Questionnaire of Preliminary Code Update Concepts & Options

January 31, 2011 Workshop

Below are questionnaire results from the January 31, 2011 workshop. Approximately 103 participants attended the meeting, of whom approximately 50 submitted surveys. The numbers in the "RATING" columns reflect the number of votes cast for each option; the most prevalent rating for each option is shaded. The "AVERAGE SCORE" column lists the average score for each option, with 2 being "Great Idea" and -2 being "Bad Idea." "Unsure/Neutral" votes were counted as 0 and "Good Idea" votes were 1.

CONCEPT/OPTION	RATING: Bad Idea	Unsure/ Neutral	Good Idea	Great Idea	AVERAGE SCORE	INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS
1. NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION						
1. In residential areas, the maximum block length for vehicle circulation should be:						
a. 1320 feet (1/4 mile) (NMT Committee proposal)	34	5	4	5	-1.1	• Some of the new developments (north) have direct access to the south and don't need to go east to the airport. • Seems too big, even for bikes.
b. 660 feet (1/8 mile) (Planning Commission proposal)	5	6	22	15	0.9	• Compromise of b and c. • With pedestrian pass-through (2). • Saves fuel; works with 2.b.
c. 400 feet to match the traditional Ellensburg block length	5	8	18	15	0.8	• Saves energy if you don't have to drive a mile to go 400 feet. • As much as possible. • Best for vehicles and non-motorized.
2. In residential areas, the maximum street or pedestrian pathway interval for walking or biking circulation should be:						
a. 660 feet (1/8 mile) (NMT Committee proposal)	7	4	31	7	0.6	• Allow for alleys, cut-throughs for foot traffic.
b. 400 ft (1/16 mile) (alternative proposal)	3	5	12	23	1.2	• Better access for children. • Could be one lot, two lot, or three lot combo. Basic lot size but different development size. • Should be as much as possible.

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3. Local street design options:						
a. 24-foot street width standard (PC proposal)	4	6	24	10	**0.8**	• Allows parking on both sides of the street. This provides a barrier between the sidewalk and moving vehicles. • Seems wide enough for transport and parking, but not over asphalt. • With bike lane.
b. 20-foot street width only with certain housing types (PC proposal)	13	6	16	8	**0.1**	• Maybe too narrow. No room for bikes? • One way. • In combination with Option d.
c. 30-foot street width only where needed (PC proposal)	13	5	22	5	**0.1**	• Should be the standard. • Pedestrian; non-model alternatives in the 30 feet. • Don't allow this width in residential. • Must include bike lanes.
d. Allow choice of three widths above (NMT Committee proposal)	12	5	12	13	**0.3**	• Need flexibility. Mandate periodic bike lanes and make other streets narrower? • Shouldn't local street width be consistent? This choice would lead to too much special pleading. • Dependent on the area. • Never larger than 30 feet; 38 feet is too large. • Does the size allow for bike lane?
4. Planting strips and street trees:						
a. Provide between street and sidewalk on both sides of all new streets?	4	4	26	23	**1.1**	• In our semiarid environment, these planting strips are a waste of resources. They create a narrow strip that must be watered and maintained separately from the main yard. Also, people parking on the street must walk across muddy and sloppy strips. Trees can be planted on the inside of the walkway on both sides. • Must be maintained. • Use smaller trees, however. • Planting strips are usually a waste of water for irrigation. We need to be conserving H_2O. • I like the idea of a planting strip. The trouble is maintenance. • More costly than Option c, but more visually appealing and safe.

