

April 30, 2015



# Planning Department Newsletter

## PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ISSUES

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On April 8, the Planning Commission conducted a workshop to discuss community matters that will be important to consider as the city begins the process of drafting a revision to its Comprehensive Plan. The meeting was facilitated by Lisa Key, project manager for David Evans and Associates, Inc., the consultant selected by the city to assist with the plan revision.

Ms. Key opened the session by reviewing the proposed process and schedule for amending the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that a series of activities would be conducted leading to the production of a draft plan revision in April of 2016.

Next, Ms. Key solicited input from the Commission members. She started by asking them about their desired outcomes for the plan revision process and policies. Commission members responded with the following comments:

- enhance the high quality of life we enjoy today
- reduce traffic congestion
- implement solutions to high traffic volume and speed in residential neighborhoods
- promote pedestrian/bicycle transportation

- add parks and recreational facilities, especially in new neighborhoods
- develop an extensive economic analysis of the community
- remain attractive for retirees
- enhance the downtown through such means as attracting new businesses, filling abandoned storefronts, expanding the farmer's market, and conducting more community events
- improve access routes into the downtown area, especially from the WSU campus
- encourage the establishment of a bypass to reduce or eliminate the need for a state highway bisecting the town
- better integrate WSU students with the rest of the community
- promote historic districts in the city
- explore impact fees and other tools to address development impacts and maintain levels of public service
- ensure adequate supply of housing and public facilities (e.g., elementary schools) for our growing population
- provide for changing residential needs, such as live/work spaces and micro housing

The Commission then offered its opinions regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the Pullman community. A summary of this discussion is presented below.

**STRENGTHS**

- stable economy
- sizable amount of disposable income
- educated population
- stable, harmonious city government
- excellent community services (e.g., schools, hospital, police, fire)
- high quality of natural resources



One of the strengths noted by the Planning Commission is the community's stable economy, anchored by Washington State University.

**WEAKNESSES**

- public resources constrained due to limited tax base
- lack of retail stores and restaurants
- current condition of downtown
- perception of lack of parking, particularly in the downtown area
- transitory population
- construction costs higher due to topography and poorly drained soils

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- enhanced airport services and development potential due to runway realignment
- growth possibilities in Pullman-Moscow corridor
- water reuse and reclamation projects
- establishment of bypass(es) around community
- ability to transform roadways into complete streets for all modes of travel
- can leverage the community's natural resources (e.g., continue pathways along streams)
- use of resources at WSU (e.g., brain trust, technology spin-offs, base of volunteers)
- growing branch of Spokane Falls Community College and the technology training it provides
- possibilities provided by eventual designation of the Pullman-Moscow region as a Metropolitan Statistical Area

**THREATS**

- declining aquifer
- sustainability of city finances
- potential diminished capacity to provide high quality public facilities and services
- adequate management of future growth in the community
- lack of identified funding for new or expanded airport terminal
- reliance on a limited set of major employers

This input supplied by the Commission will be incorporated in with the comments received from local citizens and organizations to inform the process of developing preliminary goals and policies for the new Comprehensive Plan. The city is tentatively planning a June meeting of the Planning Commission and other city committees to discuss an initial draft of the goals and policies. Once these provisions have been properly refined, they will be presented to the general public for its feedback.

## NEW LIVABILITY INDEX INTRODUCED BY AARP

At the American Planning Association's National Conference in Seattle last week, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) unveiled a new online "livability index" to help communities determine how well they are meeting current and future needs. Interested parties can use the index to measure how their location—from an entire city to a specific neighborhood—stacks up against other communities. The index employs a number of factors to rate livability, including housing, neighborhood quality, transportation, environment, health care, civic engagement, and community opportunities. The AARP organization is, of course, dedicated to improving the lives of America's retirees, but the premise behind the index is that the circumstances that make a place great for seniors also make that location desirable for everyone else.

The scoring system for the index uses a range of 1 to 100. The characteristics of all communities in the U.S. are compared against one another, so the average location gets a score of 50. To achieve a 100 score, a place would need to be among the best in each of the above-cited categories, and there were no such communities designated in the database. Even the cities classified as most livable received a score in the low 70s.

The livability index score for the city of Pullman is 56. According to AARP, the city rates high with regard to housing, transportation, environment, and health matters; average on neighborhood characteristics and civic engagement; and low on community opportunities (specifically, the index rated Pullman low for income inequality, economic opportunities, and age diversity). Obviously, the high percentage of students in our population skewed the results in that latter category. For comparison purposes, the city of Moscow has an index score of 55.

According to the index, the most livable large cities in the U.S. (population of 500,000 or more) are San Francisco (index score of 66), Boston (65), and Seattle (63). The most livable medium-sized cities (population between 100,000 and 500,000) are Madison, Wisconsin (68); St. Paul, Minnesota (66); and Sioux Falls, South Dakota (66). The top three small cities (population between 25,000 and 100,000) are La Crosse, Wisconsin (70); Fitchburg, Wisconsin (67); and Bismarck, North Dakota (67).



Pullman scored particularly high in the livability index relative to air quality and the excellent condition of its drinking water.

Since the index is programmed down to the Census Block level, it allows users to explore the livability of individual neighborhoods. One can type an address into the system and determine the rating for that particular area. The most livable neighborhoods in America, according to the index, are Mifflin West in Madison, Wisconsin; the Upper West Side of Manhattan in New York; and Downtown Crossing in Boston. Each of these neighborhoods received a livability score of 58.

The AARP livability index can be found by visiting the organization's website at <http://www.aarp.org/>.

