




CITY OF PULLMAN

Public Works and Planning Departments

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Pullman Planning Commission

FROM: Pete Dickinson, Planning Director 

FOR: Meeting of November 18, 2015

SUBJECT: Review of College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan

DATE: November 10, 2015

The College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan (CHCNP) was adopted by the City Council on November 17, 2009. The purpose of the plan is to achieve a vision for "a high-quality diversified neighborhood occupied by people who enjoy living or working in an attractive historic setting with convenient access to the Washington State University campus."

CHCNP Implementation Strategy 10B reads as follows:

Conduct a Planning Commission meeting approximately two years after adoption of this neighborhood plan to assess the consistency of this plan relative to Comprehensive Plan policies, and to evaluate whether implementation of this neighborhood plan is creating any unintended consequences for the community. Transmit the Commission's findings to the City Council for review following the conclusion of this Planning Commission meeting.

On November 30, 2011, the Planning Commission conducted an assessment of the CHCNP as prescribed in the above-cited strategy. The Commission concluded its November 2011 discussion by recommending that it review the CHCNP two years later since the city was in the beginning stages of implementation at that time.

At its meeting of November 13, 2013, the Commission considered the status of the CHCNP in accordance with its earlier directive. The pertinent segment of the minutes from this meeting are included as Attachment "A" to this memorandum. At the end of

the discussion, Commission members once again expressed interest in reviewing the plan in another two years.

The goals of the CHCNP are included as Attachment "B" to this memorandum. Commission members can review the entire CHCNP at the planning department page of the city of Pullman website. The policies of the Pullman Comprehensive Plan that, in staff's opinion, apply to the CHCNP are listed in Attachment "C." Following a review of the CHCNP in relation to applicable Comprehensive Plan policies, planning staff believes that the CHCNP is consistent with those policies.

Over the past six years, the city has implemented various features of the CHCNP. The major accomplishments in this regard are as follows:

- city staff, with help from interested citizens, prepared a "Welcome to College Hill" pamphlet in 2010 that promotes responsible living in the neighborhood; the city coordinated with the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity in the fall semesters of 2010 and 2011 to distribute a copy of this pamphlet to each residence in the College Hill Core; when city budget cuts prevented the printing of the pamphlet in 2012, the College Hill Association (CHA) revised the document in consultation with city staff and facilitated its distribution throughout the neighborhood with the assistance of the Associated Students of Washington State University in the fall semesters of 2012, 2013, and 2014; CHA's intent was to distribute the brochure in the fall of 2015 during its Adopt-a-Block program activities, but that program is undergoing reorganization this year, so the next likely distribution of the pamphlet will be in the fall of 2016; the document is also available for review at CHA's website
- within the College Hill Core, protective inspections staff in 2009 and 2010 performed a survey of each multi-family structure from the adjacent public street, noted apparent building code violations, and worked with property owners to effect code compliance
- in 2010, the Planning Commission and City Council conducted proceedings to consider rezoning the College Hill Historic District (bordered generally by Stadium Way, B Street, Howard Street, and Maple Street Extension/Indiana Street) from R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential and R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential to RT Residential Transitional; in the end, the City Council decided to follow the Planning Commission's recommendation to not rezone the property
- in 2011, planning staff prepared draft design review concepts for new construction in the College Hill Core to improve land use compatibility and enhance the appearance of the built environment; these draft design standards were discussed at a College Hill stakeholders meeting in October of 2011; a revised set of draft standards were presented for public comment at Planning Commission meetings in November and December of 2013, and the Commission proceeded to review

and comment on these revised standards at workshops in January and February of 2014; after receiving letters expressing concern about the potential impacts of design review standards in the College Hill Core neighborhood, the City Council conducted a meeting in April of 2014 to solicit citizen input and engage in a thorough discussion of the topic, concluding the session by directing the planning department to continue the development of the design review standards; in December of 2014, planning staff distributed an email message to pertinent stakeholder groups asking for advice in the development of the next set of draft standards; staff is continuing its work on this project as time allows

