



Wasco County Planning Department
 "Service, Sustainability & Solutions"

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Issue: #5

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Dear Brenda,

What the planning department does on a day-to-day basis can be perceived by some as very challenging. This is perhaps embodied in the oft-heard quote, "Oregonians hate two things: sprawl and density." To me what this quote means is there will always be a lot of tension and conflict between competing land use values in Oregon, the appropriate role of state and local jurisdictions, and how to promote or limit land uses for the benefit of the entire community. It's just the contradictory nature of our department's business. There is strong support for protecting farms, forest and natural areas, as well as the rights of property owners. And this is unlikely to change.

Our department can't control personal sentiments or perceived systemic problems of the statewide planning program. Moreover, our department can't significantly reform state or federal mandates that influence our day-to-day functions. However, what we can control is taking initiative to continually reevaluate and adapt our local regulations to create flexibility where appropriate and then apply them in a fair and consistent manner. In addition, we can control how we engage the public.

In this context, we conducted a focus group last September to garner feedback to improve our operational efficiencies. In response to the feedback received, our department has formed an advisory committee to further evaluate our development review processes and how to improve them. Although the committee has only met once, it will soon be actively engaged in working with a consultant to conduct an audit of our land use and development ordinance. We envision this project will ultimately identify functional modifications that could improve the ability of the planning department to respond to the public more effectively and efficiently. It will also work to improve customer service while maintaining credibility with state and local agencies.

This advisory committee and project are really exciting for our department (much more rewarding than debating the merits or

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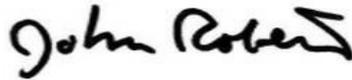
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We work to maintain up-to-date information, however, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omission or results of any actions based upon this information. If you have any questions regarding any of these items, contact the organizational representative of that source/information.

drawbacks of sprawl versus density). We think this endeavor is a step in the right direction to internally evaluate what we can control.



John Roberts, AICP
Planning Director

STREAMLINING DEVELOPMENT REVIEW: DLCD GRANT UPDATE

Planning department functions, regulations and procedures, by their nature, are often complex and difficult to understand. Any inefficiency in the development review process can waste time, create confusion, and may give the community the false impression that a planning department is difficult to work with.

With this sentiment serving as a backdrop, Wasco County applied for a grant through the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to address improvements to our department's operations [See [Newsletter #2, November 2011](#)]. DLCD awarded the grant to the County and, as a result, the Planning Department in April issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for qualified professionals or firms to conduct an audit of our development review process. Seven firms responded, and their proposals are currently under review by staff and the Development Review Improvement Process Advisory Committee.

The goal of the project is to produce recommendations on how to improve the Planning Department's operational functions. The project objectives represent a mix of important economic development, technical, informational, customer service, and strategic planning needs related to land use planning. Overall, the audit will provide the Planning Department with the opportunity to increase the pace of its progress toward improving development review processes and the clarity and usability of the LUDO. Wasco County is grateful to DLCD for the grant money and the opportunity to help pursue this endeavor. Stay tuned for updates on our progress.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

Among the most common questions the Planning Department receives are questions about accessory structures - when are permits needed and what are the size limitations? Understandably, in a largely rural county, residents want to build shops, detached garages and storage sheds on their property.

While each of these buildings has a unique name and serves a specific purpose, they are all defined as "accessory structures" in the context of Wasco County land use. The regulations affecting these structures are relatively straightforward for each zoning district. However, the rules change depending on whether property is located in the county or the National Scenic

Area.



The Wasco County Land Use & Development Ordinance (LUDO) defines accessory structure as: "A detached structure, its footprint being less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the primary structure's footprint, the use of which is customarily incidental to that of the primary structure or the primary use of the land, and which is located on the same lot-of-record with the primary structure or use. Accessory structures shall not include agricultural exempt buildings."

In other words, accessory structures must be detached from the dwelling and their footprint [the area of ground covered by the dwelling] must be less than $\frac{3}{4}$ the footprint of the dwelling. In fact, a property owner may qualify for more than one accessory structure on a property if he can meet the applicable standards for each one. Additionally, the Wasco County Planning Department does not require review of accessory structures 200 square feet or less and 10 feet or less in height. However, all structures must meet required setbacks and other land use standards, so it's to everyone's benefit if residents contact the Planning Department before siting these smaller structures.

