

13. WSU UNIVERSITY DISTRICT PROPOSAL

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STAFF REPORT \_\_\_\_\_

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QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL ON STAFF REPORT \_\_\_\_\_

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DISCUSSION \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES:



# CITY OF PULLMAN

## Administration/Finance

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: John Sherman, City Supervisor

RE: College Hill University District Discussion

DATE: May 30, 2008

WSU President Elson S. Floyd will attend the City Council meeting next Tuesday night to make a presentation on the College Hill University District. A copy of the draft proposal from WSU is attached.

Although we are listing this as a discussion item on the agenda, the primary intent is to allow President Floyd the opportunity to present the concept of the University District and the rationale behind it to the City Council. For this reason we have opted not to include staff comments pertaining to the proposal at this time. However, it is certainly appropriate for you to ask questions and make comments as you deem appropriate. We would be happy to address the proposal from a staff proposal at a future City Council meeting.

We are thrilled that President Floyd is taking time out of his busy schedule to come to the City Council meeting. We also want to express our sincere appreciation to President Floyd and others at WSU for their ongoing interest in improving Pullman.

Over the years WSU has been a very positive catalyst for making improvements off-campus. We have partnered with WSU and other parties on many projects. For example, WSU was a key player in many downtown improvements including the Town Centre Building, the new U.S. Bank Building, Cougar Plaza, the Riverwalk, and the Centennial Path linking the campus with the downtown. WSU is also a direct funding partner in providing a variety of important public services including Pullman Transit, the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport, and Whitcom.

Aside from these examples of WSU involvement in off-campus projects and services, WSU has also taken a strong leadership role in trying to make improvements in

the College Hill neighborhood. We strongly applaud WSU for this commitment. Recently, WSU partnered with the City of Pullman in funding the College Hill Neighborhood Study. As is stated in the opening statement in the study:

Both the City of Pullman and Washington State University (WSU) wish to collaborate in enhancing the College Hill living experience, but the institutions neither individually nor collectively have complete control over the means to accomplish it. This study was commissioned by the City and WSU to describe the problems that have arisen on College Hill, the approaches various actors have taken to resolve those problems, and possible new strategies the community may wish to employ in the near future.

WSU has, as the saying goes, “put its money where its mouth is” with respect to making improvements on College Hill. Its real estate acquisitions are but one example of this financial commitment.

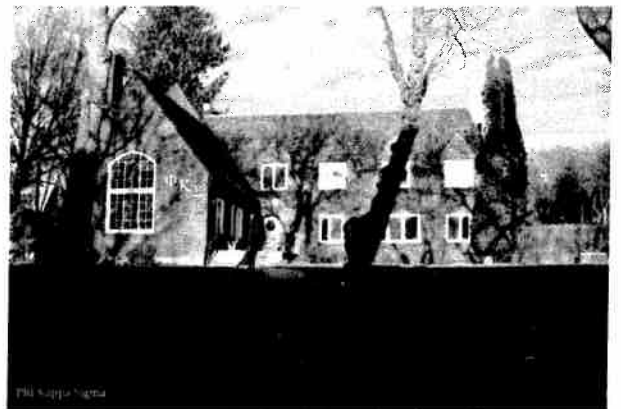
It is not unusual for universities to take a strong interest in the neighborhoods that surround them. Many universities have made substantial investments in altering their adjacent neighborhoods for the better. Such universities have recognized the importance of these investments. For example, the following quotation from the Deputy Mayor of Baltimore, Maryland is taken from the May 2008 issue of *Governing* magazine. His comments pertain to the plan by Johns Hopkins University to partner to rehabilitate the neighborhood next to it in Baltimore:

“The plan acknowledges that Hopkins is a great strength in that community,” says Deputy Mayor Andrew Frank, “and Hopkins, in its own enlightened self-interest, felt it was important to work with the community and the city to revitalize the neighborhoods around the huge investment in their campus.”

In summary, we appreciate the interest and commitment that WSU has made to better the community, including the College Hill neighborhood. We look forward to President Floyd’s presentation next Tuesday night.

