

# City of Pullman College Hill Neighborhood Study

March, 2007





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## Problem Statement

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.

The College Hill neighborhood lies along WSU's northern perimeter, mostly south of Stadium Way, east of Missouri Flat Creek and north of the South Fork of the Palouse River. Many of the homes on the hill are quite old and historically significant, constructed contemporary with WSU's founding to house and serve the faculty, staff and students of the adjacent university.

WSU's student population, for a variety of reasons, has grown to prefer private, off-campus housing instead of dormitories and fraternity/sorority (Greek) housing. This has increased demand for student housing near the university, and the



Figure 1 - The College Hill study area.

College Hill neighborhood has been impacted as a result.

While the proximity to and connection with the university are attractive to many College Hill residents, the disruption of their neighborhood's physical and social fabric resulting from the rapid and sustained student influx is disturbing to most. The conversion of historic structures to multi-family housing, the construction of new apartments and parking lots in place of single-family homes, the intense demand for on-street parking, and the side effects of student social activities are altering College Hill's character.

This report hits the intersection of planning and sociology, and develops a

list of action items to address an array of behavioral issues impacting the College Hill neighborhood. Some approaches involve urban design and land use, while others involve organizational or institutional involvement to strengthen social relationships. A mix of approaches, acted on as an integrated strategy, will be necessary to alleviate College Hill's current problems.

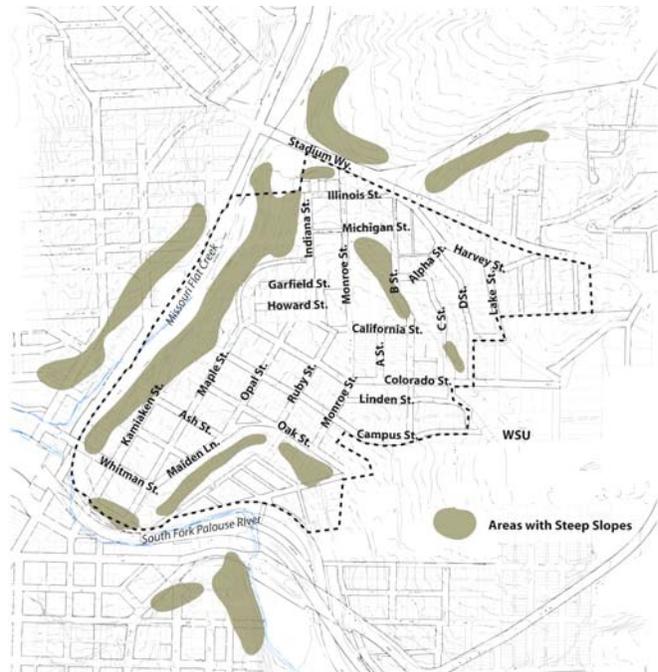


Figure 2 - College Hill rises above the South Fork of the Palouse River and Missouri Flat Creek.

## Vision

*Looking for What May Be*

### ***The City's Perspective***

The City of Pullman adopted a vision statement in its 1999 comprehensive plan, saying in approximately 1,600 words what the community should look like in the year 2020. Among those 1,600 words, the university is mentioned 12 times. Its presence in and interaction with the community is one of the most important components of the City's vision statement.

Here are some excerpts dealing specifically with WSU:

#### **Paragraph 2**

*Pullman is a showcase for all college communities. Washington State University is a thriving educational center that offers the highest quality learning opportunities for individuals across the state and around the world. The university and the community cooperate fully to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the city. Community residents take advantage of the many cultural and recreational resources available at the university.*

#### **Paragraph 24**

*Motor vehicles are parked off-street in parking lots or garages well-removed from the street. On-street parking spaces are available, even near the university. WSU*

*provides sufficient parking for all motorists who wish to park on the campus. Plenty of parking is provided in the downtown area to accommodate employees and those conducting business there.*

There are also passages of the vision that relate directly to neighborhoods and housing:

#### **Paragraph 4**

*Residential neighborhoods are clean, attractive and comfortable. People know their neighbors and interact frequently with them. Neighborhoods near the university contain a lively mix of residents who embrace the diverse lifestyles represented there. Quality of life in residential areas is preserved through buffering, screening, and separating distinctly different housing types.*

#### **Paragraph 6**

*An abundant supply of good quality, affordable housing is available to all current and prospective residents, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical abilities or socio-economic status. Dwellings are well-maintained and structurally sound. Tenants care for the property they rent in a responsible and respectful fashion. Landlords take an active role in maintaining their property so that it is attractive and safe.*

**Paragraph 13**

*Historic places in the community are preserved, thereby fostering a caring attitude regarding the city's heritage. Our residents know and value the history of our city and region.*

**Paragraph 27**

*Day or night, people feel extremely safe in our community. With the help of local police organizations, the community has taken responsibility for security in its neighborhoods. For the few incidents that do arise, the police department acts promptly and professionally to resolve the matter. The fire department works diligently to prevent fires through its maintenance inspection programs....*

These vision excerpts illustrate a hopeful future state, drawing on the best of what Pullman offers today and using the coming years to manage change to its best advantage. It is clear that the City wishes to build upon a healthy and collaborative relationship with WSU to enrich the community's social, economic, and intellectual make-up, creating an energized and diverse college town. It is also clear that Pullman hopes to provide and maintain neighborhoods that welcome diversity, look good and are safe.

***The Neighborhood's Perspective***

The College Hill Association (CHA) took the initiative to prepare its own neighborhood plan. It ran a series of neighborhood workshops in 2004 and produced the College Hill Neighborhood Plan in 2005. That plan included the following vision for College Hill:

*The College Hill Neighborhood has a unique pride of place in the city of Pullman. Close proximity to both the Washington State University campus and downtown Pullman business district make it a highly desirable location to live in or visit. The built environment is characterized by tree-lined streets and historic architecture in many forms (from single-family residences to churches, commercial buildings, and stately Greek-system houses). The vibrant population is comprised mainly of Washington State University-affiliated students, faculty, staff, and retirees. More densely-populated than other parts of Pullman, the College Hill neighborhood and its small, attractive commercial areas are co-host to most of the significant cultural events and night life in Pullman. The active pedestrian community is served by excellent infrastructure, including lighting, paths, parking and public transit. All members of the College Hill community are good citizens and good neighbors, demonstrating mutual respect to everyone. Historic structures are treated with care and the neighborhood is clean and safe for all.*

The CHA neighborhood plan then identifies seven core values embedded in the vision, providing guidance that may inform future planning for the area:

1. *College Hill shall be a model for university-community relationships.*
2. *College Hill shall be a place of pride by maintaining buildings and conserving and enhancing architectural quality, trees, sidewalks, yards, and residential character.*
3. *College Hill shall be culturally and socially diverse. This diversity will become the foundation for mutual respect between neighbors.*
4. *College Hill shall be a neighborhood suitable for raising families, for adults and for retirees.*
5. *College Hill shall be a residential district where students enjoy the benefits of living in a neighborhood setting as opposed to a barren assembly of high-rise apartments.*
6. *College Hill shall demonstrate new leadership and innovation in facilitating partnerships that can help reverse the decline in housing and increase stewardship.*
7. *College Hill shall accomplish its larger civic goals through the active participation of students and community members.*

The CHA vision and embedded values are then translated into goals and action items in the plan, many of which have been incorporated in recent activities in the neighborhood.

It is important to note that the vision statement argues for continued diversity on the Hill, welcoming the activity and energy that a student population brings to the neighborhood. The main focus, however, is on harmony and community health.

### ***The University's Perspective***

No published vision was available to include in this study, but conversations with WSU officials indicated that the university's intent is to help College Hill successfully deal with the forces placed upon it by the university. WSU has acted unilaterally and collaboratively to undertake a number of actions to manage and mitigate neighborhood impacts. The university's administration is now changing, however, and priorities may shift in response.

The university adopted a policy in 2002 to guide its efforts within College Hill, describing a series of actions designed to increase the university's presence in the neighborhood and address issues of student behavior and neighborhood decline.

