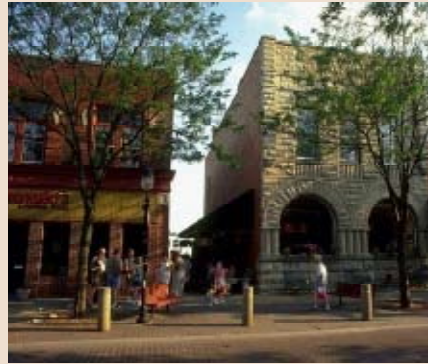




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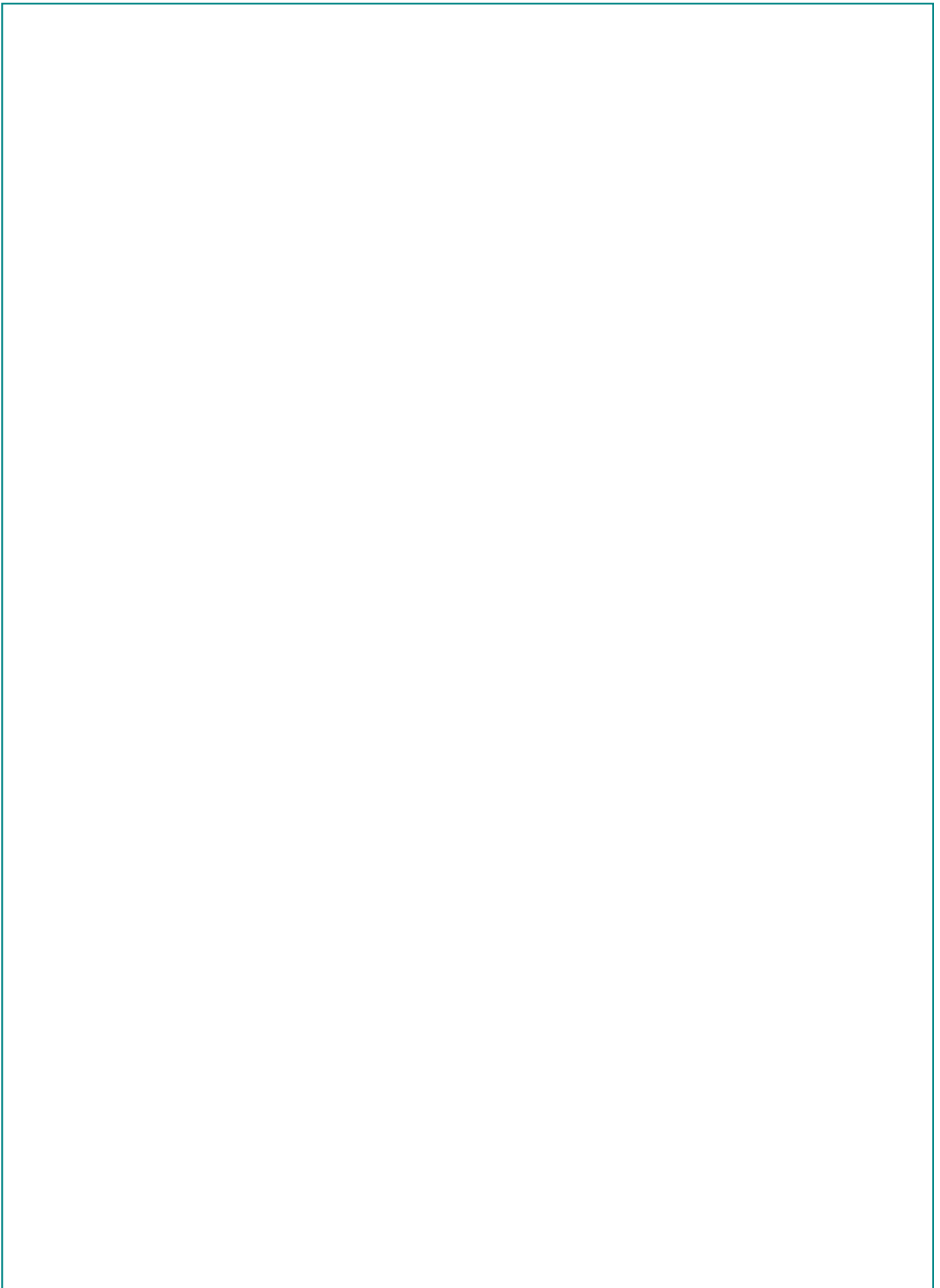
LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS INITIATIVE



