

PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD

Briefing Session

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 2, 2005, 12:15, Room 113,
First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Eugene Carroll, Gerry Krieser, Roger Larson, Dan Marvin, Melinda Pearson, Mary Bills-Strand, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor. Marvin Krout, Ray Hill and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.

STATED PURPOSE Staff briefing on the **proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Design Standards for Major Streetscapes**

Marvin Krout explained that this was an issue in a couple of previous attempts. Staff has taken two different items from previous years. In 2001, the Entryway Corridors proposal was placed on pending by Planning Commission due to opposition of owners along I-80. It would have had major impacts on what you could build along the Interstate. In 2002, the Public Way Corridors proposal was placed on pending by Planning Commission. This was a collection of proposals that all had to do with arterial streets. Opposition was against wider rights-of-way in new development areas. Commissioners may still hear some opposition to the wider rights-of-way, but this is not what the proposed amendments are about. In 2002, the Comprehensive Plan was adopted along with wider rights-of-way. Some changes have been:

- Staff diagramed 120 foot cross sections;
- The front yard setback in newer commercial districts was reduced from 50 feet to 30 feet;
- Easement for street purposes allowed in certain situations, beyond 50 feet from centerline;
- Street trees would be planted in the right-of-way where adequate room;
- Plant materials used as screening along arterial streets;

Bills-Strand questioned if the trees would be planted where they would need to be taken down for future widening. Mr. Krout replied that it is not guaranteed that it will never happen. Ideally, the trees would never need to be removed.

Mr. Krout continued with the summary of changes:

- Fence opening required for access to maintain major street right-of-way, unless homeowners association is established;
- Parking lot screening density was increased along streets;
- Tree canopy in parking lots was increased and calculations were simplified;

Bills-Strand believes the more visible you are in a parking lot, the safer you are. There are considerations to how many trees are planted. Mr. Krout believes it is more than street appearance. Staff is trying to provide environments that are pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Krout continued:

- Screening of drive aisles, outdoor loading, storage and refuse removal areas;
- Minimum six foot front yard landscaped area in all older commercial districts;
- Administrative waivers for all landscape screening requirements;
- "Design Standards for Landscaping, Streetscapes, Medians, Boulevards, Roundabouts and Arterials Streets" adopted.

Mr. Krout showed an example of a typical 120 foot cross section. Room for dual left turn lanes and street trees between the curb and sidewalk are provided. He also showed an example of a typical 130 foot cross section. An additional 10 feet is provided for a right turn lane.

Staff is proposing to reduce front yard setbacks in some districts if new landscaping requirements are met. Today, trees are required to be placed at the edge of the private property for lack of room. The proposed amendments increase density and location for screening along major streets. Older business districts are in effect, exempt from parking lot screening today. The proposal is for minimal six foot screening. Staff will have this in Ordinance form in a week or two for review.

Pearson noted that nationwide, there is a trend for large parking lots to do their own silt reduction. She would like to see more swales to filter the water before it goes into the system.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa McKinstry
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Planning Department