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b. Provide between street and sidewalk on at least one side of all new streets?	7	8	18	11	**0.6**	• Better than nothing. • Possibly unbalanced. • Always require sidewalks. • Planting should be on the windward side of streets. Find ways to encourage windbreaks/shelter from the wind. Consider recommending trees/shrubs that make good windbreaks. • Use smaller trees, however. • Either this or Option c seems fine.
c. Provide between street and sidewalk on one side, and allow between sidewalk and property on the other side of new streets?	10	12	16	24	**0.7**	• One option for families with children—and another side is cost saving. • Inconsistent between neighborhoods. • Use smaller trees, however. • Either this or Option b seems fine.
2. DEVELOPMENT FRONTAGES (how it looks from the street)						
1. Frontage approach for the Downtown Core						
See display boards for proposed standards & configuration of pedestrian-oriented streets, secondary streets, and landscaped streets.	1	1	7	16	**1.5**	• Transparency is important. • Avoid landscape design; would increase costs! • Storefront/secondary fine. Keep historic character, parking on side. • If the science says it's good, then yes.
2. Frontage approach for the CC-2 zone						
See display boards for proposed standards & configuration of secondary streets and landscaped streets.	1	4	8	11	**1.2**	• Planting strips more softening, smoother transition. • Plan seems good, but make "vegetated transition" from commercial downtown to residential.
3. Frontage approach for Canyon Road						
Includes 15' landscaped setbacks, visible entry, parking on side or rear – see display boards.	2	3	11	17	**1.2**	• Require planting strips, sidewalks for all lots, side or rear. • Dangerous to do landscaping on that road: traffic. • Only for pedestrian safety. • Planting strips need to be maintained. • Phase out the sprawl look.

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4. Frontage approach for University Way						
Includes 15' landscaped setbacks, visible entry, parking on side or rear – see display boards.	3	1	12	16	**1.2**	• This area should be incorporate to look like CC downtown. • Speed limit is also a factor for safe pedestrian movement. • Condos with business downstairs okay if integrated into architecture and not too tall.
5. Frontage approach for Campus Area						
See display boards for proposed standards & configuration of pedestrian-oriented streets, secondary streets, and landscaped streets.	1	4	5	19	**1.4**	• Presupposes more retail in this area. • Pedestrian safety and higher level of NV access. • I agree with establishing a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood near CWU. • Joint public-private venture with the University! For new housing/dorms. • Condos with business downstairs okay if integrated into architecture and not too tall.
3. COMMERCIAL & MULTIFAMILY ZONES						
1. Approach for Downtown Uses:						
• Require ground floor commercial on designated Storefront Streets. • Allow small scale light manufacturing uses provided building frontages meet design standards and external impacts are minimized (truck traffic, noise, and smells)	3	9	22	15	**0.9**	• Should allow for residential downtown, on any level. • Flexible space on ground level. • How will ensure external impacts are minimized? How will this be monitored effectively? • Only with retail sales that support the manufacturing (3). • Second bullet: Not sure it belongs in core unless standards around designated storefronts. • Not sure this should be a requirement. A mix of office and commercial seems good to me now. • Ground floor commercial is a great idea, but not if commercial space will be empty! • Existing = grandfathered, yes? YES.

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2. Tourist Commercial (C-T) zone:						
• Open up to more general retail uses?	20	8	16	7	-0.2	• Walk/bike to general daily needs. • Tourist/highway zones should provide uses/amenities to tourists/drivers, not residents. Need to minimize driving, not maximize. • With size limits on tilt-up-box-store style structures. No Walmart/Home Depot. • For me, the issue is quality of the building and landscape rather than use. The market dictates use. • Limit lot sizes to small-scale. No Big Boxes taking up large spaces.
3. Highway Commercial (C-H) zone:						
• Open up to more general retail uses?	16	15	11	5	-0.2	• Maybe CC-II. • Walk/bike to general daily needs. • Tourist/highway zones should provide uses/amenities to tourists/drivers, not residents. Need to minimize driving, not maximize.
4. Light Industrial Zone (I-L):						
a. Provide for greater flexibility on allowing office and supporting retail uses?	10	10	17	11	0.4	• Evaluate need for current I-L parcels. • Concentrate on really helping light industrial. • Floodplain.
b. Add design standards for landscaping, pedestrian access, and building design standards?	1	5	17	24	1.3	• Yes! • Floodplain. • Mainly for pedestrian safety. • Also for I-H zones adjacent to residential zones. • Building design standards, but I don't mind the building being right up to the sidewalk.