## Demographics

*The Social Context*

### Neighborhood profile

The following information is derived from the 1990 and 2000 decennial Census, representing information for the City of Pullman and for Census Tract 1, block groups two, three, four and (for 1990) block group five. This assembly of block groups closely matches the College Hill study area.

The tables here summarize the information. Complete tables based on the Census are included in the appendix.

**Table 1 – Total Population**

	1990	2000
College Hill	4,810	5,561
Pullman	23,478	24,675

The population of College Hill Neighborhood represents about 23 percent of the total population of Pullman. The majority of residents in both the neighborhood and the city as a whole are White. The next most frequently identified race is Asian.

**Table 2 – Race (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	93.6	90.1	88.0	83.1
Black or African American	1.1	1.9	2.0	2.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.7
Asian	3.8	3.3	8.2	8.5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4
Some other race	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.6
Two or more races		3.1		3.4

The numbers on the next page indicate that most of the residents on College Hill are relative newcomers to the area. About 95 percent of the residents moved into their homes between 1990 and 1999. These numbers echo the previous census. The 1980-1989 occupancy counts show the transient nature of the majority of residents in the neighborhood. In 1990 a little more than 90 percent of the population had moved into their homes during that time period. Ten years later only 2.3 percent of those residents remained.

**Table 3 – Year Householder Moved into Unit (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
1999 – March 2000		67.2		50.1
1995 – 1998		23.0		28.0
1990 – 1994		4.8		8.0
1980 – 1989	90.1	2.3	84.1	6.7
1970 – 1979	3.6	0.6	8.3	4.2
1969 or earlier	6.3	2.1	7.6	3.0
Total occupied units	1,136	1,249	7,385	8,836

**Table 4 – Household Size (year 2000)**

College Hill	2.25
Pullman	2.23

The median household size in the neighborhood is only slightly larger than the median number for Pullman. The median family size, however, is larger in Pullman than it is in College Hill.

**Table 5 – Family Size (year 2000)**

College Hill	2.46
Pullman	2.87

**Table 6 – Household Income (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less than \$15,000	62.9	56.7	43.9	39.8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	13.8	20.4	16.9	15.2
\$25,000 - \$34,999	7.8	9.5	11.2	11.1
\$35,000 - \$49,999	5.1	4.4	10.9	9.0
\$50,000 - \$74,999	7.3	5.3	10.5	12.3
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1.9	1.6	4.7	6.1
\$100,000 or more	1.2	2.1	1.9	6.6

It is not surprising that the highest percentage of residents in College Hill earn less than \$25,000 a year because most of the residents are students. In Pullman, there is a spike of people with incomes below \$15,000 but that could also be due to the high student population throughout the town. Median household income further reflects the disparity between incomes in College Hill and the rest of Pullman.

**Table 7 – Median Household Income (in dollars)**

	1990	2000
College Hill	9,722	11,900
Pullman	17,886	20,652

While the most common housing type in both the neighborhood and Pullman are single-unit detached homes, structures with 10 to 19 units are common throughout College Hill and the City.

**Table 8 – Housing Units in Structure (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
1, detached	24.9	25.2	30.5	30.2
1, attached	3.2	4.3	2.4	4.1
2	12.2	11.8	10.0	8.4
3 or 4	14.5	15.2	8.9	9.6
5 to 9	13.7	11.5	13.4	12.9
10 to 19	24.0	23.5	15.8	13.8
20 or more	5.9	8.6	7.9	15.3
Mobile home	0.0	0.0	5.8	5.5
Boat, RV or other	1.6	0.0	1.3	0.1

**Table 9 – Total Housing Units**

	1990	2000
College Hill	1,212	1,281
Pullman	7,546	9,392

College Hill’s housing represents about 14 percent of the total housing units available in Pullman. Between 1990 and

2000, the neighborhood only added 69 more units to the area. Most of the housing in the neighborhood was built before 1980.

**Table 10 – Year Structure Built (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
1999 – March 2000		0.0		1.2
1995 – 1998		4.5		14.2
1990 – 1994		0.3		7.9
1980 – 1989	6.8	3.9	16.0	10.7
1970 – 1979	15.0	20.0	29.8	23.9
1960 – 1969	21.4	11.7	23.7	17.1
1940 – 1959	22.9	24.6	17.8	14.7
1939 or earlier	25.7	35.0	10.9	10.3

**Table 11 – Tenure (by percent)**

	College Hill		Pullman	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Owner occupied	16.2	10.5	31.2	30.7
Renter occupied	81.1	85.0	66.7	69.3
Vacant	2.7	4.4	2.1	6.5

Another symbol of the transient nature of the College Hill population is the percentage of units that are owner-occupied versus those that are renter-occupied. In the neighborhood, renters occupy 85 percent of the units. In Pullman, rentals account for 69 percent of the housing units. Median contract rent for units in College Hill is less than those rates for the rest of Pullman.



**Table 12 – Median Contract Rent** (in dollars)

	1990	2000
College Hill	294	394
Pullman	326	452

**Table 13 – Median Mortgage** (in dollars)

	1990	2000
College Hill	321	861
Pullman	731	1,099

For people who own their homes and have a mortgage, residents of the College Hill Neighborhood pay about \$200 less per month than those with mortgages in the rest of Pullman. This is likely because their median home values are lower than the median for Pullman.

**Table 14 – Median Home Value** (in dollars)

	1990	2000
College Hill	71,000	129,133
Pullman	80,300	145,000

### **Enrollment**

WSU’s full-time Pullman enrollment is approximately 18,000 students. This level of enrollment is relatively consistent over the last five years.

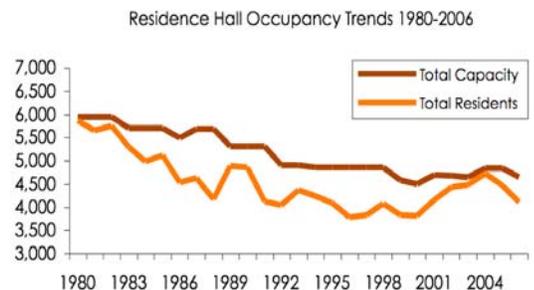
### **Greeks and student housing**

The university requires unmarried freshmen under the age of 20 to live in university housing for at least one year.

WSU provides a mix of housing options for students. The university offers 16 residence halls (or dormitories), and a selection of family apartments, graduate housing, and single-student apartments contained within nine separate apartment complexes.

There are approximately 2,384 WSU student members of fraternities or sororities. There are 24 fraternity chapters at the university and 15 sororities. Sigma Nu and Kappa Alpha Theta are the fraternity and sorority with the highest membership. The existing Greek housing can accommodate 2,162 members.

Student interest in and supply of university housing in residence halls has consistently declined since the 1980s.





Over the years, older halls were converted to other university uses. The university had a capacity of about 6,000 beds in 1980, but, by 2006, capacity dwindled to 4,650.

Apartments offer a popular option for students, but the 932 units are only about 80 percent occupied.

While WSU's Center for Fraternity and Sorority life does not specifically track the number of members who live in Greek housing, usually sorority housing is completely full and fraternity housing has a 75 percent occupancy rate. This means about 760 members live outside the housing provided in Greek row.



Figure 3 - Fraternity and sorority housing is clustered near the center of College Hill

## Land Use Planning

*Regulation and Development*

### **City comprehensive plan and zoning**

Pullman’s comprehensive plan and zoning designations for College Hill are shown here, representing an array of residential, institutional and commercial land uses. Both the comprehensive plan and zoning designations call for multi-family housing in residential areas. Commercial land use designations and zoning districts are adjacent to the WSU campus, clustered along Colorado Avenue near B Street.

**Table 15 – Comprehensive Plan Designations/Zoning District Descriptions**

Designation	Description	Zoning District	Description
Low Density Residential	Housing at less than 15 units per acre	R2	Low density multi-family
High Density Residential	Housing between 15 and 45 units per acre	R4	High density multi-family
Commercial	Retail and related non-residential development	C1	Neighborhood commercial
WSU	Contiguous university campus	WSU	Washington State University



**Figure 4** - The City’s comprehensive plan designates various residential densities and commercial land uses for College Hill.