## MAY IS NATIONAL BIKE MONTH - GET OUT AND RIDE!

For those of you who watched the City Council meeting on April 28, you'll know from Mayor Glenn Johnson's announcements that May is National Bike Month. This celebration of bicycle transportation is sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists. Established in 1956, National Bike Month is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling, and to encourage folks to use bikes for getting around the community. As the League states in its promotional materials, "Whether you bike to work or school, ride to save money or time, pump those pedals to preserve your health or the environment, or simply to explore your community, National Bike Month is an opportunity to celebrate the unique power of the bicycle and the many reasons we ride."

Within the month, there are specific promotions that are conducted. For example, "National Bike to Work Week" this year will be held on May 11-15 (with "Bike to Work Day" occurring on May 15). Also, "Bike to School Day" is scheduled for May 6.

The city of Pullman is certainly mindful of bicycle transportation in many of its activities. It maintains over 16 miles of pathways within the community. It has also been coordinating recently with the Chamber of Commerce and local organizations to acquire and install new bike racks in the downtown area. In addition, the planning department is working to ensure that the city's bicycle and pedestrian circulation policies are updated as part of the ongoing Comprehensive Plan revision.

For more information on National Bike Month, consult the League of American Bicyclists' website at <http://bikeleague.org/> and the Bicycle Alliance of Washington's "Washington Bikes" website at <http://wabikes.org/>.



The first of several new bike locking devices has been installed near Café Moro at Main Street and Grand Avenue.

City Offices will be closed Monday, May 25 - Memorial Day



## Pending Land Use Proposals

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Comprehensive Plan Revision	full-scale revision of city's Comprehensive Plan	Citywide	PC workshop held 4/8/15; next workshop tentatively scheduled for 6/10/15
College Hill Design Review Standards	formulate design standards for new construction	College Hill Core	staff reviewing responses to recent stakeholder questionnaire
Shoreline Master Program Update	revise city's Shoreline Master Program in collaboration with Whitman County	Citywide	PC discussed draft program on 3/25/15; PC hearing to be held by July
Carson's Cove Zone Change (Z-15-1)	rezone 1.8 acres from C3 to R3	620 NE Stadium Way	PC recommended approval 3/25/15; CC approved application 4/14/15
SEL Zone Change (Z-15-2)	rezone 48 acres from R2 to C3	between NE Eastgate Boulevard and NE Hickman Court	PC recommended approval 3/25/15; CC approved application 4/14/15
McKenzie Street Zone Change (Z-15-3)	rezone 3,774 square feet from C3 to R4	115 SW McKenzie Street	probable PC hearing on 5/20/15
Davis Variance Application (V-14-3)	eliminate high/low density transition area standards for proposed 4-plex	135 SE Dilke Street	applicant requested delay in proceedings to revise proposal
Historic Preservation Grant Application	request federal funding for historic walking tour mobile app	downtown area	city submitted application 4/16/15; DAHP decision expected by June
Itani Rentals LLC Boundary Line Adjustment Application	adjust boundary 0.4 feet between structures	1005 and 1015 SW Center Street	city approved proposal; awaiting recorded deeds from applicant
Itani Rentals LLC Administrative Variance Application (AV-14-2)	allow structure with a 4.62-foot side setback	1005 SW Center Street	planning staff review pending outcome of associated boundary line adjustment
Itani Rentals LLC Administrative Variance Application (AV-14-3)	allow structure with a 4.54-foot side setback	1015 SW Center Street	planning staff review pending outcome of associated boundary line adjustment
Day Administrative Variance Request (AV-15-2)	reduce flanking street side setback to 13 feet	769 SE Ridgeview Court	staff approved application 3/26/15; appeal period expired 4/13/15
Koch Animal Request (15-4)	request to keep two ducks on property	336 NW True Street	staff approved request, 4/10/15; appeal period expired 4/24/15
Washington State Department of Transportation Wash Building site plan (13-14)	construct 1,200-square-foot wash building	980 NW Davis Way	staff approved site plan 4/10/15
Blue Sky Storage Expansion site plan (14-15)	grade site for placement of future storage building	2500 S. Grand Avenue	staff reviewing revised site plan
SRE Equipment Shelter site plan (14-21)	build 6,460-square-foot equipment storage structure at airport	4800 Airport Complex North	staff requested applicant to revise site plan

*Continued on Page 6*

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; HPC: Historic Preservation Commission; DOE: State Department of Ecology; DAHP: State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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For any readers who are not currently receiving this newsletter by email and who wish to register for this service, please contact the planning department for assistance.

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
**WWW.PULLMAN-WA.GOV**

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PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
The Flats at Terre View Apartment Complex site plan (15-1)	develop 104 apartments on 3.7-acre site	1880 NE Terre View Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Ruby and Oak Street Church Conversion site plan (15-2)	convert former church space to 6-bedroom apartment	600 NE Oak Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Golden Hills West Multi-Family site plan (15-3)	develop 120 apartments on 60.7-acre site	south of Old Wawawai Road and west of Golden Hills Drive	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Center Street Adult Family Home site plan (15-4)	build 4 living units on 12,000-square-foot lot for developmentally disabled adults	605 SW Center Street	staff approved site plan 4/30/15
Average Joes Tenant Improvement site plan (15-5)	add two second floor apartments to existing building	205 NW Whitman Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
SEL Hangar and Terminal Building site plan (15-6)	construct 12,000-square-foot hangar, 1,800-square-foot terminal, and two parking lots	Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport	staff reviewing site plan

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