling to see if 3-4 unit developments could fit on a typical 5000 SF lot under the current multi-family regulations. If not, what regulations would need to be changed to generate more positive outcomes. We pulled together several scenarios—looking at both 3 units on a lot and 4 units on a lot—and will walk you through each of these scenarios to show you what we discovered.

Some basic modeling assumptions:

- Existing multi-family parking ratios
- Existing single-family parking ratios
- Density parameters—28' private street required for developments under 30 dwelling units per acre
- Existing single-family drainage requirements—65% lot coverage exemption
- Existing multi-family drainage requirements—no 65% lot coverage exemption
- Vehicle access from the front rather than from a rear alley
- No existing structures on-site—have not looked at scenarios that subdivide an existing structure into multiple units

Graphics showing development scenarios for 3 units on a 5000 SF lot. Parking requirements play a significant role in scenario configurations. Existing regulations lead to the private street dominating the lot, less space for building footprints or parking, ground floors being used for parking, and taller structures being developed to accommodate ground floor garages: See recording.

Graphics showing development scenarios for 4 units on a 5000 SF lot. The additional unit exceeds the 30 dwelling units per acre threshold—therefore, removing the 28' private street requirement and eliminating the

fee-simple single-family development option. Existing regulations lead to stacking units over ground floor parking with front-loaded garages, narrow unit footprints and taller buildings overall: See recording.

Some key modeling takeaways:

- The more parking required or provided, the less space for development
- Placing parking underneath units on the ground floor tends to impact unit size, building height and pedestrian experience from the sidewalk
- Reducing parking provides additional flexibility in terms of site configuration and unit size
- Drainage requirements could impact the location of parking and potentially unit sizes
- Drainage requirements could have significant cost implications to developments of this size and scale
- Single-family developments get a 65% lot coverage exemption—a 5000 SF lot could generate a large house (3000-4000 SF)—incentivizing larger single-family houses over smaller-scale multi-family projects
- Parking can increase impervious cover—the more parking provided; the more detention needed
- It's more efficient to put parking under buildings—disturbing less land—which could lead to taller buildings
- The 28' wide private street is hugely restrictive—in the case of 3 units, it likely forces a fee-simple single-family subdivision
- Current regulations promote car dominated landscapes—a lot of driveways and parking spaces, reduced street engagement, active uses are relegated to upper-stories instead of at the sidewalk level

Multi-family Residential Prototypes Questions? Comments?:

Ron Lindsey: It'd be very helpful on your graphics if you would put dimensions on the units for reference. At first, it wasn't clear that you were talking about 1- and 2-story units. A general question for planning: why do we have different rules for multi-family and single-family when we're talking about the same square footage of improvements on a lot? They're effectively subsidizing single-family development with the drainage requirements. What is the purpose of the 28' private street.

Suvidha Bandi: Yes, I think we need more clarification from fire protection perspective. We do know that the 28' wide private street is for fire protection. Once we agree on the concept, then we'll go to the Technical Advisory Group to talk about the reasoning of all these different driveway requirements. There are different regulations based on the different type of multi-family development. It's important to understand the effects of these rules.

Ron Lindsey: I think it's important to understand the reasoning behind these regulations when we discuss the number of units on a lot going forward.

Mike Dishberger: Good presentation. As a builder, when considering the amount of concrete on a property, you adhere to that 65% closely and avoid going over. If you can keep the driveways small, that could work. We would never put the parking in the rear because of the 65% coverage exemption. While not the prettiest place, we would typically put the concrete in the front to cut down on the amount of concrete. Regarding fire access, the fire trucks would never go down the private street—it's too dangerous even with a 28' wide private street. The truck stays on the main street and the hose extends deeper into the lot. I agree with most of the presentation's numbers. Most people would put parking under the building to reduce the amount of concrete. The whole permitting thing evolves around concrete now.

Curtis Davis: Good presentation. The current edition of the building code is under revision. Can you speak to the coordination with the building codes and how these prototype dimensions relate to those codes? An example is the proposed setback dimension change from 3' to 5'. Changing this kind of dimension has a big impact on such a small lot. Is the Planning Department coordinating with the Building Department to strike a balance around a lot of these issues? If so, is there a public input process with that coordination?

Suvidha Bandi: Yes, we are coordinating. If the Committee agrees with the idea of right-sizing the development regulations for small scale multi-family, then we can talk about what considerations we should be thinking about in terms of drainage, setbacks, driveway widths, etc. We're not there yet. You mentioned the 3' (current) setback versus the 5' (proposed) setback. We went with the proposed because it may be the future. Further coordination has yet to happen with the Technical Advisory Group discussions.

