

## Memorandum

**Date:** September 26, 2013

**To:** Michael Babbitt, Chair  
Members, West Linn Planning Commission

**From:** Chris Jordan, City Manager

**Subject:** Regulatory Streamlining Project

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On March 11, 2013, the West Linn City Council unanimously adopted a set of goals for this year, including:

*The City Council will modify codes and processes to remove regulatory and financial barriers and to incentivize positive community economic efforts.*

Since March, staff has been pursuing a set of regulatory changes that will accomplish this goal. The “Cut the Red Tape Project” is a first phase of a multi-phase project to fully implement the Council’s and community’s desire to create vibrant commercial areas that provide services and jobs for West Linn citizens.

Since this project was initiated, the City Council has discussed it in two work sessions and the Planning Commission has held more than 20 hours of work sessions and hearings. This has been a lengthy and deliberative process that has resulted in very thoughtful dialogue and ideas for the future of land use regulations in West Linn.

The staff and I have been listening to the concerns raised by the Planning Commission, including commissioners’ suggestions to divide the proposed amendments into smaller, discrete projects that may be more manageable for the Planning Commission, and I agree with this approach.

Over the past two weeks I have held several conversations with individual members of the City Council and with staff to determine how to divide the package into phases that:

- Allow for positive discourse on each proposal;
- Continue to implement the Council’s goal; and
- Allow the Planning Commission and Council to address each of the proposals in a timely fashion.

Please note that as we proceed with a modified approach to the “Cut the Red Tape” project, we will continue to work toward the next phase of this project which includes amending the Mixed Use District regulations and creating a new civic/institutional zoning district.

Based on my discussions with Councilors and staff, I have determined that the best way to move forward is to ask the Planning Commission to conclude its discussions on this first phase at its October 2, 2013 meeting, and to postpone making recommendations on certain proposals that staff will consider repackaging and deferring to a later date. The deferred proposals are:

- **Chapter 99.038 Neighborhood Contact Required.**
  - Staff will continue to solicit community input, and will consider re-submitting this section for Planning Commission review and a recommendation as soon as possible.
  
- **99.060 Approval Authority.**
  - Staff remains concerned that engaging citizens in public hearings on projects where the decision maker has very little or no discretion is inefficient and can cause considerable citizen frustration with the process; however, this component of the project seems to need further vetting and will be deferred to a later date.
  
- **60.070 Approval Standards and Conditions.**
  - The City's legal staff continues to raise concerns about the current criteria and strongly urge that it be modified. Staff will continue to review this language and will likely make further suggestions at a later date.
  
- **55.100(B) Relationship to the Natural and Physical Environment**
  - Both the staff and the Planning Commission agree on the goal of maintaining the community's tree canopy, we are still attempting identify the optimum method for protecting/mitigating the canopy during and after development. A sensible approach would seem to be to include this as part of the discussion of environmentally constrained lands in the infill/planned unit development amendments that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission during the next couple of months.

In addition, staff will modify the following proposal:

- **21.060 Permitted Uses.**
  - Staff agrees with the Planning Commission that "...lodge, fraternal, community center and civic assembly..." may not be appropriate permitted uses in all GC zoned areas. However, we would like the Planning Commission to consider amending the code to allow these to be permitted uses in GC zones other than the Willamette district.

I know that both the staff and the City Council have found this process educational, and I know that the Planning Commission will forward a well-informed recommendation to the City Council for final consideration.

As always, we greatly appreciate your volunteerism and commitment to West Linn.