

TO: Amy Buckler, Associate Planner
FROM: Gary Cooper, Project Planner
SUBJECT: Planning Commission recommendations for RM-18 Zoning District
DATE: March 16, 2014

What follows is a cursory review and analysis of the development requirements and build-out potential for the proposed RM-18 zoning district regulations for a situation where parcels 5 acres or greater in size would require a mix of housing types and transitional housing required to buffer the development from adjacent single family neighborhoods.

A previous draft analysis (“Multi Family Transitions – Considerations;” hereafter “Draft Analysis”) was completed by Commissioners Parker and Andresen, which considers whether the existing transitional housing requirement renders properties in the RM-18 incapable of achieving intended development densities. The analysis concludes the current restrictions on maximum building coverage, total impervious surfaces, required open space, transitional housing buffers, etc., taken all together, would not leave enough buildable area to achieve anything close to the desired densities for this zoning district.

As stated in the Draft Analysis, it assumes a “worst case scenario” with respect to the RM-18 requirement to provide transitional housing when situated next to single family zoning districts: The example assumes a 5 acre parcel that is bounded on all side by single family development.

The Draft Analysis is very thorough and illustrates how complicated the application of the various development requirements/restrictions can be. Upon review of the analysis, I agree that achieving the desired 18 Unit per Acre density would require a great deal of site planning and creativity. I also conclude that density within the range of the minimum allowed 8 Units per Acre and the maximum allowed 18 Unit per Acre in RM-18 is achievable now, and would continue to be achievable should the City adopt the current staff proposal: to also require a mix of housing types (not more than 70% of one type) on developments in this zone that are 5 acres or greater.

I believe the Draft Analysis is quite accurate on most of its assumptions. However, assumptions 11 & 12 of the analysis are more conservative than typical. The Draft Analysis assumes duplexes would serve as transition lots, and the minimum lot size for duplexes in RM-18 zone is 6,000 sq. ft. (assume dimensions 77.5’ x 77.5’.) In this scenario, the required setbacks would demand 2462.5 sq. ft. be free from structures greater than 30” (assuming average conditions.) It would be very unusual for the remaining 3,537.5 sq. ft. to be consumed as buildable/impervious area.

I think a more reasonable assumption for the duplex lots would be that 3,000 sq. ft. would be consumed for both buildable and other impervious surfaces (driveways/parking). This is a more typical size for a duplex. Also, for a development where density is at a premium, it is likely the buildable/impervious surfaces would be minimized as much as possible for these lots. Keeping

in mind that an 850 sq. ft. unit is not at all unusual for each duplex unit, and then allocating 3,000 sq. ft. for two duplex units and their associated parking is generous. For the 20 duplex lots envisioned in the Planning Commission analysis, this would result in 60,000 sq. ft. of combined buildable/impervious (total impervious). Subtracting this 60,000 from the 152,460 sq. ft. of total impervious allowed on 5 acres would yield a remainder of 92,460 sq. ft. of total impervious that could be applied to the rest of the development. In the Draft Analysis, the amount of land consumed for 20 duplex lots @6,000 sq. ft. per lot is greater, remaining buildable land less.

Unless I have misunderstood, I think the Draft Analysis uses an incorrect assumption by substituting “allowable building coverage” for the density units that can be obtained from a much smaller building footprint. The analysis states:

“Full use of the allowable building coverage portions of the five acre parcel as determined by the set-back requirements and lot sizes in the residential building standards would allow for a building coverage total of 164,607 sf...this is in excess of the amount allowed for the full five acres, i.e. 108,900 sf.” (p.6)

I believe the error here lies in the assumption that all the “allowable building coverage” would be necessary to achieve the desired density for the 5-acre parcel. In fact, it appears the desired density can be achieved on a much smaller building footprint, which is also typical, if the remaining residential scheme is devoted to a multi-story apartment structure.

As noted in the Draft Analysis, the maximum number of residences on a 5-acre parcel at 18 units per acre would be 90. The 20 duplex lots represent 40 residences, which indicate 50 more residences must be achieved to reach maximum density.

