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50'-0 Commercial Setback along Highway 191

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Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 11:35 AM

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Hello Everyone,

After reading the minutes of the P&Z Commission meetings that I have missed, I would like to express my objections to reducing the existing commercial setback from 50 feet to 25 feet. The stated reason was that this would enhance commercial development along Highway 191, also known as East and West Main Street. I am unaware of any applications for commercial development along this corridor, and I think we should not change the setback now for the following reasons:

Preservation of aesthetic values. It is the commission's responsibility to consider aesthetic values when any changes are put forth. Those values were important when we wrote the General Plan, and they should be important today. The General Plan, Pg. 13, states "Substantial setbacks within lot margins along roads are common and lend a spacious and semi-rural feel," and "Ordinances will be developed consistent with stated aesthetic, noise and other related values."

Concerns about public safety. A 50-foot setback allows for parking vehicles than range in lengths from 18 to 24 feet, and even longer. It allows vehicles to maneuver safely in and out of parking spaces and also allows for a five-foot pedestrian walkway. A reduced setback would require drivers to use the public right of way. I haven't seen any discussion about the impact of this reduction on public safety and I believe this requires further study.

Impact on planned Main Street pedestrian and bicycle paths. This autumn, in conjunction with UDOT, a conceptual pedestrian safety plan will be developed along Highway 191 to include a sidewalk and possible landscaping and lighting along the right of way. The sidewalk will include bicycles as well as pedestrians. As planners, I think this would be the time to look at the setbacks and make the necessary adjustments.

I am sending in a separate email three sketches I did last spring when we developed the setbacks. They show what various property sizes will render in commercial square footage with a 50'-0 setback.

I would greatly appreciate your attention to these three concerns and I hope that we can postpone this decision until they have been addressed.

Yours truly,
Michael Haviken