John Blount: Question—on some of the drawings, you show a 3-story 14.5' wide unit. That's too narrow considering stairwells and wall thicknesses. I don't think anything sells inside the Loop that's narrower than 18' wide. Who's going to buy a house a 9' wide maximum room width?

Colin Scarff: Yes, that's correct. It's narrow.

John Blount: When my dad used to build houses, the minimum was always 18' wide and he built the narrowest houses in Houston at one time. It was 18' because nothing else would sell.

Margaret Wallace Brown: Yes, John, you're probably right. However, in this presentation we're talking about multi-family—primarily rental units. We're thinking that these would likely be the older unit types that we haven't been building much of recently like fourplexes, etc. We're not talking about these as being fee-simple as that would be a very different calculation for single-family as opposed to multi-family rental. We're looking for ways to maximize the lot to build smaller units which would be more affordable.

John Blount: If you go look at those old fourplexes, they're still wider than this. There are not 14.5' wide fourplexes in Houston that I'm aware of.

Colin Scarff: We'll add the unit widths back in just so everyone can see them. But yes, it is tight.

John Blount: What would be nice is if you could review an old fourplex unit design-- figure out how it was designed and see how we could modify the code to allow what was successful in those units but got prohibited. Maybe do that instead of trying to re-invent the wheel with these other prototypes.

Colin Scarff: Yes, point us to an example unit and we'll look. Regardless, the drainage requirements are a huge constraint and would still make building wider units challenging.

John Blount: Yes, and if the City adopted a fee in lieu of drainage option, that problem would go away.

Suvidha Bandi: These are 'what-if' scenarios. They're just like imaginary drawings so they're not perfect. Right now, we know that these units are not getting built for certain reasons. We must think about what we can do to encourage these types of developments. I don't think we're at a place where we can talk about unit dimensions right now.

Colin Scarff: I do think it's a fair comment though. Ultimately, we want to produce something that is marketable. Maybe that's one of our takeaways now—the width of units.

Suvidha Bandi: These don't have to be side-by-side units. They could also be stacked. What's important is the unit sizes that we're trying to achieve.

Colin Scarff: The problem is that stacking units is more expensive.

Lisa Clark: I do think it's a fair question and comment. This analysis helps us understand if the units can fit. Now it's time to see if these units are acceptable and sellable and we have experts on this Committee to help tell us that.

Ron Lindsey: These units are not feasible currently based on the market. They're all very small and narrow units. Yes, we did ask for some illustrations of what it would look like, but these scenarios also need to be marketable. The key is not having the multi-family rules apply. We need to understand why we're applying different rules to the same amount of structure just because it's multi-family. If this is about creating more smaller multi-family rental unit projects rather than just smaller lots for individual homes, then that's something we need to think about.

Margaret Wallace Brown: I'm going back to the original charter of this Committee. We are trying to right-size our rules so that we can encourage a larger variety of unit types at more affordable price points. I'm not sure rental properties at 600 SF are not rentable. I think there is a market for a variety of unit sizes. Maybe it's not this exactly, but maybe it's something similar.

Colin Scarff: If we could get a scenario like this to work, then I think there's a market for this. We're showing more typical larger duplex units in the front with smaller units in the back that are basically subsidized by the units in the front.

Kathy Payton: We have a unit over here in Fifth Ward that's about 710 SF and only 15' wide and it sells like hot cakes. There's certainly a demand for these types of units but I can say that smaller does not always mean more cost-effective.

Lisa Clark: I think we need to agree on a direction. Is this (slide 14) a product we as a committee think would help us find affordable housing for renters? Is this the right configuration? We need to consider how to prevent changes that will continue to affect affordability. What is the takeaway we are expecting from today?

Suvidha Bandi: The takeaway I am expecting from today is that it is possible to build three to four units on a 5000 SF lot. There could be different configurations, and this (slide 14) is only one of them. We need guidance in determining how many units we want to allow, and then we can work with TAG on the details (i.e. driveway width, lot coverage, fire access, etc.)

Curtis Davis: This exercise was effective in helping to understand the dynamics of the problem. Looking at old units and existing typologies was not the charge of this exercise. I think this exercise did what it was supposed to do for us to understand the dynamics of the problem.

