



Agenda

RICHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

City Manager's Conference Room - 505 Swift Boulevard

WEDNESDAY, March 12, 2014

7:00 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS: James Utz, Chair; Carol Moser, Vice-Chair, Debbie Berkowitz; Marianne Boring, Clifford Clark; Stanley Jones; Kent Madsen, Amanda Wallner and James Wise

LIAISONS: Rick Simon, Planning and Development Services Manager
Phil Lemley, City Council

Call to Order 7:00 p.m.

Business

- 1. DISCUSSION OF VIEW CORRIDORS**
- 2. DISCUSSION OF MINOR ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS**

Adjournment

Planning Commission Regular Meeting – Wednesday, March 26, 2014
Planning Commission Workshop Meeting – Wednesday, April 9, 2014

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MEMORANDUM

*Community and Development Department
Planning & Development Services Division*

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: RICK SIMON, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER

DATE: MARCH 12, 2014

RE: FEBRUARY WORKSHOP

There are two items on the agenda this month:

View Corridors

At the last time we discussed this topic in workshop, the Commission agreed that each Commissioner would bring a list of their top five view locations within the City to begin to identify and narrow down the most important views to be preserved. To date, only Commissioner Wise has responded. His list is attached.

Code Amendments

There are a number of zoning code amendments that staff has been contemplating and so are bringing them forward to you for discussion. For those amendments that seem to generally have Commission support, staff will bring back specific code language for the Commission's consideration.

February 12, 2014

To: Planning Commission, City of Richland
From: James A. Wise, Planning Commissioner
Re: Recommendations on View Corridors

Colleagues: We've all been asked to provide a list of our top five view corridors within the City. Here are my choices, along with some supportive rationale and related thoughts about maintaining and developing view corridors. I have pictures of these, which I can share at the workshop tonight.

1. Up and down the Columbia River along Columbia Park Trail, between Queensgate and Leslie Roads. There are just stunning views into Richland and the white bluffs beyond in upriver direction, and downriver to the Blue Bridge, Pasco, and Kennewick in the other.
2. Views of Rattlesnake Mountain from the Keen and Stevens roads corridors. It's the really iconic landform of this area, and is likely to become even more important to the public imagination if access to it is increased in the future.
3. Views to the north and south of Amon Basin from the end of Rachel Road and the entry to the "Amon Creek Natural Reserve" sign along Leslie Road. This is the best place in the City to show how the desert blooms from the simple addition of leftover water.
4. View to Badger Mountain from the Park and Ride on Columbia Park Trail and Windmill Road (and views of Badger from any other number of places around Richland). Badger Mountain's growing popularity as a hiking destination and preserved open space success story deserves its own 'view corridors'.
5. Views of the Federal Building from GW Way at Comstock, and the corner of GW Way and Knight Street. This is an iconic building for the history of Richland, and a classic example of the beginning 'new brutalism' architectural style of its time. President John F. Kennedy also dedicated it in a personal visit shortly before he was assassinated. It deserves to be seen, especially from its façade with the park in front of it.

There are sadly very few, if any, other views of architecturally interesting buildings in the City of Richland. However, we have some opportunities developing that we might take advantage of if and when they develop further. These are;

6. Views of WSU-TC and the Consolidated Information Center from GW Way, along with other new buildings to come there, like the new Wine Center.

Can these be designed and finished off in architecturally interesting and appealing ways?

7. Views into the Research District from GW way and the bypass highway: The Research District has two new striking buildings coming together in the Innovation Center and the similarly named apartments up the street from it. They represent the spirit of the 'new Richland' coming out of the Hanford Years. This type of design needs to be further encouraged in other buildings through view corridors to the buildings from the perimeter of the Research District.
8. The Uptown Shopping Center has some iconic buildings that capture 1950's commercial shopping center design. See particularly the picture taken from the corner of the former Uptown Theater building. If the shopping center were restored to be particularly evocative of 1950's style, it could easily become a major tourist draw for the city. It's worth wondering what the Parkway might have become if it were to have evoked a 1940's style township, in its own restoration some years ago. (Especially with the classic theatre building at one end.)



MEMORANDUM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Development Services Division

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: CITY OF RICHLAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION

DATE: MARCH 7, 2014

SUBJECT: Potential amendments to RMC Title 23, Zoning.