*DRAFT May 27, 2008*

**College Hill  
University District  
for  
Pullman, Washington**



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## **Executive Summary**

### **College Hill University District for Pullman, Washington**

*DRAFT 5/27/2008*

#### **Purpose and Intent**

The Washington State University District (UDistrict) purpose is to assure safe housing and services for students, faculty and staff, while protecting the larger community, nearby neighborhoods, and the environment from negative impacts accompanying increasing density. The UDistrict has potential to enable WSU to help provide stability in the Greek community so that the Greek system can become a safe, healthy and vibrant form of student housing.

Development in the UDistrict shall be designed for a balanced mix of university-related and private uses linked by pedestrian oriented services and shall encourage reduced auto use, mitigate environmental impacts, conserve energy resources and achieve visual continuity in the siting, scale and restoration of buildings.

#### **University District Area (See Map A)**

The College Hill area affected directly by the UDistrict proposal is located south of Stadium Way, east of Grand Avenue and North of Reaney Way. The University District has a core area within this zone that is shown with an orange boundary as illustrated on the attached UDistrict Map A. The Historic District is also illustrated (in grey) to show the importance of adjacent neighborhoods and properties. The core UDistrict includes most of the Greek houses, some apartments, and a neighborhood business district on Colorado Street.

#### **Benefits of a WSU University District**

Many universities across the U.S. are establishing UDistricts for the purpose of assisting communities in the redevelopment and revitalization of neighborhoods. WSU proposes a similar strategy that will enable them to provide additional services to students and to create safe and healthy environments for the community. Because College Hill and the proposed UDistrict is perceived to be university owned property, WSU is interested in creating a positive image at those gateways to the university. Some of the community benefits that WSU anticipates will be realized include:

- Healthy, safe and vibrant Greek housing system
- Cleaner neighborhoods
- Better traffic control
- Controlled on-street parking
- Code enforcement
- Improved street lighting
- Students with service orientation
- Better prepared student citizens
- Quality housing
- Design standards for landscaping and environmental improvements.

#### **Background**

Since 1999, WSU Office of Business and Finance along with Capital Planning and Development (CPD) have worked with the City of Pullman, the College Hill Neighborhood, students and landlords to find solutions to common concerns for living conditions and behavior on College Hill. In 2002, WSU published the "College Hill Real Estate Business Plan and Investment Policy" to explain their policy and approach to investing in College Hill properties.

About that same time, the College Hill Association (CHA) and CPD organized a series of six community workshops and a door-to-door survey to begin the process of gathering ideas about how to make College Hill a safe and healthy neighborhood. In 2005 CHA issued "A Better Tomorrow for Pullman: A Master Plan for College Hill," which stated the vision, values, and goals for College Hill. It also summarized what was discussed in the workshops.

A product of this initial planning effort was the formation of "Better Neighborhoods for Pullman (BNP)," which is a group of decision-makers and community representatives who meet bi-monthly to discuss neighborhood issues and possible solutions. BNP provides a forum to openly evaluate issues and to seek common ground for a collaborative approach to improve Pullman neighborhoods. If good neighborhood stewardship can be achieved on College Hill, it becomes possible for all Pullman neighborhoods.

An important study that was commissioned by City of Pullman and WSU is the 2006 "College Hill On-Street Parking Study" by transportation consultants, Nelson/Nygaard. This study established that College Hill has a 74% parking occupancy. This is a reasonable density for on-street parking to enact a zone residential permit program.

In 2007, the City of Pullman and WSU commissioned a planning firm, Studio Cascade, to "describe the problems that have arisen on College Hill, the approaches various actors have taken to resolve those problems, and possible new strategies the community may wish to employ in the near future (Studio Cascade, College Hill Neighborhood Study, March 2007)." After looking at demographics, land use planning and issues on The Hill, recommendations were made for actions that could be taken to respond to identified priorities.

Also, in 2007 President Elson Floyd became WSU's 10<sup>th</sup> president. He quickly became concerned with issues on College Hill, the safety of WSU students, the living conditions on College Hill, and proposed developing a University District (UDistrict) that would enable WSU to provide resources to help resolve issues identified in the previous two studies.

