

ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT HEARING

QUESTIONS and STAFF RESPONSES

During and following the public hearing on August 3, 2015, members of the Planning Commission and the public raised a number of questions. This supplement to the staff report provides responses to those questions. Some questions have been paraphrased for context.

From Planning Commission members

- How many mobile homes are in Friendly Village Mobile Home Park?

The number of units varies slightly over time, but there are less than 250. The development agreement requires 246 'replacement' units upon redevelopment of the site.

- What policies or regulations suggest that future street alignments on 2030 Transportation maps are general or not specific?

*The most on-point statement is Transportation Policy 4.8 of the Comprehensive Plan, which reads, "Build new arterials, major collectors and neighborhood collectors based on the **general location** defined on the Transportation Maps in Appendix B. Require the use of the Engineering Design and Development Standards." [Emphasis added.] The maps also include a note, stating, "The specific alignment of the future streets shown will be determined based on more detailed analysis during development review or City alignment studies."*

Similarly Section 2.040.B.3 of the Olympia Engineering and Development Standards, provides that, "Alignment and Location. Proposed streets and other primary accesses will be aligned with existing streets or accesses as identified in the Transportation Element of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan. Street alignments will relate where practical, to natural topography and will be selected so as to minimize grading and avoid excessive runoff. Alignment and connections of newly constructed public streets will be provided in accordance with the following conditions" A lengthy set of criteria for block sizing and street alignment follow this statement.

- Does the development agreement exempt the Friendly Village site from block sizing and/or from any amendments to 2030 Transportation maps?

In the opinion of City staff, it does not. The 'vesting' provisions of the agreement provide that the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map may not be amended with regard to this property during the period of the agreement, but there is no reference to other maps or provisions of the Plan. Similarly, there is no reference to the block-sizing and other street alignment provisions of the Engineering Design and Development Standards. In 2009, the street connectivity and maximum block size requirements were a part those Standards.

- What is relationship of Friendly Village site to the planned Yauger off-ramp?

The Friendly Village site is adjacent to the proposed off-ramp. Although a final alignment of the off-ramp has not been determined, it may be built where a couple of mobile homes are now located adjacent to the Highway 101 right-of-way. The off-ramp would lead to the intersection of Yauger Way and Forestbrook Way. Various of the street grid now being built in the area could provide indirect access from the off-ramp to the Friendly Village site.

- What was timing of development along 7th and 9th Avenues – why does one have 30-foot right-of-way and the other 60 feet?

This area was subdivided in 1890, creating a new “Grand Street” (now called Boulevard Road) running south from “Fourth Street” now called Pacific Avenue. For reasons lost to time, the northeast corner north of Seventh Avenue and east of Boulevard Road was not included in the plat. As a result only 30-foot of Seventh Avenue was dedicated in the plat – half of the width of other streets. Until the 1960s local government approval was only required for plats with 10 or more lots. The ownership to the north of Seventh Avenue was divided and homes built before that decade without further right-of-way dedication. In 2003, the City of Olympia did require that an additional 9 feet be dedicated when the property at the northeast corner of Boulevard Road and Seventh Avenue was redeveloped and subdivided into 3 lots – apparently as a first step toward someday acquiring a total of 48 feet of right-of-way on this block.

- How many housing units are in the vicinity of Yauger Neighborhood Center site?

In 2010, City staff estimated that there were about 300 households within one-quarter mile of this site, and almost 1,500 households within one-half mile. Subsequent development has resulted in the former number approaching 800 units. These are ‘straight-line’ not travel distances. Note, this site probably now has the highest nearby household count of the city’s neighborhood center sites.

- What is the potential for tree preservation on Lot B of Copper Trail?

A specific tree assessment has not been done for Lot B, but it appears to have similar potential to the adjacent Copper Trail blocks where some mature trees were retained during development of multi-family housing. Regardless of the zoning, City regulations require that both multi-family and commercial developments provide 30 tree units per acre. Large trees have more ‘units’ so where feasible to minimize the area needed for trees most developers choose preservation over new planting.

- Could trees on Lot A of Copper Trail be used to meet requirements for Lot B?

Olympia Municipal Code 18.060.080.C establishes a priority that trees be provided on the same site as a development. A development applicant may obtain approval for an ‘off-site’ location “if room is unavailable for planting the required trees on-site.”

- It was stated both in the staff report and confirmed by the public works representative that the proposed amendment to change 9th Ave SE to a "neighborhood collector" is regardless of the Medella decision. So, what is driving the city of Olympia to change this one block of road? The

tone of this conversation tended to have everyone believe the Medela decision was the driving force.

The initial Medela rezone application submitted to the County a few years ago did bring the limited to the limited access to this area to City staff's attention. Although Medela's request to reclassify this street was not approved, the staff concluded that the classification of this one-block of street should be reconsidered regardless of the zoning of the Medela property. See staff report for more details.

- If the Medela rezone decision favors the new development, and the 9th Ave amendment holds, is the City of Olympia or Medela going to pay for the 9th Ave build? Can the city require Medela to pay for it?

A definitive answer cannot be provided as it will depend on the circumstances at the time. A review of any major development of the Medela site would include a traffic impact analysis, and the developer would be required to make any improvements that are warranted, i.e., proportional to the impacts. In general most improvements to local streets such as this one are built or funded by developers; although the City does occasionally add sidewalks and other improvements where there are existing deficiencies – see response below to Neighborhood question.

- Someone mentioned that the current width of the road et al was at 32 feet (I saw it, it is wide). If I remember a neighborhood center road is at 27 feet. So, how much space on average will the residents actually lose? Understanding it is not technically theirs, but arguably the city has allowed them to become accustomed to it.

