

R4C/R2A Priorities List for Meeting #2

General Comments

- We must first decide what the problem is and make proposals that offer possible routes for solutions. What are we trying to fix? Let's be clear about what we think should happen.
- List the ways in which the ORC recommendations differ from what we expected and concentrate on proposing amendments on those issues.
- Suggest that we take a look at the recommendations of the R4C Committee and the Planning Commission and come up with some very specific amendments as a first step. Then, let's work to justify the amendments—or modify them as needed. We do not want to lose any of the valuable work that has been done thus far.
<http://www.a2gov.org/government/communityservices/planninganddevelopment/planning/Documents/R4CR2A/Proposed%20CPC%20Recommendations%2004-05-13.pdf>
- Shouldn't get bogged down in details, or legal processes and findings. That's the job of Planning Staff. They can be asked to do whatever is necessary by City Council when these proposed changes get there. We only have three meetings left unless we want and get more time.
- Above everything else, almost all of us are in agreement that we want to maintain the character and scale of the R4C neighborhoods. What is possible?
- Ordinance Revision Committee should find a way of doing what we propose—or investigate and report back to us on the limitations of doing it.
- We don't expect a perfect solution, only the best one that might work—and that is not letting the Planning Commission decide on a case by case basis.
- Issues with proposed wording. The devil is in the details, and any of these issues should be clarified and any ambiguities corrected. One word can make all the difference in the future.

Lot Combinations

- Limit the lot combination size of properties in the R4C neighborhoods. If there is a way to do it, let's do it. Let's get that issue settled first.
- Larger lots and thus the potential for larger buildings is the biggest threat to the character of existing neighborhoods. We have a recent example on North Fifth Ave. The ORC's proposal treats lot combination as a routine item for approval. That sends the wrong message. The default position should be "no" with special conditions handled by the ZBA.

- This was one issue on which the previous committee seemed to agree about the goals, if not the methods for addressing those goals.
- Need to review the state enabling legislation and get some legal precedent information .
- Possibilities to be investigated are creating strict standards for combining or splitting lots
 - Can we create a maximum lot size for R4C zoning?
 - Can we require that lots cannot be split/ or combined unless the parts or resulting combinations are each conforming?
 - Can we prohibit lot combinations that are not zoned alike?
- Maximum combined lot size intended to maintain scale and livability of neighborhoods.

Overlay District/Design and Massing Standards (Group Housing Zone)

- Discussion and concern have focused on Phase II, but what about Phase I?
- Although the original R4C Study Committee discussions did not go into the City Council HN 14 “Priority Action Strategy” to “Reinforce student neighborhoods in the area south and west of Central Campus by developing new zoning definitions and standards that support organized group housing opportunities,” we need to deal with it at this time. What are the reasons for considering it? What are the issues and do we have to do anything more than reject further consideration? Is it really necessary?
- Need to gain knowledge about Group Housing District and vote on whether to support, oppose, or make alternate recommendation regarding the new proposed group zoning district, which may or may not be a true overlay district.
- Strongly oppose newly proposed group housing zone with unlimited lot combinations.
- Proposed new district is not needed and is destructive of neighborhood mix.
- Because of what we may learn about the ORC’s response to the use of this tool, we need to discuss further our recommendation that this tool be used to protect the character of some neighborhoods.
- Develop design site standards to maintain character of existing neighborhoods
 - by lot combination limitations, by max lot size
 - by overlay districts & mass standards
 - by parking standards
 - by required setbacks & conflicting land use buffers

Other Issues

- All of these issues are so related and intertwined that it is almost impossible to talk about one without talking about all (except those recommendations from the AC that the ORC accepted).
- On other issues like parking, buffers, setbacks, overlays, unless there is a clear need to make a change and an easily recognized improvement to recommend, let's not try to change it. Let's ask our individual members to propose that change and either adopt it or not. The ORC members present can raise questions as they wish.

Parking

I think that the ORC's numbers make more sense when combined with their proposed study of parking alternatives.

- Parking is a thorny issue because any recommendations on parking not only affects the number of required parking spaces, but also how much space is left on the lot for open space or for increased development of the property, and thus the intensity of use on the lot.
- The current proposal by the ORC will require noticeably less parking than the current code requires and probably will increase the intensity of use on these lots (even the small lots) therefore impacting many aspects of the livability of the neighborhood.
- It is complicated to review parking standards and requires considerable analysis to see the impact of any formula proposed.
- A better graduated scale is needed to prevent more developments of fewer units with more residents on a parcel, and reduce neighborhood parking congestion.

Required Setbacks

- These recommendations were not addressed by us previously and we should discuss them and see if we want to make a response.
- There seems to be agreement on front and rear setbacks, but I have problems with both versions of the side setbacks. I think that occupancy type is irrelevant; It's all one zoning category. The key criterion should be proportionality to the lot width. A large two-family duplex can be a bigger building on a bigger lot than one with three small one bedroom apartments. A 12 vs. 5 foot setback makes no sense. Similarly, lot area should not be a determinant of side yards. It is the lot width that is important. Section 5.62 provides for increased setbacks under certain circumstances.

- These may seem not so significant, but again have a large impact on the character and livability of the neighborhood and their residents whether the residents are renters or owners who live in the neighborhood.
- The ORC has the better proposal on this one. However, is landscape material the right way to create a buffer? Property maintenance by landlords was repeatedly mentioned at the AC as a problem. A landscape buffer will only be a temporary solution if not fed, trimmed and watered. How good are the chances for that? How about an opaque fence?