

PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD

Briefing Session

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, November 9, 2005, 11:30, Room 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Eugene Carroll, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Mary Strand and Lynn Sunderman; Melinda Pearson and Tommy Taylor absent. Marvin Krout, Ray Hill, Tom Cajka, David Cary and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.

STATED PURPOSE Review of the **proposed amendments to Design Standards and Zoning Ordinance concerning landscaping and screening, front yard setbacks, pedestrian standards and the process for approving waiver requests**

Pedestrian Standards

David Cary noted that a few of the Commissioners have been working with the Board of Health and have been exposed to some of these topics already. Staff has been working on this for about a year now. He circulated a draft of the proposed amendments. Staff has talked to a lot of groups.

The purpose of the design standards is to improve safety. There are a lot of commercial/industrial areas that do not have proper sidewalks and circulation. Staff hopes to provide for improved safety for pedestrians as well as an overall community wide effort to increase physical activity.

The standards themselves provide for an overall on-site sidewalk system that connects to the off-site sidewalk system. Review procedures will be such that staff will be requiring a circulation plan for review with application submittal or at the building permit stage. The Planning Dept. will coordinate these reviews with Public Works, who will be responsible for the standards. Existing developments will be required to abide by the new standards when 50% or more of the property is improved with an addition or with reconstruction. A new building would be required to abide by the new standards.

Strand wondered why staff feels industrial is important to have these standards. Cary replied that industrial is different from commercial in that it is often times further separated from neighborhoods. Staff received a lot of feedback on this topic. Employees who want to walk to and from their job or walk at lunch time have no sidewalk system at a lot of sites.

Cary pointed out that these standards include an optional set of floor area standards. Part of that section of the Comprehensive Plan provides for sidewalks on both sides of private drives, additional clear walking space, bike racks, transit opportunities and internal parking lot pedestrian facilities. These are optional.

Carroll questioned if there is a ratio when amenities would be increased. Cary replied that it hasn't been spelled out yet. The issue is that the pedestrian standards have been spelled out. There is a whole range of floor area incentives that haven't been spelled out yet.

Esseks noted that sometimes heightened standards are really good in offering amenities that employers want. Is there any evidence that these are positive, for example, what have other communities done? Cary replied that staff looked at various other communities. Other places have detailed standards. He has not seen any studies that state these standards equate to a definite advantage. He believes this increases the quality of life. Part of this provides for administrative waivers. New language is being proposed to state "substantially conform to intent of the standards".

Strand stated that Lincoln Plating is a fantastic example of a Wellness Program. When you have an industry that mandates wellness goals, it sets a good example.

Cary noted that this is one way to make it easier for people to increase physical activity. These proposed amendments will be before Planning Commission on November 23, 2005. These will become part of the design standards.

Proposed Amendments to Design Standards and Zoning Ordinance

Tom Cajka stated the purpose of the streetscape amendments is to enhance the visual appearance. Arterial streets in developing areas are defined. Front yard setbacks are reduced for commercial and industrial districts. New landscaping is proposed for residential lots that back on to major streets. Currently, there can be row after row of fences. The new standards would require 30% landscape screening along with the fence. A gate would also be required for the homeowner to perform maintenance. The provision that allows landscape screening density to be reduced with increased setback would be eliminated. Screening of trash receptacles, recycling bins, open storage and loading areas would be required to be screened if they are within 150 feet of street right-of-way and within public view or if the lot is abutting a residential district. Parking lot trees would be increased from one tree per 10,000 square feet to one tree per 6,000 square feet of parking area. The density of building coverage trees would be decreased from four trees per 10,000 square feet of building coverage to three trees per 10,000 square feet of building coverage.

Strand questioned if there is a minimum size parking lot that these standards apply to. Ray Hill replied that the trees can be outside of the paved area. Staff is working on an amendment that would give one half credit to trees outside of the paved area.

Krout stated that there is a minimum number of spaces that define a parking lot in the code

today.

Larson wondered about the type of tree required. Cajka replied that it is required that they must be a type of shade tree. Hill stated that there is a plant materials list that states hundreds of types of shade trees. Krout noted the idea of shade trees is to have more coverage and have more environmental effect. Shade trees will also be better for visibility purposes with the tree canopy being higher up. Increasing the number of trees in parking lots and decreasing the trees for building coverage is really a trade off.

Strand wondered about the change on drive aisles. Do the aisles on fast food restaurants and convenience stores get moved back farther? Cajka replied that they would not be allowed in the front yard setback. Hill stated they can now go in the front yard setback but pumps must be 12 feet back. This does not apply to existing facilities. It would be new development only.

