CITY OF OTHELLO PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
500 E. Main St.
April 19, 2021
6:00 PM

In-person attendance is limited to allow for social distancing. Masks are required.
For those who would like to attend remotely, see virtual instructions at the end of the agenda

1. Call to Order - Roll Call
2. Approval of the March 15, 2021 Minutes
3. Zoning north of Hemlock from 7th to 8th – Public Hearing
4. Vehicle Sales in C-1 – Request for Direction
5. Street Safety – Discussion of Priorities
6. Street Width Standards for New Streets - Discussion
7. Neighborhood Design/Street Pattern - Discussion
8. March Building & Planning Department Report - Informational
9. Housing Action Plan Update – Informational. Draft plan should be available at https://www.othellowa.gov/HousingActionPlan by the time of the meeting.
10. Old Business
    a. Accessory Dwelling Units – will schedule a study session with Council once the Rental Inspection system is more established
    b. Residential Landscaping Installation
    c. Subdivision Update – OMC Title 16 – Will return to soon, as workload allows
    d. Underground Utilities/existing pole policy – City Attorney is working on revisions to the ordinance

Next Regular Meeting is Monday, May 17, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.

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City of Othello
Planning Commission
March 15, 2021
Anne Henning

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was a remote meeting held via GoToMeeting.
Chair Roger Ensz called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Roger Ensz, Brian Gentry, Alma Carmona, Chris Dorow
Absent: Kevin Gilbert
Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning
Attendees: Bob Carlson

MINUTES APPROVAL

Feb. 16, 2021 minutes were approved as written. M/S Dorow/Ensz

ZONING NORTH OF HEMLOCK FROM 7TH TO 8TH

In the comprehensive update of the Zoning Map adopted in 2020, the block fronting the north side of Hemlock Street between 7th and 8th Avenues was rezoned from C-1 Commercial to R-4 Residential. The intent of the 2020 zoning changes was to better match the zoning with the existing and hoped-for uses. However, while this block contains one house, it also contains two commercial buildings: The Port of Othello building and Hemlock Plaza with Othello Licensing, Desert Rose Designs floral, and a former sporting goods store. There was no discussion at the time about the serious impacts to the existing uses of rezoning commercial uses to residential, so staff concludes this was an error that needs to be corrected.

Planning Commission agreed this was an error and not what they intended for this block. The commercial buildings should be zoned Commercial and the house should remain Residential.

Staff will schedule a public hearing on this item for the April meeting.

SUBDIVISION UPDATE – OMC CHAPTERS 16.26, DESIGN STANDARDS & 16.33, IMPROVEMENTS

The Commission has been working on updating OMC Title 16, Subdivisions. Since the Engineering Department is currently working on an update to the Public Works Design Standards, this is a good time for the Commission to review the Subdivision chapters related to municipal improvements, which are 16.29: Design Standards, and 16.33: Improvements. Community Development Director Anne Henning explained that many provisions of OMC 16.29 and all of 16.33 are proposed to be deleted, because they are redundant with the Public Works Design Standards. Having standards in different places leads to inconsistency when one is changed without the other. It is preferable to have all the standards in one place.

Discussion points:

- 16.29.020 Alignment of Major Streets—Conformity with Master Plan, & 16.29.030 Streets—Relation to Adjoining Street System. These sections may be affected by upcoming discussions

about neighborhood design and street pattern. The Commission will revisit these sections in the future.

- 16.29.050 Dead-end Streets. This section had previously been reviewed by the Commission, which was not in favor of dead-end streets, since they cause problems for connectivity, walkability, parking, and water connections. Ms. Henning pointed out there may be rare instances where a dead-end street is the only option, but those can be reviewed case-by-case through the deviation process by the Commission.
- 16.29.210 Blocks—Length & 16.29.230 Blocks—Crosswalks. Questions about requiring a raised crosswalk for a mid-block crossing. Ms. Henning explained that drivers don't expect a crossing in the middle of a block, so raising the crosswalk makes the pedestrians more visible as well as creating a raised area that drivers will slow down for. The Public Works Director felt that raised crosswalks would not impede snowplowing, which had been a concern previously.
- 16.29.280 Tree Planting. This section should be removed from this chapter and coordinated with the on-going revisions to the Landscape chapter, OMC 17.74.
- 16.29.310 Sanitary Sewer, 16.29.320 Water, & 16.29.330 Street Lights. Ms. Henning noted that most of the text is proposed to be removed because it relates to construction standards that are already found in the Public Works Design Standards. The portion retained would just say that subdivisions must connect to the water and sewer systems and provide street lighting. These provisions could be moved to 16.05.110, General Standards, or could remain in the Design Standards chapter. The Commission didn't have strong feelings one way or the other as to the location of these provisions.

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Ms. Henning announced that we now have the option to have in-person Commission meetings. All attendees will need to be masked and maintain distance from each other. The Council Chambers has enough space for 16 attendees beyond those on the dais. We also need to continue to provide the ability to at least call in for anyone not attending in-person. The Council held the first meeting like this March 8. The Commission was in favor of having the next meeting in person.

STREET SAFETY

Commissioner Chris Dorow mentioned that there has been a lot of discussion about street safety at recent meetings. He feels we need to define the problem simply. He provided 10 categories of issues:

1. Speeding
2. Configuration of streets/lack of use of collectors and arterials
3. Failure to yield
4. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
5. Accident distribution
6. Hitting stationary objects
7. Pedestrian accidents
8. Sight lines
9. Crime prevention
10. Consistency in street design (Example: Many stop signs west of 4th Ave, few stop signs east of 4th)

Mr. Dorow asked the Commissioners to think about these issues before the next meeting, add any categories that he missed, and rank them in importance. He felt the Commission should pick the top 3 to

5 issues to address. Chair Roger Ensz asked for Mr. Dorow's list to be distributed to the Commissioners at least 1 to 2 weeks ahead of the meeting, to give them time to think about it.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm. Next scheduled meeting is Monday, April 19, 2021.

_____ Date: _____
Roger Ensz, Chair

_____ Date: _____
Selina Flores, Planning Secretary

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: April 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Zoning Map & Comprehensive Plan Designation Map – Hemlock between 7th & 8th – Public Hearing and Recommendation to City Council

In the comprehensive update of the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan Designation Map adopted in 2020, the block fronting the north side of Hemlock Street between 7th and 8th Avenues was rezoned/ redesignated from C-1 Commercial to R-4 Residential. The intent of the overall zoning/designation update was to better match the zoning/designations with the existing and hoped-for uses. However, while this block contains one house, it also contains two commercial buildings: The Port of Othello office and Hemlock Plaza with Othello Licensing, Desert Rose Designs floral, and a former sporting goods store. There was no discussion at the time about the serious impacts to the existing uses of rezoning commercial uses to residential, and recent discussion with the Planning Commission and Council has concluded this was an error that needs to be corrected.

Staff Comments

1. The east end of Block 160 (Lots 7 & 8) contain a residence. The proposal is to leave the residence zoned/designated Residential. This is consistent with other areas where the Commission recommended and Council approved split zoning within blocks when it matched the existing uses.
2. Because this action is related to the previous legislative rezone/designation change, it is also being processed legislatively, rather than as a quasi-judicial action requested by a property owner.

Procedural actions

Action	Date
60-day notice to state	3-25-21
SEPA DNS issued	3-26-21
Introduced to City Council	4-5-21
Public hearing notice published	4-7-21
Planning Commission public hearing	Scheduled for 4-19-21
City Council public hearing	Scheduled for 4-26-20

Attachments

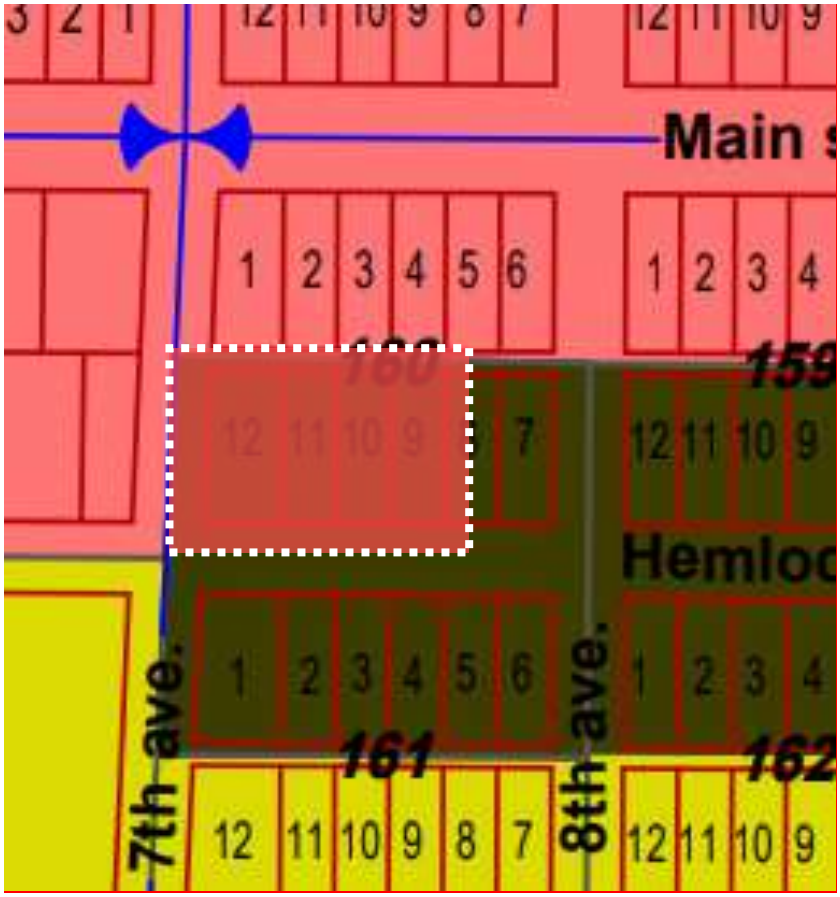
- Map/Aerial photo

Public Hearing: Notice of a public hearing was published and posted. The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing and take testimony on the proposed zone change and designation change.

Action: The Planning Commission should make a recommendation to City Council to rezone Lots 9-12, Block 160, Othello Land Company, to C-2 Central Commercial, and make the corresponding change to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Map.

Rezone Port office and Hemlock Plaza from R-4 Residential to C-2 Commercial, consistent with use, surroundings, and previous zoning. This returns the site to the commercial zoning it was prior to 2020 Zoning Update.

Rezonificar la oficina del Port La Plaza de Hemlock desde R-4 Residential hasta C-2 Commercial, de acuerdo con el uso, entorno y zonificación anterior. Esto devuelve el sitio a la zonificación comercial que tenía antes de la actualización de zonificación de 2020.



TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: April 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Zoning – OMC 17.30.030—Commercial Uses—Discussion

Currently, vehicle sales lots are only allowed in the C-3 Zone, which is Main Street east of 14th, the areas south of Highway 26, and most of Broadway. Before the Zoning Code update process from 2017 to 2020, vehicle sales lots were allowed in the then C-1/C-1B Zone, which included Main Street and 1st Ave. The Planning Commission specifically directed this change when reviewing and updating the Commercial Zones. Humberto Abundiz of Audio Waves has submitted a request to change the zoning code text to allow small-scale vehicle sales in C-1.

Staff Comments

1. Mr. Abundiz's location is 315 S. 1st Ave. He is proposing to have no more than 4 vehicles for sale at a time. He previously stated he has 6 parking spaces available.
2. In the zoning prior to the 2020 update, here were the rules on vehicle sales:
    a. In C-1 (Main Street and 1st Avenue), any uses allowed in C-1B were allowed.
    b. In C-1B (a few blocks along Cedar and Hemlock), "Automobile, motorcycle sales and light service" were permitted uses.
    c. The C-2 Zone (the rest of the commercial area) did not list vehicle sales as an allowed or conditional use. Somewhat similar uses that were allowed included "Auto body and vehicle repair shops", "New manufactured home sales", "Rental vehicles, trailers and machinery", and "RV, boat and trailer and camper trailer, sales and service."
    d. There was a C-3 Zone in the code but there were no areas zoned C-3. Display or sales of used vehicles or equipment was specifically prohibited.
3. The Planning Commission discussed vehicle sales in Commercial Zones at the September 18, 2017 meeting. The Commission determined vehicles sales lots should only be allowed in C-3, due to their appearance. It was noted that other cities general do not allow vehicle lots in the middle of town. There was discussion about the one existing vehicle lot on 1st Avenue, which would become nonconforming. The Commission felt it was reasonable to allow it to remain but specifically said new car lots should not be allowed. These regulations were what was eventually adopted by the Council.
4. Since the concerns were mostly about appearance, can standards be set that would address these concerns? If the number of vehicles for sale is limited to a small number, does that address the concerns?
5. If there is interest in changing the code, staff can research if other cities limit the number of vehicles for sale and/or have aesthetic standards for vehicle sales lots.

Attachments

- 4-13-21 email from Humberto Abundiz
- Existing code: OMC 17.30.030 Uses

Action: The Planning Commission should discuss vehicle sales lots and provide direction to staff. If the Commission is considering a change to the Municipal Code, staff will need to schedule a public hearing.

Anne Henning

From: Humberto Abundiz <audiowaves509@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:31 PM
To: Anne Henning
Subject: 315 S 1st Ave-Zoning Rule Exception

[External Message]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am requesting the opportunity to be approved for an exception to the dealership zoning rules.

I am considering adding a dealership license to my existing business. It is an effort to add services to Othello residents and to stay in business.
Throughout the six years of doing business in Othello, I have been able to offer car audio, remote starts, short circuit repair, window tint and automotive keys to the Othello residents and nearby cities. Thanks to the alternative services, I have been staying at float. Not only do I struggle with e-commerce with car audio inventory, I am starting to see the ripple effects of Covid-19. Car audio inventory is hard to come by. Suppliers are struggling to keep up with orders. The situation is forcing me to think of ways to expand my services without taking big risks. I have already invested money, time and my family's time to grow my business. That I am considering investing more money in selling cars to just stay in business and provide for my family.

