



Planning Commission

Recommendation to City Council on Henderson Park Zoning

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Title

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Recommended Action

Move to recommend to City Council that Henderson Park area remain in Commercial Services (CS-H) zoning designation and that any future zoning criteria reflect that the CS-H category is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's General Commercial designation.

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 Henderson Park area from Commercial Services - High Density to General Commercial land use zoning?

Staff Contact:

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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 Henderson Park area south of the Henderson Boulevard / Interstate 5 interchange as "General

Commercial.” The draft Plan states that, “This designation provides for commercial uses and activities which are heavily dependent on convenient vehicle access but which minimize adverse impact on the community, especially on adjacent properties having more restrictive development characteristics. The area should have safe and efficient access to major transportation routes. Additional "strip" development should be limited by filling in available space in a way that accommodates and encourages pedestrian activity.”

The City’s development code describes the General Commercial District as “intended to (a) Provide for those commercial uses and activities which are heavily dependent on convenient vehicular access; (b) Encourage the location of such uses on sites having safe and efficient access to major transportation routes; (c) Discourage extension of "strip" development by filling in available space in areas where substantial auto-oriented commercial development already exists; (d) Provide development standards which enhance efficient operation of these districts, and lead to more pedestrian-oriented development; [and] (e) Achieve minimum adverse impact on the community, especially on adjacent properties having more restrictive development characteristics.” 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).

The Henderson Park area was placed in the CS-H category in 1964. Nonetheless, it remained undeveloped until the last few years when a commercial “binding site plan” was approved. The developer has constructed a roundabout at the interchange, a public trail through the site, and a private driveway and utilities to serve four commercial lots. A hotel has been proposed on the largest lot.

These nine acres are bordered on the northwest by Interstate 5, on the northeast by Henderson Boulevard and the interchange, on the east by the City’s Watershed Park (an open space park) and on the southeast and south by single-family developments. In general, these single-family areas are ‘buffered’ from the site by forested slopes and changes in elevation.

The GC and CS-H zones are very similar. The GC zone generally allows a broader range of land uses, while the CS-H zone allows larger buildings. In the staff’s opinion, the CS-H designation is the more appropriate designation for this area. The binding site plan (bsp) approval was based on the current CS-H zoning. (A ‘bsp’ is a form of commercial development approval that includes provisions for dividing the ownership. For example, in this case it includes a tree tract and provisions for the private driveway to be shared by all four commercial lots.) Instead of significantly changing the zoning of the site to allow uses that may not be appropriate in this location (such as light industry, warehousing, and general retail uses), the staff believes the CS-H zone should be refined to achieve a category that better provides for neighborhood-supportive services. (Note, should City staff’s recommendations regarding other rezones be approved, this site might be the only remaining CS-H zone in Olympia.) See the attached summary for a comparison of the zones, and to consider such opportunities.

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, except for communications with the owner of the four lots, 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. One person attended to learn more about this specific proposal, but did not express strong support or objections.

Options:

1. Recommend that zoning of Henderson Park site be changed from “Community Services - High Density” to “General Commercial.”
2. Recommend that the Henderson Park site remain in ‘Community Service - High Density’ zone designation; and that any future zoning criteria provide that the CS-H zone is considered consistent with the General Commercial designation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Financial Impact:

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