

PANIL Notes

Volume 35

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620

Feb 2010

SPECIAL ISSUE CHANGES PROPOSED IN OAKLAND'S ZONING UPDATE

Proposed Zoning
E. Of Piedmont Av,
Southeast Area

Rio Vista Av
Lot sizes: 3500-4500 SF

RM-2
• Mostly SF homes
• Some 2-4 units

RM-3
• Mostly SF homes
• Some 2-6 units
• A few 6+ units

84 Yosemite 6-plex

RM-2
• Mostly SF homes
• Some 2-4 units

634-642 El Dorado Av
Lot sizes: 5000-6000 SF

This is one slide from the presentation given by the staff of the Zoning Update Project. The full presentation includes maps of proposed zoning areas and photos of neighborhood buildings, as well as information on what could be built in each zone.

Download the PDFs of the presentation from www.oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate/. Click on "Schedule + Meetings" to find "DRAFT Zoning Map for the Piedmont Avenue Area."

YEAR-LONG PUBLIC PROCESS

Zoning for Future Commercial Corridor Development

By Valerie Winemiller

Commercial corridor development has both helpful and potentially detrimental aspects. It can enliven surrounding residential areas; it can provide sales tax and business taxes that are a crucial part of any city budget. Commercial development can also negatively impact nearby residential areas by allowing high-impact uses or structures so large they loom over and shadow nearby smaller homes.

The Piedmont Avenue neighborhood is united by the spine of the Piedmont Avenue commercial district, and bordered by Broadway. The two commercial corridors have very different zoning, and the citywide zoning update currently underway proposes very different kinds of future development for the two streets. Zoning for these streets and the Rockridge Shopping Center will be the topic for the February 10 PANIL meeting.

A retail study of Broadway by the Conley Consulting Group (commissioned by the City Council) recommended

Continued on page 3

PANIL Monthly Meeting: Wed., Feb 10 — 7:30 p.m.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm
Sandra Sanders-West, our Neighborhood Services Coordinator

General Meeting — 8:00 pm

**Zoning Update Proposals for
Piedmont Ave., Broadway and Rockridge Shopping Center**

**Presentation with slides by
Neil Gray, Strategic Planning Department, Zoning Update Project**

Your Feedback is Requested

Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street — 11th Floor Sky Room

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Future Commercial Corridor (continued from page 1)

a 40 foot height limit (approximately four stories) along our section of Broadway. However, current discussion from the city's zoning update staff proposes a 60 foot height limit (approximately six stories), with 75 foot limits at major intersections. Transitions to the smaller scale surrounding housing is likely to be awkward.

While zoning proposals for Piedmont Avenue are smaller in scale, one important question will be the scale of related manufacturing allowed. While a factory is not permitted, current codes allow up to 7,500 square feet for manufacturing of a product for on-site sales. The proposed new codes set a limit of 3,000 square feet, but is that low enough? (For comparison, an average one-story cottage in our area is about 1,100 square feet.) In our neighborhood, this has allowed Fentons to manufacture ice cream at its site for sale in its restaurant. For a period, they were also manufacturing ice cream for an outlet in Sonoma as well as their new Vacaville store, which was not consistent with

zoning. Neighbors found the increased semi-truck traffic and garbage volume from the manufacturing to be a serious problem. Semis got stuck on narrow Entrada, and several times, parked vehicles were hit. The heaviest delivery and manufacturing activity took place at hours that were disruptive to residents. Yet the activity was well under the square footage that could be allowed. Fortunately, that problem was largely resolved when Fentons found an appropriate factory site near their Vacaville store. But the 7,500 square foot allowance is still on the books.

Also important are the allowed uses and height limits for the upper block of Piedmont Avenue, above Pleasant Valley Road. This block has different zoning because many of the historic businesses there (including a honey distributor and several cemetery- and mausoleum-related uses) are not permitted under the rules for the rest of the Avenue. Yet the buildings back up to smaller scale homes, including the only section of the neighborhood zoned for single family homes.