- in December of 2010, the City Council adopted an ordinance to initiate the city's Certified Local Government (CLG) historic preservation program; the Council confirmed the first set of Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) members in March 2011, and the HPC has been meeting regularly since May 2011; in December 2011, the National Park Service officially designated Pullman as a CLG; since then, the HPC and planning staff have developed a preliminary list of local historic resources, effected an intensive inventory of 36 historic properties in the vicinity of Maple Street on College Hill (assisted by a successful grant application assembled by the HPC), facilitated a basic inventory of approximately 40 historic buildings in the downtown area (also financed through a grant), and conducted a public forum to promote preservation in the community; over the last two years, the HPC has approved seven properties for listing on the Pullman Register of Historic Places, including the red brick paved portions of Maple and Palouse Streets, the former St. James Episcopal Church at 600 NE Oak Street (now used for apartments), the former Kappa Delta Sorority House at 520 NE Howard Street, the Drucker House at 965 NE B Street, the Phelps House at 970 NE Monroe Street, and the Zlatos House at 630 NE Garfield Street
- security cameras have been installed by the police department at selected locations in the College Hill Core; police department staff believe establishment of these cameras is an effective use of law enforcement resources to improve safety and more efficiently resolve potential criminal incidents
- the police department page of the city's website was revised to allow for online reporting of nuisance code violations and graffiti, and said website explains how to make an emergency or non-emergency report
- in 2011 and 2012, planning staff retained the services of WSU student interns to conduct a property appearance survey in the College Hill Core; staff intends to utilize the findings of this study to work with responsible parties on improved property maintenance in this part of the city
- city staff has coordinated with Pullman Disposal to provide commingled recycling collection services in the city, a system that is expected to improve appearances and efficiency in the College Hill Core

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- planning staff has promoted the College Hill Association's "yard of the semester" award program through participation in the award ceremony or by writing letters of commendation

From staff's perspective, none of the above-described implementation activities have created any unintended consequences for the community.

The Planning Commission is requested to review the provisions of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan and its implementation thus far.

Attachments

REGULAR BUSINESS

Conduct an assessment of the status of the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan.

Dickinson stated that the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan (CHCNP) was adopted by the City Council in November 2009. Implementation Strategy 10B directs that the Planning Commission will conduct a review approximately two years after adoption of the plan, which was done in November 2011 and at that time it was requested that another review occur after another two years. The city is still in the process of implementing the plan, and the design review standards from the earlier discussion are a portion of that, but various activities have been conducted in response to the goals of the plan as detailed on page 2 and 3 of the memorandum.

GIBNEY

Commented that review is a good thing and suggested that another review be conducted in one to two years.

SHANNON

Polled the Commission about having another review in one to two years; Commissioners agreed and staff was requested to bring the matter before the Commission again in approximately two years.

COLLEGE HILL CORE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN GOALS

- GOAL 1: MAINTAIN A SAFE AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD IN WHICH RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS TAKE PRIDE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND ACTIVELY PROMOTE RESPECT AMONG ALL USERS.
- GOAL 2: PROMOTE A HARMONIOUS MIX OF SINGLE- AND MULTIPLE-FAMILY HOUSING, COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, AND INSTITUTIONAL USES FOR A CONCENTRATED POPULATION OF STUDENTS, FAMILIES, RETIREES, AND BUSINESS PEOPLE WHO SHARE AN INTEREST IN RESIDING OR WORKING IN A LIVELY HISTORIC SETTING WITH CONVENIENT ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY.
- GOAL 3: ESTABLISH ATTRACTIVE, WELL-MAINTAINED PROPERTIES THAT PROVIDE A WELCOMING ENTRYWAY TO THE WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS.
- GOAL 4: MAINTAIN HOUSING WITHIN THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN A SAFE AND HEALTHY CONDITION.
- GOAL 5: PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN SUPERIOR INFRASTRUCTURE (e.g., ROADS, SIDEWALKS, UTILITIES, LIGHTING), MAINTAIN EXEMPLARY PUBLIC SERVICE, AND FACILITATE CONNECTIVITY IN AND OUT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
- GOAL 6: PROVIDE VEHICULAR PARKING AT A LEVEL SUFFICIENT TO ACCOMMODATE LAND USES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHILE PRESERVING THE PREDOMINANT RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.
- GOAL 7: VALUE AND PROTECT HISTORICAL RESOURCES.
- GOAL 8: PROVIDE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO PROVIDE BALANCE WITH THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.
- GOAL 9: FACILITATE CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG ALL AFFECTED PARTIES TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY.
- GOAL 10: ENSURE THAT ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE COLLEGE HILL CORE BENEFIT THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN KEEPING WITH THE CITY'S ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

PULLMAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES APPLICABLE TO
THE COLLEGE HILL CORE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Land Use Element

- Policy LU1.10: Improve and maintain community appearance, including entrances to the city, streetscapes, commercial and industrial areas, and residential neighborhoods; keep property clear of refuse and debris through strict enforcement of local solid waste regulations.
- Policy LU1.11: Consider development of overlay district regulations to enhance and/or preserve distinctive areas within the city.
- Policy LU3.2: Provide information to the public about city programs or projects through the use of the community newsletter, the government access television channel, direct mailings, signage, and/or other means.
- Policy LU4.1: Establish a mixture of residential densities in the community.
- Policy LU4.2: Protect the unique characteristics of established neighborhoods from intrusion by incompatible uses.
- Policy LU4.4: Buffer lower-density residential uses from the adverse and incompatible effects of commercial and higher residential density development through such means as topographic barriers, increased setback requirements, landscaping, and sight-obscuring screens.
- Policy LU4.5: Promote maintenance of private property in a neat, attractive condition.
- Policy LU4.8: Require ample landscaping and recreational areas for high-density housing.
- Policy LU4.13: Ensure that high density residential areas have convenient access to major transportation access routes.
- Policy LU5.5: Allow residential uses above the first floor in commercial areas.
- Policy LU5.7: Improve the appearance of existing commercial areas, including signs, landscaping, parking areas, and public facilities such as sidewalks.
- Policy LU5.9: Permit neighborhood commercial development in high-density residential areas so long as it caters primarily to immediate neighborhood residents, and the development is designed and operated to be compatible with the neighborhood.
- Policy LU8.1: Encourage surface grading of development sites that, to the extent possible, follows the contours of the existing terrain to protect the character of the landscape.
- Policy LU14.1: Work with property owners, neighborhood associations, the Whitman County Historical Society, and government agencies to identify, document, restore, and preserve historic sites and/or areas.

Housing Element

- Policy H1.2: Provide infrastructure (streets, paths, parks, and community facilities) appropriate to the character of the neighborhood.

- Policy H1.4: Work to eliminate safety hazards in the existing housing stock. Thoroughly publicize the city's voluntary housing inspection program.
- Policy H1.6: Encourage rehabilitation and preservation of historic housing.
- Policy H2.5: Encourage new housing construction in a range of prices and rents to meet the projected housing demand.
- Policy H2.12: Encourage communication and cooperation between the city, WSU, and the private housing sector so that the housing needs of the WSU population can be met effectively.

Transportation Element

- Policy T1.1: Promote safe, energy-efficient methods of transportation.
- Policy T2.2: Enhance and expand the existing nonmotorized transportation system to link major activity centers, provide sufficient access within neighborhoods, and separate pedestrian from vehicular traffic.
- Policy T4.1: Require all new development to provide adequate off-street parking and loading to reduce congestion and improve safety. Encourage WSU to provide parking on and near campus for students and visitors.
- Policy T4.3: Ensure that all off-street parking areas are attractively landscaped around the perimeter and that larger parking areas also have interior landscaping.
- Policy T4.4: Establish on-street parking permit programs where appropriate, based on the characteristics of the particular neighborhood or district.

Capital Facilities and Utilities Element

- Policy CF1.1: Encourage efficient, well-planned use of public buildings and property.
- Policy CF1.2: Develop and maintain cost-effective, efficient public utilities.
- Policy CF3.1: Maintain police protection at appropriate levels of service.
- Policy CF3.2: Cooperate with other jurisdictions, including WSU and Whitman County, to coordinate cost-effective delivery of police protection services to the community.
- Policy CF3.3: Consider public safety and crime prevention in the design of all new development.
- Policy CF5.8: Support solid waste reduction, curbside recycling, and yard waste composting.

Parks and Open Space Element

- Policy P1.7: Cooperate with developers to provide parks and recreation facilities, including trails, at the time that development occurs in low- and high-density residential areas.