

REQUEST FOR PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

Meeting Date: January 15, 2025

Subject: Design District Land Use Analysis

Attachments: None

Presented by: Andrew Hattori, CED Director

Approved For Agenda By: Andrew Hattori, CED Director

Background:

The design district detailed in Toppenish Municipal Code (TMC) 17.26 has been a topic of discussion at many of the most recent planning commission meetings. The design district detailed construction and site design standards which must be adhered to and approved by the planning commission before development may begin. However, it has been documented that the requirements for the design district have not been adequately adhered to and has resulted in a mixture of properties that do and do not conform with TMC 17.26.

Due to the standards contained within TMC 17.26 staff and planning commission have conducted discussions about the impact and necessity of the design district in its current boundaries and whether the design district is able to accomplish its purpose with current development as it exists today. In prior discussions it has been noted that to successfully implement a themed design district, strict and accurate review/enforcement of development proposals must be done consistently. Examples of cities that have successful themed design districts include Leavenworth, Poulsbo, Winthrop, etc. A glance at the development of these cities shows little to no deviation to theming within core areas. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for Toppenish, many properties are out of conformance with the requirements of our design district.

Analysis:

At the November 21, 2024 planning commission meeting staff detailed that next steps included a full land use analysis of the properties within the design district and a survey/interviews with affected business owners. While the land use analysis was completed the discussions with business owners was not completed. This was due to a number of factors including the holidays, underestimation of time constraints due to the land use analysis, and a desire to conduct a hearing for a property within the design district. If, after the hearing and land use analysis discussion, planning commission desires the survey/interviews with local business owners then staff will continue to move forward with that direction.

The design district contains approximately 575 individual properties totaling roughly 196.5 acres of land. The design district holds all zoning districts allowed within Title 17 aside from the "Planned Development" district. While the results showed that the majority of the properties were within the B1 and B2 business districts, residential land use within the B1 and B2 zoning district was very apparent.

Zoning	Acreage	% of Design District
R1 Residential	23.97	12.2
R2 Residential	2.71	1.38
B1 Local Business	49.04	24.95
B2 General Business	74.32	37.82
B3 Professional Office	2.56	1.30
M1 Light Industrial	11.1	5.65
M2 Heavy Industrial	10.56	5.37
SP Public Semi-Public	22.25	11.32

Table 1 Zoning of properties within design district boundaries

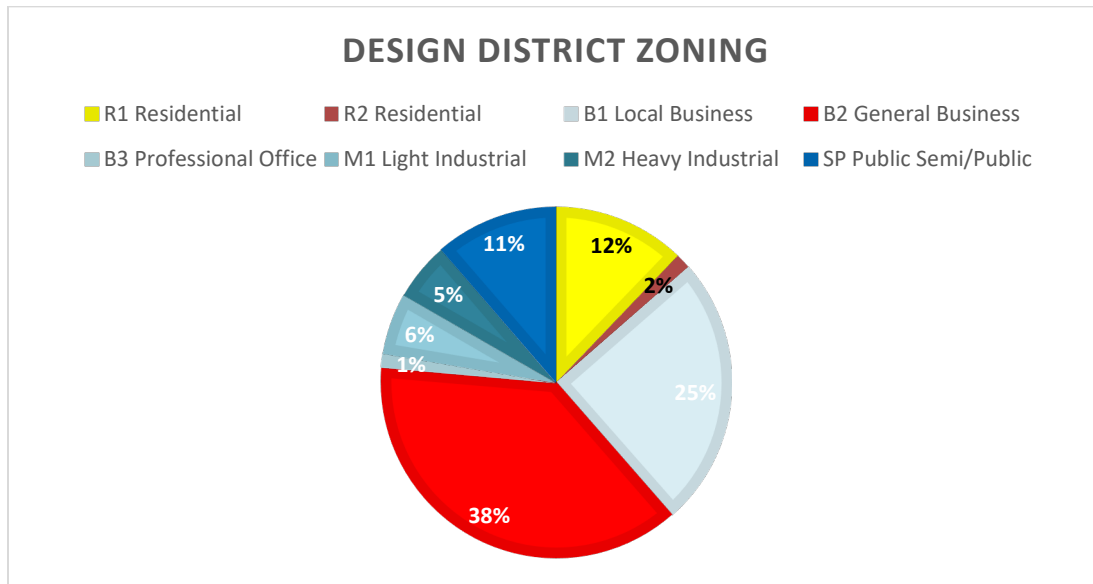


Figure 1 Chart of zoning within design district

Land Use	Acreage	% of Design District
Commercial	85.06	43.29
Industrial	11.19	5.69
Residential	58.28	29.66
Parking	6.55	3.33
Public	22.99	11.7
Undeveloped	12.44	6.33