### **Recommendations**

A UDistrict could enable WSU to provide financial and staff resources to help revitalize and control the predominantly Greek area of College Hill. As identified in the "College Hill Neighborhood Study (March 2007), a series of actions have been described, which if pursued by all involved groups (e.g. City, WSU, CHA, WSU Students, WSU Greek Community, landlords and property managers, and developers) could improve College Hill. WSU could begin to address issues associated with the Greek Community if an interlocal agreement for a UDistrict is established.

Many recommended actions will require collaboration between various groups. The actions proposed specifically for the UDistrict include:

- **Facilitating Capital Planning and Urban Design** – planning studies and GIS mapping, participating in community development planning, developing UDistrict design guidelines, collaborating on WSU certified off-campus housing program.
- **A Residential Permit Parking Program** – WSU Parking Services providing parking enforcement in the UDistrict.
- **Increased WSU Police Services** – WSU Police Services providing policing enforcement within the UDistrict.
- **Collaboration with City Officials** – most importantly, all programs mentioned above will work closely with the City of Pullman to help create a safer and more vibrant neighborhood.

## **University District Proposal Details**

There are two distinctions to be made when establishing a university district plan. The first is the “**planning and coordination**” component. The second is the “**implementation and operations**” component.

### **Planning and Coordination**

#### **1. Neighborhood Organization/Outreach: 1.25 FTE**

Continue WSU CPD community development activity. Participate as active members of the College Hill Association Board to facilitate implementation and awareness of physical and policy improvements. Demonstrated results since 2000 include:

- A Master Plan for College Hill: “College Hill: A Better Tomorrow for Pullman”
- 2007 College Hill Neighborhood Study by Studio Cascade
- Six community-wide physical planning workshops
- Funds raised and installation of multiple trash receptacles in public areas of College Hill
- Organized Move-out & Pitch-In Recycling Program in the College Hill Neighborhood in 2007 and 2008; Organized WSU Students to Adopt-A-Block programs.
- Coordinated with the College Hill Neighborhood Association to implement Neighborhood Clean-Up Days for WSU students
- “Better Neighborhoods for Pullman” forum with City of Pullman administrative leaders, citizens, and WSU staff.
- City Ordinances addressing College Hill include: a Nuisance Ordinance, Open Container Ordinance, Fighting Ordinance.

#### **2. Site and Exterior Lighting Improvements within Public Right of Way:**

##### **One-time \$50,000**

CPD has expertise in developing public exterior lighting projects in Pullman including Stadium Way, Colorado Street, the College of Education Precinct, Library Road, and soon for Terrell Mall and Wilson Road. This is being accomplished through design/engineering collaboration with professional lighting engineering firms, the serving Public Utility, and CPD staff. *See Map B.*

#### **3. Planning Studies and Geographic Information System Services: 0.5 FTE**

Since 2000 CPD has provided geographic data and mapping analyses of city address, land use, zoning, transportation, public right of way improvements, urban design, landscape and site planning, Historic District planning, parking planning, and other graphic documentation services which have enhanced WSU and City of Pullman improvements in College Hill.



#### 4. Development and Adoption of University District Design Guidelines:

##### One-time \$250,000

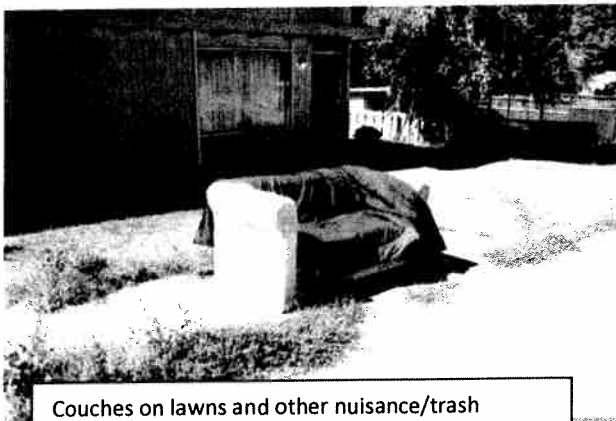
University District Design Guidelines would provide information and guidance to property owners regarding the physical appearance of existing and future development within University District. This will involve the development of a design guidelines document created through an open public process.



Students pick up trash in the neighborhood and sort recyclables after a weekend of parties.



The architectural character on College is part of the history of Pullman and WSU.



