



City of Hayward

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

In February 2022, the City of Hayward initiated a technical update to the City's Zoning Ordinance to support residential development. This update, known as the "Hayward Residential Design Study," focuses on developing objective standards for residential development and targeted zoning amendments to ensure consistency between the Hayward 2040 General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The success of this planning effort depends in large part on input from the community to fully identify the community's needs and expectations for residential design and development. One of these community engagement efforts includes stakeholder interviews. The input provided during these interviews will help guide the project team in updating the Zoning Ordinance.

From March 23, 2023, through April 13, 2023, the project team conducted 13 one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders to get their feedback on the Options and Recommendations Report. Stakeholders included residents, housing advocates, developers, architects, and homeowners association members. A summary of the feedback received during these interviews is provided below.

Summary and Key Takeaways

- 1) **Building Height.** In the Medium Density Residential and High-Density Residential zoning districts, do you support changing the maximum allowable building height to allow for four story buildings? What about five story buildings?
 - All stakeholders expressed support for increasing current structure height limits. Most stakeholders identified current height limits as a constraint to meeting density requirements, while many also noted their aesthetic preference for vertical design.
 - Most stakeholders expressed their desire for increased floor plate heights. These stakeholders agreed that nine-foot floor plates are sufficient for upper floors, whereas 10-foot floor plates should be used on bottom/ground floors.
 - Overall, stakeholders supported increasing the height limit in the Medium Density Residential zoning district (MDR) to 40 to 60 feet.
 - Nearly all stakeholders were in favor of allowing three-story structures in the Residential Single Family zoning district (RS) but agreed the incorporation of setbacks and stepbacks was key to ensure compatibility with surrounding single-family dwelling typologies.
 - All stakeholders agreed that the existing maximum height in the High-Density Residential zoning district (RH) is too restrictive and does not allow developers to achieve allowed density. Overall, stakeholders agreed the maximum height in the High-Density Residential zoning district (RH) should be increased to five stories.
 - When asked if six-story structures would be appropriate in the High-Density Residential zoning district (RH), most developers agreed that anything over five stories would not "pencil out" due to the increased cost of construction. These developers clarified that structures over five stories require steel and concrete construction, whereas five or fewer story structures can be constructed with wood frame. Developers explained that wood frames are more cost effective compared to concrete/steel construction.

- Stakeholders cautioned the city in this effort and felt there may be backlash from residents that do not want increased structure heights or densities.

2) **Building Massing.** Do you support the idea of requiring second story step-backs on single family homes? What about upper story step-backs for taller, multifamily development?

- Supporters of step-back requirements addressed the architectural monotony that can occur from structures without step-backs and prefer the visual appearance of structures with more variation in form.
- A few stakeholders were in support of stepbacks for single-family structures, but stated stepbacks should only be required for rear setbacks and not interior lot lines.
- Some of the developer stakeholders did not see value in mandating stepbacks for multifamily dwellings. These stakeholders agreed stepback requirements result in a “massive” loss of developable square footage and result in more expensive and fewer housing units.
- There was no consensus on how to best apply stepbacks; however, most stakeholders agreed stepbacks should be calculated based on how tall and how close proposed structures are to existing development.
- One developer argued the city had “no right” to dictate architectural style and felt design should be left up to the architect and developer.

3) **Building Frontage.** What kind of building frontage features do you prefer for single family development? What about for multifamily development?

- The consensus for single family development is to require deeper garage setbacks or entirely reorient garages to the back of the home. Many were in favor of small front porches and stressed the importance of variation in form.
- Most stakeholders agreed the existing 20-foot front setback was unrealistic. These stakeholders suggested the city establish a five-foot or 10-foot front setback to encourage interaction and human-scale development, as opposed to car-oriented development.
- Comments on multifamily frontages included prioritizing landscaping, balconies, and windows that consider interior function and exterior aesthetic.
- A couple stakeholders felt the city should not dictate style or design and that it should be left up to the developer to propose what they think will work best for their desired client.
- Most stakeholders agreed the city should consider eliminating setback requirements altogether for multi-family structures but did not feel the public would support this.
- Some stakeholders argued the city should dictate design standards that address the entirety of the structure rather than just the street facing frontage. These stakeholders supported the concept of “3D architecture.”