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5. Height limits for Downtown (CC zone):						
a. Currently no height limits – no change.	27	9	1	3	-1.2	• We need some taller buildings. • We need height limits controlled.
b. Provide a 3-story height limit for the historic core and a 6-story limit in outer areas of CC-zone.	9	8	19	8	**0.4**	• How about 4-story limit in the outer areas of CC zone? • Six-story limit is too much; four-story is better. (2) • Parking is already so limited that too much density is a threat? • Six stories too high; 4- to 5-story limit. • Don't wreck views, etc. • Two stories in historic district; six stories too high. • Six stories seems excessive.
c. Provide a height limit whereby any new development shall not exceed the height of existing historic structures.	9	9	13	16	**0.6**	• Yes. Three-story limit downtown but not in outer areas of CC. • Determine if any of the old buildings were taller than three stories. • Should be a neighboring relationship, not a blanket rule. • "Tall" buildings in RR/Fred Meyer-Canyon Road area are okay. • A 3-story height limit does not provide adequate guidance, nor does a 6-story limit. Put the limit in terms of feet. Limiting height to the size of historic structures is good for the downtown core but might limit flexibility in the CC-II zone. On the other hand, too much flexibility can lead to monstrosities. • No more than 3 stories.

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6. Residential/Office (R-O) zone:						
a. Allow greater flexibility on housing types & permitted density, provided they meet height, parking, setbacks, and design standards that limit perceived building size.	1	7	18	15	**1.1**	• Contingent on good design. • Existing—our community is a mixture of sizes. •
b. Allow small scale neighborhood commercial uses on street corner if they have residential or office uses above and meet design standards.	4	6	18	16	**1.0**	• Need better design standards. • Yes, this is a good idea. •
7. Residential Medium Density (R-M) zone:						
Allow greater flexibility on housing types & permitted density, provided they meet height, parking, setbacks, and design standards that limit perceived building size.	0	7	20	14	**1.2**	• Consider zero lot line options. • Examples shown have unattractive design/landscaping. Can better guidelines/incentives be provided? Need better design standards. • When we segregate size, we have enforcement problems. When it is mixed, it is better. • Contingent on good design. • Great idea IF the City can adhere to the intent of the design code; that is, not let developers abuse it.
8. Parking for multifamily uses:						
Allow flexibility to reduce the number of required parking spaces based on analysis of need and management techniques.	8	7	16	15	**0.7**	• Where would they park? • Extra spaces are helpful to unregimented temporary uses like unloading. • Parking in rear. • But monitor street parking. • Maybe, if close to downtown so walking is easier. • What criteria will guide the analysis of need and management techniques? We need to take care not to appear arbitrary.

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9. Parking for commercial uses:						
Allow flexibility to reduce the number of required parking spaces based on analysis of need and management techniques.	4	9	18	14	**0.8**	• Where would they park? • Need public transportation. • Extra spaces are helpful to unregimented temporary uses like unloading. • Preferably, parking in rear. • What criteria will guide the analysis of need and management techniques? We need to take care not to appear arbitrary. • Seems easy to abuse.
10. Internally lit signs						
Prohibit in the historic Downtown core.	3	7	14	24	**1.2**	• Provide more specific standards to preserve historical appearance. • Including monument signs? YES. • Assuming that you mean back-lit (marked "Great"). YES • Bright logo and letters are okay if the background is dark.
11. Tall pole signs						
Except for commercial areas near I-90, require lower monument signs (for new signs only) rather than tall pole signs?	3	1	21	25	**1.3**	• Pole signs: Why not require wind turbines on top? • Most businesses now can find their customers in other ways. • Require lower speed limits. Tall pole signs are only needed in areas with a higher speed. • Begin a process to shield "wall pack" and "barn lights" in commercial and residential. Offer shades inexpensively. New lighting code will help, but existing light pollution needs a replacement program. • I think we have too many tall signs already. • This would be a great idea if we would limit tall pole signs in the commercial areas near I-90. No sign needs to be 100 feet tall. It's questionable that such a tall sign is efficacious. • Height limit is all that should be imposed along with a design approval.

