GENERAL COMMERCIAL LAND USE - CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS

The purpose of the study session is continued discussion of draft implementation standards for the General Commercial Land Use designation.

Community Development Director Witkowski outlined a Revised Working Draft of General Commercial Standards which was distributed at the meeting. This draft is different than the 4-25-07 draft Council referred to staff at the April 30, 2007 meeting and incorporates changes made by City staff. Also available to Council are the City’s current Design Review Standards as well as a summary of the steps taken by the City in the process to support a stronger downtown Ellensburg. Director Witkowski outlined the major changes in this draft as follows:

> Regional retail commercial uses are shown in a new definition which would be inserted in the main definition section of the zoning ordinance and apply to both T-C and C-H zones.

> Regional retail commercial uses are listed as permitted uses with conditions; the long list of uses that applied only to regional retail commercial use was eliminated.

> Site planning criteria shown in the Lamb submittal (13.22.220) has been reworded and inserted as part of the new design review criteria in the City’s Design Standards for regional retail commercial development.

> Site Plan Procedures shown in the Lamb submittal (13.22.240) have been re-worded to better reflect some of the existing ordinances that apply to all development and environmental review in the City.

> The design standards included in the Lamb submittal have been included in a new design standard category for “regional retail commercial uses”. Where the submittal language addresses the same feature of design with several different entities, those entities are bolded and given the same letter/number designation so that Council can decide if both should remain or be edited.
Six additional issues for Council consideration include:

> Limitation on amount of regional retail commercial development allowed in the City. Staff recommends an upper limitation of 1,000,000 square feet of regional retail commercial development based on the testimony and materials presented at the April 30 meeting and economic data cited as part of the City’s comprehensive planning effort. This upper limitation is expressed as building square footage, not acreage; all regional retail commercial developments approved by Council in either the T-C or C-H zones would count towards that limitation.

> Staff suggests creation of a development agreement for phases.

> Body assigned to conduct and act upon site and architectural plans. Currently the Landmarks and Design Commission is charged with all design review responsibilities. The revised draft includes that function as a City Council responsibility with a partial recommendation from the Landmarks and Design Commission.

> Regional retail commercial definition. The definition in the revised draft defines regional retail commercial land use as a basic consumer retail land use. No specific qualifiers or exceptions are made to the definition of "retail." Limitations and qualifiers to regional retail commercial uses are contained in the conditions in the permitted use section.

> Transferability to C-H zone. The language used for regional retail commercial uses in the T-C zone will be included in the C-H zone in the final ordinance.

> Landscaping amount and requirements. Current Code requires a minimum of 5% of the lot area to be landscaped in the T-C zone; other zones require a minimum of 15%. Additionally, the Lamb submittal establishes a permanent irrigation system as optional; current Code requires a permanent irrigation system as part of project design and improvements.

Council questioned staff concerning the need for two Council reviews. Council will need to decide whether to include a development agreement document as part of the current standards. Staff has not prepared such an agreement at this time. Council needs to review and decide what level of detail it wants in the standards. "Notice of complete application" versus vesting was discussed along with maximum parking requirements and minimum store sizes. The possibility of a new regional retail rezone process was discussed.

Council listened to public comment from the audience.

Steve Merwick, President of Western Cities Development, Inc., 1570600 Fifth Avenue N.E., Bothell. Mr. Merwick distributed copies of his presentation. He reviewed the amount of acreage designated General Commercial at both the West and South Interchanges. He stated even though the City has 437 acres designated general commercial not all of it will develop that way based on wetlands, creeks, high water table, etc. Some property will go away due to attrition. There may only be about
100 acres available without annexing in more land. Council may not have enough land designated in the Comprehensive Plan for commercial development.

Randy Lamb, 4815 Road 6.5 Northeast, Moses Lake submitted the Lamb Family’s written response to staff’s April 30, 2007 recommendations for dimensional and descriptive standards for implementing general commercial land uses. This response is consistent with the proposed revisions to the T-C zone approved by Council at the April 30 meeting to use as the basis for discussion. These responses are the regulations and standards that will encourage and work to bring this kind of business development to Ellensburg. Major points in the response are: 1) regional commercial use must be added to the list of permitted uses in the City’s T-C zone so landowners can rely on it; 2) a new site plan review process and vesting provisions should be added to give certainty, help attract investment and ensure good planning; 3) site plan and design review standards must be flexible to accommodate retailers and other businesses who will be attracted to Ellensburg. The City standards must allow businesses to operate under their proven business models. If the restrictive design standards proposed by staff requiring minimum size limits, parking locations, number of entrances, etc are approved there will be no new regional commercial development in Ellensburg.

Gary Jones, 3420 S. Thorp Highway, Ellensburg Downtown Association President, read from a prepared statement and followed up on Director Bishop's comments from the April 30, 2007 meeting. The EDA wants a definition for regional retail with a test for regional draw. The downtown core is playing catch up and needs the City's help to set the stage for a level playing field with a user friendly and helpful process. Current codes and restrictions make it difficult to provide for restoration and adaptive reuse of downtown structures as opposed to new construction.

Council briefly discussed landscaping requirement percentages and mitigation measures for entities that cannot meet the requirements. Irrigation systems, development agreements for phasing and opportunities for other kinds of uses in the General Commercial zone were also discussed.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Barry

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: ___________________________________
City Clerk