

City of Stevenson

Planning Department

(509)427-5970

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Stevenson, Washington 98648

TO: Individuals Interested in the Stevenson Planning Commission

FROM: Jenny Taylor, Mayor

SUBJECT: Statement of Interest

Thank You for Your Interest!

Please take a brief moment to fill in the forms on this sheet. This will give us an idea of who you are and how you will be able to help contribute to our Planning Commission.

Name: Brian Riffel **Email Address:**

Address: Stevenson, WA 98648

Preferred Phone: **Alternate Phone:** N/A

Availability:

Are you able to attend meetings on the 2nd Monday of every month at 6:00pm? * **Yes** No

Residency/Citizenship:

Are you a resident of Stevenson? * **Yes** --No

Are you a citizen of the United States? * **Yes** --No

Your Age: --25 or younger --26-35 --36-45 --46-55 * **56-65** --66 or older

Areas of Interest

Please place a mark next to the topics that interest you (please limit your response to three (3) topics):

- | | |
|---|---|
| Land Use (Subdivision/Zoning Controls) | * Housing |
| Capital Facilities (Water/Sewer/Stormwater) | * Transportation (Auto/Bike/Pedestrian/Parking) |
| * Economic Development (Industry/Tourism) | Parks, Recreation, & Open Space |
| Scenery & Aesthetics (Signage/Architecture) | Environment & Sustainability |
| Other (please specify): | |

Background/ Statement of Interest

Please use the space below to provide us with a brief statement about yourself and why you want to be involved with the Planning Commission (attach additional sheets as necessary):

My wife, Hilary, and I built a home in Stevenson and moved in March 2020. After 25 years in the Grant Park/Hollywood neighborhood of Portland, we were attracted to the natural beauty of the Columbia River Gorge.

After making the decision to move, we also made a commitment to be part of the community and look for ways to contribute; I see the Planning Commission as a good fit for some of my interests and experience. One of my formative career experiences was being part of the founding Board of the Northeast Community Center, a nonprofit organization formed by a small group of us in response to the YMCA closing its Hollywood Branch. While not necessarily "fun", I would characterize those four years as empowering; being

part of small group making a difference in the community inspired me to transition my career from CPA to nonprofit management. After nearly a decade with a Portland nonprofit as Fiscal and Deputy Director, I had an opportunity to transition to *philanthropy*, which is the work I have been doing for the past 13 years. Given my career progression, I tend to view issues through both a fiscal and community benefit lens; that is the perspective I would bring to the Planning Commission.

As for my specific areas of interest, I do a lot of walking around Stevenson, averaging 25-30 miles/week, so I have a selfish interest in making Stevenson more pedestrian friendly; however, I also believe that a good sidewalk system contributes to property values, livability, and the overall health and safety of the community. When more people are out walking for purpose or pleasure, there are opportunities to meet and talk with each other, keep eyes and ears on neighbors, and improve one's own health.

While walking, I see many vacant homes and commercial spaces around town; at the same time, we have a lack of affordable housing and a downtown core that would benefit if these empty spaces could be filled with small businesses &/or amenities. I have a strong interest in exploring potential public policy options to create incentives and/or force utilization of these vacant properties to address some of our affordable housing and economic development challenges. Stevenson is a small, under resourced community; we can't afford to have community assets sitting dormant.

I hope to have the opportunity to discuss this position in person. Thank you for your consideration.