

**FIRCREST CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
FIRCREST CITY HALL, 115 RAMSDELL STREET**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Introductions**
- 5. [Planning Commission 2021 Work Plan](#)**
- 6. [Housing Affordability Discussion](#)**
- 7. [Department of Commerce Item #2 Grant Options](#)**
- 8. [Climate Change Discussion](#)**
- 9. Adjournment**

AGENDA ITEM: Planning Commission Work Plan

DATE: February 2, 2021

FROM: Angelie Stahlnecker, Planning and Building Administrator

BACKGROUND: On January 5, 2021, the Fircrest Planning Commission adopted a work plan for the 2021 year. The work plan provides staff clear direction, brings more transparency in the process, and fulfills Land Use Goal 12 of the Comprehensive Plan – “the City should continue to refine its permit process and periodically review and revise its development regulations.”

A brief description of why the item is included is listed below. The Planning Commission desired to present it as part of the Joint Meeting in order to receive any further comment or direction from the City Council.

Comprehensive Plan and Fircrest Municipal Code

This includes updating the 6-year CIP and reviewing for housekeeping corrections and consistency. These are usually smaller in nature and can be included in one package.

Housing Affordability

See Housing Memo

Public Design Standards

As requested by the City Council, at the August 2019 study session the design standards that apply to public buildings will be reviewed. The Tacoma School District passed a bond that includes the replacement of Whittier Elementary. It was discussed that some of the design standards were designed for residential, not a new school.

Small Wireless Standards

Staff proposed to establish standards that will address this growing industry and meet the Federal guidelines.

Review Existing Policies for Racial Bias

This item was suggested by the planning commission. No bias has been identified, but they felt it would be appropriate to review our codes for any implicit and/or unintentional bias. Staff plans to research existing tools to help in the review process.

Attachments: 2021 Planning Commission Work Plan



2021 Work Plan

- Comprehensive Plan Updates
 - 6-year CIP
 - State Mandates
- FMC Annual Review
 - Holiday lights
 - Zone amendment procedure
 - Review of definitions
 - Housekeeping corrections
- Housing Affordability
- Public Building Design Standards
- Small Wireless Standards
- Review Existing Policies for Racial Bias

The work plan does not limit the Planning Commission from considering other issues.

AGENDA ITEM: Housing Affordability

DATE: February 2, 2021

FROM: Angelie Stahlnecker, Planning and Building Administrator

BACKGROUND: Housing is a vast topic as the region strives to address a severe housing shortage. The Planning Commission has requested discussion and direction to help narrow down the options and help refine their focus.

The need to study and address housing comes from many directions.

The State of Washington has encouraged local jurisdictions to study ways to increase residential building capacity. This funded the grant the City received from the Department of Commerce to adopt a form-based code and consider other ways to increase housing opportunities. Additional legislature is expected.

As part of the next GMA required update, the County is reviewing housing allocations, of which the City of Fircrest is identified as a High Capacity Transit community which will increase our assigned allocation.

In addition, the Pierce County Executive and local mayors (including Fircrest's) have formed South Sound Housing Affordability Partners (SSHAP) in order to begin addressing housing affordability in the area.

Discussion

The Puget Sound Regional Council predicts that Pierce County will need an additional 161,000 homes by 2050, yet only one new home per three new residents is being built. (The average household is about 2.33. The need for new houses comes from people moving to the area, children becoming adults, and homeless looking for homes. This shortage has led to drastic increases in price and rent. According to Zillow, the median home price in Fircrest has increased from \$218,000 in December 2011 to \$477,774 in December 2020. This is an increase of 218% in 9 years.

While the City made significant changes to the mixed-use areas of the City, which did increase the development potential in that area, that only applies to less than 4 1/2 percent of the total land in Fircrest.

The City's low-density Single-Family zoning (R-4 and R-6) covers 62% of the City; 80% if you remove the golf course and parks. The City now proposes to study our low-residential zones and identify opportunities for additional units. Neither staff nor the Planning Commission is advocating drastic changes to these areas. We do believe some amendments could be made to increase housing availability, affordability, and choice without drastically changing the overall feel and character of the neighborhoods.

Some of those options included:

- ADUs – reviewing the regulations to make the process easier and/or provide more choices
 - Owner occupancy
 - Increase size
 - Eliminate Conditional Use Permit Requirement
- Provide exceptions to minimum lot size and minimum lot width to create additional infill parcels for single-family homes
- Consider 2-unit dwellings on corner lots
- Consider 2- or 3- unit dwellings if designed to look like SFD

Maps and examples will be provided to help in the discussion.

AGENDA ITEM: Department of Commerce Item #2 Grant Options

DATE: February 2, 2021

FROM: Angelie Stahlnecker, Planning and Building Administrator

BACKGROUND: As part of the Department of Commerce grant, the City agreed to consider 2-family dwellings (duplexes) on corner lots. Due to Covid-19 restrictions on the public meeting, the Planning Commission and City Council had expressed concerns with this change without the ability to offer in-person public meetings.

The Department of Commerce has requested the City pursue a different item that would meet the grant requirements. In order to fulfill the requirements of the grant, the code changes have to be adopted by the end of May.

Below are some of the options (we would only need one):

Procedural

1. Increase the number of lots allowed through the short subdivision process from 4 to 9 lots as provided in chapter 58.17 RCW;
2. Change the approval of final plats from the City Council to Administrative; *this would be similar to site plans where the Hearing Examiner approves the preliminary with a public hearing and then staff approves the final to ensure it meets all the preliminary requirements.*
3. Change review of preliminary plats from Hearing Examiner to Administrative. *This could be done by leaving the approval of the Final to the City Council or Hearing Examiner.*
4. Adopt other permit process improvements where it is demonstrated that the code, development regulation, or ordinance changes will result in a more efficient permit process for customers – *I believe option #7 would fulfill this requirement*

Related to ADUs

5. Remove owner-occupancy requirements related to accessory dwelling units;
6. Increase the maximum square footage for accessory dwelling units from 800sf to 850sf or greater;
7. Decrease detached ADUs from Conditional Use Permit to Administrative Use Permit

Others

1. Allow 6-plexes in the R-8

AGENDA ITEM: Climate Change

DATE: February 2, 2021

FROM: Angelie Stahlnecker, Planning and Building Administrator

BACKGROUND: The City Council requested climate change to be included on the agenda. This topic was touched on at the 2019 Joint City Council – Planning Commission meeting which included discussion on green building codes and solar energy. The general consensus was to provide public information and research incentives, but not create any code requirements.

Currently, several bills are going through the legislature, including [HB 1099](#) which would add a goal of climate change mitigation to the listed goals of the Growth Management Act as well as require a climate change and resiliency element to the comprehensive plan. The topic also came up at a recent Growth Management Coordinating Committee meeting to seek direction from the Pierce County Regional Council.