

August 7, 2015 (sent via email to Todd Stamm)

Dear Olympia Planning Commission Members,

Thank you for extending the period in which individuals may comment on the 9th Ave SE amendment to the Comp Plan. I was unable to attend the meeting and appreciate this opportunity.

There are several points to touch on regarding this street upgrade and how it relates to items in the Comp Plan. I am asking that this amendment be tabled until more information is available to the planning commission. My points are as follows:

1. Sequence – Medela LLC site specific plan, traffic analysis, then comp plan amendment
2. ADA
3. Community Involvement – Eastside Neighborhood Association and Fit w/ Comp Plan
4. High Density Corridor Considerations
5. The Cliff

Sequence

This amendment seems to be premature. There is a rezone proposal in the works for the property that would directly benefit this amendment, but there is no site specific plan in place on which to base the type of upgrade to the street. When there is a site specific plan offered, generally that would be accompanied by a traffic impact analysis (TIA). A TIA would provide in depth insight into requirements for an upgrade; for example, will signalization/crosswalks/upgrades to Blvd. also be required?

Mr. Stamm and Mr. Smith indicate that, since this property is now annexed into the city, upgrades need to be made to roads. However, there were also two other “islands” on the west side that were also annexed into the city. Residents in these areas also had concerns about upgrade to sidewalks/streets----why is this 300 ft stretch of 9th Ave SE that currently dead ends at the base of a steep slope the one that the planning dept. is considering?

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Issues

This issue was not brought up at the recent hearing or touched on by the planning department. This small section of 9th Ave SE has a steep slope. In the February and March meeting minutes for Thurston Thrives Affordable Housing Action Team, it indicates there are discussions to develop this area into affordable housing, which would include the elderly on limited incomes and individuals on disability. We took

basic measurements, which indicate that 9th Ave SE (in the comp plan amendment area) has a maximum slope of 1:12 or 8.33 percent.

Based on the *Pedestrian Facilities Guidebook: Incorporating Pedestrians into Washington's Transportation System*, by the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Association of Washington Cities, "When an accessible route is greater than 1:20 (5 percent), it is considered a ramp and must have handrails and landings." (p.38)

9th Ave SE is the maximum allowable slope for pedestrian ramps and requires maximum stamina for those who are non-ambulant (wheelchair dependent).

Before further work is done on this comp plan amendment, questions related to ADA issues need to be answered.

Is there a way to create landings?

Is more right of way needed to put handrails and landings in place?

How would this affect the driveways for current residents on this section of 9th Ave SE?

Who should take measurements and verify our estimates?

Would a future developer be responsible for handrails and landings?

Below is a table taken directly from ADA.gov

[Table 4-2.1: Federal Accessibility Guidelines for Accessible Routes](#)

Source	Maximum Allowable Running Grade without Handrails	Maximum Grade with Handrails and Level Landings		Maximum Allowable Running Cross-Slope	Minimum Clearance Width	Maximum Allowable Vertical Change in Level	Minimum Allowable Vertical Clearance(Overhead)
	%	%	m	%	m	mm	m
ADA Standards for Accessible Design ¹ (US DOJ, 1991)	5.0 ²	8.33 ₂	9.1	2.0	0.915 ³	6 ⁴	2.030
UFAS (US DoD, et al., 1984)	5.0 ²	8.33 ₂	9.1	2.0	0.915 ³	6 ⁴	2.030

¹ The ADA Standards for Accessible Design are identical in content to ADAAG Sections 1-10. However, the Design Standards are enforceable by the U.S. Department of Justice.

² The ADA Standards for Accessible Design require people to use the least slope possible on accessible routes.

³ Minimum clearance width may be reduced to 0.815 m (32 in) at an obstruction for a maximum length of 0.610 m (24 in).

⁴ Changes in level between 6 mm (.25 in) and 13 mm (.5 in) are permitted if beveled with a maximum slope of 50 percent.

Eastside Neighborhood Involvement and Fit w/ Comp Plan

According to the Comp Plan, citizen involvement is encouraged and actively sought. Recently, the Eastside Neighborhood Association (through their Vice President, Brian Brannies) indicated they were opposed to the Medela LLC rezone proposal because it impacts the East side Neighborhood significantly and they have not been involved in the process according to the newly adopted Comp Plan---Brian cited specific portions of the Comp Plan in his testimony.

