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Council green-lights Whitney design plan

• Project development will bring 76 new residences, more office space

By Josh Mitchell

Staff reporter

A massive development that is intended to bring more houses and businesses to the east side as well as revitalize an industrial side of town gained design-plan approval from the Sheridan City Council Monday night.

The development would consist of about 95,000 square feet of office space, 45,000 square feet of retail and 76 new residences. The project would be located on about 12 acres near the intersection of Grinnell and Connor Streets.

The development is the brainchild of Whitney Benefits Inc. of Sheridan and is

expected to be built out in two to seven years, according to the design plan.

City Planner Robert Briggs said the project would be good for Sheridan. "I think it's a step in the right direction," he said. "What we have seen happen in the

downtown area is retail, commercial and office growth, and we are leaning away

from industrial."

Briggs added that the residential aspect of the development will improve a housing shortage in the city.

There would be a total of about 76 new residences, which would include single family homes and townhouses.

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Quotable

"It's a step in the right direction ... we are leaning away from industrial (growth downtown)."

Robert Briggs, City Planner for Sheridan

Growth

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Sheridan City Councilman Thomas O'Leary also thinks the development will be good for the city. "I think it's a fabulous idea for Downtown Sheridan," he said. "I look forward to seeing it come to fruition."

The development has two basic components. One is Grinnell Square, which would consist of businesses, offices and apartments. The other aspect of the project is residential — Grinnell Park Place Neighborhood.

Grinnell Square, which would have an urban design with pedestrian walkways, would be a mixed-use development with office and retail on the street level. The second level would be residential and office, and the third and fourth floors

would be residential only. In terms of the residential in Grinnell Square, there would be about 20 loft apartments, the design plan states.

In addition, Grinnell Square would also be home to a new School District 2 administrative building, for which the construction plans have already been submitted, officials say. The school district building is said to be the anchor of Grinnell Square. Bringing the school district and its 20 permanent employees to downtown is expected to give downtown merchants a boost.

At the intersection of Grinnell and Connor Street, there would be a pedestrian square. The design plan states that the development will be designed in a way that resembles the old east side.

The neighborhood, Grinnell Park Place, would include single family residences, townhomes and live-work residences. Live-work residences would allow people to walk to their jobs. And the neighborhood would serve people of varying incomes, the report states.

The project will require that two new private roads be built that will be called Whitney Lane and Grinnell Park Place. Both of the roads will run perpendicular to Connor Street.

Briggs said the final plat for the development will most likely be approved in December or January.

Afterwards, Whitney Benefits will attract developers to build different aspects of the project, Briggs said.