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4. SINGLE FAMILY ZONES & SUBDIVISIONS						
1. Encourage innovative subdivision designs						
Allow a greater diversity of lot sizes and subdivision configurations through the standard subdivision process.	1	7	19	20	**1.2**	• Provided it creates larger open space blocks. • Greatly needed! • Yes, as long as the block sizes remain relatively small and well connected. • Like more diversity, but needs to be tied to goals (affordability, energy efficiency) not just style. • Many of the historic lots are small. They have been combined for development of larger houses or left for small homes. • Green space! Connect to other green spaces. • I would support this IF the planning and design process is rigorous enough to prevent other shortcuts and abuses by developers. • In trade for solar open space. • Diversity of configurations may be visually appealing as opposed to the "it all looks the same." • But provide clear design standards for subdivision configurations.
2. Density bonuses – Allow an increase in density in exchange for the following amenities: *(rank each element)*						
a. Greater energy efficient design (site and homes)	1	1	21	30	**1.5**	• Design standards? Smaller bonus. • Straw bale construction. • Just enough to encourage it sufficiently. • All homes should be encouraged to be better users of energy.
b. Greater mix of lot sizes and housing types (such as mix of housing sizes, cottages, perhaps some attached single family)	1	3	20	24	**1.4**	• Smaller bonus. • Small houses and big houses can work together. • Promotes diversity in community members. Promotes diversity in appearance. • With design considerations.

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c. Incorporating off-street trails	1	6	13	30	**1.4**	• Should be required regardless. • Bigger bonus. • This is crucial to our energy and health future. • Yes, yes, yes. • Need to be public access.
d. Incorporating additional park space or protected/ enhanced natural areas.	1	3	13	33	**1.5**	• Bigger bonus. • They do need lots of maintenance. • Yes, yes, yes. • More parks/green space/natural zones.
e. Other item(s)? _____						• Low-income housing. • Parking/throughways. • Educational mini-park. • Larger number of smaller community playgrounds. • Natural native plant heritage areas?
3. Subdivisions with tall fences backing up to street:						
a. Prohibit subdivision design that incorporates continuous tall fences adjacent to sidewalks/streets on local and collector streets.	1	4	10	35	**1.6**	• Definitely! • Not realistic for existing homes. Allow existing homes to add fences (child and pet safety). • More creative fencing and landscaping in front of the fence. • Fences are sometimes okay with planting strip beside the street. • I like the landscape strip and sidewalk. Trouble is, how do you ensure the strip is maintained?
b. Limit tall fences adjacent to sidewalks on arterial streets to 50% of the street frontage. Encourage homes, but not driveways, to face the street.	4	11	12	24	**1.0**	• Even 50% seems too much. • Encourage homes to face arterial streets. • No tall fences should be allowed on street frontage. • Occasionally, allow lots that have big back yards to the next street. • What about a shrub fence with Juniper? • This hurts effort to reduce lot size. • What is "tall"? Four-foot maximum sounds reasonable. • I like the idea of an alley.

