

April 30, 2010



Planning Department Newsletter

COMMISSION HEARS INPUT ON COLLEGE HILL REZONE

On April 28, the Planning Commission opened its public hearing on a proposal to rezone the College Hill Historic District and adjoining property, and it received a substantial amount of input during the course of the evening. The basic proposal is to change the zoning of 29 acres of land centered around the intersection of Monroe and Michigan Streets from R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential and R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential to RT Residential Transitional. The planning department initiated this case in accordance with an implementation strategy in the city's recently adopted College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan to conduct proceedings to consider the proposal.

Each of the zoning districts pertaining to this matter allow for single family homes and apartments. The main difference between them relates to housing density. The R4 zone requires at least 1,000 square feet of land per dwelling unit, the R2 district demands a minimum of 3,000 square feet of land per residence, and the RT classification mandates at least 4,500 square feet of land per dwelling. So, the effect of this zoning map change would be to reduce allowable housing density in the area. Only two small properties at the south edge of the subject property are currently zoned R4, so this case mainly involves a discussion about the

differences between the R2 and RT designations.

At its meeting on April 28, the Commission accepted public comment from 31 people. The individuals who presented remarks were about evenly divided by those in favor of the proposal and those opposed.

Proponents stated that the main issue with respect to this matter is historic preservation, since the College Hill Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the city should take appropriate action to protect that designation. They opined that the presence of this historic district adds value to the entire community. They said the R2 allows for new construction and alterations that could eventually compromise the status of this historic district. Supporters claimed that the neighborhood has simply been lucky to have not experienced more building construction as of late, and the forces to

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A house on Indiana Street, located within the historic district.

develop the area under R2 housing densities are still quite strong. They mentioned that the new construction that has occurred in the neighborhood has been unattractive and out of scale with its surroundings. They also indicated that the rezone to RT would promote occupancy of homes by families and improve the overall livability of the area.

Opponents acknowledged the importance of historic preservation, but asserted that the historic district designation was not threatened because the existing R2 zoning provides sufficient protection for historic resources in the area. As evidence, they noted that very little new development or demolition has occurred in the neighborhood over the past 50 years. They also stated that roughly 25 percent of the developments in the area would become nonconforming uses if the rezone were to be

approved, and, because of significant zoning code limitations on expansion and reconstruction of such uses, the value of these properties would be reduced. Opponents recognized the concerns about the appearance of new construction in the neighborhood, but pointed out that changing the zoning classification would not affect aesthetics. Instead, they proposed the application of architectural design standards to enhance the historic character of the area.

After providing everyone in the audience the chance to speak at least once, the Commission decided to continue the public hearing to Wednesday, May 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. At that time, the Commission will accept additional public comment on this matter. Eventually, the Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council to approve, modify, or deny the proposal.

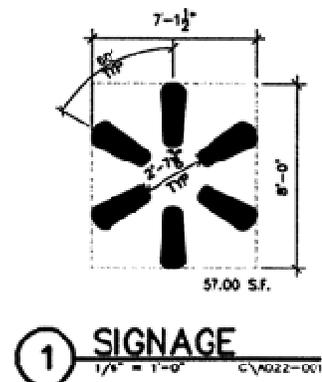
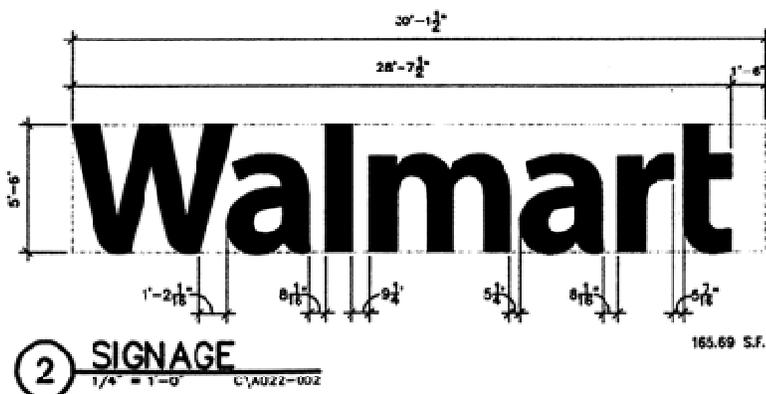
WALMART SIGN VARIANCE APPROVED