Multi-family housing designations, however, are not entirely consistent with existing land use patterns. The comprehensive plan’s policies encourage development of higher-intensity housing near the WSU campus, and the mapped land use designations reflect it. Much of College Hill within the R2 zoning district is actually single-family in character and included within the designated College Hill Historic District.

### ***WSU planning***

In the absence of a current campus-wide master plan, WSU relies on a 2002 policy to guide its capital and real estate strategy in College Hill.

That internal policy directs WSU's involvement in College Hill through a number of financial and non-financial actions. According to that policy:

*The College Hill Real Estate Portfolio was established in 2001 as one aspect of a joint effort between the Pullman community and Washington State University to revitalize the living environment for students, faculty, staff and residents in the College Hill area. These efforts seek to improve housing conditions and the appearance of the University's College Hill entrance, align student behavior with the University's values and code of conduct, and enhance the University's image locally and nationally.*

WSU plans to invest in College Hill real estate to provide temporary housing for students and faculty, accommodate university development in the neighborhood, convert other existing uses to student activity or services centers and to provide additional parking. The university also will support continued involvement with Pullman and neighborhood groups and produce



**Figure 5** - Zoning on College Hill permits a variety of multi-family housing densities and community commercial uses.

reports on a regular basis for internal university review.

The university is very concerned about its impacts on the neighborhood and intends that its actions to acquire, develop or dispose of property align with the neighborhood's desires to the extent that they also serve university objectives.

The university's focus is to make real estate and policy decisions that further its mission as a world-class institution of higher learning. Some of its College Hill decisions relate to enriching the campus living experience by providing space for convenient shopping or off-campus housing. Others relate to its support of specialized or "theme" housing in the neighborhood and to the acquisition of derelict rental properties in the hopes of restoring them to owner occupancy. The university recognizes that the condition of College Hill impacts the university's image, and it makes incremental investment in the neighborhood as

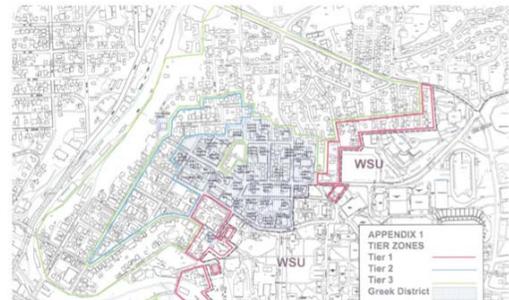


Figure 6 - WSU's College Hill policy identifies priority areas for university investment.

opportunities arise to upgrade its appearance and help it function better as a lively off-campus mixed-use district.

The real estate policy includes several objectives to achieve the goals of revitalizing College Hill in a manner consistent with the university's mission and improving College Hill's living environment. Those objectives include:

- *Acquire properties for future university expansion*
- *Acquire properties to provide temporary housing for faculty and students*
- *Acquire properties that may be used for or converted to use as a student activity and/or student service center*
- *Partner with the City of Pullman, College Hill Association and developers in creating buffer zones and seeking parking solutions*
- *Support Student Affairs' efforts to monitor behavior of university students living off-campus on College Hill*
- *Participate in community planning activities*
- *...Build relationships with College Hill developers to influence neighborhood- and student-friendly development.*

The university's existing master plan dates from 1994, with a minor update made in 2000. Since the 1994 plan, however, the university has worked on

several "precinct" plans, focusing capital planning attention on specific districts on campus with unique needs. The Veterinary Medicine, Bio-Technology, Engineering, and Stadium Way precinct plans deal with capital facilities needs for those special activities and areas. WSU intends to incorporate its work on the precinct plans into a larger current campus master plan.

As part of its planning efforts, the university makes an annual presentation to the City of Pullman to describe capital planning activities underway and the changes in store for the Pullman campus.

### **Neighborhood plan**

The College Hill Association's (CHA) neighborhood plan was prepared by the neighborhood and is not adopted by the City of Pullman. The plan stresses the need for an active, diverse and harmonious College Hill, but it does not provide a land use plan to indicate what level of development should occur where. Its focus, instead, is more strategic, striving for consensus in vision and values and linking them to specific action items designed to mobilize the community to address important issues.

## Issues and Responses

*Symptoms, Cause and Treatment*

### **Community Health**

Many of the concerns voiced during this study and revealed in research of College Hill's history can be addressed as larger "community health" issues. Rowdy behavior, damage to property, and threats (or perceived threats) to public safety can impact normal community and social functions. If unchecked, these patterns will disrupt the very social context of the neighborhood making it less livable for families and others who value security and comfort at home.

### **Safety**

Students and non-students alike do not always feel comfortable on College Hill. Some areas of the community appear to be more threatening than others, and some periods of the year, days of the week or times of day are more likely to be identified as threatening. While actual incidences of violence or injury are rare, the potential for such appears to be growing.

WSU operates well into the evening, with classes and events extending through dusk during the academic year. Students who walk through College Hill after dark, either to their cars or to their homes, do not universally believe their safety is

assured. Representatives of the Associated Students of Washington State University (ASWSU) interviewed for this study noted that walks along Colorado Avenue west of Ruby after dark are particularly troubling for female students. They are frequently harassed and will take other, less direct, routes just to avoid that particular district. The WSU office of Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Assessment and Prevention Services (ADCAPS) indicates that violence against women students is on the increase. Two rape arrests were made in College Hill in 2003.

ASWSU is also an active safety advocate, coordinating with the City of Pullman to upgrade street lighting and with the university to institute and support safety escort and shuttle services for female students.

Families with younger children are similarly troubled, with parents fearful that children will be exposed to unruly or violent behavior. There are no reports of violence against families on College Hill, but parents are scared nonetheless.

Another safety issue revolves around the conflict between pedestrians and automobiles. A College Hill traffic and parking study prepared in 2006 by Nelson/Nygaard indicated that vehicles in the neighborhood in search of parking



spaces pose a notable threat to pedestrians. Though the vehicles may be moving slowly, their drivers are more attentive to parking opportunities than they are to pedestrians crossing the street.

**Noise**

Weekends and the evenings of special events can be loud on College Hill. The week before the start of the fall term, the entire weekend of Apple Cup, and the weeks of and after finals are noisy. Parties and associated traffic are the principal noise sources, with impacts spreading across the neighborhood as revelers move from one activity spot to the next.

**Litter**

The primary litter issues revolve around student residences on College Hill. While there is incidental litter generated by pedestrians on their regular walks through the neighborhood or by animals overturning trashcans, the majority of the litter problem is concentrated at housing units rented by students. Debris left in yards, couches occupying front lawns, inoperable vehicles at curbside, overflowing dumpsters, and the lingering residue scattered about from well-attended parties are the major source of neighborhood litter problems.

The Better Neighborhoods for Pullman group prepared a study of litter and trash

accumulation on College Hill, documenting the locations and types of litter problems. They found:

- o *Dumpsters provided at apartments and Greek houses, particularly those nearest the campus, frequently overflowed. The property managers at these locations noted that those who do not live at the facilities often use the dumpsters.*
- o *Most litter and yard debris problems occur at a few locations and are chronic.*

**Law enforcement and crime**

City of Pullman police reported 190 College Hill incidents in 2005. One hundred of them were alcohol arrests. Over the past three years, complaints of simple assault appear to be down, while theft, weapon and drug arrests are up.

**Table 16 – College Hill Crime Statistics**

Crime	2003	2004	2005
Rape	2	0	0
Robbery	1	0	1
Assault (aggravated)	3	0	0
Assault (simple)	26	15	7
Theft	8	56	61
Motor vehicle theft	1	0	0
Alcohol arrests	119	85	100
Drug arrests	3	5	16
Weapon arrests	0	1	5

*Source: WSU Police Department compiled from City of Pullman Police Department statistics*

College Hill is not part of the WSU campus, and WSU police neither patrol the area nor respond to complaints



emanating from College Hill. The City of Pullman Police Department provides all law enforcement for College Hill. During times of particularly high demand, such as Apple Cup or other major events, the police department will call up its full staff of paid and volunteer officers to enhance the law enforcement presence. During other times, however, the police department has two to three officers on duty. Response times to non-emergency events on College Hill can suffer if officers are busy in other areas of the community.