Couches on lawns and other nuisance/trash violations will be enforced.



Citizenship can become a cultural norm.

## **Implementation and Operations**

### **1. "WSU Certified" Off-Campus Housing:**

#### **1.25 FTE Inspector/Coordinator**

WSU is committed to the security and well being of its students. Voluntary residential "WSU Certification" would provide information and guidance to residential property owners about what they need to achieve and maintain in order to become approved and certified WSU off-campus rental housing. An Off-Campus WSU Certified Housing program would help parents and students make more informed decisions when selecting rental housing. Activities could include the following among others:

- Regular house inspections based the Voluntary Residential "WSU Certification" Guidelines to maintain certification.
- New house inspections to participate in the Voluntary Residential "WSU Certification" program.
- Staff would write inspection reports, establish a web site that advertised WSU Certified Housing; work with landlords and rental agencies to encourage them to become Certified Housing participants.
- Provide monitoring and enforcement as it pertains to the City of Pullman Nuisance Ordinance
- Coordinate clean-up trash programs with Pullman Disposal
- Develop an Off-Campus WSU Certified Housing Web Site.
- Marketing of WSU Certified Housing

### **2. College Hill On-Street Residential Permit Parking Program**

#### **3 – 4 FTE Parking Enforcement Staff**

**Overall Goal:** In order to improve safety and the quality of life for the residents of College Hill (both WSU students and year-round residents), the City of Pullman and WSU are interested in implementing a uniform on-street residential parking permit program.

#### **Benefits:**

1. Would give priority for on-street parking to residents of College Hill.
2. Would provide more reliable, predictable parking for College Hill residents.
3. Would reduce congestion and traffic on College Hill residential streets.
4. Would provide opportunities to make additional safety improvements, and improve streetscape aesthetics.
5. Would encourage WSU commuters to explore alternative modes, such as transit use, in lieu of short trips in a single occupancy vehicle.

#### **Recommendations**

Residential Permit Parking (RPP) on College Hill cannot be limited solely to the proposed University District. By limiting parking in the U District, the problem is pushed to the College Hill streets outside the U District. To be successful, a RPP must be uniformly implemented by WSU within the U District and by the City of Pullman outside the U District. The problem of commuter parking displacement to other neighborhoods off of College Hill is not expected to be a concern because of the separation of College Hill by major streets, the steepness of streets, and the walking distance to campus outside the College Hill neighborhood.

For a RPP to be successful, the following recommendations should occur:

- College Hill and U-District parking should operate under an interlocal agreement with the City.
- The City should make minor legislative changes allowing for the implementation of a RPP zone without the need for a property owner-initiated petition. This would require amending Pullman City Code (PCC) 12.50.040 that provides for the initiation of a petition by owners of property abutting at least sixty percent of the frontage of each side of the street or streets in the areas proposed for the RPP zone.
- A RPP should be implemented by WSU in the College Hill UDistrict neighborhood and by the City of Pullman in the remaining neighborhoods south of Stadium Way.
- A clear strategy for parking enforcement jurisdiction must be established between the City and the University.

#### **Operational Concept:**

1. UD parking district should operate under interlocal agreement with the City.
2. Operating under the interlocal agreement would allow for the application of WSU's existing permit, enforcement and adjudication processes and established software and hardware resources and other materials and supplies, assuming the City agree to that structure for the UD. This is a legal issue.
3. Care needs to be taken in establishing UD boundaries so that residents living on the edge of the district are not confused about jurisdiction. For example, boundaries should not split streets down the middle where one side is WSU and the other is City of Pullman.
4. Residential parking in the UD could be a zone-style based on the Nelson/Nygaard study.
5. Parking rates and fines in the UD for residents and commuters would be set so as to cover the initial and ongoing costs of operations, maintenance, and enforcement. Parking rates for existing private commercial parking lots on College Hill may be helpful in determining the local market rate.
6. Parking zone rates could be tiered and designed to distribute demand across the available supply of parking within the UD.
7. The number of permits issued for each zone will be carefully managed and limited.
8. Parking permits for each zone could be allocated on a limited basis to high density living groups. A priority system could be established for this purpose similar to what is currently done with on campus residence parking.
9. High density, high demands parking zones could be priced higher than those of lower density and parking demand.
10. Commuter parking zones could be established in zones where parking surplus exists. A limited number of permits could be available to commuters at a price which will discourage use and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.
11. Relatively low-fee, long-term, secure storage parking could be established along the North Fairway Road corridor to take advantage of existing transit services. Additional shuttle service could be made available on a user-fee basis.
12. Comprehensive signing, painting, and striping of spaces will be needed for efficient and effective operation of the UD parking system.
13. A UDistrict Parking website would be developed to provide information to residents and commuters. This could include on-line parking services similar to those offered by WSU Pullman.

