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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: MAY 20, 2021  
TO: OUR SALEM ZONING SUBCOMMITTEE  
FROM: EUNICE KIM, LONG RANGE PLANNING MANAGER  
SUBJECT: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT APRIL MEETING

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The Our Salem Zoning Subcommittee met for the first time on Friday, April 30 and began discussing [zoning options](#) intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Subcommittee asked questions about the first three options discussed: Increasing maximum heights, eliminating parking requirements, and increasing minimum densities. This memorandum provides answers to the questions and describes ideas that could be further discussed at the Subcommittee's meeting on May 27, 2021.

### General

**1. Is there data that shows how much each zoning option will reduce greenhouse gas emissions?**

No. We have been using a transportation model to try to understand how changes in land uses could impact how people would travel around the Salem area and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. However, we have learned that the model, run by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, is not very sensitive to land use changes alone.

We do know, based on research, that there are changes that can be made to help encourage mixed-use development and housing near transit routes. Promoting compact, mixed-use neighborhoods, for example, is one of the strategies outlined in the [Oregon Statewide Transportation Strategy](#). That document includes a variety of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources. (Another resource is *Cool Planning: A Handbook on Local Strategies to Slow Climate Change*, which is attached.)

The zoning options under consideration by the Our Salem Zoning Subcommittee largely aim to allow, or require, more housing near [Cherriots' Core Network](#), which includes bus routes on which Cherriots has committed to maintaining or increasing service.

### Maximum Heights

**1. Is the MU-III zone tied to Cherriots' Core Network?**

Yes. The MU-III zone, which would be a new zone, is proposed primarily along commercial corridors in Salem that are part of Cherriots' Core Network. The intent is to allow and encourage a mix of uses in areas that have frequent transit service. (Staff will present a map of the proposed MU-III zone and Core Network at the May 27 meeting.)

As land develops – through infill, redevelopment, and new development – in the proposed mixed-use corridors, this promotes a land use pattern that reduces travel distances between

housing, jobs, services, and amenities while increasing opportunities for people to use transit, bike, and walk. This helps decrease the community’s overall reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

**2. How can buildings heights and setbacks be linked together?**

We can – and have – linked building heights with setbacks in our zoning code. For example, in the Mixed Use-1 and Mixed Use-2 zones, the setback next to residential zones depends on the height of the building. Specifically, the setback is 10 feet plus an additional 1.5 feet for each 1 foot of building height above 15 feet. In other words, the taller the building, the farther away it needs to be from adjacent residential areas. That setback applies even if there is an alley between the mixed use zone and the residential zone. A 55-foot tall building, for example, would have a setback of 70 feet.

**3. How much of the proposed Mixed Use-III (MU-III) zone is adjacent to land zoned Single-Family Residential (RS), Multiple Family-I (RM-I) or Multiple Family-II (RM-II), or other another zones?**

Here is a breakdown of the number of taxlots and total acres by zone that is adjacent to the proposed MU-III zone:

Zoning Groups Adjacent To Proposed MU-III Zone Areas	Taxlots	Acres
Salem RM1 & RM2 Zoned Properties Adjacent To Proposed MU-III Zone Areas *	159	134.17
Salem RM2/RS Split Zoned Properties Adjacent To Proposed MU-III Zone Areas **	4	4.34
Salem RS Zoned Properties Adjacent To Proposed MU-III Zone Areas	331	99.38
All Other Zoned Properties Adjacent To Proposed MU-III Zone Areas	117	447.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>685.01</b>

