

Meeting Notes

To: Eunice Kim, City of Salem
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From: Heather Austin, 3J Consulting
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Project Name: Salem Multifamily Housing Design Project

On April 30, the City of Salem conducted a public workshop to present refined code concepts to update Salem's design standards for multifamily housing. It was the second workshop for the Multifamily Housing Design project, which aims to help meet Salem's housing needs by removing barriers to the development of multifamily housing and ensuring that new development is compatible with the city's neighborhoods.

The public workshop began with a [presentation](#) by the City's project manager Eunice Kim and consultant Heather Austin. Eunice provided an overview of the project, including its goals, purpose, and timeline. Heather then briefly described the refined code concepts that would be discussed in further detail in small groups. Those concepts were grouped into five topics: Project review process, parking, 3-4 dwelling unit projects, 5-12 dwelling unit projects, and 13 or more dwelling unit projects. Input from the small group discussions is provided below. It will be used to help finalize the code concepts as part of the final step in the Multifamily Housing Design project.

Following the small group discussions, City staff and the consultant team reported the input they heard in their groups to all meeting participants. The public workshop concluded with a question and answer session. That information is provided at the end of this meeting summary. More information about the public workshop can be found on the [project website](#).

Project Review Process

- General support for staff-level review of multifamily projects
- General support for utilizing the existing adjustment process with mailed notice and opportunity for written public testimony
- Appeals should be based on code criteria, and any appeals should be limited to ONLY the issue identified as the basis for the appeal
- The idea was proposed that each multifamily proposal should be given one "get out of jail free" card, giving the applicant the option to waive one multifamily design standard without the need for an adjustment. Adjustments to any additional standards would require an Adjustment application

Parking

- General support for proposed parking requirements (3-12 dwelling unit projects: 1 space per unit, 13+ dwelling unit projects based on unit size: 1 space per studio/1 bedroom unit and 1.5 spaces per 2 or more bedroom units)
- There was general consensus that the image on the poster board with parking between the building and the street is NOT the preference. Parking should be located to the side or rear of the building
- There was general consensus for offering credits to off-street parking, with these thoughts:
 - o Proximity to transit and affordable housing projects could have a greater credit (up to 50%)



- Is the city considering a shared parking credit? (Staff responded that shared parking is an option under the current code – joint parking agreements – and this will remain)
- Some reservation to the credit for on-street parking as it will put pressure on some streets that already have limited parking available
- The idea was posed that parking could be based on the number of adults in residence: one adult = 1 parking space
- Not specifically related to vehicle parking, the idea was posed that all multifamily developments should be required to provide secure bicycle parking as a best practice

3-4 dwelling unit projects

- Overlap with Compact Development Overlay Zone provisions and single family zones: how would this affect ability to build on single family lots? (Response was given that the Compact Development Overlay Zone provisions that apply to 3- an 4- unit projects would be updated with these same standards)
- Are there additional single-family setbacks that apply to these besides the rear? (Response was given that the 5-foot side-yard setback would apply to new 3 or 4-unit buildings)
- Pedestrian connectivity should be provided to the street
- General support for increasing lot coverage from 50% to 60%
- Placement of open space is very important, and it should not just be in the setbacks
- Are there provisions that would allow domed roofs? (Response was given that the roof pitch requirement may not explicitly permit it, but an adjustment may be available)

5-12 dwelling unit projects

- The following thoughts were provided:
 - It is important to have common green space between units to ensure units aren't too close together and doors aren't too close together
 - Solid waste and recycling standards are a problem
 - 40% open space requirement may be good
 - Expand the allowed density and uses in the Duplex Residential (RD) Zone

13 or more dwelling unit projects

- The following comments were provided regarding open space:
 - ¼ mile to a park may be a more reasonable distance than ½ mile to receive an open space reduction
 - Reduction of required open space near parks may not be a meaningful concept for projects with 13 or more dwelling units because there is not land of that size available near parks
 - Open space should be at least partially usable
- Some people like the provision that balconies are not permitted overlooking single-family residential, others think it could work well if there was a large enough setback, and some think balconies keep the rear of buildings from looking like a box
- The idea was given that multifamily projects should be constructed to the front lot line if adjacent to single-family residential (Response was given that as proposed, a percentage of the multifamily building would be required to be built to the front setback line)
- Windows overlooking common areas are important, so residents can "see and be seen"

Final thought

- A reminder was given that neighborhood meetings generally don't meet in July, so as the project progresses, the preference would be to not have periods for public review and comment during July