College Hill is a busy place for law enforcement, with high rates of alcohol-related arrests and demand for service that may occasionally outstrip the City's ability to provide it.

### **Alcohol consumption**

There are parties in College Hill. WSU's Greek row was once notorious for excessive alcohol consumption. In the mid 1990s, WSU prohibited alcohol in its fraternities and sororities, attempting to stem over-consumption and ensure student health. The parties have since moved out of the fraternities and into private housing in College Hill. Alcohol consumption is still an issue.

WSU also established its office of Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Assessment and Prevention Services (ADCAPS) to help address this continuing problem. The

ADCAPS office is active in community outreach and in counseling students on responsible, safe behavior.

### ***Student population***

More than 18,000 students attend classes at WSU Pullman. Of those, approximately 10,000 to 12,000 live off campus. Many of those who reside off campus live in, park in, or walk through College Hill.

Incoming freshman who are unmarried and under the age of 20 are required to live in either university or Greek housing. The dorms are not as popular with students as they used to be. Few sophomores elect to return to the dorms, choosing to live off campus instead. This results in a young, off-campus student population.

Greek houses are also waning in popularity. Fraternity and sorority members seek living off campus and out of the Greek house, occupying "live-out" residential units. While the WSU sororities are at capacity now, the fraternities are approximately 25% vacant.

### **Turnover**

The university, long-term residents and property managers invest time to help acclimate student residents on College Hill to the neighborhood's residential setting. The effort must be repeated



frequently, however, as new student residents flow into the neighborhood with each new academic term. Residential turnover is high, with few student residents living in the neighborhood for more than three years. Statistics on the rate of turnover are not available, but interviews with students and property managers during the writing of this report indicated that most student residents live on the Hill for two years or less.

Turnover of the resident student population means that conflict solved one year may very well recur the next, involving new student residents unfamiliar with neighborhood expectations.

### **Supervision**

Students residing in College Hill are mostly unsupervised. Those living in Greek houses must answer to house rules. Those living in private homes, however, are on their own, bound only by the terms of their lease agreements, the laws of the City of Pullman, and the willingness of the landlords and City to enforce their requirements.

### ***Property maintenance***

Poor property maintenance is a chief complaint of College Hill residents. Property maintenance issues that result in shabby appearance, piles of litter, hazards

to public health and the presence of the proverbial front-lawn couch trouble both students and non-students alike.

Many landlords are conscientious stewards of their rental housing units. However, according to those interviewed in this report, there are two types of rental properties most frequently associated with recurring property maintenance issues:

### **Absentee landlords**

This situation is not unique to Pullman and College Hill. Those landlords who live outside of Pullman appear to be more likely to neglect their properties and allow them to slide into decay. They may not even be fully aware of the condition of their rentals, satisfied that rents continue to be paid and holding little interest to visit or reinvest in the property unless absolutely necessary.

### **Parent landlords**

In many cases, WSU parents residing in places other than Pullman have purchased homes in College Hill, intending to house their children there during the years they are in school. After the students leave WSU, the parents sometimes retain the home and continue to rent it to students, keeping the asset and enjoying the income. Though the incentive for purchasing the home may



have been different than that for other absentee landlords, these “parent-owned” homes soon develop the same set of characteristics seen in absentee-owned homes.

In many cases, landlords contract with property managers to tend to their rental units. A local association of Pullman’s property managers has been active in working with student tenants to educate them on their responsibilities to keep the property clean. In return, these property managers do what they can to ensure housing is safe and maintained in good condition.

ASWSU also contributes toward a solution, periodically running articles in the Daily Evergreen to explain tenant responsibilities in property maintenance. The December 5 and 6 issues of the Evergreen included such articles, as well as companion pieces describing tenant recourse for negligent property maintenance performed by landlords.

The student association also created a student committee in 2003 to assist students in resolving issues associated with off-campus housing. Interest in the committee has waned, however, and no students now serve on that committee.

WSU now maintains a Web site providing students with information and tips for off-campus housing life.

### ***Neighborhood Fabric***

College Hill is under stress. Long-term residents are worried that the very elements of the neighborhood that drew them there are at risk. The university is concerned that the shift in the neighborhood’s character to a rougher, less attractive place may damage WSU’s image, put students at risk, and hinder its ability to maintain world-class status. Students enjoy the neighborhood’s proximity, but some also express shame because of the “party” legacy attached to it and the deteriorating conditions of some of the housing.

College Hill’s social and physical fabric is at risk of coming undone, with some believing the “tipping point” of a transition into an unrecoverable slide has already been reached. Others believe now is a time of opportunity. Both points of view demand action of some sort.

### ***Vision***

This is an issue only because there is no documented, publicly vetted and officially adopted vision for College Hill. Many agree that the Hill should be diverse, active, respectful of its historic origins, and interlinked with WSU, with students and families living in dynamic harmony. Nothing officially adopted confirms this.

In the absence of a neighborhood-specific vision, the community's expectations of what can be will have no anchor, and the policies of WSU and the City of Pullman will have no measure by which to be judged. The absence of an adopted vision will make dealing with the neighborhood's issues difficult.

The City's vision as adopted in the 1999 comprehensive plan mentions relationships between neighborhoods and the WSU campus, but it differs somewhat from the vision and core values contained within the College Hill Neighborhood master plan and the nuance and directives contained in WSU's real estate policy.

### *Land use*

College Hill is composed of a mix of institutional, residential and commercial land uses. In many cases, particularly in the residential areas, a parcel's land use does not match the zoning or comprehensive plan land use designation applied to it. Many single-family residences are zoned for multi-family housing. While many have remained single-family, others have not. The opportunity of earning rental income has enticed some property owners to increase development intensity, either by converting large homes into multiple apartments or by constructing new multi-

unit buildings to reach maximum allowable densities.

The divergence between the existing land uses and the type of land uses permitted by zoning threatens to destabilize areas of College Hill. The City's comprehensive plan calls for the development of high-density housing near the university, but its application of R2 zoning in traditionally single-family neighborhoods, while consistent with the comprehensive plan, has disrupted the pattern of single-family development. The introduction of higher intensity housing has been occurring incrementally and on scattered parcels. Apartments are distributed throughout the neighborhood, altering the physical character of historically single-family areas and pressuring the remaining single-family homes to undergo similar conversion.

The land use and zoning designations appear to have been applied with a broad brush. College Hill's complexity in land use warrants a more fine-grained zoning approach.

An interesting consequence of upzoning from single-family residential to multi-family residential is the way in which property is perceived by owners and potential purchasers. The value of land zoned for single-family residential is generally tied to the condition and size of

the home built upon it. The value of land zoned for multi-family is more tied to the value of the rents that may be earned from it. Owners of multi-family zoned property do not necessarily care about the condition of the home as much as they care about the property's ability to produce revenue.

One result of this consequence is "disinvestment" in existing homes, motivated by the owner's future hope of developing something more grand later on and supported by a continuing revenue stream of rent payments generated by tenants in the existing, possibly deteriorating, structure.

The discrepancy between what has historically existed and what could be developed creates tension in the neighborhood. There is a pervading sense that the area is in transition, but there is little consensus on what the outcome of the transition should be or how the transition should be managed.

### ***WSU expansion and vitality***

Though the university has no plans to expand the campus boundary into College Hill, its College Hill real estate policy indicates plans to acquire property in the neighborhood, becoming an increasingly significant participant in College Hill's functions and fabric. The policy underscores WSU's

interdependence with the neighborhood and directs the university to invest in ways that may convert land from current use to something more closely linked to the school. While the neighborhood may embrace additional student activity and the rehabilitation and reuse of structures under university stewardship, the introduction of off-campus parking in the neighborhood may be unwelcome.