Peter Freedman: 4 units on a single lot is a great opportunity for affordability. A 5000 SF lot is the typical lot size, but there are bigger lots out there where these scenarios might work even better.

Mike Dishberger: There are building code changes in progress, some of which are optional, which keep the 3' setback. There are also sound transmission policies that nobody understands, which may make the construction crazy expensive for the units as shown (slide 14). I propose we move forward with the four units and four parking spaces configuration.

Multi-Family Development Considerations

Suvidha Bandi: Questions to think about:

- What should the trigger be for multi-family review?
- Is a 28' private street really needed?
- 'One size fits all' parking: Should there be parking minimums? Do we need requirements for all development, regardless of the need and proximity to other modes of transit?
- How will drainage requirements impact the development style?
- How will driveway widths impact the development style?

Parking demand is not constant. It varies based on the modes of transportation available, the cost of parking and owning a car, and the urban form. People make different choices based on what is available and at their disposal. If people can meet all their needs within close proximity to the development, then the number of vehicle trips will reduce. There is the opportunity for this if we develop parking strategies that account for Houston's variations in multimodal access and urban form, based on the various investments the city is making in public transit (such as high frequency rail, bus rapid transit, Metro Boost, high comfort bikeways).

Map showing Metro light rail lines and TOD streets with a quarter-mile buffer in blue. These may be areas where we can remove parking minimums or reduce the parking requirements: See recording.

Map showing Metro Boost and Rapid bus stops with a quarter-mile buffer in blue. These may be areas where we can reduce parking as well: See recording.

Map showing high comfort bikeways with a quarter-mile buffer in blue. The areas in blue are in close proximity to existing and programmed (currently under construction) bikeways: See recording.

Map showing all three transport maps (light rail and TOD streets, bus stops, and bikeways) put together with a quarter-mile buffer in blue: See recording.

If we choose to remove parking minimums in the areas in blue, we will have moved forward in the direction that *Plan Houston*, *Resilient Houston*, and the *Climate Action Plans* direct us to do so. We were able to cover a significant area just with a quarter-mile buffer. This is a very comfortable walking distance.

Graphics showing existing regulations and proposed changes to the number of units allowed for single family and multi-family residences. The proposed changes involve increasing the number of units allowed in Multi-Family Residential from 3 or more units to 5 or more units and creating another category for 3-4 unit Residential developments: See recording.

We should also think about reduced parking as an option to encourage affordability and the positive type of development we want to see.

Graphic flowchart diagram from earlier in the presentation illustrating the current regulations for lots without single family residential restrictions. This version has been amended to illustrate the proposed changes from the previous slide: See recording.

Concept: Preliminary proposal:

- Create another category—or a performance standard—for residential developments with 3 to 4 units to be reviewed under residential review.
- Developments on lots that are less than 10,000 square feet with a depth of 150 feet or less will not be required to provide 28' private street. These lots should maintain a maximum coverage of 65%.

We should think about reduced parking for this type of developments. If the Committee agrees to this performance standard idea—and guides us in what kind of reduced parking we should consider along the reliable modes of public transit—we will take that direction to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and work out all the details and come back to you to present the full-fledged proposal.

Multi-Family Development Considerations Questions? Comments?

Ron Lindsey: I don't think putting a quarter-mile buffer around the bikeways makes much sense. The whole idea of the bikeway is that you get on your bike and go. The quarter-mile buffer is best for when you have to walk to some kind of structure or facility before you can get on that transit. I would delete the bikeways map. In addition, they are not really a network; they'd have to have a network tied to major employment areas to be effective. On a side note, if somebody could talk to Public Works into accepting permeable concrete as non-impervious cover, that would help with some of the detention requirements. Right now, Public Works does not accept permeable concrete—concrete that allows water to flow through it—to be counted as non-impervious cover. If they would look at that again and be willing to accept permeable concrete, that would have an impact.

Margaret Wallace Brown: Do you know what the rationale for that is?

Ron Lindsey: I do not, other than they said they would not accept it.

John Blount: 90% of the soils in Harris County and in particular the city of Houston are impervious. So, if you have permeable concrete, it will put water down on top of clay. Public Works will, I think just like the County, allow permeable concrete over gravel beds that serve as detention, but it's very expensive. Other parts of the region are very successful with permeable concrete because they have good soils. They put them in the woodlands and had to tear out the permeable concrete for this very reason. So, there's a reason Public Works won't accept them without storage underneath.

