

**CITY OF WEST LINN  
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING  
SCHEDULED HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2008**

**FILE NO.:            PLN-07-05**

**REQUEST:            SUNSET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

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**City of West Linn  
PLANNING & BUILDING DEPT.  
STAFF REPORT**

TO: West Linn Planning Commission (October 1, 2008 meeting)

FROM: West Linn Planning Staff (Chris Kerr, Senior Planner)

DATE: September 16, 2008

FILE NO.: PLN-07-05

SUBJECT: Sunset Neighborhood Plan

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Planning Director's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed Sunset Neighborhood Plan ("Plan") identifies the shared vision of the Sunset neighborhood and expresses the goals, policies and action measures to achieve that vision. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the livability of the Sunset neighborhood. The Plan is to be adopted as a part of the West Linn Comprehensive Plan, and will address the more immediate needs and concerns of the residents of the Sunset neighborhood. The City of West Linn has already adopted six (6) other Neighborhood Plans into the Comprehensive Plan. Under the guidance of a Steering Committee consisting of Sunset residents, and with the assistance of a professional consultant, a detailed citizen participation process was utilized that resulted in this Plan. This Plan will improve communication at the neighborhood level and between residents and City officials. The Plan has received overwhelming support from the residents and the Sunset Neighborhood Association.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds that the proposed Plan is in conformance with all applicable decision making criteria of the City's CDC and is consistent with the general policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan and; therefore, recommends that the Sunset Neighborhood Plan be adopted as proposed.

## **APPROVAL CRITERIA:**

Community Development Code (CDC,) Chapter 98 provides administrative procedures for legislative amendments (such as this one). Section 98.100 lists the factors upon which a decision shall be based:

1. The Statewide Planning Goals and rules adopted under ORS Chapter 197 and other applicable state statutes;
2. Any federal or state statutes or rules found applicable;
3. Applicable plans and rules adopted by the Metropolitan Service District;
4. The applicable Comprehensive Plan policies and map; and,
5. The applicable provisions of implementing ordinances.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:** Public notice of this Plan amendment was printed in the West Linn Tidings on September 18, 2008. In accordance with state statutes, notice was also provided to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and Metro. All legal notice requirements have been satisfied.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Preparation of the plan was conducted with extensive public input (described in greater detail in the Citizen Involvement Section of this Report). No additional comments have been received by the City as of the date of this Report.

**120-DAY RULE:** Not applicable to this legislative action.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the request of the Sunset Neighborhood Association (“Association”), in the fall of 2007, pursuant to the specific goals and policies within the West Linn Comprehensive Plan, the City Council directed the Planning Department to assist with the preparation of a neighborhood plan for the Sunset neighborhood. The Council instructed Staff to proceed with contracting with a professional consultant to assist the neighborhood in the preparation of a Neighborhood Plan for the community. To oversee the drafting of the Plan for the neighborhood, the Association assigned seven (7) volunteers from various geographical areas of the neighborhood to act as a subcommittee, the Sunset Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee (“SNPSC”). The SNPSC was tasked with the detailed preparation of the Plan. In December of 2007, Staff and the SNPSC reviewed the three (3) proposals received by professional consultants to complete the task. After careful deliberation, a clear consensus was reached by the SNPSC to utilize the firm of Cogan Owens Cogan to work with the subcommittee with the Plan.

The SNPSC, led by the consultant and with technical assistance from the City Staff, held seven public meetings on topics that included:

- *Background/profile of the Sunset neighborhood*
- *SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threats) analysis*
- *Questionnaire methods*
- *Citizen involvement/public outreach efforts*
- *Defining the Vision*
- *Establishing Goals*
- *Neighborhood Plan layout*
- *Review neighborhood feedback*
- *Revisions to the Plan*

## **CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

Preparation of the Sunset Neighborhood Plan was a ‘bottom-up’ process centered on involving the neighborhood residents at every phase. In total, there were three separate mailings on the project that went to each household in the Sunset neighborhood (approximately 950 households per mailing). City Staff completed all mailings. Overall, ten (10) different meetings were held on various components of the Plan, each of which were well advertised and all were open to the public.

The SNPSC started the process by creating and sending a 4” X 6” ‘postcard’ to each household in the neighborhood. The purpose of the postcard was to introduce the project to the residents. It included information announcing the process, seeking volunteers, and providing the schedule and locations for future meetings, and included City contact information for those with questions or comments. In March of this year, the SNPSC prepared a questionnaire that was mailed to every Sunset household with a return envelope addressed to the City encouraging their feedback. The consultant added an online version of the questionnaire to the City’s website that permitted paperless responses as well via the Internet. The questionnaire included both open-ended questions (*What do you value most in your neighborhood?*) as well as suggested policies that they could rank as important or unimportant to them. In July of this year, another mailing was sent to each household that included a draft of the Vision, Goals, Policies and Actions that had been prepared. This mailing included a separate comment page for residents to provide their written responses and suggestions.