Sioux Falls Stakeholder Meetings Report

Submitted By:
RDG Planning and Design
June, 2008





Sioux Falls Stakeholder Meeting Report

On April 10, 2008, a series of stakeholder group meetings were held as a part of the public input process associated with the Shape Sioux Falls initiative. These sessions were facilitated by RDG Planning and Design's Marty Shukert and Gary Lozano. Sioux Falls Planner Sam Trebilcock was also in attendance. While each session included a range of participants, they were loosely organized around the indicated development issue area. The schedule, session issue area, and attendees are indicated below.

8:30 Session 1: Residential Land Uses and Development

Attendees:

Todd Anawski	Sioux Empire Homebuilders
Judy Winter	Sanford
Patrick Gale	Sioux Falls Community Foundation
Sue Olsen	Habitat for Humanity
Corey Hanson	Viereck Real Estate
Richard Schwanke	JSA Consulting and Engineers
Eric Willadsen	Willadsund-Lund Engineering
Steve Van Buskirk	Van Buskirk Development
Stacey McMahan	Architecture Inc.

10:00 Session 2: Commercial Land Uses and Development

Attendees:

Jon Hart	Citizen
Monty Miller	Sayre Engineering
Beth Jensen	KELO TV
Dennis Gilliam	Macerich Commercial
Steve Metli	First Bank and Trust
Roger Mack	Lloyd Commercial Real Estate
Meredith Larson	Planning Commission
David Erickson	VandeWalle Architects
Chad Kucker	Brian Clarke Assoc.
Mike Hauck	Sioux Falls Commercial Real Estate

11:30 Session 3: Economic Development

Attendees:

Matt Parker	Parker Transfer
Mark Vellinga	Graham Corporation
Dave Fleck	Sioux Falls Construction
Jessie Schmidt	Planning Commission
Erik Helland	Landscape Garden Center
Dale Jans	Jans Corporation

Bob Jamisoin	City Council
Doug Brockhouse	Bender Commercial
Spencer Ruff	Spencer Ruff Assoc.
Perry Kolb	Wilsey & Assoc.

2:00 Session 4: Conserving and Revitalizing Neighborhoods

Attendees:

Jon Schmidt	Civil Design Incorporated
Dick Dempster	Architecture Incorporated
Paul Hegg	Hegg Companies
Matt Woodside	Board of Historic Preservation
Vicki Helwig	Whittier Neighborhood
April Schave	Whittier Neighborhood
Kent Metzger	Planning Commission
Lynette Olsen	Planning Commission

3:30 Session 5: Large Institutional Land Uses and Development

Attendees:

Andrew Tople	Sioux Falls Tomorrow
Carl Tonjes	Citizen
Jeff Kreiter	Sioux Falls School District
Ross Winkels	The Winkels Group
Kurt Brost	Sanford
John Paulson	Sanford and Sioux Falls Tomorrow

5:00 Session 6: Transportation Corridors and Open Space Development

Attendees:

Michael Christensen	Falls Area Bicyclists
Bill Brinker	HDR Engineering
Jennifer Sanderson	Sioux Falls Community Foundation
Cynthia Monnin	Friesen Construction
Mark Wiederrich	Goldsmith and Heck
Chuck Fjellin	Parker Transfer
Eric Berg	Mid-American Energy
Rick Foster	Foster Landscaping
Kermit Stagers	City Council

Each session began with a summary of the results of the Visual Listening Survey and proceeded with discussion regarding the implications of the values and preferences expressed by the survey participants. All sessions were recorded and sessions notes indicating all significant comments were produced. These comments were then organized by development issue area and the summary of Stakeholder Group Session comments by issue area follows. The issue areas are presented in roughly the order of the number of comments made. These comments will be made public and taken into consideration in discussions regarding development regulation revisions undertaken with the Shape Sioux Falls project.

I. Landscaping

A. History

1. Twelve years ago the move was made by the planning commission to improve aesthetics. There is a problem with what has been grandfathered in and what follows the new aesthetic standards.
2. We are doing better now with landscaping, but can do even better in future.
3. Whatever happened to landscape ordinance revisions proposed in the recent past?