### **Parking Services Considerations:**

1. Legal questions:
  - a. Can there be higher parking fines in the UDistrict than in the rest of the City?
  - b. Who will be liable for poorly maintained parking spots that require an increase in accident investigation for slips or falls?
2. Estimated Costs:
  - a. 3-4 FTE at a cost of \$130,000 – \$170,000
  - b. Estimated cost of permits is \$250 - \$350 per year, for \$130,000 - \$180,000 respectively.
  - c. Fine revenue could be \$50,000 - \$100,000 annually if WSU is able to retain fine revenue and apply current due process and collection procedures.
3. Consider the impact of the UDistrict on Transit, other CH neighborhoods, and WSU parking system.
4. Off-Campus Park & Ride lots and student storage lots will need to be established.  
*See Map C*



The City Parking Ordinance against parking on lawns will be strictly enforced.



Parking on streets directly affects the safety of the neighborhood. Fire trucks must be able to pass safely.

### 3. WSU Police Services in the U District

#### Operational Concept

WSU Police assume shared police responsibilities in the University District in the areas of criminal investigations and community oriented policing strategies through an area task force arrangement. The policing emphasis balances traditional patrol strategies with investigative and Community Oriented Policing designed to maximize efficiency and expertise in needed areas. Additional resources will be phased into the University District as follows.

#### PHASE ONE

Creation of a task force partnering three (3) professionally trained WSU police detectives with existing City of Pullman police detectives to strengthen investigative effectiveness and efficiency in the U-district and throughout the WSU/Pullman area. This partnered approach will mitigate resource limitations faced by both departments and will foster the development of investigative expertise in areas of common concern (i.e. serious assaults, sexual assaults, other labor and expertise intensive crimes).

#### PHASE TWO

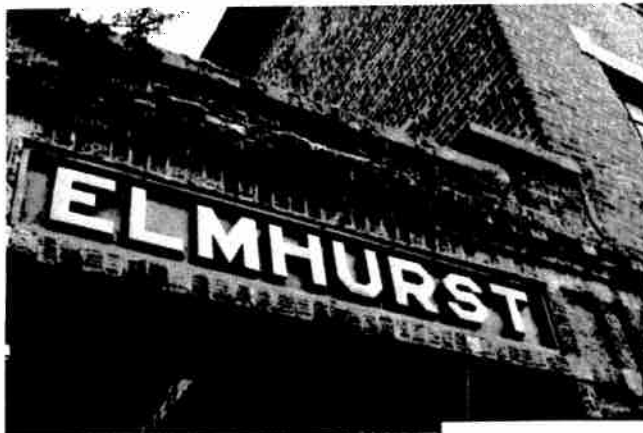
Creation of a task force partnering three (3) Community Oriented Policing beat officers with existing City of Pullman beat officers to strengthen police and student relationships in student areas. This approach will provide face-to-face policing throughout the U-District, Residence Halls, and other living areas as well as in targeted areas of concern among our student population (i.e. private property managers, athletics, fraternity and sorority organizations, and other student/staff groups).

#### PHASE THREE

Hiring of three (3) additional patrol officers to perform routine and traditional patrol functions and to provide more police presence in targeted areas. The addition of three officers (one per existing shift) will provide patrol flexibility and reduce overtime that has traditionally prohibited increased patrol presence.

