

Draft Comprehensive Plan Objectives relating to Community Development Department (in no order of priority)

At the March Planning Commission meeting, I presented to the Planning Commission some concepts for Comprehensive Plan objectives. They are given in black text below (dot bullets). The Planning Commission gave the go ahead to develop those concepts into objectives. Deborah Johnson, CWCOC, has developed potential objectives that relate to those concepts. Those draft objectives are given in blue text (circle bullets).

- Develop regulations that would allow for infill of residential areas with large lots. Especially in West Longview, the city has substantial areas with large lots. These lots often have relatively narrow frontages but are very deep. In congregate, these lots result in a substantial amount of underdeveloped land. Frontage width requirements keep these lots from redeveloping into allowed densities. Allowing “backyard development” would open up more land for development but has the potential to have substantial adverse impacts to a neighborhood. Thus, careful consideration and substantial public outreach would be needed to develop an infill code. To access “backyard development” private road standards may have to be developed.
 - Develop private road standards to support infill development and redevelopment of existing large lots.
 - Conduct targeted public outreach to support the development of thoughtful, workable regulatory options that enable infill development or redevelopment of existing neighborhood large lots.
 - Examine the viability of creating a limited number of infill templates using lot dimensions that typify existing large lots in Longview.
 - Create, adopt, and implement a range of options for retrofitting existing neighborhood large lots with infill development or redevelopment.
- Develop and adopt a map showing preferred future street connections to improve citywide circulation.
 - Engage Public Works, utilities, and other stakeholders in developing a series of future street connections intended to improve citywide circulation.
 - Using the outcome of stakeholder work, create a map showing preferred future street connections to improve citywide circulation.
 - Identify and implement mechanisms to support right-of-way acquisition for preferred future street connections.
 - Work with Public Works to incorporate preferred future street connections into capital funding plans and prioritization.
- Develop comprehensive citywide landscaping requirements. As far as I can tell, the City has never done a comprehensive review of its landscaping requirements. This would need to be done in conjunction with developing streetscape standards and could complement stormwater standards.

- Examine existing stormwater standards against existing landscaping standards to identify gaps and/or redundancies.
 - Integrate existing stormwater and landscaping standards with best practices applicable to this region to develop updated landscaping standards for street frontages, on-site improvements, parking lots, and other aspects of development.
 - Implement updated landscaping standards in conjunction with private new development and redevelopment, and with public improvement projects.
- Develop a specific process (site plan review) for ensuring new development or substantial redevelopment is consistent with zoning regulations and the Comprehensive Plan. There likely would be a fee associated for this type of review. Currently it is handled piecemeal through the building permit review process or other approval processes. Site plan review would help to better identify issues upfront before the applicant substantially into the design process.
 - Streamline permitting for substantial new development or redevelopment using a site plan review process to ensure compatibility of proposals with zoning and the comprehensive plan, while enabling early feedback to developers.
 - Evaluate other jurisdictions' site plan review processes for local adaptation as a basis for creating, adopting, and implementing such a process in Longview.
(NOTE: As this is a fairly common process used in numerous other communities statewide, the City should not have to "reinvent the wheel." See <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Planning/Development-Regulations/Site-Plans-and-Binding-Site-Plans.aspx>)
- Develop comprehensive citywide sign regulations. The City has a mish-mash of sign regulations with some zoning districts (e.g. General Commercial, Central Business District, and Civic Center District) only restricting off-site signs. The Downtown enforce. For this project to be successful extensive involvement of the business community will be needed.
 - Evaluate existing sign standards against applicable case law, particularly the Reed v. Town of Gilbert (2015) decision, to identify any needed changes.
(NOTE: See <http://mrsc.org/Home/Stay-Informed/MRSC-Insight/June-2015/Review-Your-Sign-Codes-in-Wake-of-New-US-Supreme-C.aspx>)
 - Examine the potential for creating and promoting specific area, neighborhood, or district identities via public signage, business sign distinctiveness, or other elements.
 - Engage the business community and other stakeholders in developing comprehensive, citywide sign standards that consider and incorporate case law.
 - Develop targeted outreach materials for the business community and developers offering early information on signage requirements, for use in business planning.
 - Convert from the Appeal Board of Adjustment to Hearings Examiner. Currently, most of the quasi-judicial decisions (variances, special property use permits, appeals to land use and building permit decisions) are made by the Appeal Board of Adjustment. This board is made up of 5 volunteers from the community. These volunteers may have little experience in development and likely little or no experience in the public hearing process.

Hearing Examiners are professionals (usually attorneys, sometimes land use planners) that understand the hearing process and can construct a record that is will be more defensible in court. Many jurisdictions have gone to using hearings examiners. The drawback is the increased cost for a hearing examiner. Likely fees would need to increase to cover the additional cost.