B. Landscaping/Open Space Standards

1. City should encourage cluster development, instead of having patches of green space in front of entrances to higher density development. It would be better to save up that green space and create one central space that really matters.
2. Much of the landscaping that we see today is voluntary.
3. There is the need for a better definition of what good landscaping practices are.
4. Pedestrian ways and islands of trees in parking lots tend to meet quite a bit of opposition.
5. Grouping of trees would be a good idea rather than strict requirement of one tree every so many feet. However, good landscape design is important, because clustering of trees to meet standards can sometimes overcrowds tree plantings on a piece of land too small to support them.
6. Living roofs and green roofs should be a option

C. Practical Issues

1. People are trying to squeeze out landscaping to make use of all the land they have available for parking.
2. Every community talks about affordable housing, but when it comes to the development of it, very little thought is given to landscaping because of the costs involved.
3. There is a limit to how much can be done. Making developers follow landscaping standards will slow development. There needs to be some degree of flexibility with enforcement of such standards.
4. There needs to be balance in efforts to create a better environment. One cannot just go and bulldoze everything and make it beautiful. There has to be a level of practicality to any standards that are established. There needs to be a balance between economics and aesthetics.

5. There are areas where the streets have been widened to the point that most of the green space between the sidewalk and the street has been lost. Rather than using trees or grass for landscaping in these areas, perhaps it would be better to use decorative pavers or planters.
6. The basic issue is that we have laws requiring landscaping and people not wanting to spend money on landscaping. You can only have so many laws and so many exceptions to the laws. We just don't make exceptions to the laws.
7. Problems with utilities and city height and width limits on trees makes it difficult to have them in the right-away between the street and sidewalk.
8. Redevelopment areas are very difficult to provide landscaping because these are typically areas with small developed lots and where widened streets have taken street landscaped areas.

D. Climate/Planting

1. Standards need to be maintenance-sensitive.
2. Water supply is a major issue for Sioux Falls and the City should ensure that ordinances reinforce sustainable practices for landscaping. Sustainable landscaping – xeriscaping - needs to be an option. Only landscaping that needs irrigation is allowable now. This needs to change.
3. There is a need for good soil foundation to help reduce the need for watering maintenance.
4. Snow removal is an issue with landscaping.

E. Implementation

1. Existing ordinances still do not require much landscaping, except for trees and grass.
2. There is a high cost involved in maintaining landscaping. This requirement falls on neighborhood associations, and is a big barrier. Perennials and trees would be more of an option instead of just grass if maintenance was easier.
3. Are there organizations or partnerships that could be created as a way to get developers and property owners to green up a facility and make it more esthetically pleasing?
4. The City cannot dictate the types of plantings that can be installed (i.e. the planting of flowers).
5. Need to approach the problem through supporting innovative design, rather than just creating further landscaping requirements.
6. Should give the choice to developers either to follow a set of guidelines in developing a site, or with the help of a landscape architect, create a landscape site plan that may not follow the regulations to the letter, but that you then work to get approved based on its design. Should stop landscaping from just being “an equation” to developers.

II. Signage

A. Sign Size

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1. Major problem with commercial development is that there is an insistence on the part of businesses that they need to have a sign up along the road in order to attract people into the commercial zone, and street trees get in the way of that. Need for the use of trees that do not have dense canopies.
 2. If big signs are allowed in the code people will demand it from developers as a part of their lease in strip mall or office.
 3. Many scattered signs worse than one big sign.

B. Monument/Pole/Building Signs

1. Monument signs don't work very well with tree requirements
2. Islands of landscaping placed so as to not block signage should be allowed. That would allow for businesses to have their signs located prominently along the road, but also allow for the landscaping to mature and not constantly be replaced.
3. People here in Sioux Falls don't like monument signs, they want to know where an individual business is located, and that's why there is so much competition between businesses to have the largest sign.
4. Building signage is more important than monument signage, but the perception of monument signage is just the opposite.
5. Could the Skyway Liquor sign (double-pole) be allowed today? Some thought is was bad others actually liked the sign (that is not the only thing bad with the picture).