This policy has not been shared broadly outside the university and its directives may simultaneously surprise, worry and reassure the non-university community. It discloses a comprehensive and concerted effort to reinvest in College Hill's improvement.

The university is very interested in enhancing its level of service to potential students and faculty. This has motivated WSU to pay close attention to College Hill and to consider partnership or direct investment to improve neighborhood conditions to enhance student living and academic environments.

In this regard, the university now owns nine residential properties in College Hill, using the homes and apartments to provide housing for students with special interests. These include housing for the CERES sorority, students participating in police internship, students in the French language program, and so on.





According to that study's problem statement,

*...Insufficient on- and off-street parking supply has historically been an issue in this area. Because the neighborhood was designed as a single-family community, the intensification of uses has created a deficit of off-street parking, particularly as single-family homes have been redeveloped or have been split into multiple units. Additionally, the proximity to the university, where parking costs are much higher than the rest of the city, and the lack of on-street parking controls in the neighborhood encourage WSU commuters to park in the neighborhood and walk to campus. In combination, these factors have caused local residents to complain about parking availability near their place of residence and/or be forced into parking illegally in their own neighborhood.*

The study found that the highest parking occupancy rates occur within ¼ mile of the campus between 7 to 10 am, particularly along Colorado, Opal, and California streets. The undersupply of available parking has led to vehicles parking in front of driveways and on front lawns.

There appear to be several different user groups seeking parking in College Hill:

**Resident non-student** – These are the families who live in the neighborhood,

representing non-students and including faculty, staff and others who may, in some way, be related to the university. Parking demand from this group is generally consistent with what is expected in single-family neighborhoods, with off-street parking provided in a manner that usually meets household needs. There is little demand for on-street parking from this group, except to accommodate visitors to the home.

**Resident student** – These are the individuals who either rent or own housing in the neighborhood and are enrolled at WSU. Occupancy patterns of the housing units may be quite different than those for resident non-students, with *per capita* vehicle ownership being relatively high. Off-street parking may be inadequate to meet parking demand, causing residents to park vehicles on the street, in front yards, or in remote locations.

**WSU commuters** – These are the people who park their vehicles near campus, avoiding the cost of a campus parking permit but still seeking convenient day parking near the university. This group desires on-street parking close to campus, with peak demand occurring on weekday mornings.

**Event attendees** – These are the people who visit WSU to attend special events,



usually held in the evenings or on weekends. They desire on-street parking near the campus, but their peak demand periods do not usually conflict with those of neighborhood residents.

**Neighborhood visitors** – These are the people who come to College Hill to do something other than walk to the campus to attend an event or go to class. They desire on-street parking near their destinations, optimally a spot in front of the house they are visiting.

The City of Pullman instituted a residential parking permit (RPP) program in portions of College Hill. The program does not apply to the entire study area. According to Pullman’s RPP ordinance, a request for inclusion in the RPP program can be made only by petition of the neighbors in the area proposed for the RPP. This works well for areas where owner occupancy rates are high, but it can be difficult in areas where rental properties predominate.

The Nelson/Nygaard study claims that in the year 2000 there were 5,550 driving age adults in College Hill out of a neighborhood population of only 5,722. They estimated that residents owned approximately 1,850 vehicles and that there are approximately 1,326 on-street parking spaces within the study area. The rate of auto ownership is high, creating

demand for more parking spaces than the streets can accommodate.

Pullman’s zoning ordinance requires that off-street parking be provided at a rate of one parking space per bedroom for new multi-family development. While this can provide adequate parking for residents, it devotes more land to vehicle storage. This results in pressure to purchase underdeveloped property nearby and to replace existing residential structures with parking lots.

### *Traffic*

Most of the vehicular issues in College Hill are related to parking and the compromised safety of pedestrians and bicyclists put at risk by drivers focused on finding places to park. Other traffic issues on the Hill, however, deal with the flow and control of cars at intersections, such as the intersection at B St and Colorado. Pullman recently converted that intersection to a four-way stop. That intersection is impacted by an offset alignment of B St. and a vertical curve on Colorado that limits visibility.

Traffic issues in College Hill are consistent with what would be expected in a residential area immediately adjacent to a major university campus. The streets can be busy, but speeds are slow.

### *Infrastructure*

Pullman is attempting to respond to the increasing population densities in College Hill. Recent infrastructure improvements have included sidewalk installations, street and utility upgrades and the installation of street lighting in various areas.

## Priorities

### *Choices, Tradeoffs and Hopes*

As the various actors in College Hill consider their options, they will also need to consider them within the context of what is most important. After conducting interviews with numerous stakeholders and researching various documents and articles, it appears that the following six criteria, in no particular order, rise to the top. They will be important considerations during the formation of College Hill strategies and policy and may help prioritize action as one option is weighed against another.

### ***Safety***

College Hill residents, WSU students, the City and the university all want College Hill to be a safe community. They understand that a diverse and active neighborhood will present safety challenges, but they believe that development of an energetic, college-focused community can be managed in a safe manner.

### ***Neighborhood character***

All of those interviewed for this study are charmed by College Hill's character and its historic relationship to the university. The community cherishes College Hill's position as a historic resource and as a

neighborhood where families coexist with student housing.

### ***WSU growth and vitality***

WSU must remain a world-class university, and all strategies considered for application to College Hill must be consistent with that aim. Pullman depends on a successful university, and College Hill is even more sensitive to any fluctuations the university may experience.

### ***Student housing close to WSU***

The City's comprehensive plan and the economic and academic necessities of students dictate that housing be available in close proximity to the university.

### ***Property values***

Homeowners and landlords in College Hill wish to maintain the value of their real estate assets. Any strategy impacting property values will need to be considered very closely to ensure that the benefits of the action are well worth the cost.

### ***Relationship to other areas***

Pullman residents understand that draconian regulations or oppressive policy changes imposed on College Hill may have repercussions on other neighborhoods. Just as the prohibition of

alcohol in WSU Greek houses led to off-site partying, restrictions imposed in College Hill designed to improve the neighborhood's condition may lead to ramifications in Military Hill or elsewhere. It will be important to keep this in mind during discussions of possible programs, ensuring that impacts to other areas of the community are considered in the debate.

## Actions

### *What to Do Now*

The situation on College Hill requires individual and collaborative actions in response. The following sections propose actions that the actors on College Hill can recommend to restore balance in the neighborhood and help it become the place the community wants it to be.

### ***Individual actions***

Individual actions are those that can be undertaken unilaterally by an agency or group, requiring little in the way of commitment from others to create, adopt or implement them.

### **City of Pullman**

Any action undertaken by the City, by the nature of representative city government, will be collaborative to some degree. The City Council represents the entire community, and any legislative action taken by the City requires public meetings. The City does, however, have authority to act unilaterally to establish programs that implement its ordinances and to initiate and fund studies or policy revisions. The actions listed below are unilateral – at least at the outset – and are within the scope of the City’s authority.

**Law enforcement** – The City of Pullman is the jurisdiction responsible for law enforcement on College Hill. While the City’s police department is doing what it can with limited resources, it may not be doing enough. College Hill demands a disproportionately high amount of police attention, and the department now responds as it is able. The department provides additional staff to assist with major events on campus, devoting a large amount of its resources to increase its presence at certain times of year. On a continuing basis, however, the department needs more help to effect the desired culture change on College Hill. The City can either find ways to dedicate more resources to the police department or pursue collaborations with others to increase law enforcement on the Hill. Alternately, the City may wish to focus instead on continuity of law enforcement during an academic year, helping establish acceptable behavior patterns and enhancing the neighborhood’s confidence in the department’s ability to respond.

**Parking** – The City now manages a residential parking permit program and imposes parking requirements for new development on College Hill, described earlier in this report. The City may wish to consider expanding the residential street parking program into all areas of College Hill without requiring neighborhood initiation of the program.

This is generally consistent with the recommendations from the Nelson/Nygaard report. It would require an amendment to the ordinance establishing the residential parking program, but it may help begin discussion of a more comprehensive parking solution.

