

July 30, 2010



## COMMISSION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF MADER NORTH ANNEXATION

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Last month, we reported in this newsletter that the City Council had finalized its prezone designations for hundreds of acres of property located outside the city to the north of Military Hill. Early in July, the owner of a majority of this land, Steve Mader, filed a request to annex the property to the city of Pullman.

The proposal involves the incorporation of 506 acres of land generally bordered by NW Terre View Drive on the south, Brayton Road on the west, Albion Road on the north, and the Palouse Highway (State Route 27) on the east. The westerly portion of the parcel (134 acres) is prezoned R1 Single Family Residential, the middle part (299 acres) is pre-assigned as an R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential district, and the easterly portion is prezoned I1 Light Industrial for 58 acres and C3 General Commercial for 15 acres. Most of the parcel is under cultivation, although there is a single family house, veterinary medicine research facility, and grain elevator situated on the property near Albion Road.

This is the largest annexation request the city has received since 1994, when WSU applied to incorporate 583 acres of its campus property near Airport Road. The average size of Pullman annexations over the past 20 years is 60.2 acres. The city processed 22 annexation petitions during the 1990s. The applications have slowed to about one per year since then.

Mr. Mader's proposal was reviewed by the Planning Commission at its meeting of July 28. Planning staff expressed support for the proposal, subject to five conditions related to compliance with standard annexation procedures, and the addition of two areas (a six-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Albion Board and the Palouse Highway, and the Albion Road right of way adjacent to the site) to the proposed annexation territory. Several members of the public presented comments in opposition to the applicant's request during this session. One citizen noted that, if the land is not annexed, it could be developed with a series of five-acre home sites under the county's "cluster residential" regulations, and that would be even worse than annexation, because it would constrain the city's ability to grow north of Military Hill. Nevertheless, this citizen remarked that there is no need for such a large annexation, and asked that the city simultaneously work with the county to limit potential cluster residential development in this area and consider a more modest annexation proposal. Objections were also raised about the burden the proposal would place on city services such as road maintenance and public safety. Finally, remarks were made about insufficient notification being provided for the session; planning staff stated that there are no public notification requirements for this type of meeting, so all of the pertinent information was distributed by the city as a courtesy to the public.

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Following this acceptance of citizen input, the Planning Commission discussed the matter. Commission members mentioned that the subject property is part of the city’s urban growth area, so it is logical to annex the parcel. They indicated that it is in the city’s long-term interest to control this land rather than allow it to be occupied with cluster residential development. They also noted that any issues regarding

provision of city services would be addressed when development was proposed for the property. Consequently, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the request, subject to the conditions suggested by staff. This matter is scheduled to be reviewed by the City Council at its meeting of August 24.

## DESIGN STANDARDS DISCUSSED FOR COLLEGE HILL CORE

The College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan adopted last year by the City Council included the following as an implementation strategy:

Adopt and implement architectural design standards for new construction in the College Hill Core to improve compatibility between existing and new structures and to enhance the appearance of the built environment.

Design standards are used to guide the appearance and configuration of land use developments. The standards typically concentrate on the following five topics:

- 1) overall site layout, encompassing vehicular access, parking areas, pedestrian walkways, building location, placement of open space, relationship to adjacent properties, and association with the adjoining street(s);
- 2) building design, relating to the mass (i.e., height, width, and depth) of the structure, roof characteristics, location and treatment of the building entrance, the placement and design of windows, the form of the walls, the materials used for exterior surfaces, and the relationship of the structure to other buildings in the surrounding area;

- 3) landscaping and screening, including retention of existing vegetation; installation of new plantings, fences, and walls; provision of functional open space and effective buffers for parking areas and property boundaries;
- 4) signs, with an emphasis on programming placement of displays at the outset of project design;
- 5) public spaces, involving such spaces as sidewalks, pathways, planting strips, streets, alleys, plazas, and transit facilities.

In March of this year, the Planning Commission discussed procedures for developing design regulations for the College Hill Core neighborhood. The Commission decided at that time to begin the process by conducting an introductory meeting to discuss the objectives of these proposed regulations with interested citizens. The Commission held this kickoff session on July 28. At this meeting, College Hill residents and other community members who have an interest in this neighborhood provided comments that included the following points:

- portions of the College Hill Core were built up at different periods in history, and that should be respected in the design standards
- design standards should ensure that new buildings have style
- design standards should promote historic compatibility, durability and function, safety, and neighborhood livability
- there are many good examples of design standards from other communities, including college towns Bellingham and Ellensburg
- the city should utilize the expertise of local design professionals in the formulation of the standards
- the College Hill Core is vastly different from other parts of Pullman, so it is appropriate to develop design standards that are specific to this neighborhood



These condominiums on Oak Street were built with design oversight provided by WSU.

*(Continued on page 4)*



## 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 |
| College Hill Architectural Design Standards                         | formulate design standards for new construction                              | College Hill Core   | PC approved review process 3/24; PC public forum held 7/28   |
| Historic District Rezone (Z-10-2)                                   | rezone 29 acres from R2 to RT  | vicinity of Monroe and Michigan Streets                               | PC recommended denial of rezone on 6/23; CC hearing scheduled for 9/14   |
| SEL Residential Rezone (Z-10-3)                                     | rezone 40 acres from I2 to R2  | between Hickman Court and Eastgate Boulevard near NE Terre View Drive | PC hearing scheduled for 8/25  |
| Old Wawawai Road Rezone (Z-10-4)                                    | rezone five acres from C3 to R2  | southwest corner of SW Old Wawawai Road and SW Effie Drive            | staff reviewing application materials; PC hearing tentatively scheduled for 9/22   |
| Mader North Annexation  | annex 506 acres to city  | north of Military Hill between Palouse Highway and Brayton Road       | PC meeting held 7/28; CC meeting to be scheduled for 8/24  |
| 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   | request approved 7/22; appeal period expires 8/5   |
| City Shoreline Permit Application No. 77                            | relocate and upgrade existing Wawawai Basin Lift Station                     | 1025 NW Guy Street (Wastewater Treatment Plant)                       | permit issued 6/22; permit materials sent to Dept. of Ecology to initiate state comment period   |
| 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  |
| Hilltop Inn Addition site plan (10-7)                               | demolish Hilltop Restaurant and construct 54-room addition to existing motel | 928 NW Olsen Street   | staff requested applicant to revise 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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## DESIGN STANDARDS

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- successful communities ensure superior design for their built environment
- good design instills pride in a neighborhood, increases property values, and promotes good behavior
- design standards should be kept simple and easily enforceable to facilitate new construction and significant remodeling
- design standards should promote flexibility and creativity in the design of projects, rather than rigidity
- design standards should allow for the use of a wide variety of building materials so owners can choose materials for ease of maintenance and improved energy efficiency
- higher density development should correspond with the scale of the existing neighborhood
- design standards should provide a great degree of certainty to all concerned about the form and visual characteristics expected for new construction
- design standards should not be used to resolve zoning issues
- design standards should be utilized to improve traffic and transit flow, and enhance pedestrian safety

After hearing from interested citizens, the Planning Commission talked about various potential objectives for the proposed design standards. Planning staff suggested that it present the Commission with a series of questions at a subsequent meeting to better frame the discussion and help the committee provide informed direction to staff regarding the formulation of the draft design standards. The Commission agreed to staff's proposal. The planning department will furnish updates on this process in future editions of this newsletter.