

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

September 2020

What is most important about this project to you?

- Creating affordable housing options and being strategic about how to use the city's vacant land.
- Getting public input on design issues and providing clear choices to the decision-makers.
- An end-product code that is clear and well-written, and results in built products to be proud of.

What do think is the most challenging or urgent housing issue in Ridgefield?

- Increasing housing prices and a low supply in all sectors. There are especially few affordable options for low-income buyers, renters, and seniors (empty-nesters).
- It's not clear that transportation infrastructure is keeping up with growth.
- Downtown is the core of the city and should not be forgotten for its infill opportunities.

Are there good or bad examples of recent housing projects?

- National homebuilders tend to have lower-quality products and they know how to find code loopholes.
- Some past subdivisions (e.g. Bellwood Heights, Cedar Ridge) had cookie-cutter design and poor façade materials that prompted Council to make code changes, and more recent projects have improved in quality (e.g. Pioneer Canyon, Green Gables).
- The PUD open space standards aren't preventing some bad designs that relegate parks to leftover parcels or near busy streets.

If you work with the code, what works well and what needs improvements?

- Multiple stakeholders commented that various setbacks and lot coverage requirements reduce the viability of multiplex development.
- Incentives or requirements for a variety of lot widths could help offer more price points and diversity of housing designs.
- The PUD code is not explicit that ADUs, duplexes, and triplexes are allowed.
- The single-family detached design standards offer too much flexibility with surface-level "menu" options. Standards for multiplexes and townhouses are lacking and more specificity would be welcome.
- Garages are being built too small and driveways are too short - so storage forces cars onto the streets.
- The code allows CC&Rs to ban renters, which reduces housing options. This should be revised if multiplexes are going to be further encouraged.
- Pre-application meetings and PUD neighborhood meetings work well.
- Levels of review and the amount of public notice for certain housing types should be examined.

Other notes and ideas.

- Alley-loaded lots would improve the streetscape, but buyers avoid them because of smaller backyards.
- Downtown has some existing duplexes and triplexes that fit in well, partially thanks to their minimal driveway/parking footprint. More multiplexes in downtown is desirable if they can retain this pattern.
- Duplexes and triplexes may appeal to some people because of the smaller yards, lower maintenance needs, and lower utility costs.
- Residents and local builders are very engaged with local government. Providing project information and soliciting feedback early on will help smooth the adoption process.
- Visual examples and standards will be important for this project.
- Ridgefield's impact fees are high, and separate building permits being required for multiplexes is a barrier.