The SNPSC held seven meetings, and there were two additional public ‘open houses’ held concurrently with the SNA’s regular meetings to review the proposed Vision and each of the proposed Goals, Policies and Actions in the Plan. These include ‘breakout’ sessions with individual discussions with residents about all aspects of the Plan. All of the meetings were advertised not just in the three mailings, but in also in the newspaper, on the City’s website, and in separate inserts in the City newsletter. The SNPSC took the additional steps to deliver information door to door, at their neighborhood fair, and at separate public locations (e.g. Sunset Market). The SNPSC’s focus on encouraging public input throughout the process, via the initial postcard and expending ‘shoe leather’, resulted in extraordinary responses from the community. Over 200 survey responses (over 20% of all households) were returned to the City and over 60 people attended the public meetings.

Based on the feedback received and the discussions with neighbors at the meetings, the SNPSC ultimately made their final revisions to the Plan in August of this year. Finally, at their regularly scheduled October 1, 2008 meeting, the Sunset Neighborhood Association voted to recommend that the City Council adopt the Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

## **SUMMARY OF PLAN**

Similar to the other neighborhood plans that have been adopted, the Plan is organized into five (5) sections, each generally summarized below:

### *I. Introduction*

The Introduction states the purpose of the Plan, the process was utilized for its completion, a definition of some of the terms used, the Plan's relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is intended to create a 'sense of place' by identifying and developing neighborhood assets. It serves to educate the City and neighborhood residents about specific issues of importance in Sunset. The Sunset Neighborhood Plan is intended to address more immediate needs and concerns than the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The Goals found in the Plan are statements that indicate a desired result or aspiration. Future actions by the City Council must be consistent with Goals stated in this neighborhood plan. Policies are statements that achieve the desired goal. Their intent is to guide future decisions made by the City. They are not however, the only way to accomplish a goal. The Action Items are recommended projects, standards, or specific courses of action the City and the neighborhood association can utilize to achieve a policy. These are suggestions to decisions makers and their completion is dependent on City-wide priorities, finances, staff availability, etc.

### *II. Neighborhood Profile*

The Sunset neighborhood is approximately 50 acres in area and has a population of approximately 2500 people. The community is principally single-family residential (802 houses), but does include a variety of housing types, including 211 multi-family units. The most identifiable features of the neighborhood are the Camassia Natural Area and Wilderness Park. Other significant features of the neighborhood include the Sunset Primary School, Sun Garden Montessori (private) and the West Linn Paper Company. The only formal commercial activity is the small retail store "Sunset Market" located on Cornwall Street. However, as is common in the rest of West Linn, there are a significant number of home-based businesses in Sunset.

In terms of transportation, I-205 effectively separates the community from the waterfront; Cornwall Street and Parker Road are both classified as arterials. Sidewalks and bike lanes are not prominent and there are no bus stops in this neighborhood.

### *III. Neighborhood Vision (page 13 of the Plan)*

The Sunset Vision statement was crafted by the SNPSC and represents the community's most important assets and values clearly and concisely:

*"The Sunset Neighborhood is a safe, welcoming and family-friendly community. Sunset residents take pride in their neighborhood's*

*diversity, natural beauty, access to open space and residential charm. We seek to preserve, enhance and celebrate the neighborhood's character as it is enjoyed today."*

#### *IV. Goals, Policies and Actions (beginning on page 14)*

Goal #1 of the Plan seeks to maintain the existing character of the neighborhood. As is the case in other neighborhoods, the Sunset resident's indicated concern that newer housing was not being designed consistent with the existing community. They also included Policies and Actions that would preserve the existing housing stock and a variety of housing types. Include as a possible Action is the mapping of historic homes and the feasibility of an historic overlay district. Additionally, the need to educate any residents that are violating nuisance codes, and stricter enforcement by the City when necessary, is also included under this Goal.

Goal #2 seeks to ensure that the Sunset Primary School is a defining asset in the neighborhood. When this Plan was being developed in the spring of 2008, the School District was contemplating, as part of a bond measure, relocation of the Sunset Primary School from its current location. (Since that time, the School District has removed this specific element from the proposed bond measure. However, the District has clearly indicated that, for financial reasons, it would prefer to discontinue use of the Sunset Primary School at its current location.) Owing to resident's strong identification of the School as an integral part of the community, several Policies and Actions are included in the Plan that seek to ensure that the District, City and neighborhood communicate effectively and work collaboratively to resolve any relocation issues in the future. Also included are suggested methods to redesign the existing property to make it more amenable to the District.

Goal #3 states that the Plan must ensure the natural and scenic environment of the neighborhood is maintained and preserved. Policies are included related to mapping the existing tree canopy and providing additional tree plantings in right-of-ways. The resident's also included Policies to connect pedestrian paths, provide additional signage to identify parks and historic landmarks.