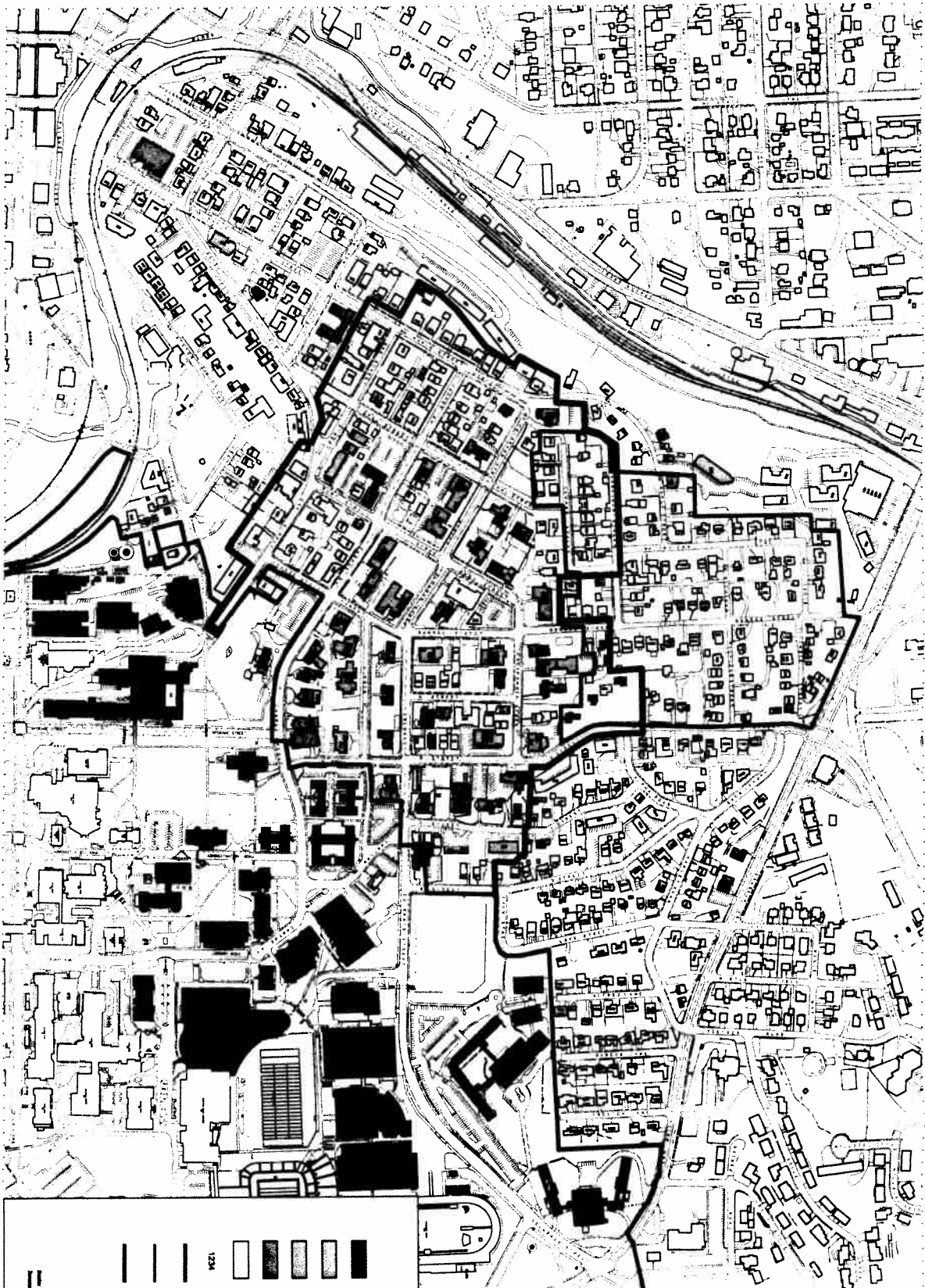
#### SUPERVISORY FUNCTION

In addition to the three phases outlined above, one (1) additional supervisory position will be created to direct the specialized functions related to the U-district (detectives and beat officers). The new supervisor will act as the liaison between the WSU professional staff and the specialists working in the U-District.












Apartment and Greek Houses provide the impression that the U District is part of WSU.

