



March 24, 2016

“Bickford Landing” IECO #07-0435
A Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Concurrent Rezone Request

PROJECT NARRATIVE

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Description of Proposal:

This request is for a comprehensive plan amendment with concurrent rezone from Business Park to High Density Residential, 24+ units per acre.

The site, “Bickford Landing”, is a 3.36 acre parcel which fronts on Bickford Avenue just 120 feet north of 62nd Place SE. The property is 906 feet long by 162 feet wide, with the narrow dimension on Bickford. The ‘back’ 440 feet are unusable due to a wetland and steep slopes. This back area slopes east towards the wetland, while the majority of the site slopes west towards Bickford Avenue.

The site is narrow and small; not large enough for commercial development. The deep building setbacks required for Business Park zoned property abutting residentially zoned property reduce the usable space on the site, making it economically unfeasible for the allowed multifamily use, which must occur in conjunction with commercial uses of the site. The topography of the site also presents problems when trying to design a commercial use into the site. The large grade difference from where the access is to the useable portion of the site requires excessive grading, for the commercial building size.

The property is currently designated and zoned Business Park. North of the site is a large area also designated and zoned Business Park. South of the site is a narrow parcel (105 feet wide) which is Medium Density Residential and south of that is unincorporated land designated for single family use. This change would place High Density Residential zoning between the existing residential uses to the south, and the commercial (BP) uses to the north. As such, the proposed change would provide a good transition between the lower density multiple and single family residential uses and the commercial uses. The development of this project would also

bring utilities and access to the medium density residential properties to the south further allowing for more affordable housing in the Snohomish area.

The project would be a 55 plus project (55 years old plus). Affordable housing would be incorporated in the housing mix. This is a sector of the population is currently under served in the Snohomish City Area.

The property is next to Bickford Landing is Snohomish Station, a large commercial complex, with restaurants, food shopping and other amenities. With the close proximity of Snohomish Station, most of the residents could walk to do their shopping which takes the burden of driving from many of the residences.

The comprehensive plan encourages projects of this type, as discussed below.

Growth Management Act Analysis:

Following is an analysis of how the project complies with the Growth Management Act. We provide the relevant citations, and then our analysis. GMA language is provided in *italics*; our comments follow in standard script.

Growth Management Act.

In Washington State, comprehensive plans are directed by the Growth Management Act (GMA), Chapter 36.70A RCW. GMA provides a context and specific requirements for jurisdictions planning under the act. This context is outlined in the framework planning goals contained in RCW 36.70A.020, as follows:

*1. **Urban growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*

The current comprehensive plan designation of the site is Business Park, recognizing that the site is suited to urban development. The proposal is consistent with this goal because it places multifamily use where adequate public facilities and services exist. These include water and sewer lines, and bus transit service.

*2. **Reduce sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.*

The change from Business Park to High Density Residential would maintain an efficient, high density use of the land, and prevent sprawl. This comprehensive plan amendment will allow residential development of this site at its highest density, without the need to incorporate commercial uses. The building setbacks imposed on the property under the BP zone prohibit a full, efficient use of the site. The setbacks from the south property line are 50 feet under the BP zone; those would drop to a maximum of 10 feet under the High Density Residential zone. City of Snohomish code section 14.210.230(C)(2) defining setbacks for Business Park zoned property reads:

From all other property lines forming the perimeter development: a. Adjacent to nonresidential land use designations: Ten (10) feet. b. Adjacent to residential land use

designations: A visual screen and a setback of not less than fifty (50) feet in depth shall be provided.

The proposed re-designation and rezone would therefore help in the reduction of sprawl by allowing increased residential density where it can best and most appropriately be accommodated.

3. *Transportation.* *Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.*

Bickford Avenue is a mass transit corridor, with the nearest existing bus stop 120 feet south of the site at 62nd Place SE. (Stop #2988). The proposal would support this goal by placing multiple residential use next to a transit line.

4. *Housing.* *Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.*

As a 55 plus Housing project with low income units available, this proposal implements this GMA goal. The City of Snohomish housing stock is primarily single family detached homes; this proposal would provide the variety of housing types sought.

Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is an association of cities, towns, counties, ports, and state agencies that serves as a forum for developing policies and making decisions about regional growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation issues in the central Puget Sound region that includes King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. PSRC is designated under federal law as the Metropolitan Planning Organization and under state law as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the four-county area.

PSRC's Vision 2040 is a shared strategy for moving the region toward a sustainable future according to the following framework goals:

Environment. *The region will care for the natural environment by protecting and restoring natural systems, conserving habitat, improving water quality, reducing greenhouse gas 4-i Introduction emissions and air pollutants, and addressing potential climate change impacts. The region acknowledges that the health of all residents is connected to the health of the environment. Planning at all levels should consider the impacts of land use, development patterns, and transportation on the ecosystem.*

This goal is implemented by the proposal by providing high density residential use next to a mass transit corridor. This would enable future occupants to utilize mass transit to access services and amenities instead of depending on their gas guzzling, carbon emitting cars.

