

SUMMARY OF PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION JUNE 3RD, 2010

Fountain District Urban Village Subarea Plan and Development Regulations

Commissioners Present: Tom Barrett, Chair; Sharon Robinson, Vice Chair; Danne Neill; Allen Matsumoto; Edie Norton.

Absent: Jim Bishop and Kurt Baumgarten

Staff Present: Katie Franks, Development Specialist II; Brian Smart, Planner II; Chris Comeau, Transportation Planner; Tara Sundin, Special Projects Manager; Heather Aven, Planning Commission Secretary.

A Planning Commission work session was held on Thursday, June 3rd to give commissioners the opportunity to discuss several topics identified during the public hearing on May 20th. (Click on links to view [Agenda](#) and [Comment Tracker](#).) Staff prepared presentation materials regarding the details, background studies, and the broader City-wide policies that informed the proposals in the Fountain District Urban Village Subarea Plan and corresponding development regulations. (Click to view [staff presentation](#).) Because it was a work session, no public comment on the Fountain District topic was taken during the meeting. Following a question and answer session with staff and a lengthy discussion between Planning Commissioners, the Commission is considering recommending a number of changes to staff's proposal. The Commission will consider taking action on these proposed changes following the June 17th public hearing.

- 1. Elm Street Corridor:** The proposal is to provide bike lanes on Elm Street between Broadway and Connecticut, which would require removal of on-street parking on one side of the street (see [staff presentation](#) for parking analysis). Commissioners discussed ways of adding parking in the area to mitigate potential impacts of removal of on-street parking along Elm Street.

Change Proposed: The following language will be added to Page 30 of the [Subarea Plan](#), "Public Parking Policies":

- "Development of on-street parking on side streets within the Commercial Core and Commercial Transition areas is encouraged, where space allows, through the creation of diagonal parking."

Planning Commission asked staff to research the feasibility of declassifying Monroe Street between Meridian and Elm Streets, from an arterial to a residential street, to allow flexibility for on-street parking.

Change Proposed: The following language will be added to Page 30 of the [Subarea Plan](#), "Public Parking Policies":

- "Consider reclassifying Monroe Street between Meridian and Elm from "arterial" to "residential." Work with property and business owners, residents, and the City Fire Department to explore additional parking opportunities that could be created in this portion of the Monroe Street right-of-way."

No other changes to proposal.

- 2. Maximum allowable height on Meridian Street:** Discussion of the proposed change from 35' to 45' maximum allowable height in the Commercial Core along Meridian, as well as the proposed change on the Haggen site from the existing "No Height Limit – Planning Director's Discretion" to a maximum allowable height of 55'. Under the topic of height, commissioners also discussed the proposal to limit maximum height at the "Fountain Galleria" site to 45'. This and several other sites in the southern end of the Commercial Core are currently zoned "No Height Limit – Planning Director's Discretion" (Click to view the [Existing Zoning Map](#) for current allowable maximum heights in the Fountain District Urban Village area.)

No change to proposal.

- 3. **Duplex Housing in Residential Transition 1 Areas:** Commissioners asked for more detail about design requirements under the Infill Toolkit Guidelines for duplex housing, and for comparison to the existing code requirements for these housing types. All duplexes will be required to meet the Infill Housing Toolkit guidelines.

No change to proposal.

- 4. **Create opportunities for additional parking within the district:** Public comment identified the need for additional parking in the southern end of the village area. Commissioners asked staff to bring information about potential opportunities in this area, and asked if a "Parking District" might be created similar to the two existing Fairhaven Parking Districts.

Change Proposed:

- "Land Use Classification #17. Parking Facilities " in [BMC 20.37.220 Fountain District Urban Village – Permitted Uses](#) from Not Allowed to as a Conditional Use in Commercial Transition areas. Parking Facilities (surface or structured) would be permitted subject to the Conditional Use provisions specified in BMC 20.16 and to general requirements for the use and the use area.

Land Use Classification:	Commercial Transition	Commercial Transition	Residential Transition 1	Residential Transition 2
17. Parking facilities	P	N C	N	N

No other changes to proposal.

- 5. **Additional Changes Proposed As Outlined in Public Comment Tracker:** The Planning Commission reviewed other changes outlined in the Comment Tracker ([ADD LINK](#)) and is considering the following changes to staff’s proposal:

Change Proposed: Accommodating the needs of the City’s Fire and Emergency Response Vehicles was tantamount in planning for the circulation and transportation element of the district. The last sentence of the first paragraph on Page 23 of the *Subarea Plan* [Subarea Plan](#) will be edited to read as follows:

- ~~“Transit Service is available along Meridian and Elm Streets. Meridian and Elm Streets both serve the City’s Fire and Emergency Response vehicles and Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) bus service on a continuous basis.”~~

Change Proposed: The following policy language be added to Page 24 of the [Subarea Plan](#) under “Circulation Policies:”

- “Consider creating traffic calming devices to discourage traffic from cutting through the residential area on Halleck Street at the south end of Peabody Street.”

Change Proposed: Page 39 of the *Subarea Plan* identifies the Capital Improvement costs *“**includes costs of sidewalk construction on one side W. Illinois Street from Cornwall Ave. to Lynn Street.”* Staff recommends that the following policy language be added to Page 26 of the [Subarea Plan](#) under “*Streetscape Policies:*”

- *“Construct sidewalks on the northern side of W. Illinois Street from Northwest Avenue to Lynn Street, and missing sidewalk section on the southern side of W. Illinois between Northwest and Cornwall Avenues.”*