



Planning Commission Meeting Minutes July 11, 2022

Call to Order: 6:37 pm

Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Eric Warnat, Commissioner
Monae Birkhofer, Commissioner
Cody Davis, Commission (stood in as Chair)
Jeff Wheatley, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Patricia Love, Community Development Director
Audrey Rotrock, Associate Planner
Tansy Schroeder, City Planner

Absent: Justin Burns, Commission Vice-Chair; Melissa Toner, Commissioner; Patrick Hosterman, Commission Chair

Also known to be present: Peter Kamb (online)

Public Requests and Comments:

None

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes from the June 13, 2022 Planning Commission meeting were approved.

New Business:

Twin City Mile Recommendation

In December of 2020 the City Council adopted the City Beautification Action Plan and directed staff to begin implementation of the 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Project list. The Beautification Plan consists of 6 key program elements:

- 72nd Avenue Gateway Signage and Landscaping
- Main Street Revitalization
- Downtown Gateway Features
- SR 532 Beautification
- Wayfinding Signage
- Public Art

The 2022 budget includes preliminary design and public outreach for the Main Street Revitalization project that has been branded as the Twin City Mile Project. Using policy guidance from the Beautification Plan, the City is initiated the Downtown Revitalization Project that invests in the downtown business district infrastructure by:

- Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Streets;
- Actively Engage Storefronts with Walkable Sidewalks;
- Encourage Use of Streets for Community Festivals;
- Create Usable Urban Park Spaces; and
- Promote the Concept of Buying Local.



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A Steering Committee was formed to help define the project vision, goals and project concepts. The 11-member committee consisted of Councilmembers, Downtown Business Owners, the Stanwood Camano Arts Advocacy Committee, and the Stanwood Chamber of Commerce. Consultants Scott Lankford of Lankford Associates, TranspoGroup, and KPG supported the design efforts.

The project reimagines how the City's main downtown commercial corridor, 271st and 270th Street, could look and function by connecting City Hall Park to the Train Station: The Twin City Mile. Project elements include constructing gateways, reconfiguring travel lanes and parking, building wider sidewalks and plaza areas, constructing park areas, and installing street trees, art, and other curb appeal amenities.

The Twin City Mile Steering Committee recommends moving forward with engineering designs focusing on the following important project features:

- General support for design elements
- Keep brick road element throughout downtown
- Keep downtown pedestrian friendly
- Seriously consider the one-way street on 271st option (East End) during preliminary design
- Vegetation/planting is needed to improve the look of downtown
- Two bookend parks are high priority to tie the whole downtown together
- *The City had the following marketing ideas: "Follow the Stanwood brick road!" or "From the brick road to the railroad" etc.*
- *Consider changing the name of 271st Street to something more descriptive of the Mainstreet / Twin City Mile improvement project*

The Planning Commissioners had the following comments:

- If sidewalks are widened to accommodate more pedestrians, request awnings to be added to buildings for rain protection.
- Consider allowing temporary closures of streets seasonally or per event and allow street vendors, performers, etc.
- Consider having requirements to incorporate the brick theme into facades of buildings/businesses across the entire Twin City Mile.
- Create a better bypass system for drivers to get around the Twin City Mile when traveling to the QFC area.
- Consider adding more signage to guide people to the City's public parking lots.
- Consider adding historical markers/placards as part of wayfinding.
- Make the Twin City Mile ADA accessible.

Peter Kamb, a member of the public, commented that he appreciates the effort the City has put in to this project. He also said that one benefit of creating a one-way street on the East end would be that traffic would be diverted north towards the train station and the City's public parking lot.

The Planning Commissioners support moving the Twin City Mile Recommendation forward to City Council.



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Proposed Storefront Improvement Program

Throughout the Twin City Mile Steering Committee meetings, the issue of city and private property maintenance along the corridor became a recurring theme. While it has been widely documented that investment in city infrastructure, especially in downtowns, spurs investment in private property, the Committee has concerns that many of the small businesses may not have the resources to make improvements to their property.

Storefront Improvement Programs are a common tool used throughout the United States to incentivize private property owners to make investments in their properties. Attached is a draft proposal for the Committee's consideration of how a Storefront Improvement Program could work in the City of Stanwood. The proposed program seeks to preserve and enhance the charm of the downtown commercial area by providing small grants to property owners to make physical improvements to their storefronts.

The Planning Commission unanimously supports moving the Proposed Storefront Improvement plan to Council and had the following comments on the program:

- The Commissioners support this program with parameters such as design standards to match existing brick theme/Main Street design, and a deadline of when improvements must be completed after receiving the grant.
- Consider hiring a management company to help guide the process and ideas and have oversight of the financial side of the program.
- Consider allowing adjacent businesses to partner up for the grant which could in turn reduce total construction costs.
- Consider a modification to the sign code for Main Street to require a cohesive look throughout.
- Consider a bonus amount for businesses that have been in business five or more years.
- Consider involving the Stanwood Chamber of Commerce.
- Consider creating a "Tool Kit" as an aid for people wanting to start a business.

Old Business:

Farmers Market Outreach Event

On Friday, June 24th, the first Farmers Market Outreach Event was held. The staff hosted booth focused on housing: specifically, attendees were asked what type of housing is needed in the future. 73 people stopped by the booth on June 24th and were asked to vote on the following questions:

1. What type of housing is needed in Stanwood – Townhouses, Triplexes/Fourplexes, or Multifamily Residential?
 - 44 voted for Townhouses
 - 31 voted for Triplexes/Fourplexes
 - 18 voted for Multifamily Residential
2. Would you support infill manufactured housing?
 - 31 voted Yes
 - 9 voted No
3. Do you support Accessory Dwelling Units?
 - 40 voted Yes
 - 7 voted No



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Other Comments:

Housing:

- Need more subsidized & Affordable housing
- Would not like to see any of these types of houses
- Does not want to participate in the poll because they have a house already
- Multifamily looks like Seattle = no
- Absolutely no to all
- No more apartments / We have enough MF
- Renter rights are important
- Cost of rent is too high
- Church Creek is charging for certain amenities
- Mixed used is good
- Section 8 housing accessibility is needed
- Property maintenance is needed
- Single family only
- Affordable housing land trust
- Maintenance is key!
- Make MF more affordable
- ADU displaced long term renters
- If More MF = Then they will leave Stanwood
- ADU's are too dense, too many cars in neighborhoods

Traffic:

- Traffic is terrible
- Possible roundabouts?
- Traffic issues and road issues, road to I5 needs widened

Permitting:

- Too difficult to develop sheds (10 years ago)
- Quality of materials/work, bad experience with permitting in the past
- Get permits through! Expedite!
- Transparency is key

Other:

- I feel I am not informed enough, not sure what we need in Stanwood
- Growth management act can be axed
- Higher density = higher crime and DV
- Quieter life in Stanwood (Came from Edmonds)

The Commissioners are excited to hear more results from future Farmer's Market outreach events and suggested a possible partnership with Housing Hope or Habitat for Humanity to address the Section 8 and subsidized housing need.

Miscellaneous Business:

No Planning Commission Meeting in August. See you in September

Recent Council Action on Commission Items:

Update on Kottsick Annexation

Council approved the Kottsick Annexation on June 9th.

Upcoming Items:

Proposals from Comprehensive Plan Consultants for review

Adjourn: 7:55 pm