\* Contains 1 taxlot with split RM1/RM2 Salem Zoning

\*\* Contains 4 taxlots with split RM2/RS Salem Zoning

**Parking Requirements**

**4. What is the appropriate distance from the Core Network to decrease or eliminate parking requirements?**

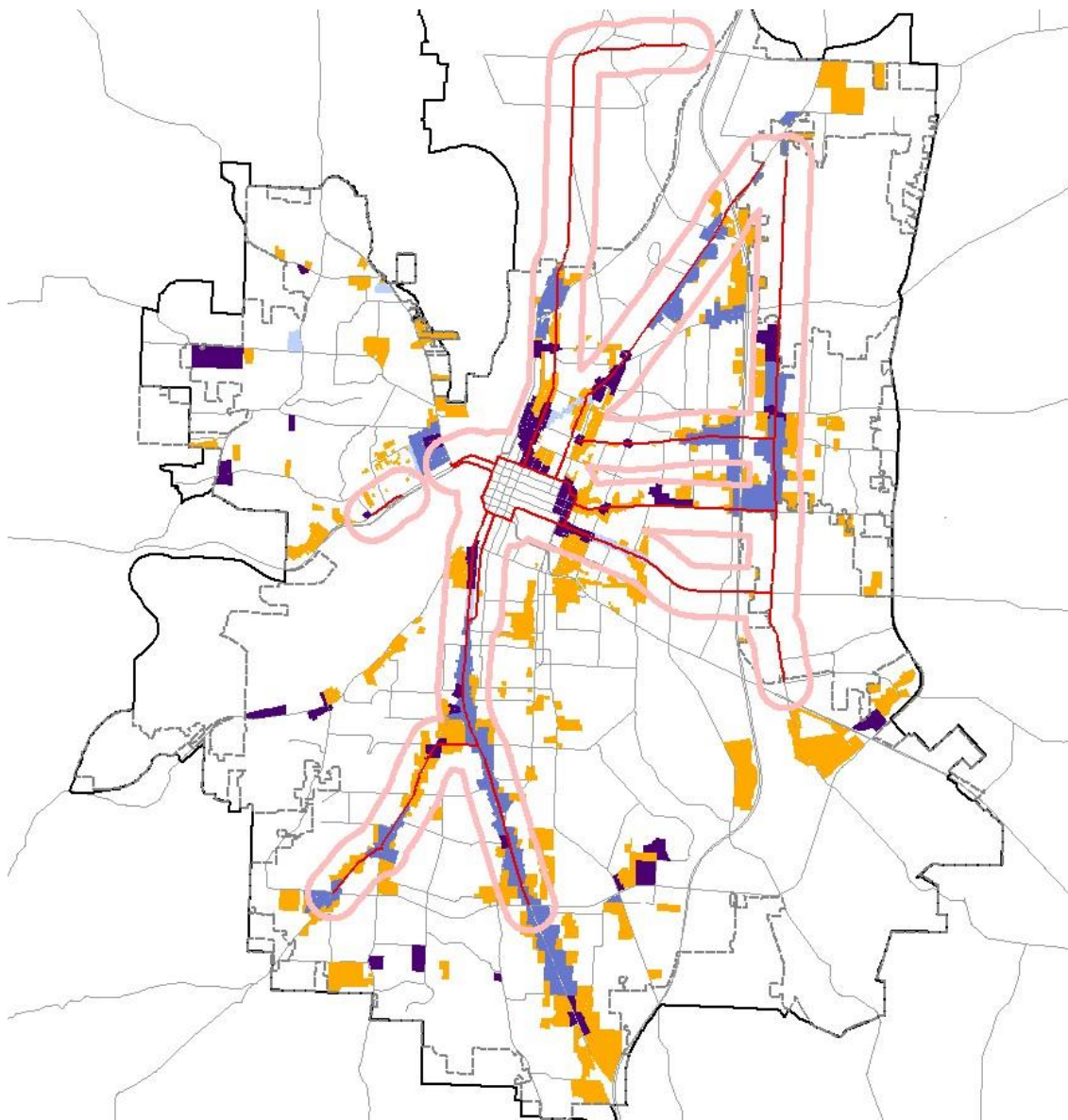
Currently, multifamily, three-family, and four-family housing located within ¼ mile of the Core Network is not required to provide off-street parking spaces. A ¼ mile (1,320 ft.) is commonly considered a “walkable” distance, as it translates to roughly a 5-minute walk. (A ¼ mile is equivalent to about three downtown blocks.) That is why a ¼ mile was the distance chosen to for the elimination of minimum parking requirements for multifamily housing. In the zoning code, the ¼ mile is specified to be “measured along a route utilizing public or private streets that

are existing or will be constructed with the development.” That way, it is not a straight as-the-crow-flies distance that may or may not be the actual walking distance.

In Portland, as mentioned at the Zoning Subcommittee meeting in April, off-street parking is generally not required for uses within 500 feet of frequent transit service. That is closer to 1/8 mile (660 feet).

As currently proposed, the majority of the mixed-use zoning (MU-I, MU-II, and MU-III zones) in Salem (about 64%) would be located within an 1/8 mile of the Core Network and about 68% would be within a 1/4 mile. See two maps below.

