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Dear Mayor Tabb, City Council Members, and Staff:

On my own behalf, though as a historic preservation professional and as a Landmarks & Design Review Commissioner, I submit the following comments in response to Articles 5 and 6 of the Final Draft Land Use Code dated July 3, 2013:

ARTICLE 5

Design

15.520.020...would this be the section in which we require that developments not have a faux historic “theme” that is not, and has not recently been in evidence in Ellensburg? For instance, no faux Bavarian-Alpine architecture like false timbering, cuckoo clocks, overly ornate trim around windows, scrolled fascia, substantial overhanging balconies, etc; and no faux pioneer Western architecture like false front buildings, wood board-and-batten primary facades, etc. Make it cover all types of development.

Also, please note in the “applicability and compliance” section that all three levels of improvements require review by the L&DRC if they are in a historic district, or on a landmarked property.

15.530.020 B. – Instead of “may,” use the word “shall.” These are the standards the Landmarks Commissions uses.

15.530.030 B, C, D, and all other design departures – must be reviewed by the Landmarks & Design Review Commission.

15.530.050 C (3) – add “or other historic districts, or on landmarked properties.”

Signs

15.560.020 – 2nd PP - add “or in a historic district.”

15.560.050 – why allow monument signs up to 12’ in height? We have 20-35mph speed limits in the City, and there is no need to have a sign this high – higher in fact than a motorist’s line of sight as she approaches the building. Not only that, but it obscures amenities such as landscaping and the lovely architecture of the buildings that I am sure we will get. Totally unnecessary and inappropriate in scale.

15.560.070 C. (5) – why on earth would any retailer need a wall sign with letters taller than 3-4 feet? To allow signs to include letters and logos 8-10’ in height is grotesque and will detract from the aesthetic of the city, where speed limits are 20-35mph, not 70mph! The height letters need to be to see a sign is not commensurate with building size or frontage – it becomes Canyon Road-esque, which everyone agrees is NOT a positive thing.

15.560.180 C. – Temporary Banners – please use the same enforcement language as you have in 15.560.220. This has traditionally been an area without enough enforcement language in it to allow the City to actually enforce it!

ARTICLE 6

As far as Article 6, the Critical Areas Ordinance, goes, I would remind you that we had a very long, very public process in adopting this, and to date the only problem I have been able to identify is that it does not have enough enforcement tools. There is a property owner who has been cited with (I believe) three violations of the ordinance on the same piece of property, at non-concurrent times, and he continues to thumb his nose at the city, because Director Smith’s “hands are tied” to some extent. I would suggest that after two critical areas ordinance violations, building permits be withheld for a period of up to 2 years. That, more than a \$500 slap on the wrist, would likely get a person’s attention. If they have done the same thing twice, and are then “knowingly” violating the law, there need to be serious repercussions.