Current zoning requires that new development provide one parking space per bedroom. This may reflect student housing's increased parking demand, but this requirement also increases the amount of land devoted to parking. Insertion of parking lots into a residential neighborhood can devastate neighborhood character, but it is an immediate and direct result of an increased parking requirement.

The City may consider revising its parking requirements to call for a maximum of two parking spaces per residential unit in conjunction with a comprehensive residential street parking program. This would reduce demand for parking lots on College Hill but limit the amount of on-street parking available to College Hill residents.

The results of such a program may include the need for off-site parking for student and other households unable to

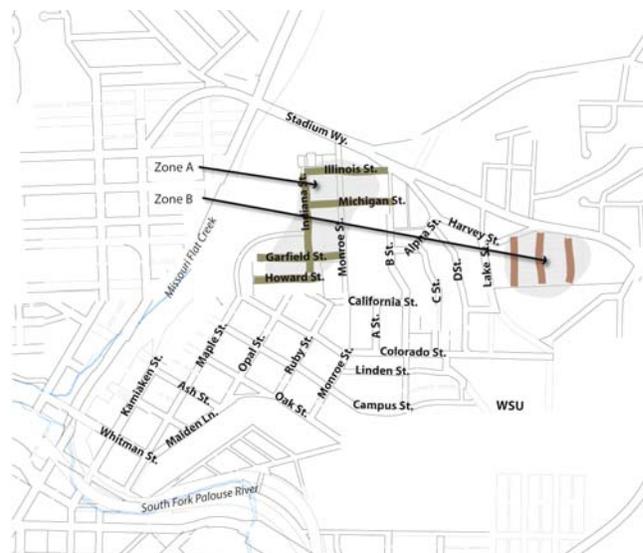
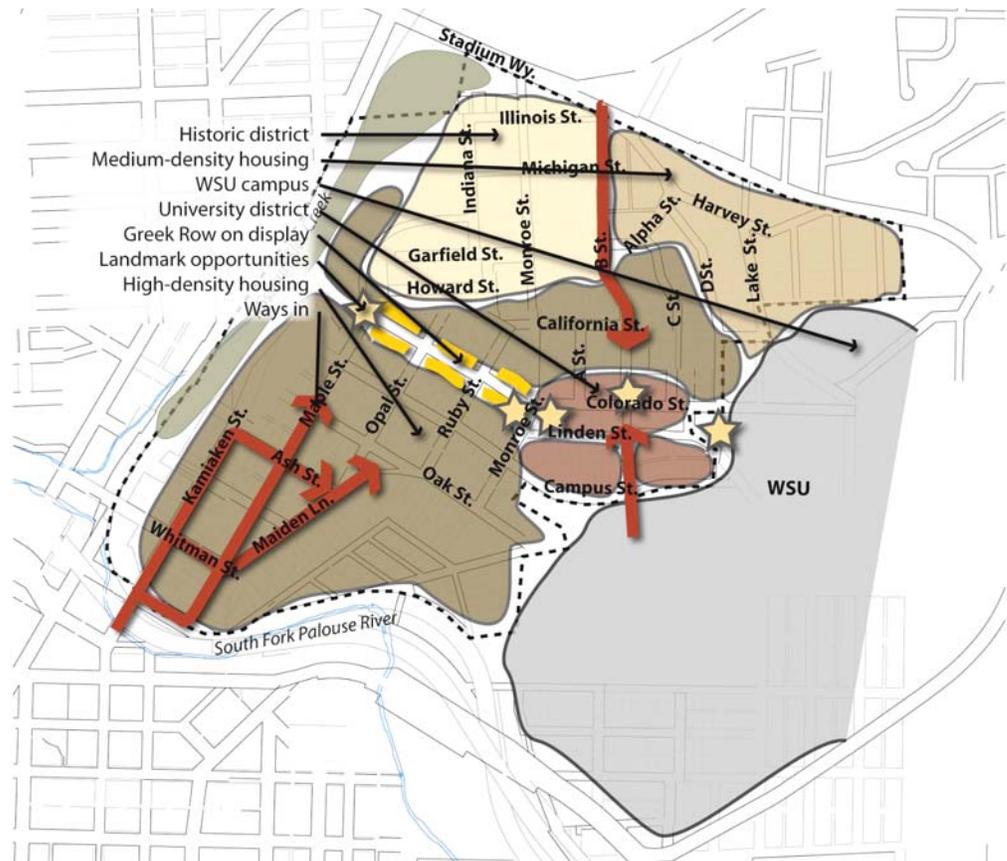


Figure 8 - The City's RPP is now limited to a handful of streets in College Hill.

cope with two spaces per unit plus their allocation of on-street parking. It may also result in an overall reduction of vehicle ownership on College Hill. Students may plan on sharing vehicles, walking, riding the bus, or riding bicycles if vehicle storage is scarce or distant. While the City alone can institute this program, successful implementation would likely require some degree of WSU involvement.

**Neighborhood planning** - The College Hill Association (CHA) prepared a neighborhood plan in 2005. It set in motion a variety of neighborhood-based programs, and the City has embraced some of the plan's recommendations. It is time, however, that the City respond by initiating its own neighborhood planning process to develop a broadly accepted vision for the Hill and include



comprehensive representation in the planning process, building on the work CHA started. The results of the neighborhood plan could inform specific zoning changes that may go beyond accommodating the historic district and set appropriate long-range land use policy for the neighborhood.

**Comprehensive plan revisions –**

Pullman’s comprehensive plan establishes land use direction on College Hill at a fairly broad scale, a scale not representative of the Hill’s complexity and diversity. The City may wish to reconsider its long-range land use designations on College Hill to reflect better the mix of residential, institutional, and commercial activity occurring there

**Figure 9 –** This neighborhood urban design concept illustrates how mixed uses, a university district and a prominent of Greek Row can come together.

and to anticipate more assertively what opportunities may arise. While placing high-density housing near a college campus makes good sense, the comprehensive plan may establish a land use plan that integrates the high-density housing more effectively into the system of arterials and social spaces that attract the most activity. This would allow the land use pattern to respect and enhance the historic single-family districts, redirecting apartments into a mixed-use, urban living environment along Colorado Street and Campus Street.

**Zoning revisions** – The College Hill Neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic places. The City’s zoning map should be revised to reflect that. The new zoning district could take the form of a historic district overlay covering a single-family residential zoning district or an entirely new zoning district with standards and land use regulations customized for College Hill. Zoning could also be amended to reflect direction established in the comprehensive plan, creating a pattern of zoning districts encouraging development of a mixed-use, urban activity center adjacent to the university. Any changes to zoning in College Hill, with the possible exception of measures to address the historic district, should follow a comprehensive neighborhood planning effort and be designed to implement it.

**Design guidelines** – Much of what disturbs College Hill residents and the university is the scale and character of new development and structural remodels. City-adopted design *guidelines* can suggest specific types of construction and design treatments that will bring new development and remodels into closer conformance with the neighborhood’s character. Design *standards* would require them. Either guidelines or standards can be considered as part of a larger strategy, probably embedded in a neighborhood

plan or comprehensive reassessment of College Hill zoning.

#### **WSU**

WSU student behavior and the pressure to develop housing to serve students are probably the two largest forces acting on College Hill. College Hill is mostly privately owned and not subject to WSU’s jurisdiction. However, the university’s unilateral policies regarding real estate acquisition and disposal, student housing, and student conduct are major influences on the Hill.

**Campus master plan** – WSU does not have a current master plan available for public review, though it does prepare “precinct plans” to guide capital investment. The university may wish to consider assembling a comprehensive master plan so the City and surrounding neighborhoods can collaborate with the university to implement the plan and prepare to respond to changes the university plans to make. The master plan would not necessarily limit the university’s ability to respond to opportunities or react to circumstances. It would, rather, promote community partnership in university growth and vitality, allowing more open discussion of the university’s long-range plans.