#### 1/4 Mile Buffer



#### Legend

##### Zoning

- Mixed Use-I
- Mixed Use-II
- Mixed Use-III

##### Transit

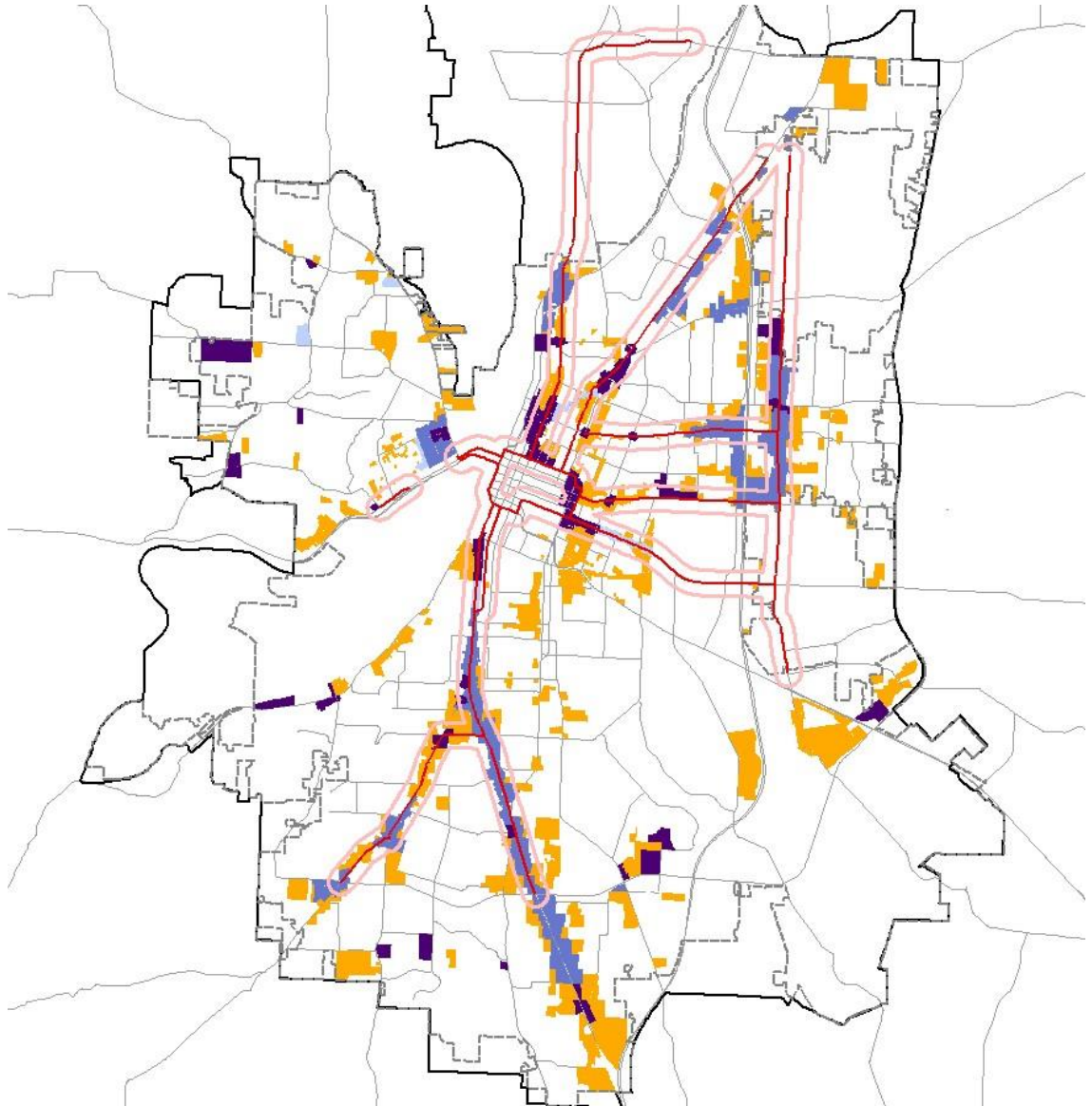
- Cherriots Core Network
- 1/4 Mile Core Network Buffer

##### Streets

- Roadway

##### Boundaries

## 1/8 Mile Buffer



### Legend

#### Zoning

- Mixed Use-I
- Mixed Use-II
- Mixed Use-III
- Multiple Family Residential 2

#### Transit

- Cherriots Core Network
- 1/8 Mile Core Network Buffer

#### Streets

- Roadway

#### Boundaries

- Salem City Limits (SDE)
- Urban Growth Boundary (SDE)

Parking reductions can also be varied based on the distance from transit routes, with more parking being required the farther away the use is from transit routes.

**5. What incentives are currently used to reduce parking requirements?**

Existing reductions to parking requirements are contained in Salem Revised Code (SRC) Section 806.015. They are summarized in the table below.