- Evaluate existing regulations to identify needed amendments in order to convert quasi-judicial decisions from an appointive body to a hearing examiner system.
 - Evaluate other jurisdictions' hearing examiner structure as a basis for creating, adopting, and implementing such a process in Longview.
(NOTE: Hearing examiners are widely used in other communities statewide, so this is another area where the City should not have to "reinvent the wheel." See <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Planning/Land-Use-Administration/Hearing-Examiner-System.aspx>)
 - Modify public information materials such as permit handouts, website, etc. to incorporate and explain the hearing examiner system.
- LIDAR mapping. Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) mapping is a remote sensing method used to examine the surface of the Earth. This type of mapping sees through the vegetation and provides a detailed map of the underlying surface. The geotechnical consultant for the City's Critical Areas Ordinance update highly recommends that the City undergo LIDAR mapping. This mapping is very useful in identifying geologic hazards.
- Improve the quality of critical areas data by funding and conducting or acquiring Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) mapping for Longview.
- Develop an urban growth agreement with Cowlitz County. An urban growth agreement is a method to coordinate on how lands within the City's Planning Area Boundary are developed until the area is annexed. An urban growth development can help smooth the transition from rural to urban type development. Cowlitz County has emphasized these types of agreements in their draft Comprehensive Plan update.
- Engage Cowlitz County executive leadership in policy-level discussion focused on improving working relationships and coordination with regard to unincorporated areas immediately adjacent to Longview.
 - Evaluate existing Cowlitz County urban growth agreements with other jurisdictions in the county for applicability to Longview.
 - Work with Cowlitz County to draft, adopt, and implement an urban growth agreement for Longview.
 - Coordinate with Cowlitz County to establish a formal, mapped urban growth boundary attributable to Longview as part of its next comprehensive plan amendment.
(NOTE: In practice, the County has been willing to include other jurisdictions' map amendments as an integral part of its comp plan updates, but if amendments are sought separately and outside of that cycle, jurisdictions are expected to pay for and initiate an application just as a private party would. Another option would be to leave out the language specific to the amendment cycle, but recognize that this would incur cost.)
 - Modify public information materials such as permit handouts, website, etc. to

incorporate and explain the hearing examiner system.

- Develop a neighborhood plan for the Highlands Neighborhood that would guide the development of a zoning district specifically for the Highlands Neighborhood. The plan and resulting zoning district would address development densities encouraging higher densities than what is physically present but discontinue allowing development up to 25 units per acre that is currently allowed. The area has small lots with diverse ownership (substantial out-of-town ownership) and much of the housing is rented. This situation has not been conducive to conversion to high density residential. It may be more feasible for developers to consolidate three or four lots and redevelop them into a medium density development. Instead of four units on four parcels, the code could encourage the same area to be developed into six or more units.
 - Conduct subarea planning for the Highlands neighborhood, with the intent of creating a discrete zoning district for that area that is tailored to neighborhood issues and physical features such as lot dimensions, housing density, etc.
 - Conduct targeted public outreach in the Highlands neighborhood to support the development of thoughtful, workable zoning options as an integral part of subarea planning.
 - Adopt and implement zoning specific to the Highlands neighborhood that is resultant from the subarea plan.
 - Evaluate the outcome of tailored zoning for the Highlands neighborhood at five-year intervals, adjusting regulations as appropriate to produce desired outcomes.
 - Consider “lessons learned” from the Highlands subarea planning experience as a basis for potential subarea planning in other Longview neighborhoods or districts.
- Complete reviews of miscellaneous districts. Since the last comprehensive plan update all of the major zoning districts have been updated (residential, commercial and industrial). Some of the miscellaneous zoning districts such as the Civic Center, Country Club and Riverfront District need to be evaluated and updated as needed.
 - Develop and fund a work program to systematically review and update miscellaneous zoning districts such as the Civic Center, Country Club, and Riverfront District prior to the next comprehensive plan update.
- Develop standards and requirements in the City’s development code for mass transit infrastructure.
 - Engage RiverCities Transit and other stakeholders in developing requirements and standards intended to support mass transit infrastructure.
 - Using the outcome of stakeholder work, create, adopt, and implement regulations.
 - Identify and implement mechanisms to support the incorporation of mass transit infrastructure into related public projects.
- Continue inventory of all potential historic sites in residential, commercial, and industrial areas for future historic registration.

- Complete the City's inventory of potential citywide historic sites by _____.
- Utilize the findings of the history sites inventory to develop a program supporting and prioritizing historic registration of properties as they become eligible.
- The City may want to examine adoption of green building standards or incentive programs in partnership with the PUD for "green" buildings or certified homes or remodels.
 - Incorporate "green" construction methods and materials into public projects.
 - Consider strategies to encourage the use of "green" construction methods and materials in private projects.
- Develop a strategy for addressing alternative transportation issues such self-driving vehicles and/or alternative fuel vehicles (e.g. electric or hydrogen fuel vehicles).
 - Monitor and examine how emerging technologies such as self-driving vehicles can best be addressed in local regulations.
 - Incorporate electric vehicle infrastructure into the development code.
(NOTE: Per 2SHB 1481 (2009), this was to have been completed by 2011 by the largest cities in the state. This law did not apply to Longview, but work done thereunder offers Longview the opportunity for easy adaptation.)
- Develop Crime Prevention through Environmental Design standards for commercial and industrial zoning districts. In the last update of the zoning code, CPTED standards were established for multifamily housing developments.
 - Evaluate existing literature and other jurisdictions' standards as a basis for evaluating existing regulations against Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
(NOTE: CPTED is not a new concept; some other communities statewide have adopted standards, and a variety of professional literature is already available. See <http://www.popcenter.org/tools/cpted/PDFs/NCPC.pdf>)
 - Engage the Police Department and other stakeholders in developing requirements and standards in the development code intended to support CPTED.

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