Currently, I am not in a position to rent a bigger location, especially with the struggle of Covid-19. I do not have the space to have several cars parked in the lot either. Thus, my goal is to have a maximum of four cars for sale at all times. I am not planning to stop selling car audio, remote starts, window tint and automotive keys. Thus, I know the importance for my customers to find parking. I have no intention of taking so much parking space from my business. I cannot afford to irritate my customers. The idea is to produce a little more revenue.

I understand the importance of rules and guidelines. That is why, I am asking for the opportunity to sell cars at my current location 315 S 1st Ave.

Thank you,

Humberto Abundiz

315 1st Ave Othello, WA 99344
P: 509-346-3345
audiowaves509@gmail.com

17.30.030 Uses.

(a) The commercial land use table indicates where categories of land uses may be permitted and whether those uses are allowed outright or by conditional use permit. Only commercial zones are included in this table. Land uses not listed are prohibited unless allowed through the process specified in subsection (c) of this section. Further interpretation of these zones may be obtained as specified in Section 19.03.020. Land uses are also subject to the footnotes following the table.

(b) The symbols used in the table represent the following:

(1) A = Allowed, subject to applicable standards and any footnotes.

(2) C = Conditionally allowed through the conditional use permit process, subject to applicable standards and any footnotes.

(3) X = Prohibited use.

(c) Uses similar to those listed may be established as allowed or conditionally allowed through the interpretation process in Section 19.03.020(b). In determining whether a use should be permitted, the administrator shall refer to the purpose statement in Section 17.30.010 and the most recent version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), as used by federal agencies in the classification of business establishments.

TABLE 1: LAND USES IN COMMERCIAL ZONES

USE CATEGORIES	C-1	C-2	C-3
Retail			
Retail use (other than those listed below)	A[1]	A	A
Contractor supply and sales, lumberyard	X	A	A
Daily outdoor merchandise display	A	A	A
Drive-thru for a permitted use	A	A	A
Eating and drinking places	A	A	A
Farm and landscaping equipment sales, supplies, and service	X	A	A
Fuel stations	X	A	A
Manufactured home sales	X	A	A
Marijuana sales	X	X	X
Open sales lots in conjunction with a principal use which must be in an enclosed adjoining building	X	X	A
Vehicle sales lots (can include RVs, boats, trailers, and campers) (can include light service), in compliance with the development standards in Section 17.61.060	X	X	A
Warehouse sales	X	X	A
Wholesale			
Wholesale use when not associated with a retail use	X	X	A

USE CATEGORIES	C-1	C-2	C-3
Services			
Service uses (other than those listed below)	A[2]	A	A
Adult entertainment and cabarets (in compliance with Chapter 4.28)[3]	X	X	A
Banking and financial services	A	A	A
Clubs, lodges, assembly halls	X	A	A
Cultural, recreational, and entertainment uses	X	A	A
Daily care providers (child care, elder care)	A	A	X
Dance hall	X	X	A
Drive-thru for a permitted use	A	A	A
Family day care home in an existing residence	A	A	A
Health care providers	A	A	A
Hospitals	X	X	A
Lodging (hotels and motels subject to review under Chapter 17.67)	X	A	A
Kennels, animal boarding, pet care	X	X	A
Personal service shops	A	A	A
Professional offices	A	A	A
Recreational vehicle park (in compliance with Chapter 17.44)	X	X	C
Rental of vehicles, trailers, and machinery	X	X	A
Repair and maintenance, including vehicles, small engines, and appliances	X	X	A
Theater	X	A	A
Truck stops, sales, and light repairs	X	X	A
Veterinarian	X	X	A
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities			
Passenger transportation facilities, public or private	X	X	A
Personal wireless telecommunications facilities (in compliance with Chapter 16.68)	X	A	A
Utility facilities (such as well house, electrical substation, etc.)	A	A	A
Industrial and Storage			
Cargo containers used for storage[4]	X	A	A
Light manufacturing when subordinate to a retail sales outlet and contained in a building	A	A	A
Outside storage in conjunction with a principal use which is in an enclosed adjoining building	X	X[5]	A
Self-storage, mini-storage, RV storage	X	X	A

USE CATEGORIES	C-1	C-2	C-3
Storage, warehousing, and distribution, not associated with a retail business	X	X	A
Truck parking[6]	X	X	A
Wrecking yard, salvage yard, junk yard	X	X	X
Public and Institutional			
Churches	X	A	A
Libraries	A	A	A
Municipal and governmental facilities, shops, and yards	X	A	A
Outdoor recreational, entertainment, or amusement facilities	X	X	A
Park, playground, athletic field, other noncommercial recreation	A	A	A
Schools, public or private	X	A	A
Residential			
Adult family home in an existing residence	A	A	A
Assisted living facility	X	A	A
Manufactured or mobile home park	X	X	X
Multifamily residential use not in conjunction with a commercial structure	X	A[7]	X
Residential use in a basement or upper story[8]	A	A	A

Notes for Table 1:

[1] Limited to buildings under two thousand square feet.

[2] Limited to buildings under two thousand square feet.

[3] An adult entertainment business must be at least seven hundred feet from any park, school, preschool, youth club, bus stop, day care center, or another adult entertainment business.

[4] The following are required for any cargo containers used for storage:

(a) The container must be placed adjacent to a site-built structure, with separation as required by the International Building Code and International Fire Code;

(b) The container shall be inconspicuous from public streets. It shall be located behind the building or screened with sight-obscuring fencing, walls, or landscaping;

(c) Only one container is allowed per development site;

(d) The container shall be placed and blocked to prevent harboring of animals under the container or between the container and other structures;

(e) The container shall not be connected to water or occupied in any way;

(f) The container shall have only factory-installed doors. No windows or other openings shall be allowed;

(g) The access route to the end doors cannot be on a public right-of-way, including alleys;

(h) The container shall not be rented out or used for storage by anyone except the occupant of the associated building;

(i) The container shall be painted to be compatible with the adjacent building;

(j) The container shall be removed prior to the sale of the land or change of tenant;

(k) A permit from the city shall be required, with a fee of fifty dollars, to verify compliance with this code.

[5] Existing outside storage as of the date of initial adoption of this ordinance may continue. No new outside storage uses may be established.

[6] Any parcel of land used as a public or private truck/trailer truck parking area shall be developed, used, and maintained in the following manner:

(a) The lot shall have access directly off an improved truck route as established in Chapter 9.36;

(b) All vehicles shall be within three hundred feet of a fire hydrant;

(c) The driveway shall have a surfaced apron no less than thirty feet wide by thirty feet long and shall be permitted by the public works director per Chapter 11.20;

(d) Vehicles shall not drive over curbs and/or sidewalks to access the parking area;

(e) The lot shall have sidewalks along all curbs as prescribed in Chapter 11.16;

(f) The parcel or lot area shall be graded to contain one inch of stormwater on site, or enter into a city stormwater contract if applicable;

(g) The parking and maneuvering area shall be graded and graveled sufficiently to control dust and mud and to provide access to fire trucks;

(h) All trucks/trailers shall be licensed operating vehicles. There shall be no non-operating, damaged, parting, hulks, or pieces of vehicles allowed to be stored under this conditional use;

(i) No truck parking lot shall be used for truck repair, painting, or freight transfer;

(j) A water service shall not be provided to an unplatted lot. A conditional use permit for a truck parking lot does not require platting of the parcel involved but further development or different uses may require platting;

(k) Any person parking a truck or trailer on a lot which has not been approved for such parking shall be deemed to have committed a civil infraction and shall be punished by a C-6 penalty. Any person permitting the parking of trucks or trailers on a parcel or lot without having obtained a conditional use permit to do so shall be deemed to have committed a civil infraction and shall be punished by a C-3 penalty.

[7] Residential uses without street frontage commercial uses are allowed, subject to the following provisions:

(a) Not to be located within one hundred forty feet (a half block) of Main Street or Highway 26.

(b) Minimum of three dwelling units per building.

(c) Buildings are subject to commercial zone design standards.

(d) Parking shall be in compliance with Chapter 17.61.

[8] Accessory residential uses are allowed, subject to the following provisions:

(a) Parking for the residential use shall be provided in compliance with Chapter 17.61.

(Ord. 1547 § 4 (part), 2020).

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: April 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Street Safety Prioritization – Discussion

At the March 15, 2021 regular meeting, Commissioner Dorow provided a list of street safety topics that he asked Commissioners to add to, prioritize, and discuss at the next meeting. His list was:

1. Speeding
2. Configuration of streets/lack of use of collectors and arterials
3. Failure to yield
4. Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
5. Accident distribution
6. Hitting stationary objects
7. Pedestrian accidents
8. Sight lines
9. Crime prevention
10. Consistency in street design (Example: Many stop signs west of 4th Ave, few stop signs east of 4th)

Staff Comments

1. It seems logical to separate existing streets from future streets when discussing how to address problems and solutions. Retrofitting an existing street is a much different process from setting standards for new streets, in terms of what is possible, what is economical, and who pays (developers vs taxpayers).
2. As a reminder, the City has previously addressed street safety on existing streets by adopting a Local Road Safety Plan, which is a document required by WSDOT for certain types of grants, where specific locations with safety issues are discussed and prioritized, and countermeasures proposed. This document is posted on the City's website for easy access.

Attachments:

- None

Action: The Commission should determine how they wish to proceed on this topic.

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: April 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Street Width Standards for New Streets – Discussion

At the April 12 City Council meeting, Council adopted 2021 updates to the Public Works Design Standards (PWDS), the regulations that govern how new street and utility improvements are constructed. Because residential street width has been such a contentious issue, the Council adopted the PWDS with the 40' width that had been in the standards prior to the change to 42' in 2017. However, the Council brought up the need to further discuss residential street width, for safety and cost reasons. The Planning Commission has the opportunity to be involved in this discussion and provide input.

As has been discussed at great length over the past few months, when streets are wide, drivers go faster, have more collisions, and cause more damage and injuries. Despite speed limit signs, a driver will mostly go as fast as they feel comfortable. Street design cues the driver about how fast is appropriate to go. Wide, flat, unobstructed streets make a driver feel comfortable going fast. Consider the design of a freeway with its wide lanes and wide curves. Also think about how it feels to drive in a school zone and keep your speed down to 20 mph when the street is telling you to drive faster. Now think about how it feels to drive on a narrow street, especially a tree-lined street. The physical characteristics of that street make a driver more cautious and drive slower. The more comfortable a driver is, the faster they go and the less attention they pay to their surroundings (checking their phone, failing to notice stop signs and pedestrians, etc.)

The facts clearly show Othello has an accident problem, with a disproportionate number occurring in residential areas. While there may be multiple causes that contribute, wide streets that encourage higher speeds are definitely a factor. We have discussed various countermeasures that can be added to retrofit an existing street and add psychological friction to slow traffic, but one simple solution for new streets is to simply build the streets narrower. This accomplishes the goal of reducing speeds and therefore improving safety, and has these additional benefits:

1. Narrower streets and slower traffic make it safer and more pleasant to walk and bike, encouraging those activities and improving the health of those who participate in them, as well as making it more feasible to complete some short trips on foot or by bike.
2. More efficient use of land, allowing more housing and therefore more taxable property in the same area. This is also more economical for the developer, reducing the cost of new housing.
3. Reduced street construction costs. While construction costs are paid by the developer, the developer of course passes the costs on in the finished project, increasing the costs for the purchaser and making housing less affordable.
4. Reduced maintenance costs. A wider street requires more materials and labor for crack seal, chip seal, overlay, and eventual reconstruction. These costs are borne by the city forever. The City of Moscow, ID recently changed their default standard from 36' to 28'. They estimate it will save $500,000 per mile over 50 years in maintenance costs.
5. Reduced snowplowing. A smaller area will take less time to clear.
6. Reduced stormwater generation. Stormwater regulations will likely only get more restrictive. Stormwater from city streets is the city's problem to manage, convey, treat, and dispose of. Less initial stormwater reduces the volume that needs to go through this process.

7. Shorter crossing distance for pedestrians. This reduces the time a pedestrian is in danger of being struck by a vehicle.

There are many advantages to reducing street width, but safety is a primary concern. So the question is, given that current standards create safety hazards, do we continue to require that new streets be built to these standards?

Attachments:

- City Engineer Street Width materials for 4-7-21 Water/Sewer/Street Committee meeting:
    - Memo
    - Attachment A: Residential street widths in various Eastern WA cities
    - Attachment B: Accidents in the next 16 larger and 7 smaller WA cities
    - Attachment C: Othello accident data, 2014-2018
    - Attachment D: Auto insurance rates in Othello vs Moses Lake

Action: The Commission should discuss this issue and provide direction to staff.

RESIDENTIAL STREET WIDTH

The City of Othello, throughout its history, has had very wide residential streets (40 feet from face-of-curb-to-face-of-curb). Our streets are much wider than other Cities in Eastern Washington (see Attachment A). Wider streets typically result in faster speeds, more accidents, and more severe accidents/injuries. This is supported by numerous studies that can be found on the internet.

Compared to other cities, year-in and year-out Othello consistently has a high number of accidents and injuries resulting from these accidents (see Attachment B). WSDOT crash data shows that an incredibly high volume of our accidents (68.0%) occur in areas where the speed limit is 25 MPH versus All Cities (25.4%) and Eastside Cities (26.7%) (see Attachment C).

These statistics not only affect the people involved and hurt in the accidents, but everyone in the entire community. I had my insurance agent compare what the costs would be to insure my family in Othello versus Moses Lake. The only change to the policy was the zip code. The additional cost to my family would be $513 per year (9.5% increase). He compared the rates from six different companies, and they were all more expensive in Othello than Moses Lake by an average of $603 (see Attachment D).

A request to reduce the residential street width to 34 feet was taken to the Planning Commission in December and they chose to keep the City's current standard. In January, the accident data was presented to the Planning Commission and I believe they acknowledged that we have a safety issue. They have shown interest in looking for ways to improve the safety on our existing streets, but no real interest in making significant changes to the standards for new construction. I feel they may reconsider their position if they hear the insurance cost information, but staff runs the risk of offending the Planning Commission if we continue to provide unrequested information on a topic they feel they have already voted on.

I originally supported a residential street width reduction to 34 feet, but now I believe that is the bare minimum and it should be reduced even further. Moses Lake reduced their width to 30 feet over 15 years ago and I'm not aware of any complaints. The Larson area North of Moses Lake has existed for over 65 years with 26-foot residential streets and 33-foot collectors and has an outstanding vehicle accident record. If safety is an important factor to the City, a 26-foot should be considered. But I would suggest a reduction to at least 30 feet.