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c. If and where tall fences along streets are allowed, require landscaping between the fence and sidewalk.	5	5	21	27	**1.1**	• Only if large setback/planting strip. • Do not allow such fences. (3) • This hurts effort to reduce lot size. • Not at corners. Could be at back of lot, but not at front. Many new lots are oriented with a side to the street, and a tall fence does not play well. • Problem is maintenance. (3) (Homeowner doesn't see or benefit from plants.) • Great for snow removal as long as planting is maintained. (The fence by Mt. Stuart Elementary is horrible.)
4. Garage location/design options:						
a. Provide standards that limit the visual prominence of garages along streets. *(see display board for examples)*	4	5	20	22	**1.1**	• Require alleys. • Minimum standards are good. • Garages in back!!! Alleys, please. • Not the City's job to regulate. • Garages in rear! • Too many "garage homes." • At least 20 feet of yard/green.
b. Provide a density bonus for subdivisions where lot/house design limit the visual prominence of garages along streets.	4	6	21	20	**1.0**	• Require alleys. • I like incentives instead of regulations. • Also for open space (community garden). Cottage housing. • Too many "garage homes." • Garages bother me, but not enough to trade against. • Garages in rear! • With design considerations. • No. Just reduce garage prominence. • Require that garages have a greater setback than houses.

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5. Setbacks & usable open space concepts:						
a. Require garage setbacks to be at least 20' from street to minimize cars/trucks blocking sidewalks.	2	2	25	20	**1.2**	• Parking area is issue, not setback to garage. • No cars backing out on sidewalks, it's dangerous!!! • Or alley entry for parking. • Good idea. However, driveways need to be 25 to 30 feet to accommodate full-size trucks. • For front-facing garages. Alley or side streets are okay. • Whatever amount of feet is necessary to get the vehicles off the sidewalk.
b. Increase minimum rear yard setback from 10' to 20'. *CLARIFICATION: This would not apply to garages off alleys.*	8	8	17	18	**0.7**	• Depends. • Or combine area for community gardens. • Too restrictive. Doesn't make sense if there is an alley; required distance of 10 feet between garage and alley is sufficient. • We should be trying to increase visually appealing density, not limit it. Private green space in the city should give way to more community green spaces. Enhance ideas of community and civics. If you want privacy or personal green space, don't live in the city. • This would decrease yard green space and add concrete? • What does this mean? With or without an alley?
c. Require at least 10% of the lot to be usable open space with no dimension less than 15 feet (side or rear yard).	9	9	14	16	**0.6**	• Should be much more than 10%. • Ten percent seems too small; go higher. • Or combine area for community gardens. • Interesting. • How can we have this requirement and still achieve greater density?

Other Comments:

- Category 1: Remember children walking and biking.
- Categories 1.1 and 1.2: These two sections actually belong together. Actually, I don't like either the 660- or 400-foot option. A length of 550 feet would be better.
- Category 1.3: I would eliminate the 20-foot option and allow developers to choose between the other two.
- Category 1.3: Requirements for off-street parking are excessive for 38-foot-wide streets (current code)!
- Category 1.3: Current design standard is way too wide!
- Category 2: I'm concerned this level of prescription is too much on "style rules" in an economic future that is starving for greater substance.
- Category 3: Limit height for all zones.
- Category 3: Better architecture in commercial and residential!!!
- Category 3.5: Building height needs to be sensitive to changes in solar and wind potentials to adjoining lots!
- Category 4.3: Alleys, please.
- Category 4.3: At the least, green space (not rocks and weeds)/planting strips should be required between the fence and sidewalk. These tall fences look awful and suggest a lack of friendliness; not inviting for walking.
- Category 4.3: What height? Code should be considered for lower height than those along subdivisions near Mt. Stuart Elementary.
- In the areas around campus, get more student input. We use it the most and most of us are on foot and walking. The apartments north of campus are predominantly students.
- Get rid of substitute wetlands for mitigation because people don't take care of them after they pass final inspection.
- Green corridors, green spaces.
- Walking to schools and parks seems to get forgotten in planning!
- Above all, make the city more attractive and livable while keeping the park-like and "little West" town feel.
- Also, architectural styles should fit in with a small town; i.e., okay for more density, but try not to have San Francisco (or even Bellevue) style apartments/condos (height, etc.) or things that do not fit in with the look of the town, like has been done with Univ. mishmash (some nice/appropriate buildings, others weird").