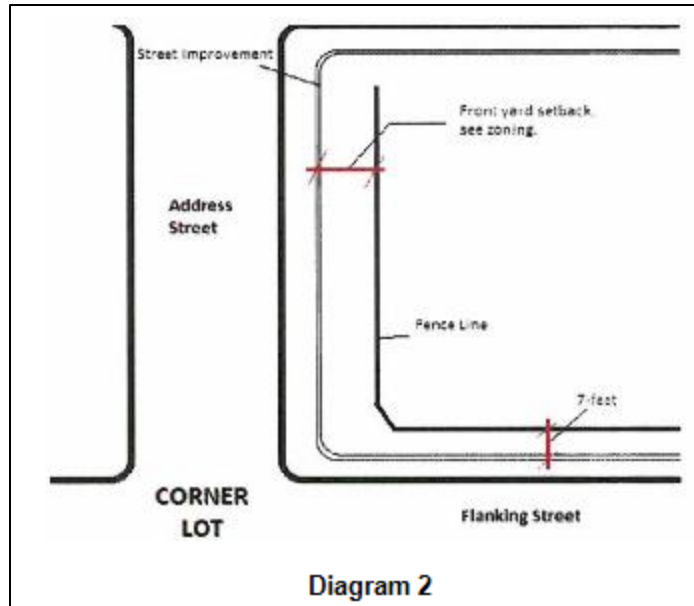
Below you will find some suggestions for amendments to the zoning title we would like the Planning Commission to consider. Staff will present photos and examples at the 3/26 workshop.

SETBACKS

1. Fence setbacks on corner lots. The setback is currently the same as that for the homes which is generally 20 feet from the property line on both street frontages. This is frequently 5 to 7 feet behind the closest portion of the sidewalk to the home. The result is a substantial portion of the rear and side yard of the lots that cannot be screened from the street.

Rationale:

Staff deals with a large number of inquiries from Home Owners and Builders who desire to have more of the rear & side yards fenced from the street. With the primary concern with fences near the property line on corner lots is the obstruction of the sight distance vision triangle at intersections. Fences are permitted in other communities closer to the secondary street frontage and the sight distance triangle is preserved. One example is permitting them to within 10 feet of the edge of the nearest improvement which would be the back of the sidewalk if provided or the edge of the asphalt and at no time beyond the property line. In an example of a street with sidewalks the fence would be located 10 feet behind the closest portion of the sidewalk to the home. The diagram below is from the City of West Richland. Their fencing ordinance was amended in 2011 to allow the secondary frontage (flanking street) fence to be within 10 feet of the edge of improvement. After receiving so many requests to allow fences even closer they subsequently amended the code again to allow fences within 7 feet.



2. Reduce home setbacks on corner lots. Consistent with the requirements for fences above, corner lots are required full front yard setbacks on both street frontages resulting in smaller rear yards. Staff is requesting the Commission consider reducing the flanking side yard setback from 20 feet to maybe 15 feet.

Rationale:

The intent would be to provide for the efficient use of residential land as well as variety in the character of a community with the siting of homes on corner lots.

3. Zoning district setbacks, single-family to multi-family residential. The zoning code setback requirement from a multi-family development to a single-family development is as follows:

23.18.020 Residential performance standards and special requirements.

B. Multiple-Family Residential Use District Special Requirements. In any multifamily residential (R-3) zoning district that directly abuts a single-family zoning district, the following buffer, setback and building height regulations shall apply to all multifamily residential structures:

1. Buildings shall maintain at least a 35-foot setback from any property that is zoned for single-family residential use. Single-family residential zones include R-1-12 – single-family residential, R-1-10 – single-family residential, R-2 – medium-density residential, R-2S – medium-density residential small lot or any residential planned unit development that is comprised of single-family detached dwellings.

Planning Staff would like the Commission consider a sliding scale for the setback based on the density or massing of the multi-family development. Consideration is not given in the code for small scale infill projects. An example would be when a triplex multi-family development is adjacent to the single-family zoning district. Depending on the size and particularly height of the triplex it could be quite consistent with a single-family district and not warrant a 35 foot setback.

Rationale:

The purpose of a 35-foot setback from multi to single-family uses is to reduce the impact of large scale develop to transitional housing areas and adjacent single family development. Often, multi-family complexes are three stories in height and approach the 40-foot height limit in order to maximize the density. In the case of smaller scale projects they may not always be multi-stories in height consistent with large apartment communities. A 35 foot setback greatly impedes development of smaller properties.

At the direction of the Commission Staff will pursue alternate setbacks and return with proposals for consideration.

4. Access easement “alley” setbacks. The zoning code provides no guidance on the setback from access easements except that structures, including homes, cannot be built on any easement.