4) **Open Space.** What is more important for multifamily development – private open space (patio, balcony) or common open space shared by all residents (courtyard, BBQ area, play structure, dog run, community room, roof garden, etc.)?

- All stakeholders expressed strong support for common open spaces.
- Most stakeholders agreed some private outdoor space is important but only needs to be a small area such as a balcony with more emphasis on common areas. Another stakeholder stressed the importance of common space accessibility for all and ease of movement throughout these spaces.
- Common open space amenities included: outdoor seating areas, basketball courts, covered patios, and a mix of paved and grass areas.
- Some stakeholders expressed their concern for underutilized common spaces and recommended that common spaces be designed based on the target demographic of each development as opposed to a standardized approach.
- Those stakeholders who supported public open space expressed the importance of orienting structures to face public open spaces (a.k.a. “eyes on the street”). These stakeholders felt doing so would encourage use and make residents feel safer.
- All stakeholders supported the idea of allowing developers to choose which amenities to install based on an approved City list. The number of amenities required would be based on the total number of units in a development.
- One stakeholder stated the city should not require open space as it decreases the amount of units that can be built on site: “[open spaces] take up valuable land and cost developers extra money that is ultimately passed onto residents.”

5) **Parking.** In single family development, should garages be setback further from the street than the rest of house? In multifamily developments, where should parking lots/garages be located?

- Responses to parking requirements varied greatly. Some stakeholders supported the idea of reducing parking requirements and providing less prescriptive requirements for on and off-street parking minimums. Others felt the city does not require enough parking and the current parking requirements for single family homes are falling short.
- One stakeholder argued that large, multi-generational families are putting a strain on single family neighborhoods because the families often have more cars per household.
- Most stakeholders agreed the city should create parking reduction incentives that benefit the whole community (i.e., reduced parking if additional park space is provided, reduced parking if affordable units are provided).
- Almost all stakeholders agreed that “garage” or “covered” parking spaces do not work with current trends because most residents use their garages as storage space.
- Some stakeholders expressed concern around the existing parking requirements for multifamily developments. These participants agreed the existing parking minimum should be eliminated or reduced.
- Some stakeholders expressed their support for eliminating parking requirements altogether and letting the developer choose how much parking to provide.
- Popular multifamily parking designs included concealed parking facilities behind landscaping or structural elements, moving parking facilities behind structures, and most ideally providing subterranean parking garages.
- All stakeholders agreed that California is forcing jurisdictions to reduce parking and the State will eventually eliminate all parking requirements for residential development.

- 6) **Site Development.** Do you support the idea of establishing different development standards based on different site features, i.e., slope, lot size, street width, etc.?
- Stakeholder responses to this question were limited. Most were in support of development standards to streamline the approval process and ensure the city is meeting housing needs as efficiently as possible.
 - Some stakeholders noted the challenge of applying the same standards to every development and adapting to the typology of each lot is the most logical way to develop.
- 7) **Below are some additional comments from stakeholders.**
- There is a general lack of amenities throughout the city including grocery stores and retail shops. Increasing density and floor area ratio in commercial and mixed-use zones would greatly improve this issue.
 - Stakeholders prefer multifamily developments oriented around walking paths and cycle paths.
 - Encourage the use of the Neighborhood Commercial district, which allows mixed use residential.
 - Hayward should actively develop a single design element/theme that can be used to represent and promote the city (i.e., most trees in bay area, best walking trails, etc.)
 - The city continues to allow and encourage low density single-family development. The city should take further steps to encourage multifamily projects and denser residential areas.
 - The city should encourage vertical development incorporating more mixed-use developments as opposed to strictly developing residential is preferred.
 - The city should be more flexible when it comes to alternative housing options for displaced and homeless individuals. The city could be more flexible in the application of design and development standards to assist in the development of housing.