



# City of Stevenson

## Planning Department

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**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Ben Shumaker  
**DATE:** March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Road Diet & Functional Classifications

### Introduction

This memo presents a proposed reduction in road width standards (**Road Diet**) as reviewed by the City Planning Commission. The road width reduction is based on the results of the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 joint meeting between the City Council and Planning Commission, where it was recommended as a way to lower the development costs for land divisions. The amendments proposed in this memo do not include changes based on a citizen request to increase the number of lots allowed to be served by shared driveways, however they do include some changes to the private street requirements to ensure clarity and consistency within the City's development review process.

### Background Rationale: Tools to Guide and Support Residential Growth

The joint meeting between the City Council and Planning Commission considered 8 different tools available to the City and/or developers that influence how infrastructure relates to residential growth. In a workshop setting, 2 breakout groups applied each of these tools to a specific scenario to evaluate how they impact the development's return on investment. After the breakout sessions, the full group reassembled to discuss findings and preferences.

	Base	IOU	Out of the Sewer	Money from Heaven	Road Diet	Shrink Ray	Gamble	Wild Card	Scales of Justice
<b>Revenue</b>	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000	\$1,200,000	\$2,400,000	\$2,700,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,840,000	\$2,400,000	\$2,800,000
<b>Expenses</b>	(\$2,031,750)	(\$677,250)	(\$788,792)	(\$1,015,875)	(\$1,710,333)	(\$2,031,750)	(\$2,031,750)	(\$1,015,875)	(\$2,031,750)
<b>Return on Investment</b>	18%	254%	52%	77%	58%	48%	89%	136%	38%
<b>Period</b>	6 Years	8 Years	3 Years	6 Years	7 Years	8 Years	15 Years	24 Years	7 Years
<b>Annual Return</b>	3%	32%	17%	13%	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%

IOU = Local Improvement District

Money from Heaven = Grant Funded Improvements

Shrink Ray = Lowering Minimum Lot Size

Wild Card = Uncoordinated Tax Funding Strategy

Out of the Sewer = Development on Septic Systems

Road Diet = Reducing Road Width and Improvement Standards

Gamble = Latecomers' Agreements

Scales of Justice = Planned Unit Developments

Recommended Strategy at Joint Meeting

Included by Planning Commission

The "Scales of Justice" concept was the most preferred tool at that meeting and codified into law as part of a Zoning Code update in June 2017 related the Planned Unit Developments. At the same time, the "Shrink Ray" concept was included within the higher density R2 and R3 Zoning Districts.

By lowering the cost of entry, "Road Diet" also received support at this meeting. While the Public Works Department had been tasked with reevaluating and reducing road requirements in the *Stevenson Engineering Standards*, that responsibility was transferred to the Planning Department in July, 2017 along with a discussion of

private road standards. In March 2018, anticipating a comprehensive transportation plan, the Planning Commission chose to hold off on the Road Diet as a single issue undertaking that would be better addressed within the context of the wider plan. Because the downtown plan has taken priority over the comprehensive transportation plan, the Road Diet is again being considered.

### **Guiding Policies**

The 2013 Stevenson Comprehensive Plan provides numerous objectives and tactics that support and guide the decisions the City Council is asked to make:

- 2.1 Protect the natural and scenic qualities of the area by regulating land use and carefully managing urban change.
- 2.2 Establish a vegetation conservation and management plan and program for all areas of the city. The program should provide for the replacement, planting, preservation, and maintenance of trees and native vegetation.
- 2.3-4 Establish design standards for land divisions requiring new plantings when trees and/or native vegetation are removed.
- 2.13 Establish standards for urban development that encourage mixtures of land uses and intensities.
  - 2.13-1 Consider establishing incentives and/or special standards for infill projects.
- 2.14 Ensure development review processes are prompt, predictable, open, and uncomplicated.
- 3.1 Periodically review and revise land development regulations for residential areas to accommodate changing social and economic needs of residents.
- 3.2 Encourage a range of residential land uses, housing sizes, types, and price ranges and establish appropriate development criteria.
  - 3.2-2 Ensure adequate and buildable areas for multi-family housing development.
- 3.6 Review and carefully consider the immediate and long term effects of fees, charges, regulations, and standards on dwelling costs.
- 3.8 Review all development proposals for compatibility with surrounding established residential areas. Policies related to land use, transportation, public facilities, and utilities should seek to maintain and enhance the quality of these areas.
- 7.2 Establish and manage the transportation system in a manner which contributes to community appearance and livability, recognizes and respects the characteristics of natural features, and minimizes the effects on abutting land uses.
- 7.3 Develop a transportation system that provides all citizens with transportation choices and alternatives.
- 7.4 Develop a plan for safe and convenient alternate forms of transportation, such as bikeways, walkways, and pathways.
  - 7.4-1 Consider separating pedestrian, bicycle, and auto traffic.
- 7.5 Periodically review and revise standards for public and private roads.
- 7.7 Establish a tree conservation and management program for City rights-of-way. This program should provide for the replacement, planting, preservation and maintenance of trees.
- 7.11 Manage on-street parking to permit the safe and efficient operation of the transportation system.
- 8.7 Provide adequate easement and right-of-way widths for public and private utilities and emergency and other services.
- 8.8 Base the provision of future public facilities and utilities upon financial cost and adequacy of desired levels of service.

Some clear directions emerge from these objectives:

- A. This effort is anticipated and supported.
- B. Cost is a concern when public roads are provided, especially as it relates to the cost of housing.
- C. Accommodating pedestrians is important.
- D. Community appearance, street trees, and open spaces are priorities during land development.