If a neighborhood collector were fully improved (sidewalks, trees, etc., on both sides) to today's standards, a total of 55 feet would be needed – including one foot outside each sidewalk. However, actual improvements may be modified for the special circumstances.

- The Comprehensive Plan "encourages" bike lanes but doesn't require them, for any streets, as I understand it. You mentioned bike lanes are not typically part of neighborhood collector streets and it stands to reason it would not be feasible for a one block street as I would assume this would take another approximately 5 feet of space away from the residents. Can you just clarify this? I ask this because the whole bike lane business for this particular street doesn't make any sense and appears that everyone is using loose language to try and justify their agenda. Why would the residents complain about losing frontage space and then use bike lanes as an example of what the city is not doing? How could the extra cost, regardless of amount, of a bike lane be justified or feasible for this small parcel?

Bike lanes are standard requirements for major streets, in fact for arterials and major collectors they are required unless listed as 'exempt' in the City's Engineering Design and Development Standards. However, they are uncommon on local residential streets such as those at issue. There are only two local-street where the Standards call for bike lanes are Ensign Road from Lilly Road to the Chehalis Western Trail and on Fern Street SW from 9th Avenue to 16th Avenue.

- I am assuming traffic studies have been completed for 9th Ave SE. So, what is the current average traffic during peak and non-peak hours and what is the estimate if the Medela project development is granted?

Traffic studies have NOT been done for 9th Avenue SE. Such studies are usually done when a development is proposed, and Medela is only seeking a change in zoning at this time. The traffic estimates in the Ninth Avenue Report attached to the hearing staff report describes that if not rezoned this street could receive up to 1,000 motor vehicle trips per day. More detail is provided by the attached July 10, 2015, memo from Dave Smith – but please note that the memo addresses traffic to be generated by from the Medela rezone area, which is only nine of the fifteen acres served by Ninth Avenue SE.

- Concerning Friendly Village - Can you clarify the issue? If this area is privately owned, how can the City of Olympia plan or pre-plan new streets for it? Is the city of Olympia simply assuming they will be able to somehow purchase it from the owner or is there some provision that allows the city of Olympia ownership in the future? I'm just not clear on this and how it is an issue.

The proposal is to establish a general map for new streets to be constructed if and when the Friendly Village site redevelops. Since streets are commonly constructed 'one piece at a time' in association with private development, a Comprehensive Plan routinely includes a plan for new streets in undeveloped areas to provide guidance for the property owner, developers, the public and the City staff in advance of specific development proposals. The rezone of the Friendly Village site a few years ago led staff to conclude that as part of this Plan update this site should be addressed in anticipation of any redevelopment. What specific new streets, if any, should be constructed would be determined if and when a redevelopment proposal is submitted to the City.

Post-hearing questions from Eastside Neighborhood Association relative to Ninth Avenue

- Why is this being considered? There are no plans or submissions made for any substantial development at this point.

When staff was asked to provide comment on the Plan amendment and rezone being considered by the County a few years ago, it became evident that if the land east of Boulevard Road was developed to the existing R 4-8 zoning, daily traffic volumes would exceed a local access street threshold of 500 trips. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's primary guide to what facilities are needed for future development. State law provides that any proposed development must be considered under the Plan then in effect – so if we wait for a development to be proposed it would be too late to revise the Plan. Local access streets are narrow and can only accommodate one travel lane for both directions of travel. A neighborhood collector is designed to handle daily traffic volumes greater than 500 daily trips and include two 10 foot travel lanes and one parking lane. This would accommodate new land development under the existing zoning and future proposed zoning changes. Thus staff concluded that an amendment in the Plan should be considered before a development was proposed.

- Why is the other part of 9th Ave SE east of Boulevard not being considered as well? This part already services a bus line and access to Lions Park. It has no sidewalks and is not safe for pedestrians.

West of Boulevard Road the street network includes blocks with multiple access points into the neighborhood including street connections to 4th Avenue and Boulevard Road. This allows traffic to disperse and not be funneled onto primarily one street, which is expected for 9th Avenue SE east of Boulevard Road. In addition, west of Boulevard Road, the area is developed is nearly fully developed and not expected to generate much new traffic. And unlike 9th Avenue east of Boulevard Road, most of the existing streets to the west are expected to continue to accommodate neighborhood traffic with two travel lanes and shoulder parking.

However, staff does recognize the bus route and park access create special issues along 9th Avenue west of Boulevard Road. The City staff has added the construction of sidewalk on 9th Avenue from Boulevard Road to Lions Park to a list of streets where new sidewalks are to be considered. When doing work in this area, the City will look for opportunities to combine projects for sidewalk construction.

- Why is it that the Eastside Neighborhood always has to fight for improvements, yet the perception is a developer just throws around an idea and the city is already planning improvements. How about looking after the current residents?

We try to fairly balance the distribution of City resources, including City constructed street improvements. Nonetheless, it may be that nearly every neighborhood feels they do not receive their fair share. With regard to 9th Avenue east of Boulevard Road, the City staff is not proposing to reconstruct 9th Avenue SE to a local access or neighborhood collector street standard. The comprehensive plan amendment would only reclassify 9th Avenue SE. The selected classification would guide decisions about the form of any improvements, whether being built by the City, adjacent property owners, or any proposed development that would add traffic to the street. In particular, if a development is proposed that might add traffic to this route, a traffic impact analysis will be done to determine what improvements should be built by the developer on 9th Avenue SE and any other affected locations.