The Pullman Board of Adjustment recently approved a request for a sign variance related to the Walmart Supercenter currently under construction on Bishop Boulevard. In February, Walmart Stores, Inc. filed an application for the variance, which involved the installation of a 223-square-foot sign on the wall of the store that faces Bishop Boulevard. The zoning code limits the size of any individual sign to 200 square feet, thus creating the need for the variance proposal.

The Board conducted its public hearing regarding this matter on April 19. Ed Stockwell, a representative of BRR Architecture (the firm that designed the building), was in attendance to support the application. Mr. Stockwell said the physical constraints of the property—mainly the steep slope adjacent to Bishop Boulevard—demanded that the building be set farther back from the street than would

be expected on a more level parcel. This, in turn, led to the variance request, so that the sign would still be readable from the greater distance. Planning staff also reminded the Board that, in 1994, it granted a variance to the ShopKo Corporation to install a 470-square-foot sign on the front wall of its Pullman store; in that case, ShopKo had cited reasons for the exception that were very similar to those presented in this Walmart application.

After accepting testimony, the Board members discussed the matter. They agreed that the justification for the proposal was sound, and they remarked that the slightly oversized sign seemed to be suitable for placement on the wall of this large retail structure. The Board then approved the application without conditions.



This sign was approved by the Board of Adjustment at its hearing on April 19.



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	CC requested ordinance revisions on 1/20/09; ad hoc committee met on 2/9/09 to address ordinance revisions; legal staff reviewing draft ordinance amendments
Zoning Code Text Amendments	revise zoning code application requirements	Citywide	PC recommended approval 4//28; CC review scheduled for May
College Hill Architectural Design Standards	formulate design standards for new construction	College Hill Core	PC approved review process 3/24; PC public forum scheduled for 7/28
Historic District Rezone (Z-10-2)	rezone 29 acres from R2 to RT	vicinity of Monroe and Michigan Streets	PC hearing initiated 4/28; continued to 5/26
Mader Land R1 Prezone Proposal (Z-10-1)	change prezone designation for 134 acres from R2 to R1	outside city limits; east of Brayton Road, one-half mile southeast of intersection of Armstrong and Brayton Roads	PC recommended in favor of proposal on 3/24; CC 1st hearing scheduled for 5/11
Whispering Hills 5 Final Planned Residential Development Plan (PRD)	final plan for establishment of 17 lots on 2.2 acres in a PRD	south of SW Old Wawawai Road and west of Sunnyside Park	staff awaiting complete application
WSU Alley Vacation Request	vacate 2,240 sq. ft. of alley right of way	east of Monroe Street and north of Oak Street	staff reviewing application
Walmart Sign Variance Request (V-10-1)	install 223-sq-ft wall-mounted sign on front of building	1690 SE Harvest Drive	BOA approved application 4/19; appeal period expires 5/10
Sacred Heart Church Canopy Conditional Use Expansion Request (09-3)	construct 110-sq-ft canopy over rear entryway of church building	400 NE Ash Street	staff awaiting complete application
City Shoreline Permit Application No. 77	relocate and upgrade existing Wawawai Basin Lift Station	1025 NW Guy Street (Wastewater Treatment Plant)	notice of application filed 4/9; local comment period expires 5/9
Itani Valley Road Apartments site plan (09-1)	construct 16-unit apartment building on 27,000-sq-ft lot	1245 NE Valley Road	applicant submitted revised site plan materials
Johnson Avenue Storage Lot site plan (09-10)	construct 360-sq-ft carport and conduct grading on 4.9-acre site	1222 SE Johnson Avenue	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Tomason Place Apartments site plan (10-1)	develop 26-unit apartment building on 1.4-acre site	555 NE Terre View Drive	applicant submitted 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; LC: Landmarks 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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