



CITY OF KYLE

Community Development Department



August 1, 2017

To: City of Kyle Mayor and City Council
From: Howard J. Koontz, AICP
Re: Residential Style Guide

For your consideration, comment, and approval, this is the residential style guide for the construction of one- and two-family detached structures in the corporate limits of the City of Kyle.

The city of Kyle has experienced, and continues to experience, transformative growth in the residential sector. The installation of Kyle's first traffic light occurred in 2007, and yet the city has grown to over 38,000 in population to date, with over 4,600 single family units built in the past 10 years alone.

Many aspects of the residential development process are highly-regulated by codes; the subdivision of land, the development of property for construction of infrastructure, and the materials and methods for the eventual assembly of houses are all objectively regulated by statute, written or adopted by reference by the city's leadership.

Certain freedoms in the overall process are specifically reserved to the private sector, mostly because the individual conditions for site placement, architectural style, and other aesthetics are too numerous to effectively fall under the auspices of one parent regulatory code. Also, part of the artistic process is preserved to allow freedom of individual product to capture the prevailing market share in any given sales season.

Once set in motion, left on its own, the development process should be able to function free of artificial constraints. Unfortunately, the City of Kyle has recognized a deleterious pattern of residential home building that it feels cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. In the absence of city oversight, the predominant pattern of residential home construction has regressed to a competition between sellers based seemingly only on price-point, but lacking in any meaningful amenities, architectural style, or core attributes that make communities more than a collection of houses.

Kyle is falling into a building pattern resulting in a bedroom community, removed and detached from the emergent "Kyle" brand, completely dependent on the automobile, without any particular identity or sense of place. Housing projects increasingly lack any kind of permanence or resiliency, and instead concentrate on highest density return for

land area available. The concept of 'Live, Work, Play' has been subverted in a way that capitalizes on the immediate housing demand, at the sacrifice of the city's efforts toward sustainable land use planning and a comprehensive plan for quality of life initiatives.

So where does that leave the city? Creating more --and more specific-- regulations will simply result in a homogenous product lacking in creative design freedoms, and in turn, lacking in variety of product that today's buyers seek. And yet, allowing the lowest common denominator for home construction threatens the future quality of life for our residents, and the viability of as-yet developed land.

Kyle has chosen to amend the city's zoning ordinance in such a way as to create a conditional use process for the platting of new one- and two-family subdivisions, and enact a staff-level review process for new one- and two-family structures. This "Residential Style Guide", a primer that displays the type and style of residential home construction and neighborhood design befitting the expectations of the residents and leadership of Kyle, is a design guide that shows the ideas to which residential development should adhere: Concepts for both overall neighborhood design and specific home architecture.

The schedule for this item was for discussion with no action at the June 27th Planning Commission work session, then additional discussion at the Commission's July 11th regular business meeting. No formal action was taken at either of those two meetings. At a Special Called Meeting on July 25th, a duly advertised session for the purpose of public discussion and formal recommendation to the Kyle Mayor & City Council. The Planning Commission considered the attached language, agreed with the whole of the document, and recommended approval of the ordinance with one key addition: regulations on the type of asphalt shingle required. The document, as amended, with recommendation for favorable consideration, is presented this evening for your approval.