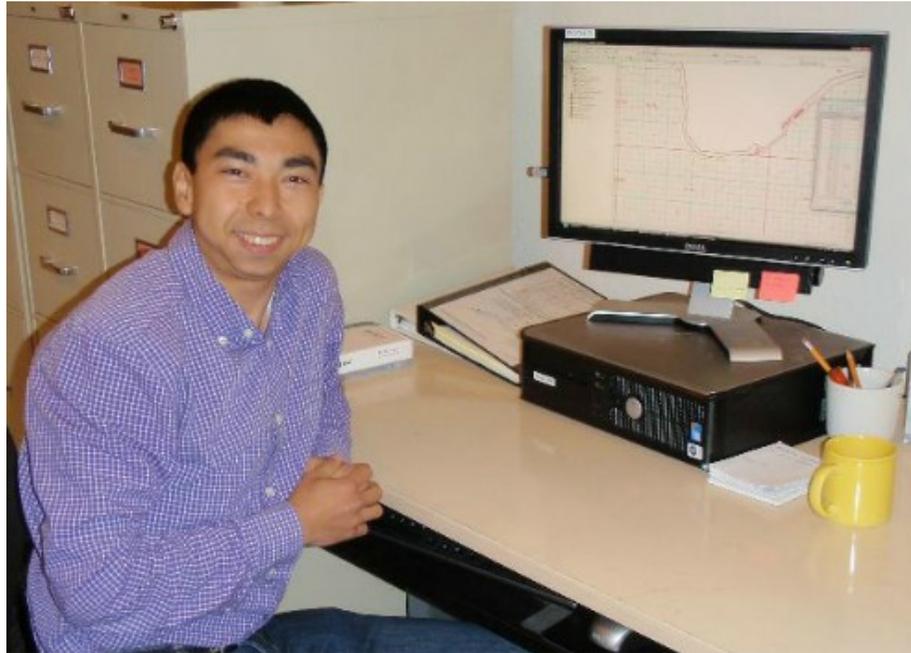
In the National Scenic Area, the definition of accessory structure is different, as are the regulations affecting their size and use. The Wasco County National Scenic Area Land Use & Development Ordinance (NSA LUDO) has a similar definition of accessory structure but instead of limiting size as a percentage of the dwelling footprint, size is limited based on the acreage of the parcel.

For structures 60 square feet or less in area and 10 feet or less in height, no review is necessary (unless located in the buffer zone of a water body, riparian area or other EPD). In most zones, each parcel is also allowed an expedited review for one accessory structure between 60 and 200 square feet and 10 feet or less in height.

Otherwise, accessory structures in the National Scenic Area require full review and cannot exceed 24 feet in height. On parcels 10 acres or less, multiple accessory structures may be permitted but the combined footprints of all accessory

structures on a single parcel cannot exceed 1,500 square feet. On parcels larger than 10 acres, the combined footprints cannot exceed 2,500 square feet.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Sherzod Rakhmonov is the new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) intern at Wasco County. Sherzod is from Uzbekistan, a country in Central Asia. His undergraduate degree is in land use planning. In fact, he is the second generation of his family pursuing work in the planning field. His father is well-known in the land use planning field in Uzbekistan. Sherzod enjoys travelling, and is always looking for a next adventure.

Professionally, Sherzod draws on different fields to approach goals. While working as a GIS Analyst at the State Research Institute of Land Management, he was amazed how useful GIS tools were in making accurate land use planning decisions. He became deeply interested in GIS, and with his love for adventure, decided to enhance his GIS knowledge by pursuing a Master's Program in Europe. He received a scholarship for his graduate study funded by the European Commission. Immediately prior to coming to Wasco County, he completed a 3-month internship in Portland, OR.

At Wasco County, his main duties are to update, maintain and analyze GIS databases via:

- Integrating accurate GPS data to GIS maps;
- Attaching scanned survey documents to GIS;
- QA&QC of GIS database; and
- Improving the accuracy of GIS database feature class.

Recently his project proposal to build enhanced web-mapping for Wasco County was approved by the Board of Commissioners. The aim of the project is to make GIS data freely accessible to the public without requiring GIS software. He will begin working

on this project in June. The alpha version of enhanced web-mapping application is expected to be launched in September, and the beta version in October.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Here are a few important upcoming dates. Please visit the [Planning Department website](#) for further details.

There are currently no Planning Commission meetings scheduled.

GOT A TOUGH QUESTION? ASK US!

If you have a question about anything in this newsletter, or if you have a general question about zoning, developing your property, floodplains or any other planning-related question, please let us help. You can send your questions to wcplanning@co.wasco.or.us. We will research your question and help you find the answer.

Please pass along this newsletter to anyone who may be interested in planning, land use and development in unincorporated portions of Wasco County. Archived editions of the newsletter will be posted to the Planning Department website. To subscribe to the newsletter, please click the "Join Our Mailing List!" button in the sidebar running down the left side of the newsletter.

Sincerely,

The Wasco County Planning Department

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