

TO: Mike Smith, Community Development Director

FROM: Nancy Lillquist, Ellensburg City Council

DATE: October 4, 2011

SUBJECT: Comments on Draft 1 LDCU Article 5

Process: This proposed Code and the Public Works Standards are interrelated and must be cross-referenced; ideally we would be reviewing and adopting the code and the standards together. If the standards are not adopted concurrently with the code, street design and dimensions, for example, will be in conflict between the two documents until the standards are revised, potentially creating a problem for applicants. The Non Motorized Transportation Code Committee recommendations are spread through both documents and it is difficult to know if all recommendations are captured or considered without the ability to review them side by side. While recognizing that staff may not want to revise the Public Works Standards until elements of the draft code are more certain, the path to adoption Council considered at our September 19 meeting should be revisited to consider how we can adopt both documents concurrently. If Public Works staff needs additional staff to accomplish the revisions on the Code Update's timeline, we should consider how to accomplish that.

Specific comments are below for discussion.

Article 4

I previously commented on Article 4 with regard to the NMT Committee's recommendations in a memo dated September 12. A couple of additional thoughts -

15.40.040 Local access street design. There is some discussion of not allowing options for builders for local street design. It seems to be based on the assumption that the cheapest (narrowest) option will always be selected. But if you ask builders which they would choose there is more to the calculation. I've only talked to two builders, but both said they would build the 30 foot street to allow parking both sides, except in cases where a cottage development was being considered - then the builder would build the 20 foot street with off-street parking, consistent with how cottage housing is supposed to work. The options give builders the ability to tailor the street to the kind of neighborhood they are trying to create. Builders are not only concerned about construction costs, but also about selling lots for good prices. If the City selected one of the three options to be the standard, which would it be? They all have pros and cons. Also, the builder I talked to would like the option of decreasing ROW width if alleys are part of the subdivision design. The reason for the 60 ft ROW width is to locate utilities, which typically are located in alleys where there are alleys.

15.41.020C3 Block design and connectivity standards IH zones. I propose an additional exception to the 1320 ft street interval in the case of heavy industry of the sort that needs large tracts of land. For example, there was talk of a sawmill locating near the west interchange. As

parking facilities. How does one go about demonstrating that bicycle activity will not occur at that location? How does the director decide?

15.56.120 A-frame signs. The larger signs don't seem to be a problem in the auto-oriented zones; I don't see the need to reduce the signs to a size that is probably not readable at 25 mph.

15.56.130 Service station signs. Why are service stations different?

15.57.030B Landscaping plant material tree standards. The standards seemed excessive to me, so I consulted Gordon Crane, the City's arborist. He explained that while a 2 inch caliper tree looks better initially, the roots have been cut to grow in a container, so it takes longer for the trees to start growing and there is higher mortality than for 1 to 1 ½ inch trees. Also, 2 inch trees are about 4 times more expensive, more expensive to plant (because you need equipment), and there is less selection (fewer varieties can grow to that size with their roots cut). Gordon said that research shows that 1 inch caliper deciduous trees, and also the smaller conifers, catch up to and exceed the larger trees over a few years.

15.57.030E2 Soil and mulching. Bark mulch and washed rock are more commonly used for landscaping cover; sawdust will blow away, and manure and yard waste aren't that attractive for topping, though if composted are fine for fertilizer.

15.57.050 Landscape site design. Stormwater detention standards should be referenced when referring to rain gardens and swales.