Margaret Wallace Brown: That makes sense. May I also address the bike lane question from Ron? The City of Houston is working very closely with the County, and we have (I believe) 50 miles of high comfort bike lanes that have been built in the past two years. It is in fact a network. We are building the network out even more around Downtown from the bayous, all the way to Hermann Park and east through Third Ward. There is a significant network; while it may not be there today, it's getting closer to being one. Ten years, five years from now we will have our complete network.

Ron Lindsey: My comment was two-fold. One, on the map Suvidha put up there were isolated pockets of bike lanes. To me, those shouldn't be included because they do not connect anything yet. Two, the quarter-mile buffer doesn't make sense since you can't just get on your bike and go. So, it's just whatever is immediately adjacent to that bike lane that might make sense. Other than that, I thought that map was very compelling and it's helpful to see how much public transportation is available and how you can create units that do need public transportation versus private car orientation.

Suvidha Bandi: The City of Houston has approximately 350 miles of high comfort bikeways resulting from over 150 million in investment. The bike plan includes another 1,450 miles with 150 miles currently in planning, design, and construction. This (slide 22) is information that came from the transportation team. You'll see that the spine that is coming down from the northeast through Downtown and then toward Hermann Park ties into the Buffalo Bayou and the White Oak Trails.

Margaret Wallace Brown: So, we have a significant network already started. Thank you.

Curtis Davis: Like the quarter-mile buffer for walking to transit, there is a quarter-mile buffer for those who commute by bike. In the quarter-mile buffer—the dodgy areas without cycling infrastructure—bicyclists must keep their head on a swivel to get to the bikeway safely.

Luis Guajardo: I really like the thought about sustainable transportation playing a role in how we link our regulatory framework and our land use policy around this. It's really comforting to see that we are going to be up to about 500 miles of bikeways by mid-decade. I think it's great to have to be thinking about that future network that's coming. We do have gaps right now, but they're being filled up quickly and across the city. We should look at the quarter-mile buffer more closely to see what makes sense, but generally I support the thinking around bikeways and transit here. I'd suggest a couple of additional things for staff to consider mapping buffers around. One is transit centers and park-and-rides, which I consider attractors of people wanting to walk and bike to them. If you live near a transit center, you can offset your car use significantly. There are over 30 of them in the service area. I would also consider the high frequency network, which is the red routes on Metro service. These run every 15 minutes or less, seven days of the week. I would consider the high frequency network, in addition to the Boost network and the rail network, as being the kind of area where you can live and not have a car. A lot of those high frequency routes are future Boost routes, future rail corridors, or future Bus Rapid Transit corridors.

Lisa Clark: Thank you. Shawn, I see you put a comment in here about permeable pavement: "Even getting 50% IC reduction would be beneficial". Would you explain your comment a bit?

Shawn Massock: Not to discount the clay comment earlier, because I think soil conditions also must be taken into account; maybe it's what the permeable paver sits on. Maybe there's something that's not full detention—maybe a cell-type detention set-up. Maybe there's a barrier or level of permeable soils underneath that as well. In a lot of other areas I have dealt with, the main reason for not giving credit for permeable concrete is maintenance concerns. Over time, it becomes impervious cover because of the cells clogging up and so forth.

Suvidha Bandi: I need help from the committee to agree on the overall concept. In my opinion, any development near high frequency transit—such as Boost or the Metro red line—should have no parking minimums. If the development is in proximity to less frequent modes of transit—such as 30-minute bus routes

or transit centers—maybe we should consider reduced parking as an option. Otherwise, I think the regular parking requirements should stand.

Lisa Clark: Yes, I agree with you on no minimum parking requirements. Let's get some committee comments.

Ron Lindsey: I would go with one parking space per unit, but I would not go for zero. I would not include the bike lanes because there are a very select few people who would commute to work every day on a bike. It's not enough to offset the parking that is going to be there. You can't just wish away the car because some people like to ride a bike. Other than that, I like what Suvidha has set out with an additional category for residential.

Sandy Stevens: We can't wish away parking. I live in a neighborhood with lots of guest parking. No parking requirements will put more stress on our streets. I live in an area with TOD streets and light rail and people still own cars. I can't support no parking minimums. I do support reduced parking requirement.

Shawn Massock: I agree with not supporting the removal of parking requirements. There should at least be a minimum; we could do like 0.667 per unit, essentially creating 3 parking spaces for 4 units in the transit-oriented areas.

Lisa Clark: I assume staff is ok with moving forward on the residential category proposal.