Rationale:

Providing for a minimal setback such as 6 feet for those private streets that function as access to more than one lot allows for a more open corridor and less crowding of the private street. Existing neighborhoods utilizing private streets appear to have maintained a minimum of a 6 foot setback from an access easement. This was not a condition of the plat, rather how the homes have been designed for these types of lots.

5. Sheds & detached structures. Remove the requirement that sheds and other detached garages are 6 feet from the primary residence as this is no longer required by the International Building Code (IBC).

Rationale:

This requirement as shown below was driven by the IBC and has since been removed from the IBC. The requirement also makes it very difficult if not impossible in some instances to install sheds less than 120 square feet in the side yard of a home that otherwise is unusable. In many examples homeowners are forced to place sheds in an area of the yard less than desirable because of this provision. Should this provision be removed from the zoning code all requirements of the building code will still be applicable.

SUBDIVISION

6. Amend the plat application requirements.

- a. Reduce required map copies due at submittal from 32 to 15 and require electronic formats as well, CAD & .PDF. This reference is found in the second sentence of 24.12.010 Preliminary plat – Application for approval.

Rationale:

Staff has found that 32 copies are more than needed for the review by other City departments and the Planning Commission. Electronic copies are the preferred manner to view the preliminary plat requests by both the City departments and other outside agencies.

- b. Notice of Application Mailer. Remove requirement the Applicant provides the variance report (list of abutting properties within 300-feet) and establish that the City prepares the report and is reimbursed for the time to prepare the report, printing & letter costs as well as postage.

Rationale:

Variance reports are generated by Title Companies and can be quite costly depending on the number of address the report includes. For example a report that generated only 20 addresses cost the Applicant \$183.00 to have completed by a title company. Staff can generate the same report using the City's Geographic Information System that accesses the same property database. On a project with a large number of addresses in the report the City can lose money on postage fees that are not covered by the application fee. Recouping the exact cost would benefit the City by a reduction in costs and often would be cheaper to the Applicant than would a report generated by a title company.

7. Increase the amount of lots permitted via a short plat. Currently the maximum is 4 lots; State law allows up to 9 lots.

Rationale:

Division of land via a short or long plat is subject to the exact same requirements of the municipal code. This review includes provisions for lot sizes, utilities, roadways, park dedications or fees, critical areas protection and more. Allowing administrative review would result in the same type of development and significantly reduce Staff time preparing Staff reports and for public hearings. If notice to neighboring properties is a concern, that requirement could be included in short plat applications from 5 to 9 lots. State law will have to be reviewed to determine if this is an option.

8. Allow development on previously consolidated lots if they are returned to the size to which they were originally platted. Current code requires all new lots to be of the minimum lot size. In Central Richland for example some lots were consolidated but as developed could be divided back to two lots to the same dimensions of the original plat. This is not permitted though as they would not meet the current minimum lot size for the district.

Rationale: Allowing for the reestablishment of previously platted lots would allow for more density where possible and still maintain the character of the neighborhood. This is not an uncommon practice with other jurisdictions, even those with narrow lots at times only 20 feet wide platted at the turn of the 20th century when homes were much smaller and areas of towns and cities platted by speculative developers. Note that current setbacks would still be applied to any new construction.

OTHER

9. Establish minimum size for required landscaping trees at planting. Currently no size is stated at planting. Rather, it states the following:

“1. Trees shall be species having an average mature spread of crown of greater than 15 feet and shall be a minimum of five feet to eight feet overall height immediately after planting. Trees having an average mature spread of crown less than 15 feet may be substituted by grouping the same so as to create the equivalent of a 15-foot crown spread.

Rationale:

Without clearer criteria a Developer can install a tree that meets the letter of the code and is 6 feet in height but will not mature to a point that it is a desirable landscaping tree for both the internal parking lot and the street frontage. Many jurisdictions require a caliper size of tree to be anywhere from 1.5” to 3” diameter at breast height (DBH). This is a requirement found in the development regulations for Badger Mountain South recently presented to the Planning Commission.

Another issue is that the code does not specify the species required but this may be best discussed during a larger review of the landscaping code. In the interim Staff would like prevent the installation of trees that meet the code but will not provide the long term benefits associated with landscaping trees.

10. Develop a definition and identify which zoning districts in which to allow distilleries.

The code does not currently specify distilleries and this is a growing industry statewide.

Rationale:

The zoning definitions section and uses table needs to be amended periodically to keep it current. Adding a definition for a distillery could include that it is categorized based on the size of the operation. For example, a craft distillery could be considered similar to a micro-brewery and therefore allowed in commercial districts in which a large scale distillery would not be appropriate.