Table 2 Land Use of properties within design district

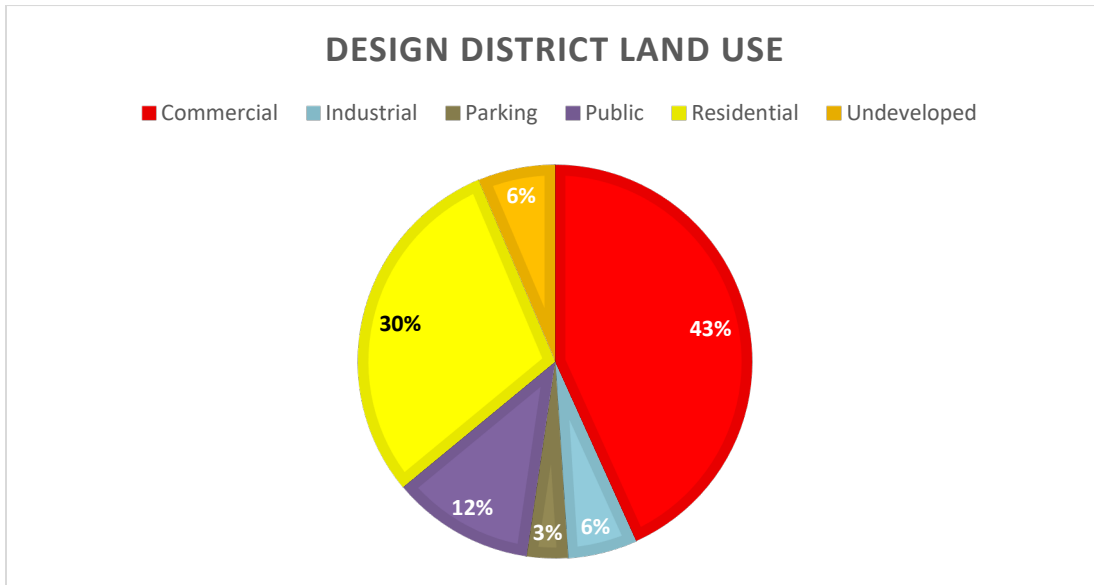


Figure 2 Chart of land use within design district

To simplify the land use we can break the chart down to a simplified version containing residential vs. nonresidential properties:

