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Planning Department Newsletter



STAKEHOLDERS COMMENT ON COLLEGE HILL CORE DESIGN REVIEW CONCEPTS

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As mentioned in last month's Planning Department Newsletter, planning staff recently completed its first draft of design review concepts for the College Hill Core neighborhood. These draft design standards, which would affect the placement and design of new buildings, parking areas, walkways, and open space, are being formulated to implement the goals of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan that was adopted by the City Council in November of 2009. The main objectives of the proposed standards are to improve compatibility between new and existing developments and to enhance the appearance of the built environment. At this point, the draft standards apply only to residential uses; design review provisions for businesses and institutional developments in the College Hill Core will be added later.



The proposed standards address both site design and building design.

Last month, planning staff distributed the draft design standards to a number of College Hill stakeholders for review. On October 27, staff conducted a meeting at City Hall to solicit feedback from these stakeholders. A total of 15 people attended the meeting, including representatives from the College Hill Association, Landlord/Tenant Association, Associated Students of Washington State University, WSU administration, and WSU Capital Planning and Development. The comments provided at the meeting included the following:

- the City Council has been advocating design standards for College Hill for several years
- the city, based on stakeholder input, has chosen design standards as the preferred mechanism for ensuring that new development in the College Hill Core is respectful of the historic setting
- several examples of new construction in the College Hill Core appear to meet the proposed design standards, indicating that the standards are reasonable and achievable
- local landlords and real estate developers have indicated through past statements that aspirations for new construction in the College Hill Core are limited and that design standards are a proper tool for addressing future appearance issues
- protecting the existing National Register Historic District on College Hill should be a top priority for the design standards

- only authentic historic structures should be used as models to follow for future new construction under the design standards process
- although the goal of design standards is to blend with neighborhood historic character, in each case the result should be a project with its own distinctive architectural features
- design standards for the College Hill Core should help preserve the collegiate look of the area and stop the deterioration of the neighborhood
- there is a diversity of architecture in the College Hill Core, but there are well-established principles of good design that apply universally to all developments
- forming a city design review board through this process would provide the added benefit of free advice from knowledgeable people
- it will be important to address the details of the proposed process, including definitions, what type of new construction will trigger the process, and which entities will administer the procedures
- the proposed design standards are vague, cumbersome, and conflicting; meeting these design standards could become a burden not just to developers but to owners of and residents in existing developments
- rather than preserving the current feel of the area, the proposed design standards proscribe a very different vision of the future
- in some instances, the proposed design standards are too specific in calling for features that are unnecessary or counterproductive
- the formulation of design standards is an attempt to regulate appearance, which will be a very difficult process because most everyone has a different idea of what is attractive
- design standards would negatively affect housing affordability
- the design standards should employ the fine grained approach called for in the College Hill Neighborhood Study of 2007 by preserving the character of the area on a street-by-street basis
- the proposed design standards should be provided to the real estate development community for review
- there is nothing in the proposed standards that specifically addresses preserving the historic integrity of the area even though that is a stated objective of the standards
- it is unclear what the actual problems are that the city is attempting to solve through this process
- rather than pursue design standards for new construction, the city should stress better maintenance of existing developments
- the city has enough controls on new construction already so there is no need to add more requirements
- if a structure must be rebuilt, it is important that property owners are allowed to reconstruct the building as it was originally designed
- WSU students are the primary occupants in the College Hill Core, and they have an interest in improving the area and preserving its historic integrity
- much collaboration will be needed with WSU students and staff during the formulation and administration of the design standards
- the city should review exemplary design standards from other jurisdictions to ensure that we build on their successes

At the conclusion of the meeting, planning staff stated that it would revise the draft design standards for review and comment once again by interested parties. The Planning Commission is likely to get involved in the next phase of review as well.



MEET NEW ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST TRACEY LANE

The planning and public works departments are very pleased to have recently added Tracey Lane to our team. Tracey began her employment as administrative specialist in early October. She replaced Kealan Emerson, who moved on to a position with the Pullman School District.

Since the administrative specialist is usually the first contact for customers at the planning office, it is likely that you'll get to meet Tracey if you come in for a visit. Her job duties include processing building permits (from initial application submittals to issuance of certificates of occupancy), scheduling construction inspections, tracking building permit records, administering deposits related to construction activity, assembling the Building Department Newsletters, managing mileage counts for public works and planning vehicles, processing public record requests, acting as a second reviewer of development plans for the planning department, taking minutes of planning committee meetings, and lots and lots of filing.

Prior to joining the city, Tracey was a long-term employee at Washington State University. While there, she worked primarily for the Office of Admissions as a fiscal specialist and program assistant. She especially enjoyed interacting with international students during her tenure in that

office. Tracey also gained experience in the academic field by working as principal assistant in the WSU General Education program. In between these positions, she became a certified nurses aide, and provided health care as part of her own business as well as at Pullman Regional Hospital.

Despite being a member of the city's team for only a few weeks, Tracey has already utilized her skills to upgrade our record keeping files. She said she hopes to achieve greater efficiency through enhanced automation of the building permit system. She indicated her main goal is to continuously contribute to the productivity of the department. She likes the creative freedom that the city allows in the conduct of her duties, she enjoys her interaction with the public, and she is complimentary of the respectful nature of city staff members.

When she's away from the office, Tracey engages in a wide variety of activities. She enjoys riding her motorcycle, spending time with her family, caring for her two dogs (a schnauzer and labradoodle), performing volunteer work, and traveling. One of her favorite spots to visit is Powell's Bookstore in Portland.

If you are in need of assistance regarding planning or public works matters, please contact Tracey. She will be happy to help you.





Pending Land Use Proposals

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Certified Local Government Program	establish historic preservation program for community	Citywide	HPC approved bylaws 9/12/11; State approved CLG application 10/17/11; staff preparing to send CLG agreement to State
College Hill Design Review Standards	formulate design standards for new construction	College Hill Core	PC meeting to set direction held 9/22/10; staff sent draft standards to stakeholders 9/16/11; stakeholder meeting held 10/27/11
City Urban Growth Area Expansion	expand urban growth area to accommodate future growth	greater Pullman area	PC recommended approval 3/23; CC endorsed UGA 6/28; staff conducting final preparations for CC adoption
Mifflin Lot Coverage Variance (V-11-2)	build deck resulting in 42.7% total lot coverage	775 SE Ridgeview Court	BOA approved application 10/17/11; appeal period ends 11/7/11
Langdon Setback Variance (V-11-3)	construct duplex with 3.5-foot side yard setback	555/557 SW Crithfield Court	BOA approved application 10/17/11; appeal period ends 11/7/11
Port of Whitman County Fiber Optic Cable Substantial Development Permit (No. 79)	install underground cable near S. Fork of Palouse River	along SE Bishop Boulevard, E. Main Street, and N. Grand Avenue	city approved permit 10/11/11; State comment period ends 11/4/11
Decagon Devices Addition site plan (11-15)	construct 27,000-square-foot addition to existing manufacturing building	2365 NE Hopkins Court	staff reviewing revised site plan

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; HPC: Historic Preservation Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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