Krout thinks Omaha already has the requirement for parking lot trees at approximately the square footage that staff is proposing.

Strand can't think of a single gas station that is that far back. She is curious why staff feels the need for this standard. Krout replied that if someone comes in with an application and has a good landscape plan but can't meet the 12 foot setback for the pumps, these items can be waived administratively.

Carlson believes this could work to someone's advantage. The front yard setback is reduced so you can increase the floor area. You just can't locate drive aisles and pumps in the front yard setback. Krout thinks this is a good trade off.

Cajka stated that a new item would require a financial guarantee or signed contract that if landscaping is not installed by time of final building inspection, it will ensure eventual installation.

Esseks wondered if the City has the staff hours to enforce these standards. Hill replied that Building and Safety is the zoning code enforcer. They work on a complaint basis. Landscaping is checked 6 months to one year after the building has been occupied.

Krout noted that when staff first started looking, the landscape standards were inadequate. When you pull out a landscape plan, what was approved is different from what is actually planted. Enforcement has been difficult.

These standards will all be combined into one staff report.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa McKinstry
Office Specialist
Planning Department

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PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD

Briefing Session

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, November 9, 2005, 12:30 p.m., Rm 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Eugene Carroll, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Mary Strand and Lynn Sunderman; Melinda Pearson and Tommy Taylor absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Marvin Krout, Kent Morgan, David Cary, Mike DeKalb and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department, Roger Figard and Randy Hoskins of Engineering Services; Peter Katt of Pierson Fitchett et al.

STATED PURPOSE Revision to Draft Urban Growth Tiers Map and Land Use Map

Steve Henrichsen began by stating that a Super Commons meeting was held on November 1st. At that time, they were briefed on the urban growth tiers map and the land use map as approved by the Planning Commission on October 26th. The City Council and County Board recommended one change. It is in the northeast area. They recommended that additional land be included on the south side of the interstate in the area of the East Beltway along Cornhusker Highway. A specific area was not detailed. Ultimately, it is the Planning Commission's decision on what boundaries to include.

The draft future service limit included everything on both sides of 98th Street from Fletcher up to Cornhusker Highway and included the Novartis area. It did not include any land on the south side of the interstate. The staff proposal is to increase the future service limit to show the land that is most visible on the north side of Alvo Road. Part of the recommendation is to continue to show the floodplain as green space. It is also recommended that the land generally from 112th Street to the future East Beltway should be shown as industrial and include it in the future service limit.

Strand asked where the area is that was recently annexed by Waverly. Henrichsen stated that Waverly annexed the land between Cornhusker and I-80, up to but not including, the existing interchange.

Larson asked how many acres are being added with the recommendation. Henrichsen stated that it adds about a half square mile of industrial land.

Esseks asked about the practical implications of extending the future service limit to that

area. Henrichsen stated that one of the questions is that Lincoln's three mile jurisdiction reached the area east of the existing interchange. As Waverly grew, their one-mile jurisdiction was extended up our three-mile jurisdiction. But their one-mile cannot extend into our three-mile jurisdiction. However, the Comprehensive Plan does not block Waverly from annexing into that area.

Larson asked if that area would be annexed into the City limits. Henrichsen stated that we would not consider a change to the City limits until the fall of next year when the new Plan is adopted. Masters added that the first phase of the Stevens Creek trunk sewer project is scheduled to begin in early December. There will be additional capacity in the pipeline that could serve a portion of the east side of Stevens Creek and perhaps some of the basin. With treatment capacity and pipeline capacity, we would be able to provide service within the ten-year time frame. In terms of water, we have not studied service to this area in the facilities study, nor has it been included in the Capital Improvement Program.

Larson asked about the Stevens Creek sewer extension. Masters stated that the six-year program shows that additional phases of construction would get us to about Holdrege Street. Then we can gravity serve areas around O Street.

Strand asked about the economic impact of this direction. Henrichsen stated that there are a number of sites along the interstate that have been shown to be either commercial or industrial. This would continue to keep the area along the interstate, but also grow to the northeast.

Krout stated that infrastructure, especially water, is the limiting factor. Lincoln needs to consider all costs and benefits to Lincoln as well as to the larger community.

Strand made a motion to include the area recommended by staff in the future service limit, seconded by Larson. There was general consensus from the members supporting this motion.

The meeting concluded at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department