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NEIGHBORS WILL NEED TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR FUTURE

“Preserve and Enhance” is Goal of Proposed Zoning

By Valerie Winemiller

In October of 1974, a half dozen people invited neighbors to a meeting to form a new group, to be named the **Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League**. The impetus was shock at a major demolition of houses and small apartments and construction of a massive new building—the Piedmont Gardens tower.

On January 13, 2010, staff from the zoning update project of the Strategic Planning Department showed neighbors the proposals for rezoning this area for lower density, generally more in keeping with the historic building patterns here, and explained the outline of proposed new rules for uses, residential density, and building sizes allowed. When completed, this will be the first comprehensive city-wide updating of zoning codes since 1965, and it will have involved approximately 100,000 residential and commercial parcels.

The Piedmont Avenue neighborhood probably has the greatest disparity in the city between what is “on the ground” and what is allowed to be built under current codes, according to Barry Miller, consultant to the city on the zoning update. Design guidelines and other development regulations will be tackled in 2011.

The three new residential categories represented in our neighborhood are

- Detached Residential (RD)
- Mixed Housing Type (RM)
- Urban Residential (RU)

Each is subdivided with differing rules for the number of units permitted, minimum setbacks from the property line, and height limits. Boundaries for the different zones have been drawn based on six factors:

- The General Plan map, passed by City Council in 1998, roughly defining planned future uses and density
- General Plan policy
- Existing zoning
- Existing land use, housing mix and density, confirmed by field work
- Parcel size and patterns
- Community input

Proposed new zoning—quick overview

During this development phase, all proposals are subject to alteration by city staff as well as by the Planning Commission or City

Council as they move through the formal approval process. Neighbors will need to advocate for the future they want, even if they like the proposal in its current form.

For the complete and accurate overview, download the maps and presentation materials.

The full slide presentation and related handouts are posted at <http://www.oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate/>. Click on “Schedule + Meetings” to find “DRAFT Zoning Map for the Piedmont Avenue Area.”

Detached Residential (RD)

On Ramona, Pleasant Valley Court, Moraga, Pleasant Valley Road, Brandon and Gleneden, the area is characterized by single family homes on lots averaging 5,000 sq. feet. An in-law (smaller secondary) unit would be permitted. Height limit would be 25 feet (30 with sloped roof), and lot coverage would be regulated.

Mixed Housing Type (RM)

The boundaries between RM-2 and RM-3 are complex, with staff attempting to respond to the varied patterns of development in the neighborhood; refer to the maps on line. Different zoning of isolated parcels must be avoided, and inclusion of too many larger buildings that exceed the zoning for the area is also undesirable. The latter are called “legal, non-conforming” structures and Oakland’s codes do allow their rebuilding in case of severe damage by fire or earthquake. At least one audience member raised concern about the proposed height limits compared to existing housing. (See drawing on page 4.)

RM-2 is proposed for upper Howe and Montgomery Streets, all of Gilbert, and John to Howe Street, and the east side of Terrace. East of Piedmont Avenue, it is also proposed for Entrada, Arroyuello, Glenwood, Monte Vista below Kingston, Montell, Robley Terrace, and Rio Vista, as well as parts of Echo, upper Glen, Linda, Yosemite, Moss and El Dorado. The map becomes complex as it attempts to respond to

Calendar

For more neighborhood events go to www.panil.org/calendar.

PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month
7:30 to 9 p.m.
Piedmont Gardens
110 41st Street
11th Floor Sky Room

PANIL Steering Committee meets monthly

For the time, date and place of the meeting,
email contact@panil.org

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month
Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 a.m.
654-1930

Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour
2nd and 4th Saturdays
10 a.m., FREE

Oakland Heritage Alliance

Thursday, Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Gray Brechin: The New Deal and its Impact on the East Bay FDR put one million people to work in 30 days!

Learn what familiar landmarks are part of that New Deal legacy

Chapel of the Chimes
4499 Piedmont Avenue,
\$10 members/\$15 non members.
You may join at the event.

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597-5011

Storytimes

Toddlers

Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.