Sonny Garza: I do like this third category for 3-4 unit residences. We need to have it to encourage new building types.

Colin Scarff: I just wanted to make the point that just because there's no parking requirement doesn't necessarily mean that developers or builders won't provide that parking on-site, it just means that the City is no longer requiring it. To the folks on the committee, especially the developers and builders: if there's no parking requirement, do you see a market in Houston for actually providing no parking on site, or do you think there's always going to be a need for you to rent or sell units for that parking space on the site?

Ron Lindsey: First, I think the issue with no parking is that some developers won't build parking and then they push that parking onto the neighborhood. I think the City does have a role to play in protecting the interests of the community as a whole. Second, if all your needs are not met in the TOD area, then you will still need a car.

Colin Scarff: If there's no parking requirement, would you say that you're still going to provide parking on site as a builder because you potentially wouldn't be able to rent or sell your units without parking?

Ron Lindsey: The City has a role in providing protection for the neighborhood as a whole.

Mike Dishberger: We're in Houston; I would always build parking.

Margaret Wallace Brown: Our team is really well trained, and we've been paying attention to a lot of research and studies about automobiles and other transportation trends. Where's the tipping point for Houston? Research shows that people are looking for walkability and safe access to transit. There are a growing number of Houstonians who use their bikes to commute to work, and we have more and more people who are using their bikes for more utilitarian purposes. We have a responsibility as a planning department to encourage multi-modality. Research has shown time and time again that a big tipping point for getting people out of their cars

and out of home ownership is (1) income level and (2) no longer providing free and convenient parking. The mayor has been telling us we have a responsibility to start encouraging transit, walkability, and bikes. That was the whole reason we did the transit-oriented development pieces of the *Walkable Places* study. In the 1990s, we built a city that was dependent on cars, but we have got to start fixing that problem.

Lisa Clark: What I'm hearing is that people aren't opposed to reducing parking minimums, it's more about an issue with eliminating parking minimums. A reduction is more welcome.

Curtis Davis: I agree with the Director's comments. What planning staff can do is look at comparable places—Atlanta might be a good comparison—and see how the market and parking issues are affected. Think about the Beltway; that might be a good place to look at to see how folks who are in an auto-dependent community have challenges with being able to drive because of the congestion. What kinds of risks need to happen to make this happen? How can we subsidize some of these risks?

Homework:

Lynn Henson: Visit Let's Talk Houston\Livable Places to:

- Read the Sightline article: "We Ran the Rent Numbers on Portland's Seven Newly Legal Home Options" by Michael Anderson.
- Take the upcoming on the development scenario prototypes discussed today.
- Read the upcoming report containing the survey results from the last survey.
- Watch the recording of the first Kol Peterson ADU workshop recording
- Register for the second ADU workshop "How to ADU HOU" on September 28th at 6 PM.

Next Meeting: October 5th

Public Comment:

Judy Hardin: I want to know if the projects you are discussing will get built in the Acres Home Area? I want to make sure that they're not.

Suvidha Bandi: If the property is unrestricted, then it is possible.

Judy Hardin: The Mayor said these would not be built in Acre Homes.

Margaret Wallace Brown: We're not talking about homes getting built in certain neighborhoods or proposing locations. If there are unrestricted lots in your neighborhood, those units could be built.

Barbara McGuffey: I would like to reiterate the unintended consequences of removing parking minimums. Cars aren't going away any time soon. Portland has some of the biggest parking problems in the county, and their residential parking permits are some of the most expensive in the country as well.

Andrew Wicks: I had a question about the slide with multiple units on the lot; I think there is a market for these smaller units but they're not really feasible with the increased costs of drainage. I think drainage might be the biggest hindrance to smaller units.

Kelly Ejirika: The detention requirements are a big hinderance. There are plenty of lots that are smaller than this and are in areas that need affordable housing options, such as Acre Homes and Sunnyside, where the cost of land per square foot makes it economically nonsensical to only put one home there. For ADUs—if you want to make an impact, go to zero parking for ADUs. Even one parking space won't be a big impact for ADUs.

Melissa Beeler: I support reduced parking for up to 8-unit buildings near transit. It would be helpful along frequent bus routes as well. We should maybe investigate transportation demand management and look into the demand side of parking as well as the supply side. I would really appreciate that as someone who has lived in Houston for over 4 years without a car. 12.5% of renters do not own a car and have to pay for a parking space they don't use. They should have the option to decouple parking from housing.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.