

Smart Housing Choices in a Changing Environment

New Partners for Smart Growth
Conference
-February 4, 2010 -
Shane Hope, City of Mountlake Terrace, WA



Growth Management Act
Washington State, USA



Changing demographics
Changing lifestyles & concerns

Case Study: Mountlake Terrace



- Suburb of Seattle
- Mostly 50s & 60s development
- Typical “1st ring” demographics

Changing Environment



- Demographics
- Busy lifestyles
- More interest in walking, bicycling, transit
- Support for Town Center
- Awareness of climate change & sustainability

Mountlake Terrace Development Code 4 Years Ago



Single-Household Zone Code Requirements:

- Min. 7200 or 8400 sf lots *
- Min. 20' front, rear setbacks *
- Min. 12' combined side setbacks *
- Max. 35% lot coverage
- 2 parking spaces per unit
- ADUs strongly restricted
- No design standards

* Except for PUDs

Mountlake Terrace Development Code Now



Single-Household Zone Code Requirements:

- Min. 7200 or 8400 sf lots—with exceptions
- Min. 15' front, rear setbacks
- Min. 5' side setbacks
- Max. 40% lot coverage
- Cottage housing OK
- ADUs OK
- 2 parking spaces per unit (with exceptions for cottage housing)
- Design standards required

Mountlake Terrace Development Code 4 Years Ago



Multi-Household Zone Code Requirements:

- Max. 8 or 16 du/acre
- 35' height limit
- Max. 25% lot coverage
- 2 parking spaces per unit
- Mixed use not allowed in most areas
- No design standards

Mountlake Terrace Development Code Now



Multi-family Household Zone Code Requirements:

- No max. density
- Max. 50' height limit in some areas
- Max. 45-65% lot coverage
- Min. 1 -2 parking spaces per unit
- Bicycle storage space required
- Mixed uses OK
- Design standards required

Other Code Changes in Mountlake Terrace



- Standards for most commercial districts overhauled:
 - Mixed use (res/commercial) OK
 - Design standards required
 - More pedestrian features required
- More opportunities for townhomes
- Parking standards revised
- Permit process made more efficient

Today's Focus:

3 Aspects of Housing Choices Program:

1. Accessory dwellings (ADUs)
2. Cottage housing
3. Smaller lot overlay



ADU Goals

- Recognize extended families and people's changing life cycle needs.
- Allow a small living space either within "main house" or detached
- Give property-owner flexibility to stay in either "main house" or the accessory unit
- Ensure accessory unit fits into neighborhood appearance

Accessory Dwelling Units



Max. size:
40% of main house
or 800 sq. ft.--
whichever is less;

Subject to building
codes.

Attached or detached
from main house;
If attached, only 1
entrance on street side;



Accessory Dwelling Units

Owner must live in at
least part of year;

Cannot be subdivided;

1 extra parking space
on-site or on-street



Requires permit and
recording with
County Assessor.

Cottage Housing Goals

- Provide common green space
- Encourage smaller homes
- Encourage neighbor interaction
- Increase walkability
- Fit into traditional single-family neighborhoods



Cottage home development



- Definition: Set of detached small-scale homes grouped around common open space and meeting certain specific requirements
- Early community input required at neighborhood meeting with developer

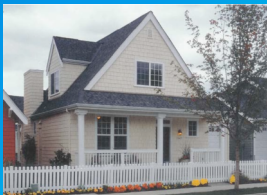
Cottage home development



Open space

- Common:
 - Min. 250 sf per cottage
 - Contiguous
 - No dimension less than 20 ft
- Private:
 - Min. 225 sf per cottage
 - No dimension less than 5 ft
 - Min. 125 sf of each private space area oriented to common space

Cottage home development



- Street facing façade of each home:
 - at least 25% windows and/or doors
 - Each home within 50 ft of street ROW must have 1 entry door facing street (may be in addition to porch entry facing common open space)
- For each dwelling, 1 covered porch:
 - At least 60 sq. ft of area
 - No side less than 6 ft.
 - Oriented to common open space
 - Providing entry to home
- Exterior of dwellings to have architectural detailing (e.g., window sills, doors with glass highlights, & multiple rooflines)

Cottage home development



- Roof pitch at least 4:12
- Any second story to be no more than 60% of first story floor area
 - Objective: Ensure small scale for this home type
- Any garage structures to be detached & have articulation (of wall or roof) at least every 25 ft
- 1 carriage home (over garage) allowed for every 4 units
- “Amenities” building for workshop, recreation, or other shared use OK
- Minimum lot size: 28,800 sf for up to 8 cottages = 2 carriage units

Housing Choices Program includes:

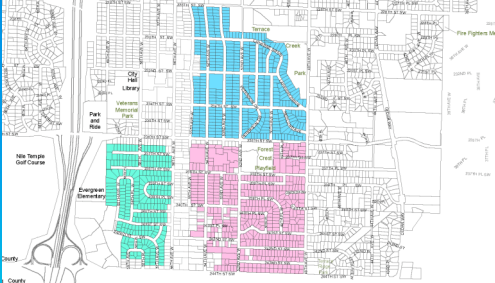
- G. New “smaller lot” overlay area (covering about 1/3 of all single-household residential zones in the city) that allows smaller lots (4800 sf min.), subject to design standards



Smaller Lot Overlay Goals

- Provide more housing choices for busy people, changing family needs
- Ensure middle-income homes
- Encourage redevelopment near Town Center
-
- Make neighborhoods more walkable and transit-friendly

Smaller Lot Overlay District



Standards for overlay district

- Garage to comprise not more than 2/3 of front façade
 - (E.g., on 40 ft. wide lot: 20 foot garage + 10 foot house entry/misc. + (2) 5 foot side yards)
- Front entry of home to have door and window(s) facing & viewable to street
 - Clear windows min. 8 sf
- Front porch encouraged (not required)
- Homes can be either 1 story (ramblers) or 2 stories, up to 25' height
- Maximum Floor Area Ratio (.06)



Design Standards for overlay district

- To promote walkability:
- 5 ft wide green space next to street curb
 - 1 tree (of type acceptable to City) every 25-30 ft
 - 5 ft wide sidewalk behind green space
 - Maximum driveway width- 20'



Steps to Change in Mountlake Terrace



1. Community leadership emerges
2. Support system is in place
3. Problems, needs, goals are defined
4. Resources & process are identified & carried out
5. Progress is evaluated & communicated

Community Recognition



- VISION 2040 Award for Housing Choices Program (Puget Sound Regional Council)
- Citizen Involvement Award for Town Center Plan (American Planning Association)
- Governor's Smart Communities Award for Town Center Plan (State of Washington)

Rated in Top 5 Seattle Neighborhoods



Lessons Learned

- Set in motion “Steps to Change”



Lessons Learned

- Get broad public involvement



Lessons Learned

- Reach “enough agreement” on goals



Lessons Learned



- Establish & implement timely process

Lessons Learned



- Use good graphics

Lessons Learned



- Communicate often & in many ways about progress

Lessons Learned

- Set in motion “Steps to Change”
- Get broad public involvement
- Reach “enough agreement” on goals
- Establish & implement timely process
- Use good graphics
- Communicate often & in many ways about progress
