



November 7, 2013

Steve Friddle
Community Planning Manager
Community Planning and Development
City of Olympia
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98507

Delivered via email to: sfriddle@ci.olympia.wa.us

RE: Briggs Village Master Plan Amendment

Dear Steve:

I recently attended a town hall meeting on Amoroso Companies application for a Master Plan Amendment at Briggs Village. It was the first time I have really participated in any local entitlement and or permit issues regarding this project. During and after the development team's presentation, it became apparent to me that the proposed amendment was very reasonable, but more importantly, absolutely necessary to preserve the economic integrity of the project and health of our neighborhood market-economy. That being said, I am writing on behalf of Berschauer Group and other affected project constituents in support of approving the developer's Master Plan Amendment.

As you know, I am an ardent supporter and firm believer in the positive economic benefits our communities realize from medium to high density urban infill. Berschauer Group has committed itself to development projects and teams that support these outcomes. I also believe however, that truly vibrant and authentic urban communities develop in an organic and scalable fashion. In other words, density cannot be artificially created nor forcibly achieved if it is to be successful.

When deciding to argue in favor of – or against – planning or zoning amendments like the one at hand, we must always test our premise(s). In this case, does approving the application for a Master Plan Amendment compromise our ability and willingness to meet long range planning goals of creating healthy urban communities? If we can agree that urban villages must be scaled responsibly to be economically viable, then we should conclude that granting this Master Plan Amendment does not compromise our goals and objectives. As a matter of fact, denying the applicants request will do more to harm and undermine our efforts to stimulate an urban renaissance within our community than the alternative. Therefore, we recommend that the City of Olympia approve the developer's Master Plan Amendment.



There is plenty of commercial real estate data and economic metrics to point to which support our own philosophical beliefs about urban land economics. The best starting point for doing so is to look at vacancy and absorption rates (the most common market indicator for new, speculative construction) in our local market. Regrettably, our local market is subject to a nominal vacancy rate of 15% to 20% across office and industrial segments. Under these 'normal' market conditions there is minimal to zero positive net absorption. Because speculative construction doesn't typically occur until vacancies dip below 15% coupled with upward demand trends, there is little basis for speculative large-block office or industrial development in our market. For this reason, it's unwise for a developer to take on the economic risk inherent in large block speculative office space.

In closing, we must let the market work in order to fulfill our urban land use objectives. I believe the market is suggesting we down-zone certain office/retail building envelopes within the Briggs Village Master Plan.

Sincerely and Respectfully,
Berschauer Group Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Clintworth", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Ryan Clintworth

