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Whitney east-side preliminary plan passes muster

By Nathan Jerke

Staff reporter

Whitney Benefits' preliminary plan to develop the former industrial area east of downtown along Little Goose Creek was unanimously approved Monday by the Sheridan Planning Commission.

The concept for a mixed-use unit development has been in the planning stages since the idea was unveiled last spring. Whitney Benefits is developing the infrastructure and selling the spaces for commercial and residential use.

"I feel it's a good project for the community," Whitney Benefits President Tom Kinnison said. "The planning commission did a very thorough examination."

The commercial plan calls for several buildings to be built using design features borrowed, or replicated, from the Sheridan downtown area.

That plan also calls for more than 400 on-site parking spaces with an additional 39 on-street spots and another 90 in a later phase of the project.

The commissioners, overall, expressed little opposition to the development plan. Commissioner Ed Neeriemer said the plan is the

first growth of the downtown area to the east that works as an addition to the city — a sentiment echoed by other commissioners.

Commissioner Wayne Blank said he worried that with all roadways under private control, the roads could fall into disrepair.

Kinnison said a central maintenance company will be developed to take care of all public areas.

"We had a lot of good questions, which that's what we're here for, to answer questions," Kinnison said.

Plans for the commercial space already include a new main office for Sheridan School District 2. The facility is planned to be built at the north end of Connor Street at Grinnell Avenue.

Kinnison said construction of the district office is slated to begin next spring and will use features from the exteriors of the old Central Middle School and Junior High School.

Kinnison said if everything goes to plan, construction of the plaza area at the corner of Grinnell and Connor will be completed and much of the development will be ready for purchase by the end of next summer.

"It's really going to have an effect on this community. It's going to look good for this community," Kinnison said.