



Planning Commission

Smith Lake Rezone

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Title

Smith Lake Rezone

Recommended Action

Move to recommend to the Hearing Examiner that the requested rezone is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan; alternate recommendation of Residential - 4 Chambers Basin District (R-4CB) for applicant parcels and adjacent parcels in vicinity to City limit boundary lines.

Report

Issue:

Whether to make a recommendation to the Hearing Examiner regarding the proposed rezone's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Olympia has received an application to change the zoning of three parcels in the vicinity of the 4900 block of Normandy Drive SE from Residential 4-8 Units per Acre (R 4-8) to Residential - 4 Units per Acre (R-4). Upon review, City of Olympia staff is recommending an alternate zone change to Residential - 4 Chambers Basin District (R-4CB), including adjacent parcels to the north, south and east. This proposal will be considered by the Olympia Hearing Examiner at a public hearing before a recommendation is made to the City Council. The City's code provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation regarding the proposal's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Casey Schaufler, Assistant Planner, Community Planning & Development

Background and Analysis:

On April 1, 2021, Blackbird Smith Lake, LLC submitted a request to change the zoning for three parcels totaling 49.16 acres from Residential 4-8 Units per Acre (R 4-8) to Residential - 4 Units per Acre (R-4).

The site is located in the southeast corner of the City and was annexed in 2006 under Ordinance 6423. Use in the area is predominantly residential with recreational trails on the eastern border.

Parts of the region were under a development moratorium from 2008 through 2012 due to high groundwater and surface flooding. In 2012, Thurston County adopted the R-4CB zone, previously adopted by the City of Olympia in 2008, in order to rezone the parcels in the Urban Growth Area to the immediate west of this proposal's subject parcels. The parcels in question are now surrounded by the zone R-4CB and share similar critical area issues.

A map of the area showing the proposed rezone (Attachment 1) and a summary of the zoning categories in question (Attachment 3) provide further context for the proposal.

The Proposal

City staff recommends to rezone to the unique Residential - 4 Chambers Basin District (R-4CB) zone that takes into consideration the challenge of the applicant to develop their subject parcels at density consistent with the Comprehensive Plan due to underlying hydrologic concerns specific to the Chambers Basin area.

City staff also recommend the inclusion of ten additional parcels in the geographic area, adding an additional 68.8 acres for a total of 117.96 acres for consideration as rezone to R-4CB.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

Rezoning these parcels from R-4-8 to R-4CB appears to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goal of providing a variety of housing choices based on the geographic characteristics of the area. *"Low-Density Neighborhoods. This designation provides for low-density residential development...ranging from twelve units per acre to one unit per five acres depending on environmental sensitivity of the area. Specific zoning and densities are to be based on the unique characteristics of each area with special attention to stormwater drainage and aquatic habitat."* Appendix A, Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed rezone appears to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goal of responding to the area's history of high water table and stormwater drainage challenges as described in policy PN1.1 states, *"Administer development regulations which protect environmentally sensitive areas, drainage basins, and wellhead areas."*

The proposal meets the requirements of OMC 18.59.055 that zoning districts correspond to future land use map designations in the Comprehensive Plan. Attachment 3 illustrates the location of the proposed rezone falling within an area identified for Low Density Neighborhoods. Both the existing R-4-8 and proposed R-4CB zoning districts fall within the Low Density Neighborhood area. It further meets requirements by resulting in a district that is compatible with the adjoining Chambers Basin zoning districts.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

A neighborhood meeting was held on June 17, 2021. The neighborhood meeting only considered rezone of the applicant's three parcels. Neighbors of the proposed rezone site expressed concerns regarding impacts from increased traffic and environmental impacts of future development.

City staff has corresponded with adjacent homeowners and occupants within the City of Olympia, the Urban Growth Area, and the City of Lacey. This correspondence largely reflects concerns raised at the neighborhood meeting.

Options:

1. Recommend to the Hearing Examiner that the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Recommend to the Hearing Examiner that the proposal is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Recommend that the Hearing Examiner proceed without the recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Financial Impact:

No direct impacts on City finances. Change in zoning may affect property values in the area and, upon future development, are likely to result in different demands for public services.

Attachments:

Zoning Map
Rezone Criteria Excerpt
Zone Comparison
Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map