

Draft Minutes
Nonmotorized Transportation Code Committee
August 26, 2010

Present: Sarah Bedsaul, Gretchen Thatcher, Kay Forsythe, Bill Yarwood, Steve Willard, Dan Davis, Karen Raymond, Nancy Lillquist

Staff Present: John Akers, Lance Bailey, Bob Bengford, MAKERS Consulting

1. Meeting brought to order at 3:30 p.m.
2. Minutes from the June 17 and July 15 meetings were approved.
3. Bob Bengford of MAKERS Consulting group was introduced. He explained Ellensburg's Land Development Code Update (LDCU), which is occurring jointly with the development of an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS). The objectives of the LDCU include revisions to make the code consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies, making the code more user friendly, and providing an opportunity to implement other community objectives, including the EECS policy. The LDCU will be completed before the end of 2011, and the EECS before the end of 2012. Workshops are planned in October, January, and May.
4. Bob asked for clarification on how the NMTC Committee's work will feed into the larger code update work. The original NMTC schedule provided for a public and city commission review and comment period, Committee discussion of comments and possible policy revisions, followed by transmittal of the policy document to the Council for their approval. The policies would then need to be written into ordinance form to make changes to the code and adopted by the Council. After some discussion, it was decided to proceed with public and commission review of the committee's work and subsequent revisions, and then to ask Council to approve the policy direction. The policies would then be folded into the Land Development Code Update process, so that the code can be revised holistically.
5. Bob provided a review and comment of the Committee's policy recommendations, based on the August draft and his experience working with a variety of communities over time.
 - a. Consider changing the title from "City Street Standards" to "Multi-Modal Street Standards" to highlight the use of streets by more than autos. The Committee was receptive to the change.
 - b. Connectivity: Consultants liked recommendations and suggested they included as minimum connectivity standards AND mapped. Committee's intent was to map collector streets but not local streets. Bob provided visuals by Andy Mortenson (consultant from Transpo), on how a connectivity index could be increased by adding a few key connections. Andy had used GIS tools and could teach City staff to use the software. City Planning staff does not currently have GIS capabilities.

- c. Bob suggested clarifying or illustrating what is a block, and having standards for providing roadway stubs. Clarify which projects are exempt.
- d. Culdesacs: Bob asked if culdesacs having a path at end for pedestrian connection would be prohibited in the committee's proposal. The committee explained that there were several reasons for prohibiting culdesacs in addition to pedestrian use, including snow removal, utilities, and fire access. Bob asked if a pedestrian connection would be required if a culdesac backed against a trail. Steve suggested that State Parks discourages unrestricted access to the John Wayne Trail. John Akers explained that while vehicular crossings are discouraged, pedestrian access is encouraged.
- e. Bob asked if there had been coordination with the County to identify trail corridors. The committee agreed it would be a good idea to have that conversation with the County. Bob mentioned possible use of canals and streams, an idea the NMT Planning committee had previously discussed. Neither the City nor County has standards that would require off street trails, such as the John Wayne Trail, to be constructed as a condition of development. The committee should discuss whether to include this as a recommendation.
- f. Bob noted that the committee allowed gated communities, which interfere with the grid in many communities, and create issues for fire response, as well as suggesting the area outside of the gate is unsafe. The committee's recommendation allows gated communities ONLY where they do not interfere with planned street connections.
- g. Commercial Street Design Standards: Bob noted that the committee did not tackle certain elements of design that are important in pedestrian oriented commercial zones such as tree grates, pedestrian furniture, lighting, crosswalks, and transit provisions. The committee was unclear what design standards already exist for those elements and noted that a consistent design has been achieved in the downtown. Review of these elements can occur in the LDCU process rather than in the NMT committee.
- h. Arterials: Should all new arterials include bike paths as a default (not just those on the NMT route map)? *(A comparison of the bike route map to the arterial street designations shows the following arterial streets NOT designated as bike routes: University Way east of Alder and Vantage Highway, Main Street from Capitol to 14th, Railroad Avenue and Anderson Road, Highway 10, and Bowers Road).*
- i. Sidewalk width: in storefront areas, an 8 ft sidewalk is recommended to pass 3 people comfortably; could the sidewalk be wider and planting strip narrower with trees in grates in some areas?
- j. Arterial Parking: could on-street parking be an option in some commercial zones where it is compatible with city goals or neighborhood character? The committee explained the dooring issue caused by placing a bike lane adjacent to parked cars, which is solved by prohibiting parking. However, the committee was willing to consider allowing parking in neighborhood commercial areas because parking would be allowed in adjacent residential areas.
- k. Bob liked the committee's treatment of fences on arterial streets, and suggested we consider a greater than 50% prohibition.

- l. Bob suggested requiring curb bulb-outs where on-street parking is planned.
 - m. Collector streets: The committee had left unresolved the issue of whether to place landscaping in a planting strip (next to the street) on both sides, or leave as an option placing landscaping next to the property on one side of the street. Arguments for placing it next to the street is that it provides a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles and a consistent, symmetrical look. Arguments for placing it on the property side of the sidewalk include ease of maintenance, and buffer from fences.
 - n. Local Streets: Bob had concerns about the short plat exemption (in the policy for discussion, not yet a recommendation); and that the curve radii were designed for excessive travel speeds (which he will work out with John Akers). He asked how private streets (allowed in PUDs) would work in a townhouse development.
 - o. Bob recommends the committee omit the 34 foot local street option as excessively wide.
 - p. Bob had questions about the extra 10 feet of right-of-way on local streets. The committee explained that it solved the “long truck overhanging the sidewalk” problem, buffers the sidewalk from immediately adjacent fence, and provided a place for utilities (for which the City usually requires an easement). Bob was concerned that the ROW in addition to the building setback pushes the building back too far on the lot and reduces the building envelope. An alternative solution to the “long truck” issue would be a 20-foot minimum driveway length standard or garage setback. Fence and landscaping requirements could solve the adjacent fence issue. Or, the ROW could be 60 feet, but provide relief in the setback so the building could be closer to the street.
 - q. Bike parking: Bob suggested tying a bicycle parking requirement to square feet rather than vehicular parking.
6. Other NMT and related issues:
- a. Transit/multi-modal access should be provided for in conjunction with nonmotorized transportation. The committee explained that Ellensburg’s transit system partnership is in the early stages of development.
 - b. Way-finding signs are often a feature of NMT plans. The Lodging Tax Committee is currently looking at entry-way and vehicular way-finding signs; the NMT Committee could communicate the need for NMT signs to be included in their discussions.
 - c. The EECS process will be looking at vehicular efficiency and fuel options.
 - d. Street-based Frontage Standards: The LDCU will look at hybrid form-based codes that may provide different street frontage standards (building orientation, landscaping, parking) for different kinds of streets.
 - e. The LDCU will also be looking at encouraging densities, which promotes walkability, by allowing different housing types, such as townhomes and cottage housing. Gretchen said she had concerns about townhomes, as they are typically 2 story, and not accessible. Bob replied that some places require a certain percentage of the homes to be ground floor only.

7. Adjourn 5:30. Next meeting is September 16 at 3:30 at City Hall. Nancy will incorporate Bob's comments into the policy document for committee discussion. The goal will be to have a final draft for public review following the meeting. We will also plan our public review process.