**Map A**  
**University**  
**District**



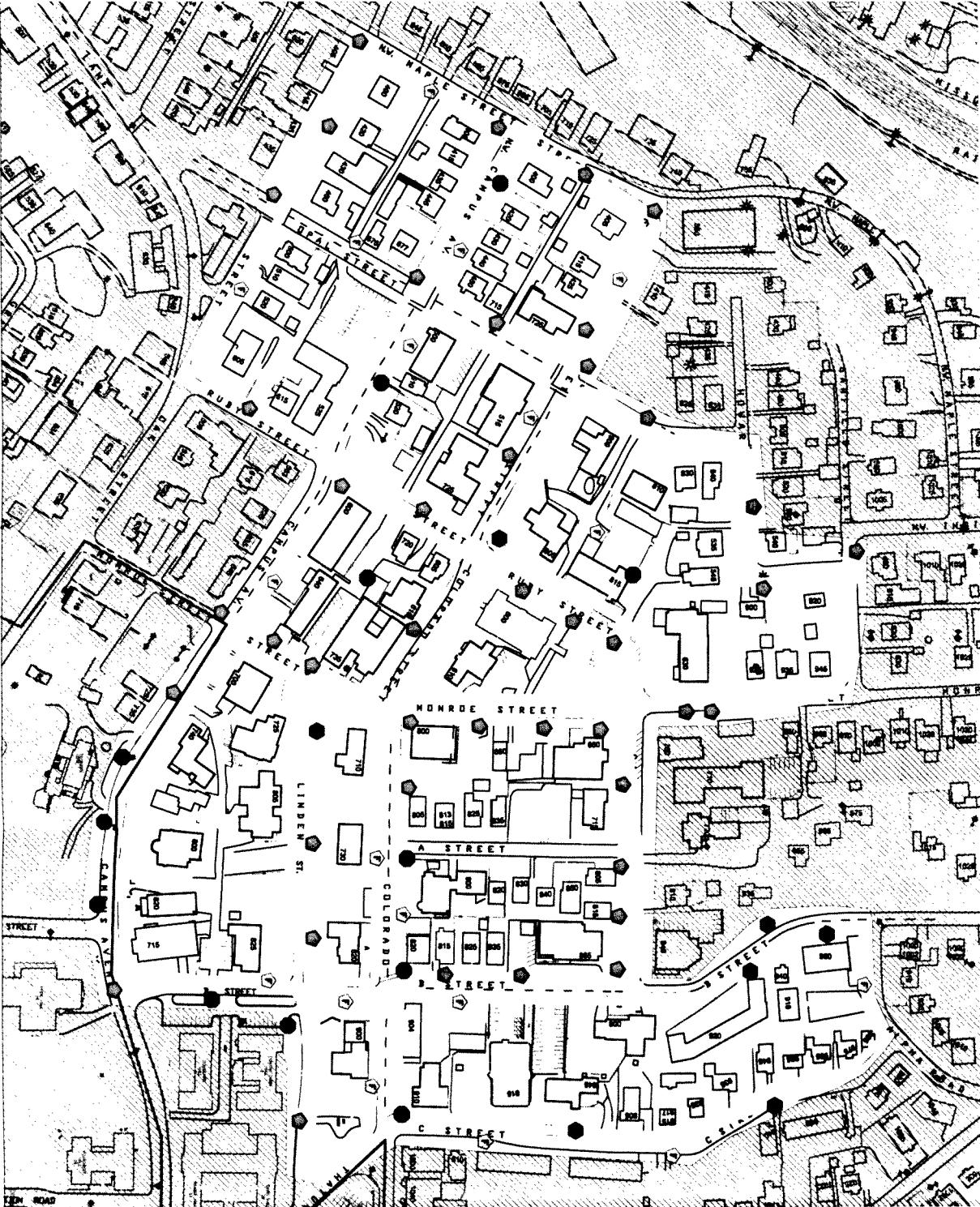
**LEGEND**

-  WSU Buildings
-  Co-Op Housing
-  Fraternities/Sororities
-  Religious Buildings
-  Commercial Properties
-  Property Addresses
-  WSU Boundary
-  Historic District
-  University District (UDistrict)

Scale 1" = 100'









