



Planning Commission

Recommendation to City Council on Capitol View Offices Zoning

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Title

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Recommended Action

Move to recommend to City Council that the Zoning Map be amended to change the two Capitol View blocks from Commercial Services - High Density (CS-H) to Professional Office / Residential Multifamily (PO/RM) zoning.

Report

Issue:

Assuming the proposed Comprehensive Plan update is approved by City Council as recommended by the Planning Commission in December of 2013, should the zoning map of the City's development code be amended to change the Capitol View blocks described below from Commercial Services - High Density to Professional Office / Residential Multifamily land use zoning?

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Presenter:

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Background and Analysis:

Washington's Growth Management Act requires that development regulations must be "consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan." RCW 36.70A.040. An update to the City's Comprehensive Plan recommended by the Planning Commission is now being considered by the City Council. A Council decision on the Plan is expected in the next few months. To provide for timely consideration of associated changes in the City's development regulations, including the land use zoning map, the City staff has proposed consideration of a variety of development code amendments, including the zoning change (also known as a "rezone") described above.

Olympia's pending update of its Comprehensive Plan and the proposed Future Land Use map in particular, now being reviewed by the City Council, would designate the long-term land use of the Capitol View blocks bounded by Eastside Street, Pear Street, 8th Avenue, and 7th Avenue SE as

“Professional Offices and Multi-family Housing.” The draft Plan states that, “This designation accommodates a wide range of offices, services, limited retail uses specifically authorized by the applicable zoning district, and moderate-to-high density multifamily housing in structures as large as four stories.”

The City’s development code describes the PO/RM District as “intended to (a) Provide a transitional area, buffering residential areas from more intensive commercial uses. Development within this district should be compatible with residential uses and generate low vehicular traffic characteristic of less intrusive uses [and] (b) Provide for a compatible mix of office, moderate- to high-density residential, and small-scale commercial uses, in order to provide opportunities for people to live, work, and recreate in a pedestrian-oriented area.” For comparison, the CS-H District “is intended to (a) Allow limited commercial services that supplement or enhance activities on the capitol campus, not large-scale retail sales for regional markets; (b) Allow high-density multifamily residences near the chief employment centers such as the Downtown Business District, the Capitol Campus, and the central waterfront; [and] (c) Be located where high land values and public necessity warrant this type of development.” OMC 18.06.020(B).

From early in the 1960s until 1981 much of the area between Plum Street and Eastside Street was zoned as “Commercial Services - General.” In 1981 zoning changes in this area gradually eroded this general designation until only two blocks remained in the slightly more restrictive “Commercial Services - High Density” designation. Those two blocks are occupied by two office buildings, known as Capitol View 1 and 2, which are leased to the State of Washington.

These five acres are bordered on the north by a Residential Mixed- Use zone composed of housing and small offices, on the east by Residential 6-12 units per acre (duplex) zoning composed primarily of single-family homes, on the south by PO/RM zoned lands including offices, the City’s Justice Center, and parking for the Capitol View buildings, and on the west by Downtown Business zoning with offices, restaurants and the new Smith Building family shelter. Both the PO/RM and CS-H zones allow large office buildings. The attached summary provides more details for comparing the building size and land use limitations of the two zones.

The PO/RM and CS-H zones are very similar. However, in the staff’s opinion, the PO/RM designation provides a more appropriate designation for this transitional area from downtown to the mixed office and housing area north of Seventh Avenue and to the lower density residential area east of Eastside Street. Although major changes in the use of these two blocks are not expected in the near future, the PO/RM designation would ensure that high traffic uses such as large retail businesses and hotels would not be allowed. In addition, it would limit the height of any new buildings within 100 feet of the lower density neighborhood to the east.

The criteria set forth in Olympia Municipal Code 18.59.050 should be used to evaluate any change in zoning: (A) The rezone is consistent with an approved amendment to the future land use map; (B) The rezone is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; (C) The rezone will maintain the public health, safety, or welfare; (D) The rezone is warranted in order to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, or because of a need for additional property in the proposed land use district classification, or because the proposed zoning classification is appropriate for reasonable development of the subject property; and (E) The rezone will not be materially detrimental to uses or property in the immediate vicinity of the subject property.

Neighborhood/Community Interests:

To date, notice of this proposal has generated minimal interest. On May 22, 2014, City staff hosted a combined public information meeting regarding the four pending zoning map changes. Two people attended to learn more about this specific proposal, but did not express strong support or objections.

Options:

1. Recommend that zoning of the Capitol View blocks be changed from “Community Services - High Density” to “Professional Office / Residential Multi-family.”
2. Recommend that the Capitol View blocks remain in ‘Community Service - High Density’ zone designation.

Financial Impact:

None. Consideration of this change is part of the budget for Comprehensive Plan update.