

## Todd Stamm

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**From:** Cameron Wilson <cameron@rants-group.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2015 10:26 AM  
**To:** Todd Stamm  
**Subject:** Oly Architectural Design Requirements

Hi Todd:

I am in receipt of the mailer concerning the City's consideration of expanding the scope of the Design Review Area, and wanted to take a moment to pass along some comments...

Fundamentally, blanket regulation like this does not work well in practice because it lumps together regulation for widely varied property types. Applying the same design standards for a small neighborhood shopping center and a large manufacturing facility, make for absurd developments. Take the 18.110.070 requirement for commercial buildings to be placed on the street edge with parking behind or to the side of it for example... First off, industrial facilities have little to no pedestrian/retail demand whatsoever. So why would we require such a building to be positioned at the "front" of a parcel? There will be no pedestrian benefit, but it would severely impact the functionality of the parcel and the building, as trucks cannot easily access loading doors.

From a development standpoint (and keep in mind, development results in revenue growth for the City), why would a developer/business choose to locate in Olympia with these sort of ridiculous regulations when they could easily go to the next municipality over and build the same building with significantly improved functionality? Applying these sort of regulatory barriers to development will only drive future tax revenues out of Olympia and into surrounding municipalities. Olympia needs job growth and tax base growth – not whimsical design standards – and these design standards will absolutely drive those jobs and tax dollars out of the City.

The same concerns apply to 18.110.030... A six foot wide pedestrian walkway from the street to the entry of an industrial building? For what benefit? This regulation when applied to industrial projects, would result in no actual benefit to anyone, while serving to make Olympia a much less desirable place to do business. Surely that is not in line with the City Council's goals...right?

That's for industrial projects, but since I've got your ear, let me vent about these regulations on medical properties... Medical properties, where sick and injured people go to get services. And the City thinks these sick and injured people are walking to their doctor's appointments? It's laughable at best, and is a direct barrier to development (associated job and revenue growth).

The City of Olympia would be far better served by refocusing on improving its job and revenue base by encouraging growth – not actively working to drive it away from the City. When more citizens are working and more businesses are paying taxes, the City can use that revenue growth to fund all sorts of other beautification and improvement projects to win our hearts and minds. But forcing the "round pegs" of business into the "square holes" of blanket regulation leads to only one outcome – the decline of jobs and tax base growth. There is just no other way to look at it.

As the saying goes, "when you find yourself in a hole, stop digging". In this case the City has dug itself into a hole of stymied development which has been limited by impractical regulations just like these. If we can't repeal the requirements for unique property types like medical buildings, well then at least we can stop adding new property types like industrial to the list. This way, perhaps the City can slow if not stop the hemorrhaging of development capital (and the jobs/revenue that it creates) out of Olympia.

Thank you for the opportunity to chime in on this very important issue. I sincerely hope the City will use this opportunity to re-evaluate its goals, and its approach to achieving them.



**Cameron Wilson**  
Commercial Broker / Property Manager

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**Tel 360-943-8060; Fax 360-943-9368**  
724 Columbia St NW, Ste 200  
Olympia, WA 98501  
[cameron@rants-group.com](mailto:cameron@rants-group.com) | [rants-group.com](http://rants-group.com)

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