As a public institution, WSU is held to a high standard of transparency and

collaboration. Some actions taken under the university's College Hill real estate policy must remain confidential to the university, but its general implications should be part of a public discussion. The neighborhood and the City should be invited as partners to ensure the course set in this policy is consistent with community vision.

**Off-campus student orientation** – WSU may wish to continue and enhance its student off-campus living orientation and Web site, helping educate those students living off campus on appropriate behavior. The orientation could include basic information on caring for a home, conducting responsible social gatherings, dealing with roommates and landlords, or parking and storing vehicles. The orientation could also include information not necessarily specific to College Hill, describing public transportation options, bike trails and facilities, and commuter parking opportunities.

**Discipline** – WSU has already implemented a student behavior discipline program. The university should continue the program and work with the community to identify appropriate community service projects.

**Community health** – WSU's office of Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Assessment and Prevention Services

(ADCAPS) is active in its outreach with College Hill and the rest of Pullman monitoring impacts of student behavior and correcting problems associated with substance abuse. This program should be continued and funded to a level that will sustain its contact with the community as well as its efficacy in counseling clients.

**Law enforcement** – University police do not patrol or respond to events on College Hill. They are restricted to policing within campus boundaries. WSU may wish to revisit its policing and police personnel policy to permit its law enforcement officers to assist with law enforcement efforts on College Hill. In pursuing this, both the City and WSU would need to address liability and labor issues.

**Housing policy** – WSU may wish to implement strategies to make the dormitories, university apartments, and Greek houses more attractive to students, enticing them to return there for their sophomore years. This would allow the students to live in a supervised condition until the end of their second year at the university, releasing more mature students into the off-campus living environment. The impact of this requirement on private sector rentals must be considered from an unfair business competition perspective and from the perspective of a broader community benefit.

**Alcohol policy** – In response to growing alcohol use in the 1990s, WSU declared Greek houses “dry.” Prohibiting alcohol in the fraternities and sororities may have reduced alcohol consumption on Greek row, but it pushed alcohol consumption into areas even further off campus. WSU may wish to review its alcohol policy to address the off-campus impacts “dry” Greek houses have helped generate, considering more closely supervised alcohol availability in Greek houses, or more severe action for underage students drinking off campus and causing trouble.

### **Neighborhood Association**

The College Hill Association (CHA) has assumed a lead position to facilitate collaboration between various actors on the Hill, preparing a neighborhood plan, conducting outreach programs, holding regular meetings, sending delegates to Better Neighborhoods for Pullman meetings, and spearheading formation of the College Hill Historic District. The greatest challenge now for the neighborhood will be to create a sustainable organization and a sustainable method of delivering services to its membership.

**CHA meetings** – The neighborhood association should continue to hold meetings with as broad an invitation list as possible, scheduling meetings only as

frequently as necessary to conduct business, tackle neighborhood issues, or facilitate collaboration with other groups.

**Outreach** – The neighborhood association is the instrument that represents the community to those off the Hill and to those new residents who choose to live there. A continuing outreach program is especially important on College Hill because of the rapid turnover of student residents and the persistent need for the young residents to learn how to live on their own. The outreach program could be uncomplicated and repeatable, including a “welcome to the neighborhood” packet delivered to student households at the beginning of each academic year or a personal – and, perhaps, informal – “mentorship” effort where permanent residents facilitate friendships with students living in the neighborhood.

### **WSU Students**

WSU student behavior is a primary issue of this report and a primary cause of upset on the Hill. While this particular population is easy to identify as a source of much of the trouble, it is inappropriate to paint all students with the same brush. Many College Hill student residents are conscientious neighbors and are just as upset about loud and destructive behavior as are permanent residents. The Associated Students of Washington State

University (ASWSU) organization is a student body that can undertake actions to relieve some of the pressure on College Hill.

**Clean up** – WSU students have previously participated in clean-up exercises, particularly immediately prior to major university events, such as parents day weekend and graduation. These clean-up activities should continue, with students living on College Hill encouraged to participate.

**Auto dependence** – Students want to have their cars where they live. College Hill is becoming increasingly congested with cars belonging to College Hill residents and cars belonging to commuter students and neighborhood visitors. The streets and off-street parking facilities in the neighborhood cannot handle the demand. Automobile ownership is a large expense to the owner, costing more than \$4,000 per year. Students may wish to encourage a less auto-dependent culture on campus, supporting shared use of autos among roommates, organizing carpools to academic, social, athletic or other events, or promoting other modes of travel for daily activities. The benefits of these programs would impact more than just College Hill, creating a greater sense of community and interdependence campus-wide.

This may be easier to recommend than to implement, however. Successful reduction of auto dependence will involve many other actors than just the students. Improvements to area lighting to ensure student safety, enhanced public transportation linking the university to shopping districts, and provision of multi-modal facilities will require participation from the City, Pullman Transit, and the university. The students must initiate by changing their demand habits. The others will respond.

### **WSU Greek community**

College Hill is home to WSU's Greek Row. The Greek organizations own substantial properties on the Hill, but the number of student residents in Greek housing is static or in decline. The fraternity community is closely linked to WSU and to national fraternal organizations, and their missions to promote academic achievement, social development, and community outreach enable them to sponsor programs for a variety of purposes. Here are some that may benefit College Hill:

**"Live-out" supervision** – Alcohol is not permitted in fraternity and sorority houses, but no such restrictions apply to "live-outs." Greek members not residing in Greek houses can host parties and possess alcohol without violating

fraternity or WSU policy. The university and national fraternal organizations have recently taken up the issue of rowdy behavior at Greek “live-outs,” but the problem persists. WSU’s Greek community may wish to increase the level of supervision of its “live-outs” to curtail bad behavior and demonstrate to the community its desire to take care of its own problems.

**Auto ownership policy** – City parking regulations require one parking space per bedroom, mostly in response to demand. Fraternity houses accommodate scores of residents, and they generally have too few parking spaces on their property to accommodate the cars the residents have. Parked vehicles overflow onto neighborhood streets. Fraternities should consider policies regarding automobile ownership, requiring vehicles in excess of those accommodated on house property to be located in remote parking facilities.

Fraternities are struggling to maintain membership, and they want to make sure they offer the best package to serve prospective pledges. Having adequate parking is one asset the Greek houses may wish to retain. They may not enjoy the prospect of telling pledges either to leave their car at home or to park it a mile away from the frat house. The Greek system would need to respond by offering

compensating incentives to potential members.

**Outreach** – Rightly or not, the fraternities have been the focus of much of College Hill’s unrest. They should consider enhancing their community outreach efforts to help identify problem areas, develop solutions, and take action. An open and honest self assessment, delivered publicly with an action plan, will go a long way to relieve resident anxiety and demonstrate Greek ability to manage its own affairs.

### **Landlords and property managers**

Rental housing demands landlord and property manager involvement. Many of Pullman’s property managers have come together to address common issues, and the problems associated with managing College Hill rental units are important ones. Not all Pullman landlords participate in the association, however, and their reticence limits the organization’s success. Landlords and property managers have immediate contact with rental tenants, but their recourse to correct improper behavior is not always immediate.

**Orientation** – Landlords and property managers have a financial interest in finding tenants who behave well. Some offer orientation packets to new tenants, introducing them to the standards of

behavior expected of them. An orientation packet, designed to be accessible to students, should be standardized for all renters and delivered to new tenants at least once per academic year. Landlords and property managers can create and distribute such an orientation piece unilaterally, including it with standardized lease agreement packages.

**Communication** – Landlords are often the most directly at risk when behavior results in vandalism or negligent care of residential units. Some property managers are quite active in managing their tenants, visiting them at early signs of trouble and discussing with them ways to modify their behavior. Others are not as involved. The landlord/property management community should consider ways to encourage all landlords and property managers to develop personal relationships with their tenants and to help guide them in proper behavior. For many tenants, this is their first time living as independent adults, and they may need help in building those skills.

**Eviction** – Evicting tenants is a last resort, and it often results in major financial loss to the landlord and property manager. It is also difficult to evict a single tenant of a multi-tenant unit, resulting in punishment of individuals who may not have contributed to the need for eviction. Landlords evicting tenants during the

middle of the academic year may find it difficult to locate new tenants.

