

Attachment D

Approved by Council on November 4, 2013

Planning Commission Principles to Guide Development of Permanent Rental Housing Regulations

Issue Presented: Residents of the Spiritwood neighborhood have raised concerns about an emerging business model in their single family neighborhood where an ownership group is purchasing homes with the intention of renting out individual rooms under separate lease agreements. If this practice is not curtailed, impacts on neighborhood livability are anticipated to continue and to increase over time.

Emergency Action Taken: On September 23, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 6128 as an emergency ordinance under the authority in Chapter 36.70A RCW and RCW 35A.13.190. This interim zoning control (1) deleted the general development regulations applicable to rooming houses; (2) clarified that boarding home performance criteria apply to rooming houses; (3) amended the definition of "Boarding House;" and (4) amended the definition of "Family" to address impacts resulting from the rental of multiple rooms in single family dwellings to unrelated individuals.

Work Program Item: The Planning Commission is being asked to develop narrowly tailored permanent amendments to the Land Use Code that address issues presented by the Spiritwood neighbors.

Principles to Guide the Planning Commission Work

1. The Council-adopted emergency ordinance should be used as a starting point for the Planning Commission work.
2. Work on the code amendment should progress expeditiously, with the goal of having permanent regulations in place by July 2014.
3. The recommended amendments should be narrowly tailored to prevent the conversion of single family homes to dormitory-like uses. With this goal in mind, the regulations should seek to ensure that:
 - a. Impacts of unrelated persons occupying a rental house are not greater than the impacts associated with a group of related persons occupying a home.
 - b. Single family homes are not designed to support future conversion to dormitory-like uses.
 - c. Impediments are not created that would limit access to fair housing choices for protected classes of people.
 - d. Tools to limit impacts are capable of being enforced.
4. City-wide impacts of the permanent amendments should be evaluated to ensure that negative consequences on rental housing and appropriate housing design are minimized.
5. Work on the rental housing amendment should not be undertaken in a manner that will delay final completion of the Shoreline Master Program Update, and the City Council will consider extensions to the Emergency Rental Housing Ordinance if necessary to accommodate Planning Commission review of these permanent regulations.
6. Policy topics relating to housing affordability and availability are part of a longer term strategy that should not be undertaken during current development of the narrowly tailored

amendments contemplated to address the Spiritwood issue. The Comprehensive Plan Update that is currently underway and expected to result in additional code development work late in 2014 is the proper forum to discuss broader policies such as:

- a. Placing limits on garage conversions for living space;
- b. Adopting additional single room occupancy regulations;
- c. Evaluating the appropriate role of detached accessory dwelling units in the provision of fair housing choices;
- d. Evaluating the single family home definition to ensure that it is appropriately specific to foster development of desired housing options without encouraging the commercial use of housing in single family neighborhoods;
- e. Addressing “apodments” and micro-housing development trends; and
- f. Considering the role of rental registration and inspection program options as a viable enforcement strategy.