With existing streets that don't have sidewalks, one option that has been discussed is constructing new curbs 5 feet in from their current location and pouring the sidewalk in that 5 feet. This option has several benefits; provides pedestrians with a safe route; doesn't take away from property owners front yards; reduces the street width; avoids changes to meter boxes, irrigations systems, landscaping, light poles, and other improvements. The result, if 5-foot sidewalks are installed on both sides of the street would be a 30-foot road.

ATTACHMENT A

RESIDENTIAL STREETS

CITY	ROW WIDTH	STREET WIDTH
OTHELLO	66	40
PASCO	60	38
RICHLAND	54	34
KENNEWICK	40' + 2-18' easements	36
WEST RICHLAND		
OPTION 1	50' + 2-12' easements	36
OPTION 2	40' + 2-18' easements	36
MOSES LAKE	60	30
ELLENSBURG	52	30
SPOKANE VALLEY	38' + 2-10' easements	32
WALLA WALLA	60	36
EPHRATA	60	33
SELAH	50	32
PROSSER	50	33
CONNELL*	40	20
QUINCY**	60	45
Average Values From Other Cities		33.5

* Connell also has a Neighborhood Collector at 30 feet

** Quincy has been "discussing for quite a few years" about narrowing their residential streets. They currently allow narrower streets widths by variance.

ATTACHMENT B

		4-Year Totals (2016-2019)				
City/Town	Population (2020)	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
Othello	8583	404	70	5	23	1	99
Hoquiam	8740	216	34	5	15	1	55
Toppenish	8844	278	33	3	6	2	44
Orting	9025	80	11	1	1	0	13
Burlington	9302	676	136	7	40	4	187
Airway Heights	9332	185	42	6	12	0	60
DuPont	9667	174	21	1	7	0	29
College Place	9742	292	40	3	6	0	49
Yelm	9930	225	46	7	6	1	60
Port Townsend	9946	223	31	7	18	1	57
Ridgefield	10191	108	23	3	11	0	37
Grandview	11105	360	54	6	20	0	80
Liberty Lake	12138	181	30	2	12	3	47
Cheney	12977	311	44	2	20	0	66
East Wenatchee	14500	673	135	6	33	0	174
West Richland	15726	204	43	7	15	0	65
Sunnyside	16920	753	135	8	18	1	162
Milton	8404	164	44	0	13	0	57
Selah	8308	210	34	1	4	1	40
Duvall	8261	70	21	3	3	0	27
Ephrata	8252	286	31	4	13	1	49
Quincy	8056	144	15	0	4	0	19
Clarkston	7517	268	27	5	21	0	53
Prosser	6731	194	25	2	9	0	36

Othello	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	106	18	1	6	0	25
2018	98	26	1	6	0	33
2017	100	9	1	7	1	18
2016	100	17	2	4	0	23
	404	70	5	23	1	99

Hoquiam	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	50	3	1	5	0	9
2018	55	13	2	4	1	20
2017	65	8	2	3	0	13
2016	46	10	0	3	0	13
	216	34	5	15	1	55

Toppenish	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	62	4	2	2	0	8
2018	74	13	0	2	0	15
2017	71	9	0	1	1	11
2016	71	7	1	1	1	10
	278	33	3	6	2	44

Orting	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	21	3	1	0	0	4
2018	19	3	0	1	0	4
2017	27	3	0	0	0	3
2016	13	2	0	0	0	2
	80	11	1	1	0	13

Burlington	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	187	31	2	9	2	44
2018	186	38	2	10	1	51
2017	154	36	1	14	0	51
2016	149	31	2	7	1	41
	676	136	7	40	4	187

Grandview	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	87	9	1	5	0	15
2018	84	17	3	4	0	24
2017	93	16	2	7	0	25
2016	96	12	0	4	0	16
	360	54	6	20	0	80

Liberty Lake	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	40	8	0	4	1	13
2018	55	9	1	5	2	17
2017	47	8	1	1	0	10
2016	39	5	0	2	0	7
	181	30	2	12	3	47

Cheney	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	90	12	0	1	0	13
2018	78	10	0	6	0	16
2017	63	5	1	6	0	12
2016	80	17	1	7	0	25
	311	44	2	20	0	66

Milton	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	39	13	0	4	0	17
2018	33	5	0	3	0	8
2017	38	10	0	2	0	12
2016	54	16	0	4	0	20
	164	44	0	13	0	57

Selah	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	55	9	1	1	0	11
2018	47	5	0	0	0	5
2017	56	10	0	0	1	11
2016	52	10	0	3	0	13
	210	34	1	4	1	40

Airway Heights	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	59	11	3	3	0	17
2018	47	13	2	1	0	16
2017	51	13	0	3	0	16
2016	28	5	1	5	0	11
	185	42	6	12	0	60

Dupont	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	41	9	0	0	0	9
2018	40	4	0	2	0	6
2017	43	4	0	2	0	6
2016	50	4	1	3	0	8
	174	21	1	7	0	29

College Place	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	74	11	1	0	0	12
2018	62	7	2	1	0	10
2017	77	11	0	3	0	14
2016	79	11	0	2	0	13
	292	40	3	6	0	49

Yelm	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	64	14	2	2	0	18
2018	44	10	1	2	0	13
2017	65	15	1	0	0	16
2016	52	7	3	2	1	13
	225	46	7	6	1	60

Port Townsend	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	52	7	2	3	0	12
2018	57	8	0	5	1	14
2017	65	10	2	5	0	17
2016	49	6	3	5	0	14
	223	31	7	18	1	57

Duvall	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	22	5	1	2	0	8
2018	16	7	1	1	0	9
2017	15	6	0	0	0	6
2016	17	3	1	0	0	4
	70	21	3	3	0	27

Ephrata	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	74	9	2	2	0	13
2018	80	12	1	4	0	17
2017	74	5	0	5	0	10
2016	58	5	1	2	1	9
	286	31	4	13	1	49

Quincy	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	38	3	0	1	0	4
2018	32	3	0	1	0	4
2017	43	3	0	2	0	5
2016	31	6	0	0	0	6
	144	15	0	4	0	19

Clarkston	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	67	7	1	5	0	13
2018	66	10	3	1	0	14
2017	76	8	0	7	0	15
2016	59	2	1	8	0	11
	268	27	5	21	0	53

Prosser	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	52	5	1	3	0	9
2018	52	8	0	1	0	9
2017	47	8	0	1	0	9
2016	43	4	1	4	0	9
	194	25	2	9	0	36

Ridgefield	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	20	3	0	3	0	6
2018	30	8	1	2	0	11
2017	30	7	1	5	0	13
2016	28	5	1	1	0	7
	108	23	3	11	0	37

West Richland	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	65	16	1	5	0	22
2018	48	11	4	5	0	20
2017	51	9	0	2	0	11
2016	40	7	2	3	0	12
	204	43	7	15	0	65

East Wenatchee	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	181	32	1	4	0	37
2018	169	35	0	10	0	45
2017	162	33	2	9	0	44
2016	161	35	3	10	0	48
	673	135	6	33	0	174

Sunnyside	Accidents	Possible Injuries	Serious Injuries	Minor Injuries	Fatal Injuries	Total Injuries
2019	186	32	1	4	0	37
2018	194	39	0	5	0	44
2017	204	32	4	3	1	40
2016	169	32	3	6	0	41
	753	135	8	18	1	162

ATTACHMENT C

Select City: Othello

Note: For cities with populations over 27,500, data includes crashes on state highways managed by cities.

2014-2018 Data Othello	Fatal/Serious Injury Crashes Only																		Total Crashes															
	All Roads		All Cities		Eastside Cities														All Roads		All Cities		Eastside Cities													
	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2014-2018	%	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Overall Numbers																																		
Total # of Collisions	11,689	-	5,012	-	913	-	6	-	1	2	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	584,149	-	301,913	-	61,799	-	459	-	97	100	100	74	88	86	82	80	70	80
# of Fatal Collisions	2,473	21.2%	713	14.2%	151	16.5%	1	16.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,473	0.4%	713	0.2%	151	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# of Serious Injury Collisions	9,216	78.8%	4,299	85.8%	762	83.5%	5	83.3%	1	1	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	9,216	1.6%	4,299	1.4%	762	1.2%	5	1.1%	1	1	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	1
# of Drug/Alcohol-Related Collisions	2,585	22.1%	945	18.9%	219	24.0%	3	50.0%	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	37,033	6.3%	17,666	5.9%	4,074	6.6%	55	12.0%	11	12	13	7	12	11	6	6	5	7
Total # of Fatalities	2,675	-	748	-	154	-	1	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,675	-	748	-	154	-	1	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total # of Injuries	16,136	-	6,636	-	1,197	-	6	-	1	1	3	1	0	4	0	1	2	2	242,333	41.5	125,375	41.5	25,358	41.0	148	32.2	41	22	34	19	32	25	15	29	25	20
By Collision Type																																		
Hit Pedestrian	2,009	17.2%	1,485	29.6%	257	28.1%	4	66.7%	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	10,387	1.8%	8,641	2.9%	1,512	2.4%	9	2.0%	2	3	1	3	0	3	2	1	1	2
Hit Parked Car	196	1.7%	119	2.4%	22	2.4%	1	16.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32,745	5.6%	28,493	9.4%	6,117	9.9%	94	20.5%	15	22	22	12	23	22	24	23	15	20
Angle (Left Turn)	827	7.1%	461	9.2%	82	9.0%	1	16.7%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42,341	7.2%	30,861	10.2%	6,223	10.1%	36	7.8%	9	5	9	5	8	5	5	7	6	4
Angle (T)	1,314	11.2%	695	13.9%	187	20.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	98,759	16.9%	74,503	24.7%	18,255	29.5%	191	41.6%	45	38	38	33	37	34	33	26	19	28
Rearend	888	7.6%	280	5.6%	38	4.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	176,842	30.3%	75,835	25.1%	14,455	23.4%	48	10.5%	13	9	11	7	8	4	3	4	8	5
Hit Fixed Object	3,161	27.0%	821	16.4%	154	16.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	103,679	17.7%	31,666	10.5%	6,538	10.6%	27	5.9%	5	9	4	7	2	9	10	9	8	12
Sideswipe (Same Direction)	238	2.0%	70	1.4%	10	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49,888	8.5%	22,740	7.5%	3,287	5.3%	18	3.9%	3	5	4	3	3	1	1	0	2	1
Angle (Right Turn)	45	0.4%	27	0.5%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,404	1.1%	4,804	1.6%	991	1.6%	8	1.7%	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	1	1
Overturn	832	7.1%	170	3.4%	40	4.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,696	1.8%	1,738	0.6%	388	0.6%	3	0.7%	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Hit Cyclist	672	5.7%	503	10.0%	82	9.0%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,847	1.2%	5,779	1.9%	919	1.5%	2	0.4%	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0
Wildlife/Animal	91	0.8%	4	0.1%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,841	1.9%	515	0.2%	130	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Head On	597	5.1%	143	2.9%	13	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,022	0.5%	1,393	0.5%	227	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Other	619	5.3%	170	3.4%	19	2.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,666	4.7%	13,070	4.3%	2,472	4.0%	22	4.8%	3	7	7	2	3	2	3	4	8	4
By Roadway Surface Condition																																		
Dry	8,704	74.5%	3,755	74.9%	776	85.0%	6	100.0%	1	2	2	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	392,681	67.2%	208,416	69.0%	48,795	79.0%	371	80.8%	79	79	78	61	74	76	62	67	54	71
Wet	2,464	21.1%	1,146	22.9%	96	10.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	155,075	26.5%	79,085	26.2%	7,010	11.3%	42	9.2%	8	8	10	8	8	2	11	4	9	3
Ice	225	1.9%	46	0.9%	18	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,848	2.5%	4,735	1.6%	2,712	4.4%	23	5.0%	4	9	5	0	5	6	2	6	3	2
Snow/Slush	126	1.1%	25	0.5%	14	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12,073	2.1%	3,799	1.3%	2,664	4.3%	19	4.1%	3	4	7	4	1	1	6	1	2	2
Other	45	0.4%	10	0.2%	5	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	930	0.2%	291	0.1%	133	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
By Light Condition																																		
Dark-Street Lights On	2,724	23.3%	1,788	35.7%	306	33.5%	3	50.0%	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	114,010	19.5%	70,157	23.2%	12,732	20.6%	105	22.9%	21	20	27	20	17	19	27	22	22	12
Daylight	6,467	55.3%	2,706	54.0%	488	53.5%	2	33.3%	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	387,222	66.3%	205,970	68.2%	43,964	71.1%	292	63.6%	63	64	61	50	54	49	44	39	39	54
Dark-Street Lights Off	93	0.8%	48	1.0%	9	1.0%	1	16.7%	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,457	0.6%	1,584	0.5%	352	0.6%	4	0.9%	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dark-No Street Lights	1,784	15.3%	224	4.5%	67	7.3%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46,815	8.0%	7,022	2.3%	1,868	3.0%	24	5.2%	3	7	3	2	9	6	4	10	5	5
Dusk	359	3.1%	148	3.0%	33	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	15,527	2.7%	8,289	2.7%	1,639	2.7%	16	3.5%	4	3	4	1	4	7	5	3	1	3
Dawn	202	1.7%	70	1.4%	4	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,801	1.8%	4,019	1.3%	671	1.1%	8	1.7%	4	1	1	0	2	3	1	3	1	3
Other	12	0.1%	4	0.1%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	774	0.1%	386	0.1%	80	0.1%	2	0.4%	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
By Junction Relationship																																		
Intersection Related	3,801	32.5%	2,443	48.7%	477	52.2%	3	50.0%	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	218,386	37.4%	153,454	50.8%	33,419	54.1%	263	57.3%	63	51	55	42	52	43	44	37	37	39
Non-Intersection (Not Related)	7,120	60.9%	2,132	42.5%	365	40.0%	2	33.3%	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	307,925	52.7%	106,170	35.2%	19,579	31.7%	143	31.2%	26	35	33	23	26	32	28	35	31	33
Driveway-Related	739	6.3%	421	8.4%	64	7.0%	1	16.7%	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	53,745	9.2%	39,868	13.2%	8,069	13.1%	53	11.5%	8	14	12	9	10	11	10	8	2	8
By Roadway Curvature																																		
Straight & Level	6,224	53.2%	3,051	60.9%	610	66.8%	6	100.0%	1	2	2	1	0	3	0	1	1	1	355,179	60.8%	195,071	64.6%	44,316	71.7%	373	81.3%	77	71	84	64	77	74	67	68	55	75
Straight & Grade	1,889	16.2%	881	17.6%	122	13.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99,049	17.0%	48,366	16.0%	6,955	11.3%	44	9.6%	16	10	9	4	5	8	11	9	9	4
Vertical Curve	364	3.1%	118	2.4%	18	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,359	2.3%	5,674	1.9%	794	1.3%	14	3.1%	1	5	2	2	4	2	2	3	2	0
Horizontal Curve	1,361	11.6%	368	7.3%	63	6.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37,917	6.5%	12,998	4.3%	2,483	4.0%	7	1.5%	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	0	3	0
Horizontal Curve & Grade	1,368	11.7%	290	5.8%	28	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37,289	6.4%	10,257	3.4%	1,295	2.1%	2	0.4%	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	34	0.3%	20	0.4%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,905	0.7%	3,069	1.0%	268	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hit Fixed Object Crashes Only - By Fixed Object Hit																																		
Fence	176	5.5%	53	6.5%	16	10.4%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,214	7.9%	3,724	11.7%	1,139	17.4%	5	18.5%	1	1	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	2
Utility Pole	253	8.0%	90	11.0%	18	11.7%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,514	7.2%	3,128	9.9%	756	11.6%	4	14.8%	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	3
Tree / Stump (Stationary)	593	18.7%	176	21.6%	22	14.3%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,905	9.6%	4,359	13.7%	614	9.4%	2	7.4%	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Curb / Raised Traffic Island	156	4.9%	112	13.7%	23	14.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,070	3.9%	2,978	9.4%	544	8.3%	2	7.4%	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	1
Mail Box	61	1.9%	15	1.8%	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,451	2.4%	953	3.0%	139	2.1%	2	7.4%	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Fire Hydrant	10	0.3%	7	0.9%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	994	1.0%	765	2.4%	182	2.8%	2	7.4%	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Roadway Ditch	334	10.5%	31	3.8%	4	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,365	12.9%	1,245	3.9%	119	1.8%	1	3.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earth Bank	285	9.0%	31	3.8%	8	5.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,573	6.3%	607	1.9%	110	1.7%	1	3.7%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ran Over Embankment	235	7.4%	23	2.8%	6	3.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,506	4.3%	530	1.7%	85	1.3%	1	3.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Metal Sign Post	60	1.9%	20	2.5%	5	3.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,837	3.7%	1,848	5.8%	448	6.9%	1	3.7%	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Building	32	1.0%	21	2.6%	6	3.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,435	1.4%	1,094	3.4%	291	4.5%	1	3.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Misc. Debris on Road	14	0.4%	3	0.4%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,223	1.2%	213	0.7%	57	0.9%	1	3.7%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Gravel	153	0.9%	21	0.3%	9	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,793	0.4%	1,222	0.2%	489	0.4%	7	0.8%	0	2	2	2	1	5	0	0	1	2
Concrete	2,090	12.1%	937	13.0%	45	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	174,801	16.7%	67,703	12.2%	3,695	3.3%	3	0.4%	0	0	0	1	2	4	1	2	3	10
Dirt	93	0.5%	13	0.2%	6	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,350	0.1%	466	0.1%	170	0.2%	3	0.4%	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Brick or Wood Block	11	0.1%	7	0.1%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,007	0.1%	685	0.1%	132	0.1%	1	0.1%	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	198	1.1%	25	0.3%	6	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,741	0.5%	1,082	0.2%	353	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Unknown	22	0.1%	15	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,019	0.4%	3,606	0.7%	58	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	5	2	2
By Contributing Circumstance (Ped Only)																																				
Inattention / Distraction	352	22.6%	242	22.9%	46	25.8%	2	33.3%	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,481	27.7%	1,153	27.8%	219	28.9%	2	33.3%	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Failing to Yield	356	22.9%	254	24.0%	54	30.3%	1	16.7%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,109	20.8%	881	21.2%	210	27.7%	1	16.7%	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Under Influence of Alcohol / Drugs	145	9.3%	87	8.2%	22	12.4%	1	16.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	453	8.5%	315	7.6%	67	8.8%	1	16.7%	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Failing to Yield to Ped / Cyclist	11	0.7%	10	0.9%	2	1.1%	1	16.7%	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	50	0.9%	40	1.0%	12	1.6%	1	16.7%	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	448	28.8%	271	25.6%	37	20.8%	1	16.7%	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1,368	25.6%	1,031	24.9%	168	22.1%	1	16.7%	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
By Facility Used (Ped Only)																																				
Marked Crosswalk	684	30.9%	597	36.4%	84	29.8%	2	50.0%	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5,192	45.8%	4,612	49.2%	694	42.2%	5	55.6%	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1
Roadway	1,024	46.3%	664	40.5%	118	41.8%	1	25.0%	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3,334	29.4%	2,481	26.4%	488	29.7%	3	33.3%	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	1
Unmarked Crosswalk	140	6.3%	121	7.4%	26	9.2%	1	25.0%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	967	8.5%	861	9.2%	209	12.7%	1	11.1%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
By Contributing Circumstance (Bike Only)																																				
Failing to Yield	103	19.0%	70	17.8%	18	25.7%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	873	20.2%	694	19.7%	172	25.1%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Other	86	15.9%	62	15.8%	13	18.6%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	770	17.8%	660	18.7%	95	13.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
By Facility Used (Bike Only)																																				
Marked Crosswalk	72	10.5%	53	10.3%	10	11.8%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,178	17.0%	1,003	17.1%	175	18.6%	2	100.0%	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roadway	343	49.9%	255	49.7%	45	52.9%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,685	38.7%	2,255	38.5%	364	38.8%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Unmarked Crosswalk	17	2.5%	16	3.1%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	257	3.7%	224	3.8%	61	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Other	17	2.5%	12	2.3%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	171	2.5%	145	2.5%	35	3.7%	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Under 23 U.S. Code 148 and 23 U.S. Code 409, safety data, reports, surveys, schedules, list complied or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential crash sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings are not subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such