Goal #4 seeks to ensure that pedestrians, cars and bicycles can move safely and efficiently. The neighborhood's lack of continuous sidewalks or paths was a common concern of residents. There was also significant concern about the existing, and future exacerbation, of cut-through traffic seeking to utilize Sunset Avenue. The Plan includes several Policies and Actions that specify repairing roads, decreasing traffic in the neighborhood, and exploring limited bus services in the community.

Goal #5 states the desire to maintain the family-friendly and safe aspects of the neighborhood. The Policies and actions seek to encourage community activities, utilizing neighborhood watches and promoting events that bring neighbors in close contact with each other. There are also Actions that request the consideration of Sunset Neighborhood street sign "add-ons" or permanent signs at entryways into the community.

Goal #6 is to develop a plan for the future of Sunset's Willamette River waterfront. The Willamette River waterfront was identified as an underutilized property by the residents and the Plan includes Actions to develop a long-term vision for the area.

## *V. Action Plan*

The Action Plan Section restates each of the Goals, Policies and Actions and includes general timeframe for each as well as the parties responsible for completing the action.

### **APPROVAL CRITERIA**

This section of the report addresses the required contents pursuant to Section 98.040(A)(2)(b) of the Community Development Code. The required subheadings appear in enlarged bold type.

#### **1. The facts found relevant to the proposal and found by the Director to be to be true:**

The Sunset Neighborhood Plan will serve to protect and enhance the livability of the Sunset neighborhood. The Plan will be a subset of the West Linn Comprehensive Plan, and will address the more immediate needs and concerns of the residents of the Sunset neighborhood. The Plan will improve communication at the neighborhood level and between residents and City officials. It was completed using a variety of citizen involvement methods and is supported by the Sunset Neighborhood Association. The Plan is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as all State and regional requirements.

#### **2. The Statewide Planning Goals adopted under ORS Chapter 197 found to be applicable and the reasons why any other goal and rule is not applicable to the proposal:**

The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan establishes the Goals and Policies that further the Statewide Planning Goals. Staff finds that the proposed Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. As such, the proposed Plan will be consistent with the Statewide Planning Goals.

#### **3. Any federal or state statutes found applicable:**

None

#### **4. The Metropolitan Service District plans and rules found to be applicable:**

Metro's Functional Plan includes requirements for compliance with various policies and strategies, including such various matters as drainageway protection, parking standards, provision of accessory dwelling units, etc. The proposed Neighborhood Plan is consistent with the Metro Functional Plan.

#### **5. Those portions of the Comprehensive Plan found to be applicable, and if any portion of the plan appears to be reasonably related to the proposals and not applied, the reasons why such portions are not applicable:**

Goal 1: Citizen Involvement requires that citizens be provided significant input into all plans to be adopted. Policy #6 states that the City shall "encourage neighborhood associations to create

neighborhood plans.” In addition to satisfying this specific Policy, Staff finds that the Citizen Involvement Program utilized for this project satisfies the requirements of Goal 1.

Goal 2: Land Use Planning. The proposed Neighborhood Plan furthers the Goals and Policies as they relate to diversity of housing, protection of existing neighborhoods, planning for the future of the riverfront and creating compatible infill housing.

Goal 5: Natural Resources, Open Spaces, etc. includes goals to preserve historic resources, enhance scenic views, preserve permanent natural areas for fish and wildlife habitat, protect sensitive environmental features, and preserve trees wherever possible. The Plan reinforces elements of this goal. Particular attention is paid to the importance of, and need to preserve, parks, open spaces, and natural corridors.

Goal 8: Parks and Recreation. The Plan addresses these issues in detail under the discussions related to improving signage and access to parks and natural areas.

Goal 10: Housing, includes as a goal “*Preserve the character and identity of established neighborhoods.*” Many of the policies and goals of the Sunset Neighborhood Plan address preserving the present character of the neighborhood. The proposed Neighborhood Plan also discusses the affordable and diverse housing stock in the neighborhood and the need to preserve that stock.

Goal 11: Public Facilities and Services, requires West Linn to plan for and provide adequate utility service and other public services (transportation, storm drainage, sewer and water service) to city neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Plan includes several policies related to traffic safety, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and public transportation.

Goal 12: Transportation. The Plan includes Goals, Policies, and Action items that the transportation system be safe and efficient. It also includes a discussion of alternative modes of transportation.

**6. Those portions of the implementing ordinances relevant to the proposal; and if provisions are not considered, the reasons why such portions of the ordinances were not considered:**

None.

**7. An analysis relating the facts found to be true by the Director to the applicable criteria and a statement of the alternatives:**

The Sunset Neighborhood Plan is in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and City of West Linn requirements. The Plan will more fully implement the goals and policies of the West Linn Comprehensive Plan, and will also provide the City with a framework and list of priorities for resolving ongoing problems and issues within the neighborhood.