C. Sign Regulations

1. Ordinances need to have some degree of site specific standards, rather than just a one size fits all approach. There also needs to be some level of design standards for buildings, incorporating their setbacks.
2. There should be an overall sign master plan for a development, so that all signs are similar in size and style and do not overpower the streetscape. Standards need to be comprehensive and cover every development equally.
3. More office developments want signage in order to attract customers and develop brand.
4. Regulations should place more emphasis on controlling temporary/promotional signage. Does the city have the resources and the rights to forcibly remove such signs?
5. There needs to be flexibility in frontage/signage allowances. If you have a business that orients its narrowest façade to the street, this will in turn translate into less square footage for signage.
6. Different sign allowance should be created based on the type of street that is being dealt with. ("Main Street" v. Interstate Corridor)
7. Signage rules on interstate where frontage is on internal road needs to be changed to provide some allowance to use Interstate exposure. Otherwise, the sign size seems out of place and much too small.
8. Signage standards should encourage signs that are more aesthetically pleasing in design.
9. Has thought been given regarding regulation of digital signs?

10. Can regulation be established to control traveling billboards (panel trucks)?

III. Corridors

1. Streets are too wide and over-designed and it allows people to go faster than they should.
2. Traffic engineers tend to always want to get traffic through an area as quickly as possible (need to change that line of thinking/find ways to slow traffic).
3. Design speed are often 10 mph greater than desired speed limit which creates problems – it would be better to design what you need and then the road won't need to be expanded later or need other engineering improvements – it will also be a much nicer facility to live near.
4. Should turn the one-way streets in town back to two-way traffic.
5. Street widths: newer developments tend to have far wider streets than older neighborhoods, which is not needed with larger garages. The narrowing of roads could potentially lead to reduction in the speed of traffic.
6. Need to develop communities where people know their neighbors. More pedestrian-friendly corridors would encourage more walking and social interaction.
7. Arterial street standards are so strict that no one will walk along them. This leads to the conclusion that arterial streets shouldn't have sidewalks.
8. The City should hold itself to minimum standards when widening streets. They should not be allowed to leave the sidewalk up next to the curb when they widen streets. There needs to be a requirement that the city buy the additional right-away for new grass and tree landscaping.
9. Bicycle linkages are important. Maybe the City should put bike paths along major streets.
10. Low maintenance landscaping should be required along corridors.
11. Clustering trees is an option in boulevards and parking lots.
12. Adequate top soil is the most important component to making sure a tree lives – not watering. In fact, overwatering has destroyed Louise Avenue landscaping.
13. Community has trouble planting any trees along roadways except Phillips Ave, because state road engineers have told the community that the area between the sidewalk and the curb are for utilities only.
14. Fence off-set in picture – this is required by ordinance. A 4 foot high fence can be 10 feet closer to ROW line than 6 foot high fence.

IV. Pedestrian Amenities v. Auto Oriented

1. Issue of climate: Need to find a way to limit the amount of foot time between retailers in pedestrian-oriented developments. Weather is a consideration for pedestrian amenities and you have to do it differently because

of it.

2. Need to “level the scale” between the car and the pedestrian (lower the domination of the car).
3. Strip Malls need better regulations, need to change perceptions regarding new development patterns.
4. Should ask larger developments to establish a theme with their developments.
5. Pedestrian oriented locations are not easy to drive through, but are still worthwhile places to have within the community. We need buffers for bikes and pedestrians.
6. When developing pedestrian connections they should not be pedestrian-only connections. Car connections need to be considered and are a part of the pedestrian equation. For instance, the downtown pedestrian mall didn't work because the auto was not considered too.
7. Need to create bike paths with the sidewalks so that bikes are kept off the streets. Separation would make bicycle travel safer and reduce the need of the automobile, in turn reducing the width and size of new city streets.
8. Parking ratio regulations could cause some issue with creating richer pedestrian environments. The City should create overlay zones with different parking requirements.
9. Sidewalks should probably be eliminated from arterial streets because of the way business developments limit access. Sidewalks should be placed along interior streets within a development and then only travel out of the development at set points for access across the arterial.

V. Density

1. With the cost of land going up there is a need to realize that density needs to be increased. Will allow also for more creative developments and better quality structures.
2. People tend to object to having three-story apartment buildings next to their homes because the size is out of context and because of the increased traffic they also bring.
3. With density, the quality of the development is important to people's overall perception, if it is not well done people will not want it. Quality in development is more important than density.
4. Density is our future, but beware of perceptions of neighbors (must find a way to make the case there with pictures). One developer relayed a recent fight that single-family neighbors had with his multi-family development.
5. Density bonuses can help developers, but doesn't guarantee a well-designed project for the public and city.
6. Parking requirements can be a barrier to additional density – shared parking a remedy?
7. Can't have maximum density landscaping and required parking at the same time.
8. When you drive into neighborhoods where you see nothing but garages there is no feeling of community or place, it is completely oriented around the car.