ATTACHMENT D

Moses Lake Rates

Auto Quote# 13505

Quote Info | Vehicles | Drivers | Underwriting | Coverages | Rates

ates | Companies To Rate | Quote Id

ort and bridge: Package

ere is your rate for an Annual policy rated for effective date 03/18/2021

	Auto only	Auto with a home policy		Bundle & Save	Company messages
ravelers Auto	$5,424.00	$5,138.00	Bridge	Save $286.00	
afeco Auto	$6,191.30	$5,525.00	Bridge	Save $666.30	Add an Umbrella Policy for $600! Based on this Auto quote.
rogressive Auto	$5,600.00	$5,600.00	Bridge	Save $0.00	POP/SD/HO
ationwide	$8,019.68	$6,556.88	Bridge	Save $1,462.80	
lutual of Enumclaw - Member's Best	Error	$7,270.66	Bridge		
lutual of Enumclaw	$10,375.68	$7,363.04	Bridge	Save $3,012.64	
ristol West Insurance	$15,476.00	Not Rated			
emper Auto Premium	Not Rated	Not Rated	Bridge		Click the Bridge hyperlink to access the quote in FIC's website
airyland Auto	Error	Not Rated			Error - See ExtendedStatus for error details

Bundle your auto and home

Get a Home Quote

E

Othello Rates

Auto Quote# 13563

Quote Info | Vehicles | Drivers | Underwriting | Coverages | Rat

Rates | Companies To Rate | Quote Id

Sort and bridge: Package

Here is your rate for an Annual policy rated for effective date 03/18/2021

	Auto only	Auto with a home policy	Bundle & Save	Company messages
Safeco Auto	$6,199.10	$5,531.90 Bridge	*Save $667.20*	Add an Umbrella Policy for $600! Based on this Auto
Travelers Auto	$5,937.00	$5,622.00 Bridge	*Save $315.00*	
Progressive Auto	$6,332.00	$6,332.00 Bridge	*Save $0.00*	POP/SD/HO
Nationwide	$8,150.10	$6,656.32 Bridge	*Save $1,493.78*	
Mutual of Enumclaw - Member's Best	Error	$7,753.50 Bridge		
Mutual of Enumclaw	$10,939.22	$7,806.78 Bridge	*Save $3,132.44*	
Bristol West Insurance	$17,146.00	Not Rated		
Kemper Auto Premium	Not Rated	Not Rated Bridge		Click the Bridge hyperlink to access the quote in FIC'
Dairyland Auto	Error	Not Rated		Error - See ExtendedStatus for error details

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TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Anne Henning, Community Development Director

MEETING: April 19, 2021

SUBJECT: Neighborhood Design & Street Layout – Discussion

In previous meetings, the Commission has been interested in discussing neighborhood design and street layout patterns.

Staff Comments

1. The first attachment, "Designing Safe Streets and Neighborhoods" is one the Commission has seen previously; however, from comments made, it seems the Commission may not have understood what it was saying about "traditional" vs "conventional" development. Traditional development is how neighborhoods were designed for hundreds of years, while conventional/suburban development started in the mid-20th century when cars became the primary method to get around and zoning was used to almost completely segregate uses. By prioritizing cars over people, "conventional" development with its wide streets and separated uses is the "Poor Planning Resulting in Dangerous Streets" that is the headline on the second page of the report.
2. Also attached are several articles from the no-longer-published Planning Commissioners Journal. While a little dated, these articles present what were then new topics (new urbanism, smart growth, and neotraditional design) in an accessible way.
3. An overwhelming abundance of information on this topic is available, but was limited to try not to create an excessively-long packet.

Attachments:

- "Designing Safe Streets and Neighborhoods", Local Government Commission
- "How Dimensional Standards Shape Residential Streets", Planning Commissioners Journal, 2003
- "The Residential Street" (Part I, II, & III), Planning Commissioners Journal, 1995
- "Rethinking Residential Streets", Planning Commissioners Journal, 1991

Action: The Commission should discuss these items and provide direction to staff.

Focus on Livable Communities

Designing Safe Streets and Neighborhoods

Caught in the Crosswalk

In *Caught in the Crosswalk*, the Surface Transportation Policy Project highlights some disturbing facts about pedestrian safety in California:

"Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of accidental death in California, resulting in over 3,000 fatalities every year."

"More than 20% of these deaths involve pedestrians" despite the fact that the number of people walking in our communities is on the decline.

Children are especially vulnerable. "Being hit by a car while walking is the second leading cause of death for California children aged 5-12. Statewide, nearly 5,000 child pedestrians are injured annually."

Pedestrians often get short shrift in the traditional transportation planning process. "California pedestrians account for more than 20% of all traffic fatalities but receive less than one percent of federal traffic safety funding."

For information on this 1999 report, visit www.transact.org.

Local Government Commission
Center for Livable Communities
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web www.lgc.org

One of the difficulties in creating more walkable and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods is the concern over safety. Good design can help overcome some of the fears over personal safety and being victimized by crime, as a companion fact sheet explains. But of equal concern is the sense that many of our streets and avenues – even in residential neighborhoods – are not safe to walk or ride on because they are designed solely to move motor vehicles in large volumes and at high speeds.

This perception is real: a disproportionately large number of pedestrians are killed and injured in California each year. Children and seniors, the most vulnerable users of streets and sidewalks, are often at greatest risk.

What accounts for these numbers? Why are we seeing such a disproportionately high number of fatalities and injuries among pedestrians?

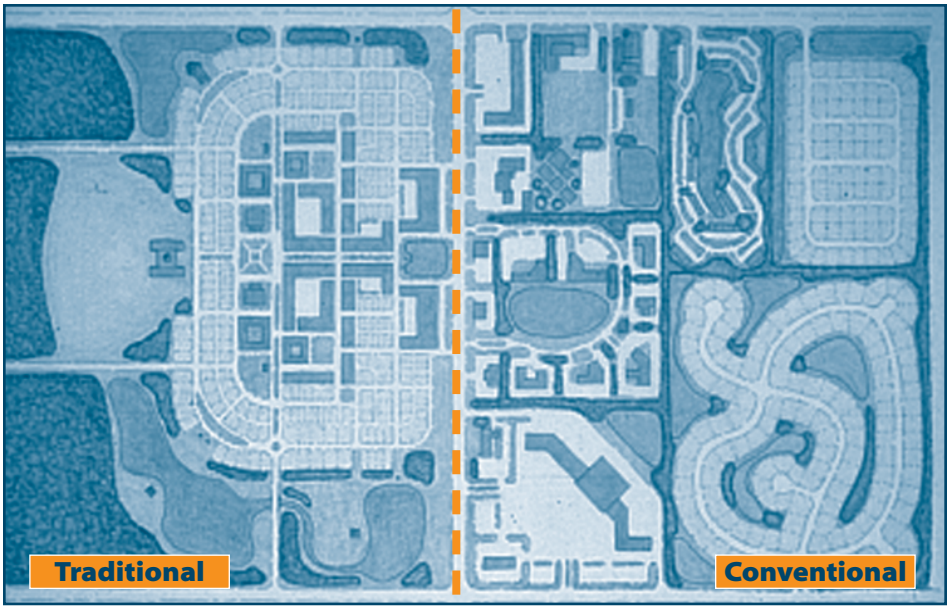
While a number of factors are responsible – including the minimal amount of funding for pedestrian safety projects – the way we have been designing and building our communities during the past 50 years lies at the root of the problem.

We have separated the places where we work from the places where we shop, and both have been separated from the places where we live. The only way to get from one point to another is by driving. It is no wonder that the typical U.S. household makes 10-14 vehicle trips every day.

Poor Planning Results in Dangerous Streets

Traditional vs. Conventional Patterns of Development

In the 1920s, zoning for separate uses became the basic tenet of modern city planning. Planners and others concerned with the public's health correctly argued that placing noxious, polluting industries close to where people lived was not a good thing. But, unfortunately, in the decades that followed the idea of separating uses was taken to an extreme and we started to treat retail and office uses as if they were noxious uses as well. As a result, today we need a 2,000-pound car to pick up a one pound loaf of bread.