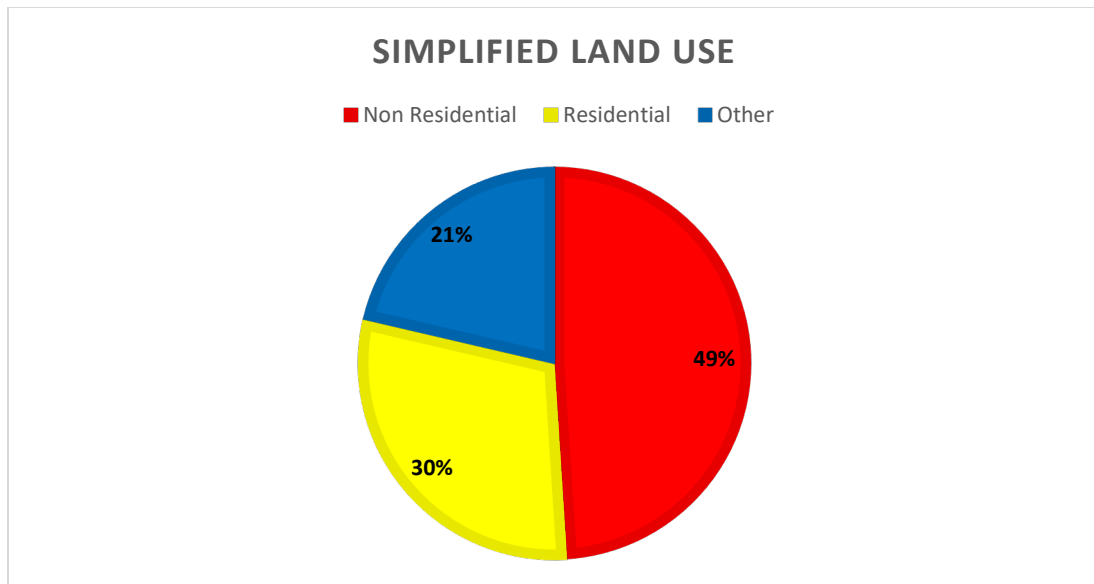


Figure 3 Chart of simplified land uses within design district

Using this information we can see that just under half of the properties within the design district are truly impacted by the design requirements. With this in mind, staff next conducted individual analysis of all properties that are non-residential within the design district to check for conformance and found that 131 properties (69%) conformed and 57 (31%) properties were out of conformance. Next staff detailed this information relative to the design district as a whole:

Conformance?	# of Properties	% of Total
Conforming	131	22.78
Nonconforming	57	9.91
Other	387	67.30

Table 3 Design district conformance of entire area

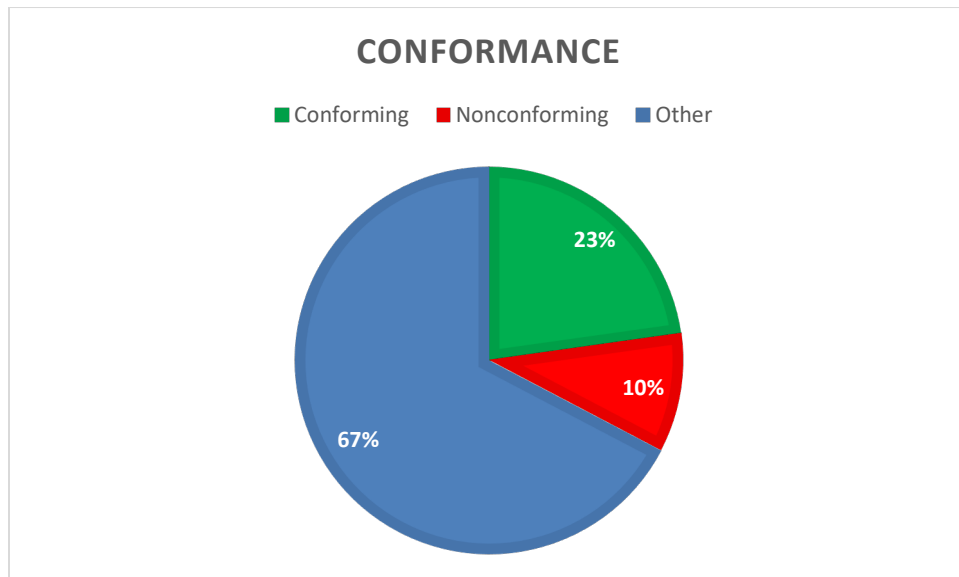


Figure 4 Chart of design district conformance

Based on the information gathered, it would appear that much of the properties within the design district are not reviewed under design district standards. It should be noted that due to the vague wording of the design district standards/requirements that conformance is subjective to the reviewer, in this case staff's interpretation. Of those that are reviewed, just under one-third of properties for not conform.

The areas of high conformance within the design district include:

- S Toppenish from BNSF Railway tracks to W 2nd Avenue
- S Toppenish from Asotin to S E Street
- S Division from S Toppenish to W 2nd Avenue
- W 1st Ave from S Alder Street to S Division
- Washington from S Beech to S Toppenish

Conclusion:

Based on the information gathered staff would suggest exploring two items:

1. A significant reduction of the design district area to include only the areas of existing high conformance.
2. Potential elimination of the design district and replacement with a "Historical Mural District".

A key consideration to the design district is to not only bring character to our jurisdiction but to also be a point of tourism and commerce. Staff believes consideration of whether the design district truly jumps out as

a “western” area needs to be taken into account. While there are areas that do conform with the standards of the design district, that’s not to say that those standards are sufficient in exemplifying a western theme. For example, many of the buildings, while containing some western architecture, are painted/colored and utilized in such a way that one may not consider it western and rather just an interesting building.

Staff researched online resources to see if Toppenish was a easily located as a “western themed” or “themed” city, unfortunately the cities that were apparent did not include Toppenish. However, when conducting research staff noticed that when the topics of murals was included that Toppenish was a highly presented city, included with much larger cities such as Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane, etc. With this in mind, staff would suggest exploring the option of converting the design district to be for historical murals from the design district time period rather than for historical architecture.

Recommendation: Not Applicable

Alternatives: Not Applicable