VI. Mixed Use Development

1. Needed with the rise of gas prices. The concept of neighborhood commercial space located no more than a half-mile from residential was prominent during the fuel crisis.
2. There is no place where you can live, work and shop all within a short distance of each other in the community.
3. There seems to be support for mixed-use, but I am still not sure people know exactly what that truly means. It would help to show images from other cities that have successful mixed-use developments.
4. VLS Images can help sell this new type of development.
5. Neighbors' perception of loss of property values is important to consider with mixed-use proposals.
6. City ordinances do not work well with the development of mix-use projects. It is nearly impossible to create the kind of vibrant built environments that people like.
7. Regulation doesn't allow for townhouse/mix use development, or for small lots with minimal setbacks.
8. There are problems with too many hoops to jump through in order to get a mix use development passed by the commission. There is very little flexibility when it comes to transitioning uses in a development.
9. Use of PUD's for the creation of Mix Use development: Maybe the city needs a quick fix on the PD section of zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use to begin.

VII. Storm Water Management

1. BMP requirements create big muddy ponds – in some situations. Seems like many of the ponds could be much nicer looking if there was a requirement for additional area and they were not so steep-sided.
2. Should work to make BMPs and detention ponds potential green spaces and amenities that developers want to focus development around. They should be used to create common areas and green spaces in neighborhoods.
3. Need to ensure that storm water facilities are well-maintained.
4. Curb-less streets with swales for storm water management: would help to reduce the reliance that new developments have on detention ponds.
5. Is a grassy swale in front yard an option for development? This feature would remind people of rural development
6. BMPs are an issue and city development fees are a major issue that may push development to surrounding communities. This fact may make new development standards more difficult to sell.

VIII. Site Development

1. Density and height limits coupled with setback and green space requirements limit the kinds of projects

that can be created which people like.

2. Make it easier for setback changes to be worked through, so that development plans don't end up being stalled easily.
3. Alternate vehicle storage. (side lots – garage structures)
4. Need freight service areas for businesses. If front area is going to be public gathering then back access (alley) for loading needs to be accommodated. Need to consider other development considerations for the truck.
5. Need to consider lighting quality not just quantity.

IX. Architectural Scale/Design Standards

1. Detail and architecture make a big difference in people's impression of positive or negative
2. Black and white requirements are good for predictability, but can be very bad for good design.
3. There are no historic district design standards, any standards that do exist are purely voluntary.
4. Maybe it's not historical that matters as much as quality architecture.
5. Need to protect and reinforce good architectural design, not just in older buildings but also in new construction.
6. Create setbacks in building height to create terrace level green space.

X. Administration of codes

1. There is a need for public education on these new forms of development and design aesthetics.
2. Attitude changes are necessary for different types of neighborhoods (development patterns).
3. Planning commission looks at some of design issues now. Planning Commission needs more control over specific design issues.
4. No design review for historic properties - currently only advisory. There needs to be more consideration here.
5. P&Z site plan review needs to allow options. One size fits all does not work very well.
6. Developers stick can stick to minimum standards and guidelines or we should allow site plan process with planning commission that can be approved with innovative ideas.
7. Good design does not have to cost a lot.
8. Current standards work okay when using the PD option.
9. PD's – final development plan regulations don't make sense for everything. A PUD is a more holistic regulation environment with more flexibility for design and ability to develop new rules rather than just use underlying district regulations.

10. Predictability vs. flexibility – is planning office geared for additional flexibility?
11. Problem with the city engineers and planning departments talking with each other. Engineering and planning talk different languages and send conflicting messages.
12. City should enforce regulations equally and follow regulations that apply to themselves (the city) too. “What regulations are forced on developer should be forced on the city too.”

XI. Survey Methodology

1. Existing development/ Old ordinance requirements – many of worst pictures would not be allowed with current ordinances
2. Many of the “best” pictures in VLS seemed to be more civic or public projects. There should be distinction between private and public.
3. Top images were green, but this is difficult to control much of the time because of weather. So, Is there a weather bias in this survey? This was quite a long discussion and has some merit. Perhaps, this means that green is important, but because we only have 6 months of green we should also determine what can make a difference in non-green months such as architecture style, colored or stamped concrete, non-deciduous trees or other landscaping, other ornamental or decorative features that add aesthetic values. The VLS should control for this “green bias” and look at what comes out of development issues instead.