As we've spread out more in this low-density sprawl pattern, we are driving more and driving longer distances. While California's population grew by 51% from 1970 to 1990, vehicle miles traveled increased by 117%. In addition to spreading out further and driving longer distances, we are also relying more and more on our cars for simple errands that we used to be able to do by walking.

We can gain a better understanding of how this has happened by comparing plans of two communities, a conventional one built after 1950 and a traditional one built in the 1920s.

The left side of the plan above shows the traditional pattern of development, the right shows the conventional. Each contains the same square footage of residential, commercial, retail, educational, and other uses. The only difference is how those uses are arranged. In the conventional pattern, different uses are strictly separated and neighborhood collector and local streets do not connect.

In the traditional pattern different uses are in close proximity to one another and are laid out in shorter, connected blocks.

In the conventional neighborhood, a parent taking a child to the soccer field in the upper part of the diagram will have to make four trips (drop off, go home, pick up child and go home). All those trips will require getting on an arterial roadway and will increase the likelihood of traffic accidents.

Of course, retailers see tens of thousands of vehicles on the arterial and also want to locate there. Traffic engineers respond by building 8- and 10-lane arterials to handle the traffic. In the process we create large, congested roadways and an environment that is inhospitable for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In the traditional neighborhood, many of these trips are internal and don't impact arterial or regional roadways. And, because different uses are closer to one another, most of these trips are short enough that they can be made by walking or riding a bicycle. Short blocks and narrow, tree-lined streets encourage people to walk.

Traditional residential streets are narrow because the blocks are short, they don't have many houses on them and traffic volume is low. The narrow streets, and the placement of trees and houses closer to the street, slow cars down and create a comfortable environment for pedestrians.

Conventional streets are long, carry more traffic and are so wide that they encourage drivers to speed. Sidewalks are often attached to the curb and trees and houses are set back from the street so there is no buffer for pedestrians. As a result people don't feel safe and comfortable walking on these streets.

"Several local jurisdictions are striving to make pedestrians a priority by improving sidewalks, slowing traffic, making crosswalks more visible…the more typical response to concerns about pedestrian safety is to remove crosswalks and let pedestrians fend for themselves."

— *Caught in the Crosswalk*, 1999

Speed Kills

We can see that something is wrong with the way we are designing our residential streets in the fact that over half of all pedestrian fatalities occur on roadways that run through residential neighborhoods. *(STPP, Mean Streets, 1997)*

As streets get wider, drivers instinctively accelerate. Research has shown that wider streets – which encourage people to drive too fast – are also the streets that result in more crashes. As speeds go up, the risk to pedestrians and bicyclists increases significantly.

Aggressive enforcement of traffic speeding and other motor vehicle laws can help insure that drivers slow down and respect other users of the road.

However, if a street is designed to encourage drivers to travel at 45 mph instead of the posted 35 mph, police are often at a loss. First of all, police can't be present at all times.

Secondly, traffic enforcement agencies that try to address speeding on arterial and residential streets are often hamstrung by state laws which require that speed limits not be set any lower than the actual speed of 85% of the vehicles on a given street. This "85th percentile" law — adopted to prevent municipalities from setting up so-called "speed traps" — helps insure that high-speed streets are a self-fulfilling prophecy.

WIDER STREETS = MORE CRASHES = MORE FATALITIES

In 1999, planner Peter Swift studied approximately 20,000 police accident reports in Longmont, Colorado, to try to determine which of 13 physical characteristics at each accident location (e.g., width, curvature, sidewalk type, etc.) might account for the crash. The results are not entirely surprising: The highest correlation was between accidents and the width of the street. As streets got wider the number of accidents per mile per year increased. **The safest streets were narrow, slow, 24-foot wide streets; the most dangerous were 36-foot wide streets typical of new subdivisions.**

As one would expect, deaths and injuries to pedestrians increase significantly as the speed of motor vehicles goes up. The reason is obvious: As vehicle speeds increase a driver's ability to respond to danger is substantially reduced. But the relationship is not linear. At 15 mph, a vehicle will be able to stop forward movement in 73 feet. But double the speed to 30 mph, and it will take 196 feet. **At 40 mph, it will take over four times the distance for the car to stop.**

So, what happens when a person is hit at these speeds? At 15 mph, the odds of surviving are approximately 96%. But when a person is hit by a car traveling at 31 mph, the odds are significantly reduced. **And at 45 mph the odds of survival are just 17%.** (Source: ITE, *Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines*, June 1997)

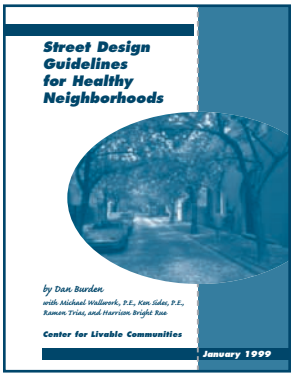
"Often pedestrians are not even seen as legitimate users of the road. Until recently they were referred to as 'traffic flow interruptions' in the Highway Capacity Manual, the primary road design reference book for traffic engineers."

— *Caught in the Crosswalk,* Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1999

Solutions

So how do we address these problems? One way is to make sure that when we design new communities we incorporate all the elements that result in a livable, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly neighborhood.

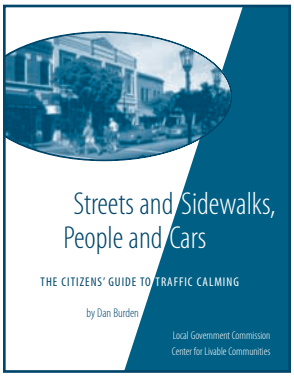
Healthy Street Design. The Ahwahnee Principles for Livable Communities are a good place to start. They call for complete communities with a mix of uses, a central focus, walkable destinations, multiple connections and a mix of housing types and densities to support transit. In these communities – based on the design of older traditional neighborhoods – we have to make sure that the streets are also well-designed: with short blocks, narrow, tree-lined streets with on-street parking and sidewalks that are at least five feet wide. (For more details, see the LGC's *Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Communities*.)



We can also retrofit some streets and arterials in conventional neighborhoods to slow down the speed of vehicles and improve the safety of pedestrians through what is known as "traffic calming."

Traffic calming slows vehicles on streets where drivers travel at higher speeds than is desirable. It is a way to reduce the negative effects of motor vehicles, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for the property owner, retailer, walker and bicyclist.

Traffic Calming. Traffic calming techniques consist of relatively simple physical changes to streets and sidewalks that help slow down vehicle speed and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, adding a landscaped median to a street that is too wide will not only slow down the cars but will create a refuge for pedestrians trying to cross the street. Traffic calming yields significant safety benefits. For example, adding small traffic circles at intersections resulted in the following reductions in crashes: 77% in Seattle, 58% in Portland, OR and 82% in Vancouver, BC. Curb extensions in Vancouver reduced crashes by 75% and narrowing streets reduced accidents by 74%. (Source: British Columbia Insurance Corporation, *Safety Benefits of Traffic Calming*, 1996) For a detailed discussion, see the LGC's *Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: The Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming*.



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Focus on Livable Communities

RESOURCES

"The Ahwahnee Principles for More Livable Communities." Local Government Commission. 1991. www.lgc.org

"Caught in the Crosswalk." Surface Transportation Policy Project. 1999. www.transact.org

Burden, Dan. "Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods." Local Government Commission. January 1999. www.lgc.org

Burden, Dan. "Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: The Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming." April 2000. www.lgc.org

"Mean Streets." Surface Transportation Policy Project. 1997. www.transact .org

"Residential Street Typology and Injury Accident Frequency." Swift and Associates. February 1998. (303) 772-7052.

Traditional Neighborhood Development: Street Design Guidelines. Institute of Transportation Engineers. October 1999. www.ite.org

This project is funded by the Physical Activity and Health Initiative, California Department of Health Services under a Preventive Health Services Block Grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Work performed as part of a UC San Francisco contract.

How Dimensional Standards Shape Residential Streets

by Joel S. Russell

Dimensional standards, which regulate building setbacks and height, lot coverage, minimum lot area, and similar matters, have been one of the basic building blocks of zoning since its inception. If a community's goal is to create a suburban environment of widely spaced buildings surrounded by lawns and parking lots, then the dimensional standards found in most communities' land use regulations today work well. However, if a community's goal is to create more compact neighborhoods, with an attractive public realm conducive to walking, it may need to re-examine its dimensional standards to ensure that they will help achieve this goal.

This article will explore some of the key differences between dimensional standards that have fostered our conventional development pattern, and those which underlie the growing "new urbanism" and "smart growth" movements – standards designed for what new urbanists call "traditional neighborhood" developments. But first, it helps to look back and consider the origins of the suburban dimensional standards commonly in use today.

Looking Back

The origin of dimensional standards harkens back to the original purposes of zoning, which arose in the industrial age both to protect residential uses from the harmful effects of industry and to ensure that homes and workplaces would not be overcrowded and would have sufficient light and air. The impulse behind both use and dimensional regulation was to separate things: to separate incompatible uses from one another and to separate buildings so that there would be enough breathing room. This made sense in its time. But as the 20th century progressed, local governments extended and inflated dimensional standards to the point of creating an enforced no-man's land between buildings, a spatial geography that inspired the title of James Howard Kunstler's book, *The Geography of Nowhere*.

> WITH CONVENTIONAL DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS, MINIMUM FRONT SETBACKS ENSURE THAT HOUSES ARE SET FAR AWAY FROM THE STREET

The tendency toward increased separation of buildings was also influenced by the American landscape architecture movement, especially the work of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. His notion of the "house in the park" gave rise to many beautifully landscaped subdivisions in early 20th century suburbs. Olmsted's idea went far beyond providing sufficient light and air for human health. By widely separating houses in a naturalistic setting, Olmsted believed residents would feel a closer connection to nature.

Unfortunately, the Olmsted ideal of the house in the park has too often degenerated into the reality of the "cookie-cutter" style suburban subdivision. Many developers clear sites and carpet the land with houses following the simple geometry of the dimensional standards of zoning and subdivision ordinances, with little regard for vegetation, topography, natural systems, or the creation of a sense of community.

For cities and towns concerned about controlling growth and development, a common "solution" has been to increase minimum lot sizes and setbacks, pushing houses even further apart. Not surprisingly, this results in neighborhoods even less conducive to walking.

The widely spaced housing pattern found in much of suburbia neither harmonizes with nature nor creates the sense of neighborhood found in a traditional village, town, or city. Olmsted's ideal was to use design to combine the best aspects of both the city and country. As embodied in conventional zoning practice, however, the outcome has often been the worst of both worlds: the isolation and automobile dependence of rural areas – without their peace and natural beauty; and the traffic congestion of urban areas – without their convenience, walkability, and sense of community.

Changing Purposes: Toward the Shaping of Public Space

In response to a growing dissatisfaction with this low-density, land-consumptive pattern of suburban development, a new movement emerged in the late 20th century, one which has turned dimensional regulation on its head. The "new urbanism" movement has understood that dimensional regulations can be used to shape and define public, neighborhood-oriented space, rather than to separate and frame individual buildings. Indeed, "new urbanism" is often a form of "old urbanism" since it draws on patterns of neighborhood and village development common before the widespread adoption of local zoning in the early 20th century. *Editor's Note: For more on the new urbanism movement, see Philip Langdon's, "New Development, Traditional Patterns," in PCJ #36 (Fall 1999).*

Conventional dimensional standards, by focusing on the goal of separating buildings from one another, give little attention to the design of the "streetscape," that is the street and the space surrounding it. To shape this space, planners and landscape architects are realizing that it is necessary to pull

Widely spaced homes with deep setbacks – a common pattern across America.

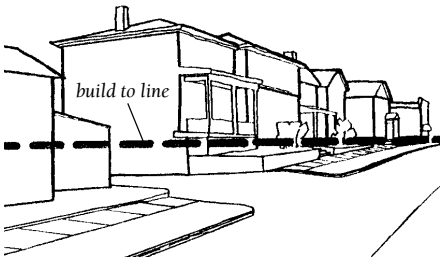
JOEL RUSSELL

buildings close to the street so that they create a sense of enclosure and make the street into an open air "outdoor room" in which the "walls" are the front facades of buildings and the "floor" consists of the street, sidewalk, and the front yards of buildings. This also creates a much more compact form of development, encouraging walking and social interaction.

Setbacks and Building Height

The front setback is perhaps the most obvious dimension that must be modified when the objective changes from separating buildings to shaping the public space of the street. With conventional dimensional regulations, minimum front setbacks ensure that houses are set far away from the street, generally too far back to enclose the space of the street. When the goal becomes shaping the space of the street, it is important instead to reduce the front setback.

Buildings that face each other across a street should be close enough to frame the street space and make it feel more like a room. Dimensional regulations that shape this public space therefore do not rely on minimum front setbacks, which often result in building separations that are far too large. Instead, such regulations use either a combination of minimum and maximum setbacks (sometimes referred to as a "setback zone"), or a "build-to" line. A build-to line is set parallel to the street at a fixed distance from it. Building facades are aligned along the build-to line, creating what is sometimes referred to as a "street wall."



To maintain the continuity of the street wall, it is also important to have a dimensional regulation not found at all in conventional zoning, a "minimum frontage build-out" requirement. This is a requirement that the building facade must occupy a minimum percentage of the lot width (usually between 70% and 100%). This ensures a relatively continuous street wall without large gaps between buildings. By contrast, minimum side yard setbacks found in conventional zoning often serve exactly the opposite purpose: keeping buildings widely spaced.

Generally, the farther apart buildings are as they face each other across a street, the taller they need to be to enclose the streetscape effectively. Thus, the wide boulevards of Paris still feel intimate because they are enclosed by six-story buildings. While most conventional zoning ordinances regulate building height only by establishing a maximum height, traditional neighborhood regulations establish both a maximum and a minimum height, determined in large part by the width of the streetscape (i.e., the street, sidewalk, and front yards). The use of only maximum height requirements in most zoning ordinances has allowed the proliferation of single-story buildings, especially in commercial areas. These cannot effectively enclose any but the narrowest of streetscapes.

