



Memorandum

To: Planning Commission
From: Thomas Dansie, Town Planner
Date: January 29, 2008
Re: February 7, 2008 Work Meeting: Central Commercial Zone Revisions

For the last several work meetings the Commission has been working on details associated with an overhaul of the landscape ordinance. Due to the detail and complexity of this ordinance, progress on the revision has been limited. Part of the difficulty the Commission has experienced during the landscape ordinance review is due to the interrelatedness of the landscape ordinance to other proposed ordinance revisions: setbacks, parking, building design, etc.

To help move progress along on the Central Commercial zone revision process, staff suggests holding off on further detailed work on the landscape ordinance until a larger draft ordinance framework is established for the entire Central Commercial zone. This framework would establish the general direction the Commission would like to pursue in each area of regulation (setbacks, building design, parking, landscaping, etc.). Once this framework is established detailed work could begin on the individual regulations.

For example, staff suggests part of the ordinance framework establish the concept of regulating the percentage of lots that are required to be landscaped, in place of the lot coverage regulation. However, specific details (e.g. the amount of required landscaping) can be worked out once the entire framework for the Central Commercial zone has been established. Similarly, staff suggests the part of the ordinance framework state that the “Larry McKown Triangle” be used in determining front setbacks. However, the geometry of that triangle can be worked out once the ordinance framework is in place.

Staff suggests this approach offers the following advantages:

- 1- It will allow the Commission (and the participating public) to look “big picture” at the Central Commercial zone. This will allow more attention to be paid toward the results of the design charrette and the Vision Statement the Commission established last fall without getting lost in the details of any one aspect of regulation.
- 2- It will give the Commission the ability to recognize and discuss the impact of one regulation on another (e.g. the impact of setback regulations on parking regulations).
- 3- It will reinforce the idea that all zoning standards work together in promoting a desired style of development. What we are trying to establish is an integrated ordinance that promotes the idea of “village scale.” This is in contrast to looking at zoning standards as a series of independent regulations that each respond to one narrow area of concern and do not correlate with each other.
- 4- It will likely speed up the Central Commercial Zone revision process.

Attached to this report is a draft ordinance framework for the Commission to discuss. Staff suggests the Commission consider the following issues to help finalize the draft ordinance framework:

- What are the most important regulations in promoting “village scale”? These should be included in the draft ordinance framework.

- What will help promote a pedestrian oriented downtown?
- The simpler, clearer, and easier to understand the ordinance, the more effective it will be. Complex, redundant, and unnecessary regulations should be avoided.
- Incentives should be linked to the regulations they are giving bonuses toward. For example, design based incentives (use of preferred materials and design elements) could yield a building size bonus. Because the design elements will decrease the visual impact of the building size bonus is logical.
- There should be a careful balance between regulation and incentives. The more incentives that are offered the less meaningful any one incentive becomes. For example, if a developer can get the same incentive by providing three or four small design elements as the incentive offered for employee housing, there is less of a motivation for the developer to seek the employee housing incentive. On the other hand, the more regulations that are imposed the less creativity in design there will be available for new developments. There should be a good mix of regulation and incentive.

Once the draft ordinance framework has been established, staff suggests the Commission continue the review of the landscape ordinance details.

DRAFT ORDINANCE FRAMEWORK
CENTRAL COMMERCIAL ZONE

REGULATIONS

Building layout

- Buildings shall meet the Larry Mckown Triangle front setback
- Side, Rear setbacks shall be x feet
- Building layout shall promote efficient pedestrian movement throughout the site through the use of walkways, courtyards, and useable open space

Building Size

- Buildings shall be limited to 8,000 square feet, but can go up to 12,500 under certain circumstances (*should not be related to setback distances like current ordinance – should be based on incentives!*)

Building Height

- Buildings shall be limited to 26 feet and two stories, but could go up to 30 feet based on incentives
- *Increased height for buildings below SR-9?*

Building Design

- Buildings within x feet of the street shall feature either a patio or an open courtyard on the front façade
- Buildings shall have 4 foot minimum re-entrant corners every x linear feet along building elevations visible from public streets
- Buildings shall have a change in elevation or direction of the roof line every x feet

Landscaping

- All areas between the front of all buildings and the public street shall be landscaped, with the exception of a parking access lane no wider than x feet
- Parking lot perimeters shall be landscaped to a depth of x feet from the parking area
- Parking access lanes shall have an x foot landscape buffer on the outside edge of the lane
- Landscaping shall conform to the specific landscape requirements of chapter 18
- At least x percent of the lot must be landscaped (total percentage to include the areas described above).

Parking

- All parking shall be located to the side or rear of buildings on the property. No parking may encroach in the Larry McKown Triangle. No parking may be placed on the property closer to the front property line than the closest building to the property line.
- *Exploration of parking requirements – shared parking, in-lieu parking fees, etc.*

Other

- Walkways to connect from the front of buildings to the public sidewalk system. These walkways must be physically separated from parking access lanes and driveways.

INCENTIVES

- Extra height (4 feet?) for second story employee / affordable housing
- Less landscape required for: extra parking, front porches, benches, drinking fountains, providing parking access to a neighboring property
- Bigger buildings for: public restrooms, employee / affordable housing, energy efficiency (LEED certification), native sandstone, double row of shingles
- Reduced side setbacks for