<b>Reductions for All Types of Development</b>	
<b>Option to Reduce Parking Requirements</b>	<b>Parking Reduction</b>
Construction of transit-related improvements (e.g., transit stop, pull outs and shelters)	10%
Implementation of an alternative transportation plan	Determined through Class 2 Adjustment
<b>Reductions Exclusive to Three-, Four-, and Multiple Family Development</b>	
<b>Option to Reduce Parking Requirements</b>	<b>Parking Reduction (up to 25% total reduction allowed)</b>
Provision of affordable housing units ( <i>only for multiple family development</i> )	25% for each affordable unit (up to 80% median family income)
Located within ¼ mile from a transit stop	10%
Located within ¼ mile of transit stop with 15-minute service	20%
Located within ¼ mile of Cherriots Core Network	100%
Provision of covered bicycle parking	1 space for every 4 covered bicycle parking spaces provided above the minimum
Provision of shared car or shuttle van for residents	4 spaces for each shared vehicle

In addition to the incentives listed above, specific parking reductions have been made in zones and overlay zones that promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development and redevelopment:

- Mixed Use-I and Mixed Use-II zones:** The parking requirement for retail uses in the MU-I and MU-II zones is lower than in other zones (1 space per 400 square feet in the MU zones versus 1 space per 250 square feet in other zones). This was done to incentivize retail uses in the two mixed-use zones as part of the State Street Corridor Plan project.
- Broadway-High Street overlay zones:** The minimum parking requirements in the Broadway-High Street overlay zones are automatically reduced by 10 percent. This change followed a Parking Management Plan in the area that recommended ways to create flexibility in parking standards. The parking reduction recognized the fact that the Broadway-High Street area is an urban, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area that is well served by transit. The reduction was also done to make it easier for properties to be reused in the future and minimize the potential need for adjustments to parking requirements.
- Edgewater/Second Street Mixed Use Corridor:** There is no minimum parking requirement for sites with existing buildings (as of June 13, 2018) and located between Rosemont Avenue and Wallace Road in the Edgewater/Second Street Mixed Use Corridor, provided the square footage of buildings is not increased and existing parking is not reduced. This was done to reduce barriers to reusing existing buildings. In

addition, the parking requirement for multifamily housing in the zone is one space per dwelling unit.

## 6. What other incentives could be used?

Other cities provide a variety of other incentives to reduce parking requirements. Salem could add new ways to reduce parking requirements or could increase the amount of total parking that can be reduced. For example, parking requirements for multifamily housing can be reduced in several ways today, but the total reduction cannot exceed 25 percent.

The City of Portland offers the following incentives (which are not offered in Salem) and allows for a parking reduction of up to 50 percent of required spaces:

- **Trees preserved:** Minimum parking may be reduced by one parking space for each tree 12 inches in diameter and larger that is preserved. A maximum of 2 parking spaces or 10 percent of the total required may be reduced, whichever is greater. However, required parking may not be reduced below 4 parking spaces under this provision.
- **Motorcycle parking:** Motorcycle parking may substitute for up to 5 spaces or 5 percent of required automobile parking, whichever is less. For every 4 motorcycle parking spaces provided, the automobile parking requirement is reduced by one space. Each motorcycle space must be at least 4 feet wide and 8 feet deep. Existing parking may be converted to take advantage of this provision.
- **Car-sharing:** Car-sharing parking spaces may substitute for required parking if all of the following are met: (1) For every car-sharing parking space that is provided, the motor vehicle parking requirement is reduced by 2 spaces, up to a maximum of 25 percent of the required parking spaces; (2) The car-sharing parking spaces must be shown on the building plans; and (3) A copy of the car-sharing agreement between the property owner and the car-sharing company must be submitted with the building permit.
- **Bike-sharing:** City of Portland bike-sharing stations may substitute for required parking if all of the following are met: (1) A City of Portland bike-sharing station providing 15 docks and 10 shared bicycles reduces the motor vehicle parking requirement by 3 spaces. The provision of each addition of 4 docks and 2 shared bicycles reduces the motor vehicle parking requirement by an additional space, up to a maximum of 25 percent of the required parking spaces; (2) The bike-sharing station must be adjacent to, and visible from the street, and must be publicly accessible; (3) The bike-sharing station must be shown on the building plans; and (4) A copy of the signed agreement between the property owner and the Portland Bureau of Transportation must be submitted before the building permit is approved.

## 7. Can parking requirements be tied to on-street parking availability?

Yes. Salem does not currently allow for parking reductions based on available on-street parking spaces. However, some cities do allow this; on-street parking spaces can be counted toward off-street parking requirements.

For example, in Bend, the amount of required off-street parking spaces can be reduced by one for every one on-street parking space abutting a development. The off-street parking requirement can be reduced by up to 50 percent; in some zones like a mixed-use zone, the amount can be reduced up to 100 percent. The on-street spaces cannot be used exclusively by the development but instead, must be available to the general public.