Street trees can also do much to shape the space of the streetscape. Where large shade trees are aligned at regular intervals in a tree lawn along a street, they define space in several important ways. They create a kind of soft street wall along the street, while simultaneously framing the space between the sidewalk and the buildings. In addition the trees create a partial "roof" canopy over both the sidewalk and the street. Shade trees can help create an intimate pedestrian-oriented feeling even in neighborhoods where houses are more widely spaced, because the trees divide up and shape the public spaces.

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The "Street Wall"

The design of the public realm is the essence of traditional neighborhood regulation, and building facades are the "walls" of that realm. Thus, the design of building facades takes on a critical importance. There are many ways to regulate facades, from prescribing minute architectural detail to the use of very general design criteria. However, certain basic facade design features are essential to creating a pleasing and inviting public space. The most fundamental is the avoidance of blank walls by requiring windows and doors that are regularly spaced. It is desirable to also prescribe such basic architectural features as acceptable roof types and roof pitches, building materials, and percentages of glazing.

There is a fine line between requiring that buildings create an attractive public space and legislating architectural taste, and different communities draw that line in different places. This may seem unrelated to dimensional regulations, but if the goal of traditional neighborhood dimensional regulations is the design of public spaces, then these issues should also be addressed.

W. SENVILLE

Building closer to the street and reducing side yard setbacks is actually a return to an earlier suburban pattern. Above left, homes in DuPont, Washington (between Tacoma and Olympia) built circa 1910. Above right, a block in the "new urbanism" Northwest Landing development, also in DuPont. Below left, homes in one of Chicago's typical 1910-20's era bungalow suburbs. The new community of Celebration, Florida (bottom right) returns to a similar pattern of modest setbacks aligned close to the street.

Editor's Note:

Designing Better Residential Streets

In recent years planners and landscape architects have started to pay more attention to the design of residential streets. As Michael Southworth and Eran Ben-Joseph note in *Streets and the Shaping of Towns and Cities* (McGraw Hill 1997): "Rethinking of suburban street standards is needed today to create more cohesive, livable, and energy-efficient communities. … Simple dimensions for minimum street width, sidewalks, or planting strips may seem innocuous, but when applied to miles of streets in hundreds of subdivisions occupied by millions of people, they have an enormous impact on the way our neighborhoods look, feel, and work for us."

Designing the Streetscape

Conventional zoning and land use practice ignores the relationship between the street and the individual building or lot. This relationship is central to the traditional neighborhood approach. In conventional practice, design specifications for streets and sidewalks are completely independent of zoning regulations, which relate only to the individual lots that line the street. Specifications for new streets are also treated entirely differently from specifications for existing streets. New streets are governed by design specifications in subdivision regulations, while existing streets are controlled by specifications of the city, county, or state agencies that maintain them. The result is that it is very difficult to coordinate development of the streetscape with the lots that shape it. Traditional neighborhood planners have had to develop new kinds of codes that simultaneously regulate the streetscape and the buildings that frame it.

Conventionally, the dimensional standards for streets are intended to maximize the speed and flow of traffic, and minimize obstacles to access by fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. The result has been very wide streets with few street trees and large turning radii at intersections. This directly

opposes the goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly public realm. Highway and fire departments, concerned respectively with moving vehicles efficiently and maneuvering large fire trucks, frequently square off on these issues against community activists, planners, and designers who are concerned with making livable communities.

There is, however, a growing body of engineering knowledge showing a middle way, that is, more sophisticated street standards that allow for both the efficient movement of vehicles and a more pedestrian-friendly environment (sometimes on different street types). One of the keys is the restoration of the interconnected street grid with small blocks and many street connections. This grid pattern disperses traffic and enables emergency vehicles to use alternate routes when there is an obstruction on a street.

The grid and its variations once formed the basic skeleton of American towns and cities. But over the last 50 years, the grid has been largely abandoned in favor of a street system consisting of a hierarchy of arterials, collectors, and local access streets (many of which are cul-de-sacs). These are arranged in a pattern similar to the branches and trunk of a tree, with traffic funneled onto congested arterials.

In contrast, regulations designed to promote traditional neighborhood development provide for narrower streets, shorter block lengths, and shorter distances between cross-streets. The use of alleys is encouraged, while cul-de-sacs are often prohibited. The newer regulations use street cross-sections that show wide sidewalks, lawns with street trees between the sidewalk and the street, and relatively narrow streets with on-street parking.

Summing Up:

The challenge for planners and planning commissioners is to determine what pattern of land development the community wants to see: auto-dependent with low-density, widely spaced buildings, or pedestrian-oriented with more compact, closely-woven neighborhoods. If the community wants to move towards the latter, it is essential to re-examine dimensional standards to ensure that they will, in fact, support achieving this goal. ◆

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The Residential Street — Part I

by C. Gregory Dale & Jennifer Sharn

Most everyone is familiar with the basic classification of roads and streets into several different categories. These major divisions include the arterial street, the collector street, and the local street. While a great deal of attention has been given to the design and functions of arterials and collectors, the local (or residential) street has also begun to receive greater attention.

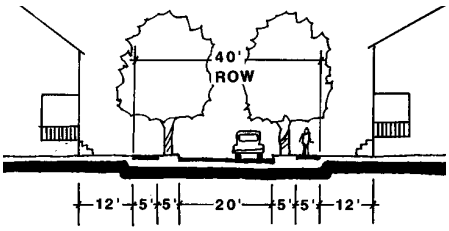
The evolution of public perception as to what constitute the most desirable characteristics of a residential street has undergone many fascinating changes. Residential streets in the early part of the century were characterized by relatively narrow widths, sidewalks, and shallow front yards, often with porches dominating the front elevation of the house. They typically occurred in a grid pattern. With the advent of the modern subdivision, the character of residential streets began to change substantially. Streets became wider to better accommodate traffic, houses were set back further, sidewalks often disappeared completely, and the front door became less of an activity area.

Now, many planners and designers are beginning to rebel against this modern pattern. You have probably heard about "neo-traditional" designers who are advocating a return to many of the old residential street characteristics. While some characterize these ideals as nostalgic, others see them as shedding new light on proven design principles. As planning commissioners you should understand the issues involved in this debate.

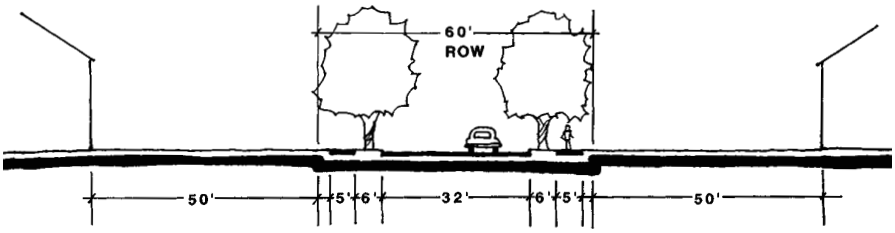
Residential Street Standards

It is important to understand how existing street standards came about and how prevalent their use is today. The design of today's residential street has evolved from the construction of roads that once carried horses and buggies and the early automobile. Streets in the early 1900's had a right-of-way (ROW) of 30-50 feet and a pavement width of 18-24 feet. Houses were typically set back only 12-20 feet from the ROW.

In the 1960's, the national Institute of Transportation Engineers produced a publication titled *Recommended Practice for Subdivision Streets.* This publication contained a set of recommended standards for residential street design. These included: a 60 foot ROW; 32-34 feet of pavement; a 6-7 foot planting strip; and a 5 foot sidewalk on both sides of the street. Typical front yard setbacks were set at 40-60 feet. These standards have been widely used as the basis for many of today's subdivision regulations. It is important to remember, however, that a transportation engineer's mission is to ensure efficient and safe vehicular movement. The standards' emphasis on vehicular movement is what has drawn increased criticism in recent years.



Early 1900's residential street cross section



1965+ ITE typical residential street cross section

Many communities are now taking another look at their existing residential street standards. In most suburban areas the last twenty to thirty years of development have produced multitudes of identical looking, curving streets that have pavement widths and design speeds not unlike major arterials or even highways. And when residents drive at speeds of 40-50 mph because that is what feels comfortable, community officials are forced to consider retrofitting "traffic calming" devices to fix the problem.

Some communities have begun to take a more proactive approach by changing the standards for residential street design. Boulder, Colorado, for example, has developed standards for several different types of streets based on their hierarchical functions and traffic volumes. In this way, the city has set for each street type standards for design speed, right-of-way, pavement width, on-street parking, and sidewalks. The new standards also provide for alleys, which, among other benefits, can help remove traffic from the street. While alleys are common in older neighborhoods, many communities' design standards and zoning ordinances prevent their use in new residential development. *[For more on Boulder's approach, see the June 1994 issue of Planning magazine].*

Suburban residential street design is not just an issue being looked at by city officials and urban planners. It has even recently been questioned by the media. *Newsweek* magazine's recent cover story, "Bye-Bye, Suburban Dream" (May 15, 1995), offers fifteen ways to bring back neighborhood identity to the suburbs. One of them is to "make the streets skinny." The article points out that modern subdivisions are designed to be driven, not walked. It is suggested that to remedy this streets should be made narrower. "Narrow streets — as little as 26 feet wide — and tight, right-angled corners are a lot easier for walkers, and probably safer as well, because they force drivers to slow down."

This type of coverage by the popular media is reflective of an emerging move-

ment in the planning profession known as "neotraditional" planning, or the "new urbanism." The proponents of these ideas believe that successful, enduring cities and towns need to have certain elements within them. These elements include such items as a pedestrian network, public buildings and squares, blocks of streets that interconnect in a more grid-like pattern, and street cross-sections designed to give a tighter, pedestrian-oriented character to the street (this is done by, among other things, requiring sidewalks and well-sized street trees; encouraging on-street parking instead of more driveways; and reducing the width of the roadway).

Nevertheless, many people still appear to like the conventional suburban pattern of deep front yards, and long, wide, gently curving streets, with cul-de-sacs — whose houses typically carry a price premium — branching off. However, this very layout contributes to higher speeds and greater traffic volumes on many local streets, and also results in more roundabout travel routes for both pedestrians and motorists.

Arterial Congestion.

Summing Up:

The standard used for the typical residential street has evolved from a narrow pavement width and right-of-way to the much wider cross-section seen in today's suburbs. Vehicle speeds are becoming an ever-increasing complaint in suburban areas. Many traffic engineers and police officers agree that drivers respond to their surroundings and not to posted speed limit signs. In other words, if the street has the width and gentle curves of a highway, people will drive on it as if it were a highway. Consequently, many communities are reconsidering their existing residential street design standards.

There are an increasing number of planners and designers who, for many reasons, advocate going back to the street pattern found in older, traditional neighborhoods. However, many developers argue that the public is well-satisfied with the "modern" suburban street pattern that still predominates today.

The next column will discuss the effect of residential street patterns on issues such as neighborhood identity, "way-finding," and other design concerns. ◆

Arterial Congestion

Peter Calthorpe, who has planned and designed a number of "transit oriented developments" notes that "standard suburban development patterns presently force all local shopping, recreation, and school trips, as well as work trips, onto the arterial street system," leading to "the congestion about which neighborhood groups typically are most concerned." Calthorpe cites a study by traffic engineer Walter Kulash which projected vehicle mile trips (VMT) in a suburb with standard street configurations versus one with mixed-use development and a grid pattern of local streets. "Because of the more direct routing possible in the gridded neighborhood, the overall VMT for trips with destinations in the area was reduced by 33% and the VMT on the arterial network was reduced by 75%. Although this study only calculates local trips and not through traffic, such local trips typically represent over 50% of all travel." From Peter Calthorpe's, *The Next American Metropolis* (Princeton Arch. Press 1993).

Residential Street Vocabulary

Boulevard — A street, broad in width, often tree-lined and landscaped. Directional traffic may be physically separated by landscaped medians.

Cross-section — A section formed by a plane cutting through an object, in this case a roadway, usually at right angles to an axis. Cross-sections are often used to illustrate the character, or design of a street and right-of-way, and can show the relationship of street to sidewalk to house.

Cul-de-sacs — Local streets, one end of which is closed and consists of a circular turn- around.

Curvilinear — A development pattern characterized by streets with multiple curves, typical of many modern subdivisions.

Frontage — The side of a lot abutting on a street right-of-way and ordinarily regarded as the front of the property. The amount of frontage required under a zoning code has a substantial influence on the perceived density of an area, often more so that minimum lot size or dwelling units per acre.

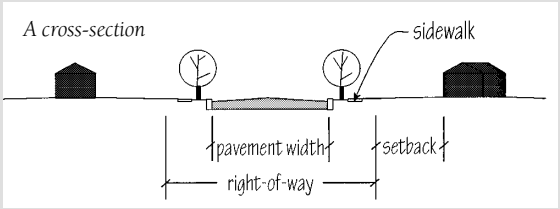
Grid — A framework of parallel or criss-crossed streets intersecting at right angles.

Pavement Width — Pavement width is the horizontal distance measured from one side of the street to the other.

Right-of-Way — The publicly owned land which incorporates the roadway, sidewalk, grassy strip, street trees and/or public utilities.

Setback — The required minimum horizontal distance between the building line and the related front, side or rear property line.

Streetscape — The design and character of a street, often with regard to the aesthetic design of features such as landscaping, lighting, pedestrian facilities, signage and street furniture.



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▶ *Jennifer Sharn, is a registered landscape architect with Pflum, Klausmeier & Gehrum, and has worked on many projects that deal with design issues in community planning.*

The Residential Street - Part II

by C. Gregory Dale & Jennifer Sharn

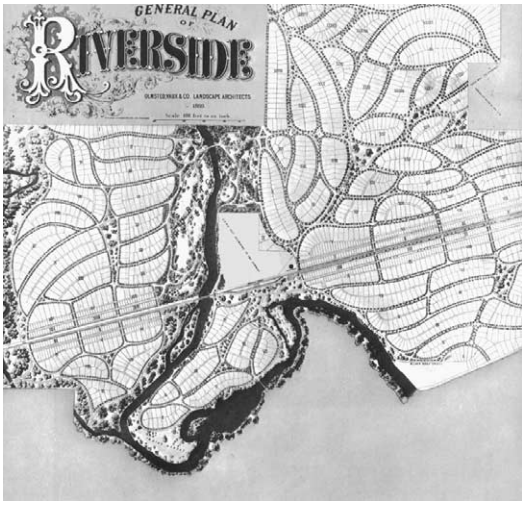
Some neighborhoods have streets that are wide with long sweeping curves. Other neighborhoods have streets which are narrow, short, and fairly straight. In some places there are many routes to choose from to take you to your destination. In others, your options are limited to one or perhaps two routes. Some neighborhoods, even when somewhat familiar to you, remain disorienting and maze-like.