Specifically, related to the 9th Ave SE upgrade, I received notice on Mon. about an informational meeting at city hall on Wed. prior to the hearing (but before the staff report was available on Thurs.). I posted the information for Eastside residents and Nathan Allen, ENA president wrote back the following: "Did not get anything via the ENA president email and I just saw this otherwise I would have gone."

As Planning Commission Members, you are directed to ONLY consider this upgrade, but not any of the other issues, such as upzoning of the only property that would benefit from this upgrade. However, when Medela LLC was still in the county, 9th Ave SE/Medela LLC were tied together in a comp plan amendment. Dave Smith indicated that improvements would need to be made to Chambers and 7th Ave in order for Medela LLC to fully build out its property-----not looking at the system of roads in this area seems to be "piecemeal" planning. In my opinion, traffic will not all flow up 9th Ave SE, but a portion will divert to Chambers St SE and 7th Ave SE. I encourage all planning commission members to walk the area, see the road system 9th Ave SE will tie into, and consider tabling this amendment until further information is available.

High Density Corridor (HDC)

Creating accessibility via 9th Ave SE upgrades do not fit with walkable, pedestrian and transit friendly communities envisioned in the Comp Plan.

At the recent hearing, a representative from Medela LLC spoke about the upgrade of 9th Ave SE and indicated it fit in with the Comp Plan. In previous statements, Mr. Niemi and

Medela LLC's attorney Joe Rehberger tout the property's proximity to the HDC (Pacific Ave.); the zoning proposed is RM-18. According to the Comp Plan, PL 13.3: 'Transform Urban Corridors into areas with excellent transit service; multi-story building fronting major streets with trees, benches and landscaping, parking lots behind building, and a compatible mix of residential uses close to commercial uses.'

They site this provision in the Comp Plan, indicating that Forest Cemetery is General Commercial and is designated for higher intensity purposes. The premise seems to be that Forest Cemetery is zoned General Commercial, so it is a "higher density" than the proposed RM-18 (lower density) behind Forest Cemetery. The problem with the Medela LLC site is access to HDC, which they hope to rectify seemingly by upgrading 9th Ave SE to a neighborhood collector. In this area of the HDC, there is limited potential for higher intensity uses according to state law governing cemeteries.

Construction on cemetery grounds is severely limited relative to what is called for in the HDC. Forest Cemetery is limited to "building" ground burial plots, mausoleum, and columbarium (RCW 68.04.040).

Cemetery Dedication is virtually permanent and removing dedication for other purposes is very difficult (RCW 68.24.070 and RCW 68.24.090). Forest Cemetery can never fulfill PL 13.3 or other provisions within the Comp Plan envisioned for the HDC.

I would further mention that, although Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and the 911 Call Center are also listed as GC, they do not fit with plans for HDC activity; this is just an area where density levels, access, and walkability cannot be reached due to topography, critical areas, and state statute. Again, creating accessibility via 9th Ave SE upgrades do not fit with walkable, pedestrian and transit friendly communities envisioned in the Comp Plan.

In the Comp Plan, activity should be oriented toward the high density corridor; however, in instance after instance, this activity for the Medela LLC site and 9th Ave SE upgrade are directed toward the Eastside Neighborhood. As stated previously, before the Hearings Examiner on July 20, 2015, the representative from the Eastside Neighborhood Association (ENA) expressed opposition on the grounds that the elements of involvement that are called for in the Comp Plan are not being met. In context, ENA has never before taken a stance on the 9th Ave upgrade or Medela LLC rezone proposal, choosing to remain neutral over the last 3 years related to this project; At least, ENA did not take a stance until the day of the rezone hearing. There are many individuals in ENA that are very much in favor of walkable, bikeable, pedestrian-friendly development, but do not see that in Medela LLC's proposal.

The Cliff

On July 20, 2015, the Hearing Examiner Mark Scheibmeier said that he had walked the site. He noted that 9th Ave SE ends and there appears to be a “cliff” where the terrain drops off quickly at the dead ended area.

One further concern is that again, this is premature upgrade until the planning commission knows what will happen at this cliff-end, which would be part of a site TIA and a site specific plan-----will the planned development build a road into the development and extend 9th Ave SE? Will there continue to be a jog in the road to get to the Medela LLC site, in which case some type of barrier should be set up so that individuals will not drive off the “cliff”.

Again, I encourage all planning commission members to visit this section of 9th Ave SE, see how this road ties in with other roads, and table this until a later time.

Sincerely,

Teresa Goen-Burgman