Using the architectural plans for the currently proposed Olympic Vista apartments, I note the range of apartment sizes varies from approximately 550 sq. ft. to 1,000 sq. ft. per unit. Using an average apartment size of 800 sq. ft. to account for both the living unit and unoccupied spaces (stairwells, lobbies, etc.), and assuming an apartment building with 3 stories @ 17 units per story (for a total of 51 units) would result in a building footprint of 13,600 sq. ft. Or, assuming a more spacious average apartment size of 1,000 sq. ft. would amount to a 17,000 sq. ft. building footprint for a 50 unit, 3-story apartment.¹ This is of course far less than the square footage represented by “allowable building coverage.”

It appears there is room to fit a 50- unit building into a 5-acre site when a single-family buffer is required all around the perimeter, including adequate remaining land to accommodate driveways and parking as well. The duplexes or townhomes at the buffer would provide required parking onsite (most likely in a garage or driveway that is already being counted as impervious surface.) For the apartment, assuming, an average of 400 sq. ft. for each parking stall, and multiplying this by the requirement to have 1.5 parking stalls for each multi-family residential unit, yields 50 units x 1.5 stalls x 400 sq. ft. each = 30,000 sq. ft.

Combining the building footprint of 17,000 sq. ft. with the associated parking yields a total impervious surface of 47,000 sq. ft. for the apartment space. Combining this amount with the previously established 60,000 sq. ft. of total impervious surface associated with the duplex portion of the development yields a total of 107,000 sq. ft. Since the maximum allowable total impervious surfaces (building plus parking, etc.) is 152,460 sq. ft., this would indicate that even under the “worst case scenario” of providing transitional housing on every border of the development, maximum density is theoretically possible. (Note, this analysis does not take into consideration every conceivable scenario; e.g. easements, requirements for dumpster access, etc.)

For this analysis the difference between the maximum total impervious surface (152,460 sq. ft.) the amount required to construct the duplexes plus a 50-unit apartment with associated parking (107,000 sq. ft.) amounts to 45,460 sq. ft. *in addition* to the 65,340 sq. ft. that has been set aside for required Open Space.

Duplex Building Area + Impervious	60,000 sq. ft.
Apartment Building Footprint	+ 17,000 sq. ft.
<u>Apartment Building Required Parking</u>	+ 30,000 sq. ft.
TOTAL Impervious for project	= 107,000 sq. ft.

Total Acres in Project Area	217,800
<u>Required Open Space (30%)</u>	- 65,340
Maximum Impervious Surface (70%)	= 152,460

<u>TOTAL impervious for project</u>	- 107,000
Total Additional Buildable Land	= 45,460 sq. ft.
(or Open Space)	

Additional Notes:

1. This zone allows for zero lot lines on 3000 sq. ft. single family residential lots. I did not attempt to see whether creating 40 single family residential lots with zero lots lines could yield a better ratio of land to total impervious surfaces, but in a tight development scenario this could be an option to explore.
2. Section 18.04.080 of the Olympia Municipal Code also allows for a 15% reduction of the required minimum lot size for transitional housing lots. For the duplex lots this would reduce lot sizes by 900 sq. ft. to 5,100 sq. ft. For 20 lots the “savings” of 900 sq. ft. per lot would yield an additional 18,000 sq. ft. that once again could be utilized to meet the land to impervious surfaces or open space requirements for a tight development scenario.
3. While this analysis demonstrates that a maximum density of 90 units for 5 acres is achievable, it is noteworthy that the requirement for the transitional housing in this “worst case” scenario does make it impossible to achieve the maximum allowable density

of 70% multifamily. Because the duplex development consumes 40 residences, the remaining apartment residences, which total 50, amount to only 55% of the total density. The transitional housing requirement does have an impact from the standpoint of trying to achieve the 70% maximum allowable percentage of multi-family development on the parcel.

ⁱ A 17,000 sq. ft. footprint would actually accommodate 51 units according to my assumptions of 1,000 sq.ft. per unit, 3 stories high. However, to maintain the maximum density of 90 units for the 5 acre parcel – given that 40 residences have been devoted to the duplex developments - we will reduce the number of units in the apartment building by one to get an even 50 residences.