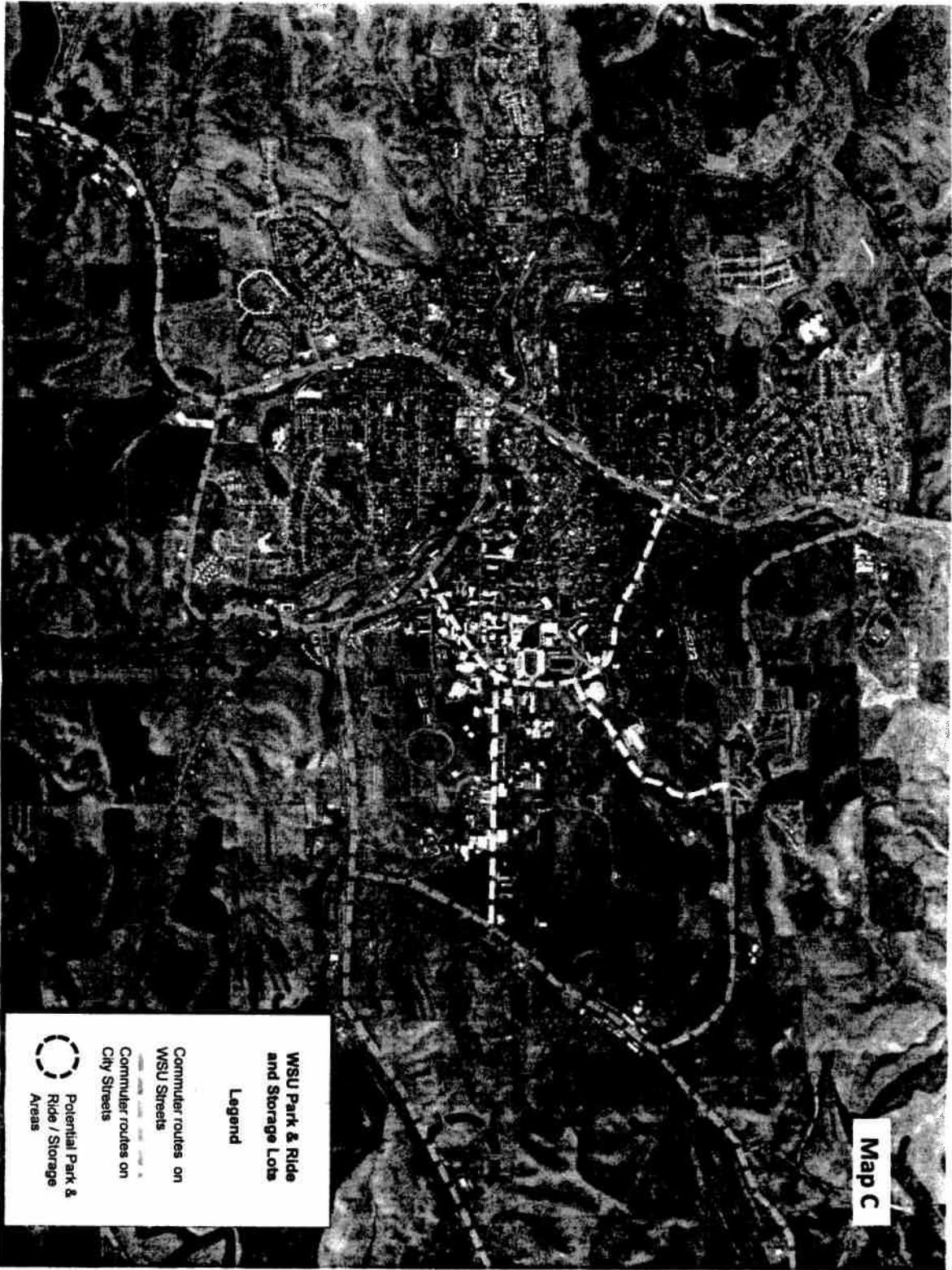


Map B  
College Hill

**LIGHTING SURVEY**

-  FUNCTIONAL
-  NON-FUNCTIONAL
-  DIM LIGHT
-  FUTURE LIGHTS
- SURVEYED AREAS





Map C

**WSU Park & Ride  
and Storage Lots**

**Legend**

Commuter routes on  
WSU Streets

Commuter routes on  
City Streets



Potential Park &  
Ride / Storage  
Areas