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OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER
ELLENSBURG, WA

July 29, 2013

City Council
501 North Anderson Avenue
Ellensburg, Washington 98926

RE: Land Code Update.

Dear City Council,

The purpose of this letter that's being addressed to Ellensburg City Council and Staff is to be added to the recorded testimony of the Study Sessions on the Land Use Code Update. The Land Use Code Update has many good elements and makes a real attempt at spelling out the requirements needed for a specific land use and eliminating the need for a lot of staff interpretation of what the code means.

Since I've not been able to find an economic impact statement on the implementation of this Land Use Code Update, I'm concerned that many aspects of this update while it looks and feel good, does not address the needs of the market place and the lack of usable land to implement this update. My comments are directed at the commercial zoning requirements of our retail and office sector of this code.

Eliminating office buildings from the Tourist Commercial Zone: Nothing has changed since City Council approved office building construction in the TC zone, except now there is less inventory of land suitable for professional office development than there was when the ordinance was approved. The major reason the ordinance was approved is because of the lack of enough developable land in the CC 1, CC2 and HC to accommodate the market demand. The City Council should be seeking the answer to the question, why was there more than 100,000 square feet of office space developed, for example at the West Interchange and why didn't they develop these office buildings in the CC1, CC2 & HC? You will find answers like the lack of parking, need for ADA office space and room to expand the business.
If you eliminate such a large portion of developable land for office buildings, you will be making a decision that will have a major impact on the development and expansion of professional services in Ellensburg and the jobs it would have created.

Bicycle Parking: The requirement to have one bicycle parking spot for every 1000 square foot of usable space in a commercial building is another example of excess cost of development. There are plans presently to develop a big box store at the West Interchange that will have at a minimum of 120,000 square feet of usable area in the building. Does anyone believe there is a need for 120 bicycle racks/parking spaces within 100 feet of the main entryway of the store that has to be covered and lighted? There are six bicycle spaces in front of Fred Meyers and I've yet to see them full. This is just one type of regulation that doesn't make sense and should have adjustable requirements based on the size of the building.

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There are many other items that need to be reviewed to make this Land Code Update a stronger document and not be a road block to reasonable commercial/residential development for Ellensburg. It appears that there is a rush to get this update done as soon as possible. It also appears that this document has been developed and framed by the Landmark Design Committee, Planning Commission, City Staff and the City's hired consultant without any real input from the local real estate industry, developers or builders; the businesses that will ultimately be most affected by these changes. Now that you have a proposed Land Code Update document, shouldn't the businesses, builders and developers be given the same opportunity that the Planning Commission and Landmark and Design Committee had in developing and tweeting these codes? These people are in the market place and work daily with the consumers that could provide strong input for the final document. The present document is a great academic exercise with no real input from the professionals with feet on the ground experience.

Sincerely Yours,

Bob Hansen, CCIM
Commercial Real Estate Broker