Pre school

Wednesday, 11 a.m.

Saturday Knitting Club
Every Saturday 3 to 4 p.m.

To place an item on PANIL’s calendars, send e-mail to:
contact@panil.org



“Preserve and Enhance” is Goal of Proposed Zoning (continued from page 3)

the mix of densities that have resulted from the current high density designation, especially in the southeast quadrant of the neighborhood. This zone allows 30 feet in height (about three stories) or 35 feet for a pitched roof with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Density is based on one unit for 2,500 sq. feet of lot size. Duplexes are permitted, and with a CUP, three or more units may be built.

A ring of RM-3 is proposed behind Piedmont Avenue on the east side of Howe, along Pleasant Valley Road, on the west side of Terrace backing up to Broadway, and the north side of 41st Street, on 38th Street and Cerrito. It also extends up Montgomery Street from 41st almost to John, and on Ridgeway from Gilbert to Howe. On the east side of Piedmont it is in scattered locations. One unit is allowed for each 1,500 sq. feet of lot area, so a 6,000 sq. foot lot that would have two units under the RM-2 rules might have four units under the RM-3 rules.

Urban Residential (RU)

Urban Residential is a high density zone allowing multi-family apartments. The category has three subdivisions

allowing different densities and heights. Larger buildings can occur when developers buy several contiguous lots.

RU-1 is designated on parts of 40th Street Way, Glen, Monte Cresta and Kingston. It allows one unit for 1,100 sq. feet of lot space—i.e., five units on a 6,000 sq. foot lot. Height limit is 40 feet (about four stories).

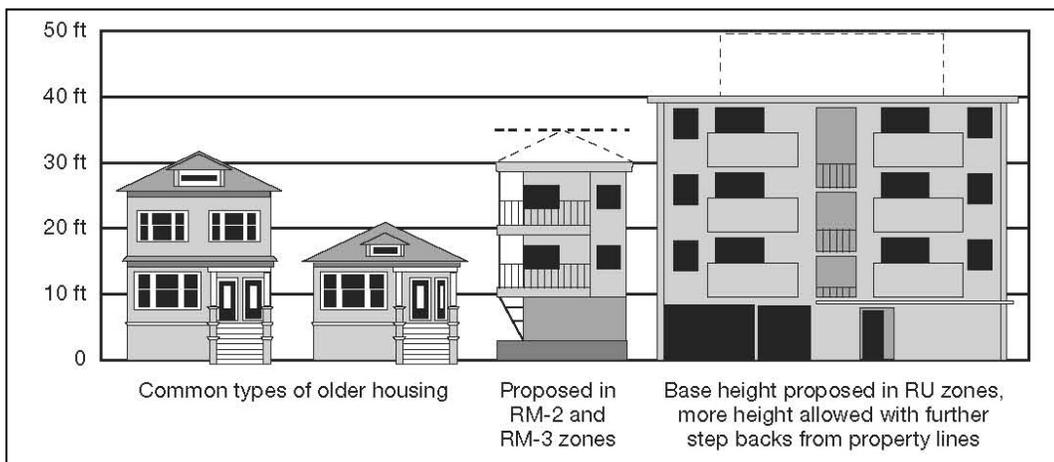
After 35 years of waiting, a little more letter-writing now can save a lot of time and frustration over the next development proposal.

RU-3 is applied mostly to areas which have already been built to the current R-70 codes. Streets include Whitmore, the west side of Harrison and the top of Monte Vista Avenue. Like R-70, one unit is permitted for every 450 sq. feet of lot space. The height limit is 60 feet (about six stories), but step backs are required above 40 feet to provide light and air.

Next Steps

Staff will continue community presentations and workshops for the next few months. Both could result in refined proposals which will probably go to the Zoning Update Committee, and then the full Planning Commission in late spring. Staff hopes that the zoning legislation will be before the City Council in the fall.

There will be points where it will be important for neighbors to write letters or attend a hearing to express support for their vision.



Height comparison of buildings in the neighborhood

Average for residential buildings is 10 feet in height per story.