The design and layout of streets helps give neighborhoods their character. This column, the second in a series on residential streets, will discuss street patterns and their effect on issues such as neighborhood identity, "way-finding," and other design concerns.

Historically, many cities were built using a grid layout, where streets intersect each other at perpendicular angles and blocks are fairly small. This grid style has been traced back to ancient times. The Greeks used this layout in planning cities, despite the obvious conflict with steep terrain. *Greek City Planning.* There are many benefits to the grid pattern, including its simplicity, the fact that it is logical and understandable, and the relative speed by which roads can be laid out and built.

Another characteristic of traditional cities which contributed to the grid pattern was that the residential environment was not wholly separate from commercial and business activities. Uses were mixed. However, by the late nineteenth century the trend toward increased separation of land uses had emerged, leading, in turn, to a more specialized pattern of streets in residential areas. *[Editor's Note: See also Larry Gercken's "American Zoning & the Physical Isolation of Uses," in PCJ #15 for more historical background].*

Transportation improvements allowed more people the luxury of living some distance from their place of work, while social trends fostered an appreciation of nature and pastoral settings. The design and development of new "suburban subdivisions" reflected these trends. One of the first, and best known, was Riverside, Illinois, an area outside of Chicago. Landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, structured the subdivision around a unique curvilinear pattern of streets, far different than the then-typical grid layout. As they noted in their report,



Plan of Riverside, Illinois, by Olmsted, Vaux & Co., 1869.

"we should recommend the general adoption, in the design of your roads, of gracefully curved lines, generous spaces, and the absence of sharp corners, the idea being to suggest and imply leisure, contemplativeness and happy tranquility." *From "Riverside, Illinois," Landscape Architecture (July 1931).*

Until only recently, this curvilinear pattern of streets has dominated suburban residential development. *Curves & Cul-de-Sacs.* For safety reasons, traffic engineers have modified the standards used within this style of design. For instance, many municipalities now require that intersections meet at a ninety degree angle, a detail which rarely occurred in the early Olmsted-like designs. In fact, the odd intersections such as those in Riverside allowed for the creation of islands of green space, further enhancing the park-like appearance. Other modern alterations have included the requirement for a minimum radius on curves to allow for safe turning, and the inclusion of cul-de-sacs, or dead-end streets.

One of the biggest criticisms of the curvilinear street pattern is its lack of order and orientation. Nearly everyone has experienced the modern American suburb where the major street starts off in one direction and then unexpectedly curves to another — and just when you think you've figured your way out of the place, the street you're on suddenly ends in a cul-de-sac. The origin of the word cul-de-sac is French for "bottom of the sack," or blind alley. They were originally designed for use by deliverymen, but are now very popular as part of the overall street pattern.

Cul-de-sacs have received much negative attention recently, yet when you ask most suburbanites where their ideal house would be located, often the answer is "on a cul-de-sac." One of the drawbacks of cul-de-sacs is that they restrict traffic flow by limiting routes. They force all traffic to funnel onto a few major collectors where speeds and volumes can become unsafe for residential use. Yet the cul-de-sac also functions very positively as a play area for young children. It's a place to learn to ride a bike, play catch, or skate, with little concern for traffic.

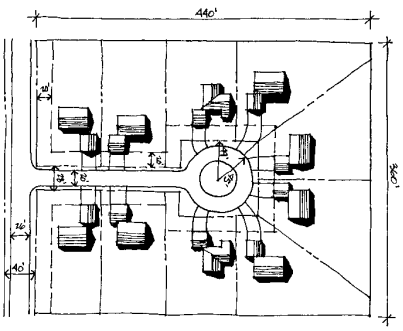
More recently, we have seen a backlash against the curvilinear subdivision. Many "neotraditonal" designers and planners are returning to the grid pattern with narrow streets as a preferred design. Communities such as Seaside in Florida and the Kentlands in Maryland are examples of neotraditional planning in practice. It remains to be seen if this represents a long-term trend in the design of communities.

The next column in this series on residential streets will discuss how modern street design can have a profound affect on other community issues, such as land use patterns, traffic control, community services, and infrastructure. ◆

Curves & Cul-de-Sacs

One of the most powerful forces contributing to the now familiar subdivision pattern of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs was the Federal Housing Administration, which between 1934 and 1970 provided mortgage insurance for one-quarter of all housing starts in the U.S. — mostly in new suburbs. According to Cynthia Girling and Kenneth Helphand: "The FHA Minimum Property Standards were often more detailed and restrictive than local ordinances. Their guidelines promoted a streetscape style, either 'continuous curvilinear' ... or 'loops and cul-de-sac' ... The net result throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s was that the FHA model for subdivision design was generally adhered to ... ." *Yards-Street-Park: The Design of Suburban Open Space* (John Wiley & Sons, 1994) 85-89.

Below: Illustration of a typical cul-de-sac, from *Cost Effective Site Planning —Single Family Development,* by Land Design/ Research, Inc.



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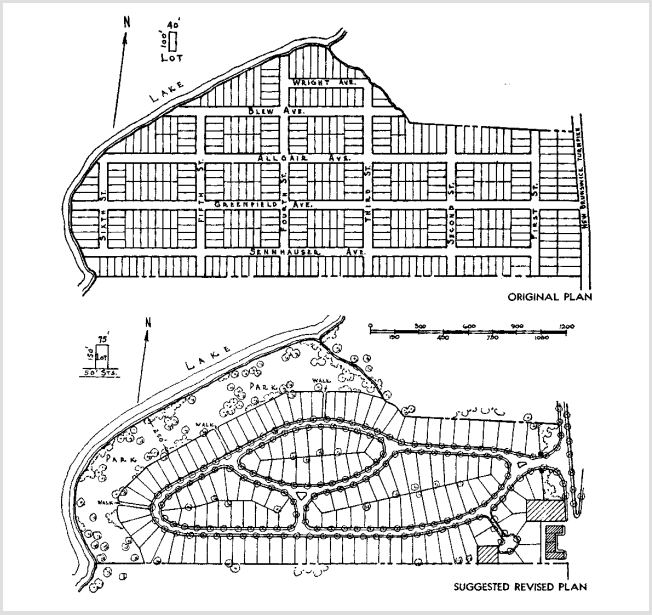
for the National Ass'n of Home Builders (1976). Reprinted with permission of the NAHB.

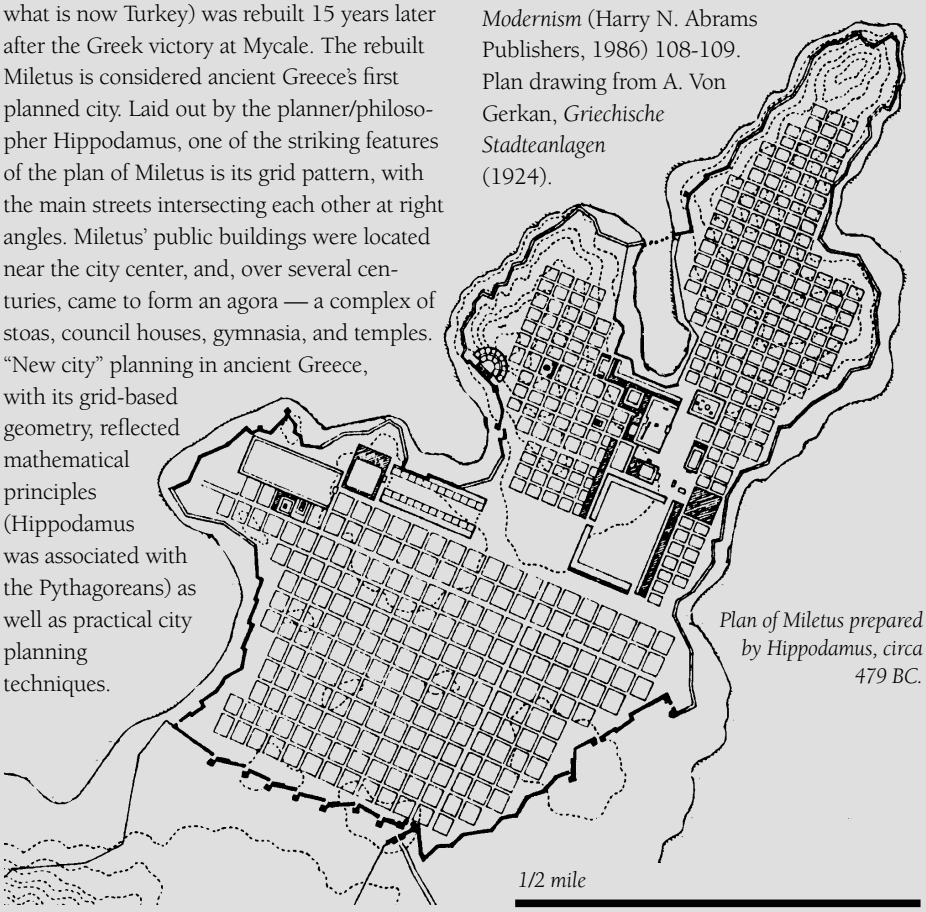
Right: The Federal Housing Administration encouraged developers to avoid the grid pattern in the "Original Plan," and use the curvilinear pattern shown in the "Suggested Revised Plan." From *Planning Profitable Neighborhoods* (Tech. Bulletin No. 7, U.S. Federal Housing Administration, 1938).



Greek City Planning

Destroyed by the Persians in 494 BC, Miletus (located along the Aegean Sea in what is now Turkey) was rebuilt 15 years later after the Greek victory at Mycale. The rebuilt Miletus is considered ancient Greece's first planned city. Laid out by the planner/philosopher Hippodamus, one of the striking features of the plan of Miletus is its grid pattern, with the main streets intersecting each other at right angles. Miletus' public buildings were located near the city center, and, over several centuries, came to form an agora — a complex of stoas, council houses, gymnasia, and temples. "New city" planning in ancient Greece, with its grid-based geometry, reflected mathematical principles (Hippodamus was associated with the Pythagoreans) as well as practical city planning techniques.

For more on Miletus and Greek city planning see, in particular, Spiro Kostof's *A History of Architecture* (Oxford University Press, 1985) 141-146, and Marvin Trachtenberg & Isabelle Hyman's *Architecture: From Prehistory to Post-Modernism* (Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1986) 108-109. Plan drawing from A. Von Gerkan, *Griechische Stadteanlagen* (1924).



Plan of Miletus prepared by Hippodamus, circa 479 BC.

The Residential Street — Part III

by Gregory Dale & Jennifer Sharn

Over the course of the past two centuries, our transportation systems have undergone a series of radical and expensive "clean slate" changes — changes that have had profound effects on development and land use patterns. The nineteenth century saw the completion of a network of canals which, after barely a decade, were supplanted by the "Iron Horse." As the twentieth century progressed, the dominance of the railroads was challenged — by motor vehicles and airplanes. The construction of the interstate highway system, in particular, had a huge effect on the nation's land use pattern.

The previous two parts of this series described how residential neighborhood streets have been transformed over the years. These changes have occurred both in the design of the typical street cross-section (including pavement width and building setbacks) and in the overall design of subdivisions, converting from a grid-style street pattern to one of curves and cul-de-sacs — with some recent hints of a possible return to the earlier pattern. This last part of the series will highlight some of the larger, "macro" factors that have affected many communities' land use pattern and, in turn, residential streets.

One important factor has been the changing nature of neighborhoods. Traditional neighborhoods up through the early decades of this century included residences, businesses, and industries — a concept planners now call "mixed use." A variety of influences, including the widespread adoption of zoning, improvements in transportation, and post-World War II federal housing and mortgage loan programs, contributed to the increased separation of land uses. The result today is that it is rare to find newly built developments which include more than one type of use. Residential developments are typically large single-use areas surrounded by fast flowing highways and arterial roads. Similarly, most commercial and office developments are located in large single-use islands, separated from other uses not just by highways, but by a sea of parking. *[See also Larry Gercken's "American Zoning & the Physical Isolation of Uses," in PCJ #15].*

This separation of uses does not allow for easy pedestrian movement between commercial and residential areas. In order to do something as basic as buy a gallon of milk, it is often necessary to navigate several miles to the nearest store. Local residential streets usually connect only in roundabout ways with commercial areas. Neotraditional planners and "new urbanists" contend that one solution to this problem is to encourage the development of true mixed communities. Residential uses of various size, density, and cost are interwoven with smaller retail and office uses. The result is a more dense development pattern with schools, homes, and businesses within walking distance of one another.

Some critics maintain that this approach fails to recognize current economic realities, in that many of today's popular discount retail stores come in sizes and shapes which do not fit easily into compact, walkable surroundings. Indeed, economic forces loom large. However, the fact that businesses have gravitated toward certain sizes and locations does not guarantee that these patterns are necessary or permanent.

The most costly result of the modern land use development pattern has been in building the necessary infrastructure. Ironically, the enormous cost of the interstates themselves may be small compared to the vast amounts of state and local public spending for an expansive network of local roads, sewage lines, and waste treatment plants — triggered by the interstates as development has surged into the countryside. Although some of these local costs are being shifted to developers through the use of techniques such as impact fees, much is not, including the long-term maintenance cost of the infrastructure.

In recognition of the costs of our highway-generated land development pattern, some communities and regional planning councils have adopted growth management plans. The purpose of these plans is to limit new spending on infrastructure to those areas that are already more densely populated, to keep current costs at manageable levels, and to avoid even more infrastructure spending which communities may be unable to afford.

Summing Up:

Modern residential streets are the product both of specific design "philosophies" (i.e., the preference for curvilinear streets) and broader influences brought about by the nature of our transportation system and single-use land development pattern. Because issues relating to residential streets hit so close to home it is important for community officials, including planning commissioners, to understand the forces at work, and evaluate whether the results reflect what the community wants for its future. ◆

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Jennifer Sharn is a registered landscape architect with Pflum, Klausmeier & Gehrum, and has worked on many projects that deal with design issues in community planning.