If Salem wanted to allow on-street parking to count toward off-street parking requirements, staff would want to create a process to track approvals to ensure on-street spaces were not double counted by different uses. Tracking approvals would also help staff know when a potential street improvement project could make a development nonconforming by removing on-street parking spaces that were used to meet its parking requirements.

There have also been concerns about parking demand in areas where there is a lot of activity. In the north downtown area, this was a concern, so a parking management plan was done to analyze parking utilization and recommend actions to address identified issues. That plan found that peak demand for on-street parking spaces in the main study area was roughly 31 percent. During peak hours, parking was found to be limited on some blocks, but available parking was always observed on adjacent blocks.

## Minimum Densities for Multifamily Housing

### **8. If a higher minimum density is established, should other development standards be made to help ensure the densities can be achieved?**

It does not appear to be necessary based on recent multifamily projects as well as input from some multifamily developers. A high-level analysis of recently-approved multifamily projects approved in multifamily zones showed that projects are being proposed at a density higher than the current minimums (e.g., 12 units per acres in the RM-II zone). The average density was roughly 21 units per acre in the RM-II zone.

This was confirmed in recent conversations with several multifamily developers. The developers stated that a minimum density of 15 units per acre, particularly near the Core Network, would not be a barrier to development. Some mentioned, however, that a range of densities should still be provided (e.g., the maximum density should be increased too) and more flexibility should be provided in terms of the amount of parking allowed. It should be noted that the City allows developers to apply for adjustments to minimum density if a site cannot meet minimum density, and that would continue if minimum densities were increased.

The City also recently updated the zoning code to encourage multifamily housing development. Specifically, the [Multifamily Housing Design Project](#):

- Provided greater flexibility in how multifamily design standards can be met
- Reduced the number of design standards for small multifamily housing projects
- Simplified the regulations for three and four-unit projects
- Reduced parking requirements for multifamily projects of all sizes

In addition, an increased density could be paired with an increase in the maximum height for multifamily housing in multifamily zones (currently 50 ft. in RM-II and 35 ft. in RM-I for), which would provide further flexibility to meet a higher minimum density.

### **9. What density bonuses or incentives for increased densities are currently available?**

Currently, the City does not offer any traditional density bonuses. Maximum densities also cannot be increased through a variance or adjustment application. As mentioned earlier, the City has made updates to the multifamily housing design standards and parking requirements, which allow for greater flexibility in the design of projects and the opportunity to use of a property for housing.

In downtown Salem (CB-Central Business District zone) where taller and denser developments have been built (e.g., Koz microunits), the City does not have a density requirement or a maximum height. Therefore, a density bonus is not needed.

There is a current Senate Bill, [SB 8](#), that if adopted, would require cities like Salem to allow affordable housing developments to have increased densities and heights. The increased densities and heights would be tied to existing densities. For example, if the existing maximum density in a zone is between 17 and 45 units per acre in a zone (e.g., RM-II zone allows up to 28 units per acre), cities would have to allow the density to be increased by 150 percent and heights to be increased by 24 feet. The bill defines affordable housing as residential property where each unit is available to families with incomes of 80 percent or less of the area median income or the average of all units is available to families with incomes of 60 percent or less of the area median income. The units must be affordable for at least 40 years. If the bill passes, the zoning code will be amended accordingly.

#### **10. Can the City require that parking costs be unbundled from the costs of dwelling units?**

Yes. This is an option that the City is considering as part of climate action plan project. Unbundling parking requirements means the cost of parking would be separated from the cost of renting dwelling units; separate leases for parking spaces would be required. This would allow people who do not have a car to forgo paying the cost of parking. It could therefore reduce housing costs, particularly for households without cars.

Some large cities have required the unbundling of parking costs. In San Francisco, off-street parking spaces for new structures with 10 or more units or conversions of non-residential buildings to residential use of 10 or more units are required to be leased or sold separately from rental or purchase fees for the units themselves. The provision specifies that this is required “such that potential renters or buyers have the option of renting or buying a residential unit at a price lower than would be the case if there were a single price for both the residential unit and the parking space.” San Francisco’s code allows the Planning Commission to grant an exception from the requirement for projects that include financing for affordable housing that requires the costs of parking and housing to be bundled together. These provisions are included in San Francisco’s planning code in its “Transportation, Off-street parking, and Loading” chapter.

A proposal to unbundle parking could accompany a reduction or elimination of minimum parking requirements, as has been done for multifamily housing within ¼ mile of the Core Network. This would allow a developer to build more housing with less parking and ultimately, to determine how much parking – and at what price – should be provided.