### **Road Diet – Proposed Change vs. Current Standard**

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Planning Commission reviewed information on the Road Diet with City Planning and Public Works staff and recommended width standards for Local streets as included in the Exhibit Attachment 1. These proposals were based on a comparison of the existing width standards required by the cities of Stevenson, Camas, Hood River, Ridgefield, and Washougal. These communities were selected based on their proximity to Stevenson, and the ease by which staff could locate the standards on the communities' websites. For example, Bingen, Cascade Locks, Sun River, and White Salmon are not represented here because of staff's inability to locate the information.

The Planning Commission also reviewed photographs and cross sections of selected "Local Streets" in Stevenson. This assessment includes 15 street segments from 12 individual streets. In collecting information on the selected streets, no effort was made to ensure that these segments were statistically representative of all Local Access roads. Instead, the primary guiding factor was to provide information related to differing eras of development representing differing community desires and the lack/presence of standards.

Additionally, Planning staff worked with the Public Works Director and field crew to identify what works and doesn't work about the existing street network and to right-size the requirements of the Standards. The Table below relates the Planning Commission recommendation to all other information considered. This table is organized from widest to narrowest with the Planning Commission recommendation shown in bold.

	<b>Paved Width (excluding sidewalks)</b>	<b># of Travel Lanes</b>	<b># of Parking Lanes</b>	<b># of Sidewalks</b>	<b>Width of Sidewalks</b>	<b>Planter Strip Width</b>	<b>Total Right- of-Way Width</b>
Stevenson – Bulldog Drive	41.5"	2	2	1	5.5'	-	50'
<b>Stevenson – Existing Standard</b>	38"	2	2	2	6'	-	60'
Camas	36'	2	2 (J)	2	5'	5' or 7'	60'
Public Works – Director Feedback*	38'	2	2	2	5'	variable	50'
Public Works – Crew Feedback	36'	2	2	???	5'	0'	???
Washougal	35'	2	2	2	5'	3'	52'
Planning – 2018 Proposal	34"	1 (S)	2	1	6'	2'	45'
Planning – 2019 Proposal A*	32'	1 (S)	2 (J)	1	6'	0'	45'
<b>Stevenson – Average Sampled</b>	29.03"	2	1	0	6'	0	45.67'
<b>Stevenson – Planning Commission Recommendation</b>	<b>28'*</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6'*</b>	<b>See below</b>	<b>50'</b>
Hood River*	28'	1 (S)	2 (J)	2	5'	0'	50'
Ridgefield	28'	2	1	2	5'	5'	48'
Stevenson – Middle Roosevelt Street	16'	1		0		-	35'

\*Width reductions possible under specifically identified circumstances.

### **Cost Considerations**

While costs have likely changed in the interim, a cost breakdown used during the December 2016 estimates the City's per square foot cost of re-paving streets at \$6.88. Based on this estimate, the Road Diet is expected to reduce the City's 2016 cost by ~\$34,400 per block repaved (\$6.88 X 10' width reduction X 500' block length). Additional cost savings are anticipated at the time of development for mobilization, clearing & grubbing, road base, etc.

### **Additional Considerations – Local Street Planter Strips**

Planter strips (curb-sidewalk separation) are currently required along Local Streets. Such strips can a) provide aesthetic enhancements (green space and street trees) within the streetscape, b) allow for road width expansion without disturbing the adjacent sidewalk, c) provide an area onto which snow may be plowed, and d) serve as stormwater control areas. However, these strips a) are generally discouraged due to the community's lack of vegetation maintenance and b) though they are required, they do not have a required width associated with them. The Planning Commission briefly touched on this issue, but because of its interaction with so many other needs, there was no clear direction on how to deal with this requirement.

**Decision Point-** City Council input is sought on this issue. Staff recommends either

- Removing the planter strip requirement for Local Streets in Table 2.03A,
- Establishing a width standard (minimum of 6' is recommended when street trees are anticipated) as part of this amendment,  
OR
- Retaining the requirement and dealing with the issue at a later date and/or on a case-by-case basis.

In any case, this decision would require a change to the attached proposal which calls out the issue in bold with question marks.

**Additional Considerations – Optional Additional Reductions**

The Planning Commission was supportive of the concept of allowing additional reductions on case-by-case bases and permitted staff to draft the enabling language for the reductions. Notes 2 and 3 represent staff's proposal, which would allow the following 2 types of reductions 1) 8' paved width where parking lanes are not necessary and 2) 5' right-of-way width where adequate public utility easements are provided (adequate is not defined). Three entities would have to approve of each reduction.

**Additional Considerations – Private Street Notice**

Public Works staff has identified an inconsistency between the Standards and the Short Plat Code, and is recommending aligning the notice requirements by adopting the language of the Short Plat Code. This proposal was not reviewed by the Planning Commission but is included for Council approval in Attachment 1.

**Additional Considerations – Private Street Sidewalks & Planter Strips**

The Standards address the requirements for private streets by applying the requirements for public streets and allowing for several specific exceptions. Sidewalks and Planter Strips are not listed among those exceptions, and it is unclear whether the Standards require them. Public Works staff has interpreted the standards as if these features are not required for Private Streets. To clarify this issue, the proposal includes Private Streets in Table 2.03A and allows the City to regulate their width directly instead of by reference to the public street requirements.

**Decision Point-** City Council input is sought on this issue. Staff recommends City Council verify Public Works staff's current implementation of these standards by specifically stating no sidewalks and no planter strips are required for Private Streets. This would also require a change to the proposal as-drafted which calls out this issue in bold with question marks.

**Discussion and Decisions**

After addressing the Decision Points above, Ordinance 2019-1142 may be adopted by the City Council and the conclusion of the (unexpectedly long) Road Diet process can be celebrated (...five days after publication).

Prepared by,

Ben Shumaker

Attachments

1. Draft Ordinance 2019-1142, including Exhibit A (4 pages)