In some cases, however, eviction is the appropriate answer. It is a tool available to landlords and property managers to ensure tenants act responsibly and conform to the terms of their lease agreements.

### **Developers**

Real estate developers and builders capitalize on the increase in demand for off-campus housing. College Hill, adjacent to the campus and appropriately zoned for higher-intensity development, is ripe for construction of new apartment buildings and the conversion of existing homes into the apartment market. Developers can act unilaterally the following ways to improve the situation on College Hill:

**Partnership** – Developers and builders should seek partnerships with the community, communicating plans and proposals openly to build trust, consider community input, and create a physical environment on College Hill that respects the nature of the community and advances its aims of providing quality student housing near the university.

**Design** – Developers must design their projects better. If design does not improve, the City will almost certainly

adopt design guidelines or standards that will impose restrictions that the development community may not enjoy. Projects must find a balance between providing student housing and respecting their surroundings. Many housing projects in College Hill have failed to do that.

**Materials and construction** – Just as design must improve, so must the quality of construction and materials. Many student housing units are poorly constructed, using materials that do not last or are inappropriately applied as exterior surfaces.

**Density** – Developers and builders may wish to consider more innovative ways to provide high-density student housing, perhaps by including retail at street level in areas immediately adjacent to campus, initiating “car-free” housing programs, or consolidating properties in identified high-density areas to create unique design opportunities consistent with high-density aims.

### ***Collaborative actions***

Many implementation actions will require collaboration between the various groups on College Hill to succeed. What follows is a list of recommended actions, categorized by implementation partnership.

### **City/WSU**

**Capital Planning** – The City and the university can collaborate to identify the timing and design of capital investment on College Hill. Both the City and WSU conduct capital planning, and the College Hill neighborhood is a point of intersection. City work on streets around the university should be coordinated with campus street work, allowing for consistency in street design and minimizing neighborhood disruption. Other, similar, capital projects can benefit from collaboration, too.

**Urban design** – The interface between the campus realm and the off-campus realm is an exciting place, busy with pedestrians, rich in activity, and flush with development opportunity. The City and university should work together to create a design scheme for this space, defining activity areas, gathering places, streetscape treatments, and land use changes that accommodate and take full advantage of this interface.

**Remote parking** – Vehicle storage is a major College Hill issue. The City and WSU should collaborate on locating commuter student parking and College Hill resident vehicle storage away from the neighborhood. The remote parking lots can be located on disused industrial property or elsewhere in the community, served with public transportation and



made relatively secure with fencing, lighting, and controlled access. There may be creative financing tools available to help implement this type of program.

#### **WSU/Neighborhood**

**Communication** – CHA and WSU already communicate through regular CHA meetings and a continuing attitude of cooperation. WSU’s executive director of Real Estate and External Affairs and representatives of WSU Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Assessment, and Prevention Services (ADCAPS) routinely participate in CHA and Better Neighborhoods for Pullman (BNP) meetings. This collaboration should continue.

**ADCAPS support** – While the university is responsible for funding and maintaining the ADCAPS program, the neighborhood has responsibility to help tailor the program to meet its needs. Students who successfully participate in the program should be welcomed into the neighborhood and recognized for their contributions. This partnership is an important component of establishing and sustaining a culture change on College Hill.

#### **City/Neighborhood**

**Historic district** – Now that the neighborhood has succeeded in processing its application for historic

district recognition, the City should take up the issue in zoning and other development regulations. Any work to implement historic district preservation must be undertaken as part of a City/neighborhood partnership, ensuring the new rules respect the essence of the district and that the neighborhood is aware of the limitations and implications inherent in zoning.

**Parking program** – The City has the authority to initiate revisions to its on-street parking program, but successful implementation will require effective neighborhood involvement. It is unlikely that a parking program of the scope envisioned in this report would garner unanimous support, but the neighborhood will be key in creating the political momentum necessary to implement an effective program for all of College Hill.

#### **City/WSU/Neighborhood**

**Vision** – College Hill needs a vision statement that represents diversity of opinion and that is vetted through a comprehensive, public process. Different groups have differing ideas of what the comprehensive plan and zoning are intended to accomplish, what WSU’s role on the Hill is or should be, and how the historic area of the neighborhood should be preserved. A vision process is a

fundamental step in reaching broader agreement of what the future should hold.

**Neighborhood plan** – Another critical, collaborative action is the development of a neighborhood plan. This plan, based on the vision statement, would examine different land use alternatives and establish a land use plan and zoning pattern, street designs, and architectural guidelines to help College Hill manage change in a way consistent with community, City, and university hopes.

#### **Other Collaborations**

**Landlord registration** – The City and its landlords should form a communication partnership enabled by registration of those who rent property in Pullman but live outside the community. This program would allow the City to notify directly the property owners whose properties may be subjected to damaging behavior by tenants or subject to code enforcement activity well before the problem reaches that stage.

**Inspection** – The City and landlords/property managers should collaborate on a new inspection program, with property owners and tenants empowered to request City inspection of suspected health and safety problems on their premises. The new program may also include provisions to permit inspections after a certain number of



**Figure 10** - Mixed-use development at a modest scale can help create a dynamic "University District" in College Hill.

complaints from neighbors have been received and after appropriate notification has been provided to property owners and responsible property managers.

**Better Neighborhoods for Pullman** – This group, composed of members of City staff, neighborhood residents, students and WSU staff, exists as an outgrowth of the CHA efforts on College Hill. While its current focus is predominantly on College Hill, its relevance extends to other areas of Pullman, as well. Changes in policy directed at College Hill may have implications for other areas of the community. Increasingly draconian restrictions considered for College Hill may shift problems to other neighborhoods. This group, with a larger, citywide focus, can help temper policy recommendations to ensure impacts in all areas can be considered.

**Public transportation** – Pullman Transit designed its system to serve the needs of WSU students. As discussions evolve to include remote parking locations or other strategies to reduce student demand for

vehicles, Pullman Transit should be invited to participate.

**Rental rehabilitation** – Developers, landlords, property managers, the university and the City may wish to consider pursuing a rental rehabilitation program designed to make grant or loan funds available to qualifying rental units in need of rehabilitation. The sponsoring agency could seek grants to establish a revolving loan or small grant fund, collaborating with other partners to establish program rules and review applications. King County has instituted a similar program, using HOME funds from the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) awarded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. CDBG funds are becoming scarce, however, so the City may wish to seek or develop another funding source.

***Priority actions***

The implementation matrix on the following page indicates the various priority issues each action addresses and assigns responsibility for implementation to the various actors as discussed in this report. Those actions shaded in gray are the highest priority, selected based on their scope in addressing important issues and their strategic importance. These priority actions should be considered as an integrated program, constituting a substantial first step to address the problems on College Hill and set into motion the desired culture change.

### Priority Implementation Matrix

Action	Issues					Actors						Comments
	Safety	Litter	Parking	Noise	Compatibility	City	WSU	CHA	Landlords	Students	Others	
Law enforcement	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓					
Parking	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Neighborhood plan			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Comprehensive plan			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Zoning			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Design guidelines		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Campus master plan			✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Off-campus orientation		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Discipline	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Community health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
Housing policy			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		
Alcohol policy	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓		
CHA meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Outreach		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Clean-up		✓			✓		✓			✓		
Auto dependence	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
“Live-out” supervision	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	National Greek affiliates
Auto ownership policy			✓		✓		✓			✓		
Rental orientation		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Communication		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Including BNP
Eviction		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Project partnership					✓						✓	Builders/ developers
Design			✓		✓	✓					✓	Builders/ developers
Materials and construction	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓	Builders/ developers
Density			✓		✓	✓					✓	Builders/ developers
Capital planning					✓	✓	✓					
Urban design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ADCAPS	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Historic district			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
Vision					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Builders/ developers
Landlord registration		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Inspection	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		
BNP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Public transportation	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	Pullman Transit
Rental rehabilitation	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	Housing authority