FEATURE

Rethinking Residential Streets

by Joseph R. Molinaro, AICP

In communities across the country, planners, engineers, developers, and local officials are trying to create more livable neighborhoods by taking a new look at design requirements for residential streets. Streets define the character of our communities and contribute to our sense of place — whether a quiet village, comfortable neighborhood, or bustling city street.

While interstate highways and arterial highways properly assign foremost priority to traffic needs, the residential environment must respond to many other concerns. Residential streets are more than just conduits for traffic; they form the setting for our homes and are where neighbors meet and talk and children play. In some ways, residential streets should be considered as extensions of our front yards, rather than as transportation facilities.

Unfortunately, outdated regulations in many communities require residential streets to be designed to standards that are suitable for major roadways. When the automobile began to dominate our landscape in the 1950s, transportation planners and engineers developed techniques for handling large volumes of traffic at higher speeds. This work, combined with substantial public funding, produced the modern, efficient highway network this nation enjoys today.

But many of the design standards developed for highways were incorporated into local subdivision regulations and inappropriately applied to residential streets. Too often, the result has been residential areas designed with streets that violate the sense of neighborhood and that encourage high-speed travel through our communities.

Inappropriate street standards also make our neighborhoods less attractive by requiring the paving of overly wide street surfaces. In addition to its unappealing aesthetic consequences, excessive pavement causes environmental problems — more stormwater runoff and heat buildup — and increases construction costs for the developer and maintenance costs for the community.

> "RESIDENTIAL STREETS ARE MORE THAN JUST CONDUITS FOR TRAFFIC; THEY FORM THE SETTING FOR OUR HOMES AND ARE WHERE NEIGHBORS MEET AND TALK AND CHILDREN PLAY."

STREET DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Street Hierarchy: Blanket standards for all streets ignore community needs and fail to recognize that different traffic characteristics demand different street design standards. For example, a cul-de-sac with 10 houses does not experience the volume and type of traffic carried by collector or arterial roads. Designing each street to match its function is at the heart of better street design standards.

While major roadways (arterials and collectors) are designed primarily for the smooth flow of traffic, local streets should be designed for much slower speeds. Traffic must be "kept in its place" if residential areas are to offer much-desired safety and low noise levels. The Boone County (Kentucky) Comprehensive Plan, for example, states that local streets should "[P]rovide the greatest degree of access to abutting property. Service of through traffic is clearly subordinate and even discouraged by low posted speeds and street design."

Street Width: Perhaps the most important design feature of any residential street is its width. Contrary to the common wisdom of earlier decades, engineers and planners now realize that in residential neighborhoods, wider streets are more dangerous than narrow streets because they encourage drivers to speed. Subcollector streets function well at 26-foot widths. Access streets, such as short lanes or cul-de-sacs, require widths of only 20 to 24 feet. The narrower widths assume that most resident parking is accommodated in garages or driveways.

Right-of-Way Width: The right of way need only be as wide as necessary to accommodate the street pavement, sidewalks, grass strip and street trees, and utilities. For a 26-foot wide subcollector street with sidewalks, a 42 to 46 foot right-of-way should be sufficient. A 22-foot wide cul-de-sac without sidewalks may need a right-of-way of only 24 feet.

Requiring excessive rights-of-way wastes land and places unnecessary restrictions on the layout of lots. Also, while rights-of-way for arterial roads may need to accommodate future widening, those for residential subdivision streets do not.

Street Geometry: Geometry is the

Streets serving only a few homes need only be twenty feet wide

term used by civil engineers to describe aspects of road design such as sharpness of curves and steepness of slopes. Obviously, the geometry required for a superhighway with a 65 m.p.h. speed limit is different than that needed for a residential street with a speed limit of 20 m.p.h. At high speeds, for example, safety requires more gradual curves; at low speeds, cars can easily negotiate the sharpest of curves.

Residential streets should be designed with tighter turns than major roads. These tighter turns force drivers to go slower, while also adding to the visual interest of the street. At intersections, the turn radius can be kept smaller, forcing cars to come to a full stop before turning rather than making a "rolling stop."

In determining geometry and street width, the need for providing emergency vehicle access must be addressed. But this does not mean that residential streets have to be oversized. Today's modern fire fighting vehicles are more maneuverable than earlier equipment, and oversized trucks such as hook and ladder typically do not respond to fire calls in single-family residential areas. If fire truck accessibility is a special concern in a community, it would be more economical to purchase trucks that fit local streets, rather than build all streets to meet the needs of the largest size fire trucks.

Working for Change

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, Larry Collins, the development director of Sivage Thomas Homes, suggested to the planning commission that the city amend its street standards in conjunction with its ongoing revision of Albuquerque's Development Process

continued on next page

Defining Streets

Development codes or subdivision regulations can recognize variable street needs by specifying a hierarchy of streets. In *Residential Streets*, a joint publication of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the National Association of Home Builders, and the Urban Land Institute, the following four-tiered hierarchy is recommended:

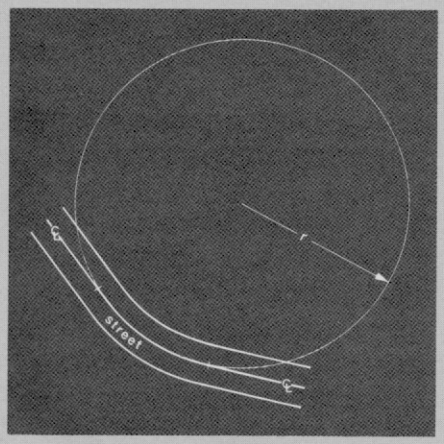
- *Arterial streets* are high-volume streets that conduct traffic between towns and activity centers and connect communities to major state and interstate highways. Typically, residences are not located on arterials.
- *Collector streets* are the principal traffic arteries within residential or commercial areas. They carry relatively high traffic volumes and should be designed to promote the free flow of traffic, including public transit buses and school buses. Some residences may front on these streets.
- *Subcollector streets* are relatively low-volume streets that provide access to residential lots and serve some through traffic to lower-order (access) streets.
- *Access streets* are the lowest-volume streets. Their purpose is to handle traffic between dwelling units and higher-order streets. They usually carry no through traffic and include short streets, cul-de-sacs, and courts. Access streets serve only a few dwelling units.

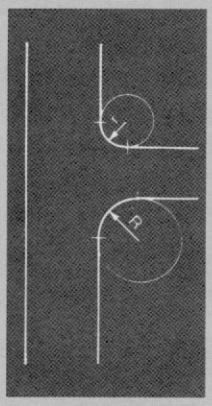
Resources

Residential Streets can be purchased from the National Association of Home Builders Bookstore, 1-800-223-2665.

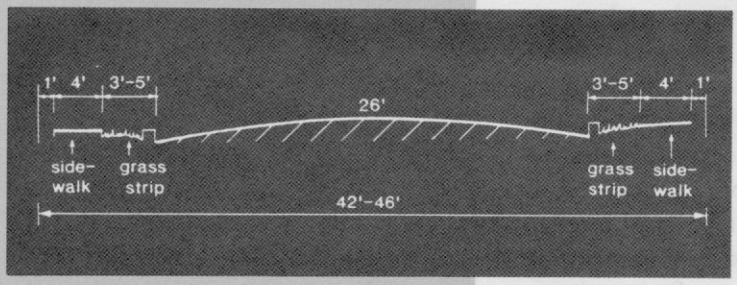
Street-Wise Glossary:

Horizontal curves are described by the radius of the circle formed by the centerline of that curve.





Intersection radius (or curb return) is the radius of the circle formed by the intersecting streets at the corner.



Right-of-way is the total width dedicated to public use, which may include, in addition to the street pavement, the areas for sidewalks, street trees, utilities, and maintenance.

Rethinking Residential Streets...

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Manual (DPM). With the commission's encouragement, Collins convened a committee of private sector engineers and design professionals, which reviewed various published recommendations of national engineering and planning organizations.

The planning commission was impressed with the committee's effort and decided to establish a task force chaired by the former city traffic engineer. The task force included Collins, two planning commissioners, the city traffic engineer, and representatives of the fire chief and several other departments. It spent several months meeting with interested parties, discussing alternatives, and developing new standards.

While existing standards require all streets to be 32 feet wide, the task force recognized different types of streets. Its recommendations call for street widths ranging from 22 to 32 feet, with most falling between 24 to 28 feet. The recommendations would also reduce right-of way widths, and scale back on required horizontal curvatures. Further, they would reduce the intersection radius and the radius of cul-de-sac turnarounds.

In Livingston County, Michigan, a fast-growing county north of Ann Arbor, the county road commission's existing regulations do not differentiate subdivision streets from arterial roads. Rather, all streets must be designed to the county's standards for rural highways. This has resulted in excessive pavement and right-of-way widths for neighborhood streets. For example, all streets must have a right-of-way of 66 feet. Recently, however, many commissioners, planners, and builders have worked to evaluate these street standards and develop alternatives.

One alternative to meeting county road standards is for townships to adopt their own standards. But townships in Livingston County are not willing to accept dedication of streets. "Liability and maintenance are the two issues the townships are concerned about," says George Bacalis, president of Artisan Builders and chairperson of the County HomeBuilders' Public Policy Committee.

To develop more reasonable standards, the home builders are working with townships to develop mutually acceptable specifications for private streets, as well as legal language that will ensure that homeowners associations will assume responsibility for maintenance and liability. In addition, the county road commission has agreed to consider changes in its roadway specifications. An interdisciplinary committee formed by the county planning director will make recommendations to the road commission.

SUMMING UP:

Several decades of experience have demonstrated that residential street standards based on highway engineering concepts intended to move high-speed traffic do not produce the intimate scale, tranquility, and safety neighborhood residents want.

Planning for more livable streets has many constituencies: citizen groups, environmentalists, home builders, and planning and design professionals. As a result, an increasing number of communities have begun to rethink their street standards.

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City of Othello
Building and Planning Department
March 2021

Building Permits		
	Issued	Final
Residential	8[1]	21[3]
Commercial	2[2]	4[4]
Industrial	0	0
Total	10	25[5]

[1] 3 new residences, 1 kitchen addition, 1 family room & patio addition, 2 porch/patio cover, 1 siding replacement
[2] Signs
[3] 8 new residences, 1 remodel, 1 garage, 7 reroof, 1 furnace replacement, 2 porch/patio cover, 1 pool
[4] Columbia Bank re-roof, Sonora Tacos sign, SVZ mechanical permit, School District refrigerated food storage container
[5] More final permits that usual, due to Permit Tech following up on old/expiring permits to get them to schedule final inspections

Inspections

- The Inspector completed 109 inspections in March. This is an average of 4.7 inspections per work day. The busiest day was March 26 with 15 inspections, followed by March 12 with 13 inspections.

Land Use Permits & Development Projects		
Project	Actions in March	Status as of March 31
Hemlock zoning	Discovered the location of Hemlock Plaza & Port of Othello had been rezoned to Residential in 2019/2020 Zoning Update. Initial discussions with Planning Commission. Notified Commerce to start 60-day comment period. Completed SEPA Checklist. Issued DNS. Public hearing notifications. Prepared introductory report for Council.	Council introduction scheduled for April 5. Public hearings scheduled for April 19 (Planning Commission) and April 26 (City Council).
High School portables	(Placement permits submitted in Feb for 2 more where 2 added last year. Site is not platted.) School Board approved purchase of portables. Scheduled for Council review in Apr.	OSD will request permission to build on unplatted property at the April 26 Council meeting.
McCain Foods Short Plat	No change. (Final plat approved 7/2/20).	Recording the plat will wait until McCain finishes & takes over the utilities.

Land Use Permits & Development Projects		
Project	Actions in March	Status as of March 31
Ochoa Short Plat	No change. (Applied in January. Proposal does not meet standards so can't be approved as submitted. Held a remote meeting in Feb to discuss issues with the applicants. They will submit a revised application.)	Waiting for a revised proposal.
Sand Hill Estates #3 prelim plat	(Preliminary plat approved in Feb.) Street & utility plan approved by Engineering Dept. Street & utility construction started in late March.	Street and utility construction getting started. City cannot accept final plat for review until improvements finished and accepted, or bonded for.
Wahitis Short Plat	No change (Plat approved in May 2019. Scootney street/utility improvement plans approved by City Dec. 2019. 5/26/20 USBR notified School District that it will be about a year before they have time to review it.)	No change: Street improvements must be completed or bonded before accepting mylars for recording. USBR issues must be resolved before street improvements can proceed.
Water Hole 17	No change. (Revised application for substantial building expansion submitted in Jan. Site is not platted; have discussed with proponent multiple times. Notice of Incomplete sent in Feb.)	Waiting for plat submittal.

Municipal Code Updates/Long Range Planning

- Planning Commission discussed changes to OMC 16.29 & 16.33, the Subdivision chapters related to design standards and improvements. These chapters are proposed to be substantially revised by having most of the requirements in the Public Works Design Standards, rather than duplicated or conflicting in the Municipal Code.
- Extensive staff review of proposed updates to Public Works Design Standards.

Housing

- Draft Housing Action Plan received from consultant at the end of the month. The project is running a little behind but is still hoped to finish on time (mid-June).

Parks/Recreation

- Participating in Farmers Market Food Incubator project meetings.

Transportation

- Planning Commission continued discussion of street safety and traffic calming.
- Discussed proposed amendments to Sand Hill Estates Development Agreement (related to street classifications) with City Attorney.

- Participating in Smart Growth America Complete Streets Leadership Academy hosted by Wenatchee (virtual).
- Discussion to identify a project to propose for a QUADCO grant.

Staffing/Technology

- Continued testing and customizing of Permit Trax.

Website

- Started formatting the Spanish version of the Fresh Food Market/Food Maker Incubator webpage with the translation provided by Grant Administrator Thalia Lemus, but ran out of time to finish it this month.

Training

- Permit Tech attended national permit tech training (virtual).
- Webinar: "Leadership for Sustainability: Strategies for Tackling Wicked Problems"
- Completed required security training from IT.
- City Hall staff completed CPR/First Aid training.
- MRSC webinar: "Developing an Effective Housing Element"

Other

- Department heads are reviewing the city personnel policies.
- Ace Hardware submitted an application form for a storage building, but no plans. Notice of Incomplete sent.