Development Patterns. *The region will focus growth within already urbanized areas to create walkable, compact, and transit-oriented communities that maintain unique local character. Centers will continue to be a focus of development. Rural and natural resource lands will continue to be permanent and vital parts of the region.*

Again, high density residential use next to a mass transit corridor is consistent with this goal. The site is located immediately adjacent to Business Park zoned property so that future occupants will have a pedestrian connection to those uses and amenities.

Housing. *The region will preserve, improve, and expand its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident. The region will continue to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.*

By providing affordable housing for seniors, the proposal implements this goal.

Transportation. *The regional will have a safe, cleaner, integrated, sustainable, and highly efficient, multimodal transportation system that supports the regional growth strategy, promotes economic and environmental vitality, and contributes to better public health.*

The proposal is supportive of this goal in as much as it places high density residential use next to a bus line.

Comprehensive Plan Analysis

Following we provide an analysis of how the Goals and Policies found in the City of Snohomish 2015 Comprehensive Plan support this proposal. We provide the relevant citations, and then our analysis. Comprehensive Plan language is provided in *italics*; our comments follow in standard script.

Land Use Map:

In addition to allowances for multi-family development in all commercial designations, the City has designated a number of relatively small areas specifically for development of multi-family uses of varying densities, generally in the vicinity of primary transportation corridors or commercial designations. Permitted densities range from 12 units per acre to 24 units per acre. The exception is the Pilchuck District designation which has no maximum density. Lands designated Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential total 184 acres, little of which is vacant. According to the 2012 Buildable Lands Report, most of the multi-family capacity, estimated at 671 units, is in the commercial designations.

This citation indicates that little of the High Density Residentially designated land is vacant. This implies that there is a need for more High Density Residential land. Multifamily residential use is allowed on Business Park zoned property such as this site, but requires that it be in conjunction with commercial uses. On this property, however, neither a mixed use nor straight multifamily development is financially feasible because the buildable envelope is too narrow once the 50 foot Business Park zone building setbacks are applied to it.

LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL LU 2: *Manage growth and community change in accordance with the values and vision of the Snohomish community of residents, land owners, and business people, and consistent with the Growth Management Act.*

LU 2.3: *Residential densities. Evaluate options for increasing district-wide residential densities where it will not have a detrimental effect on infrastructure and existing neighborhoods and where adequate accommodations are made for public spaces and pedestrian facilities.*

This comprehensive plan amendment will allow increased intensity residential development of this site. As indicated earlier, the building setbacks imposed on the property under the Business Park zone prohibit a full, efficient use of the site. The setbacks from the south property line are 50 feet under the Commercial zone; those would drop to 10 feet under the High Density Residential zone. The change in designation from commercial to High Density Residential increases compatibility with the Medium Density Residential use to the south. The site is already served by the necessary urban infrastructure.

GOAL LU 5: *Accommodate a range of housing types and residential densities to provide living options for the spectrum of ages, lifestyles, and economic segments of the City's population.*

MF 5.1: Density range. *Provide a range of density options for multi-family development types.*

Adding additional High Density Residentially designated land increases the density options.

MF 5.2: Multi-family location. *Medium and high density development should be located near public amenities in order to provide easy access.*

The large Business Park zoned properties north of the site provide a public amenity within walking distance. Mass transit in Bickford Avenue provides easy access to other amenities such as Blackmans Lake and historic downtown Snohomish.

MF 5.3: Multi-family access. *Design of multi-family development should provide clear and convenient pedestrian access to the public sidewalk. Buildings rather than the parking area should be the predominant appearance of the site.*

This is a design criteria which can be met with this project.

MF 5.4: Transitional land use. *Multi-family designations may be used to provide a transition between areas of differential intensity of land use where existing or future adjacent land uses will not compromise the health or quality of life for multi-family residents.*

The proposal provides a land use transition between the existing Medium Density Residential use to the south and the Business Park use to the north.

GOAL LU 16: *Encourage higher density residential development in appropriate locations.*

Land Use PD 16.2: *Discourage low-intensity uses. Except in areas identified for single-family dwellings and townhomes, discourage inefficient use of land through low-rise, low-density residential development.*

This comprehensive plan amendment will allow residential development of this site at its highest density. The building setbacks imposed on the property under the commercial zone prohibit a

full, efficient use of the site. The setbacks from the south property line are to be 50 feet under the Business Park zone; those would drop to 10 feet under the High Density Residential zone.

GOAL HO 1: *Quality housing available to all economic sectors of the community and those with special needs.*

HO 1.1: *Housing types. Plan for a wide variety of housing types, sizes, and densities to provide housing and home-ownership opportunities to a range of ages and income levels.*

As a senior housing project which will include affordable housing, this goal is served.

HO 1.3: Low-income incentives. *Provide incentives to public and private non-profit organizations for low-income housing projects, including density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, waiver of review and utility connection fees, and donation or longterm lease of land.*

The proposal is a senior housing project which will include affordable housing. This type of project is made possible by this policy. Encouraging this type of project is the reason this policy was adopted. The comprehensive plan amendment requested makes this kind of project possible on this site.

HO 1.4: Location. *Increase opportunities and capacity for affordable housing close to employment, education, shopping, public services, and public transit.*

As described above, this comprehensive plan amendment makes development of this site as a multifamily project possible. The proposal is for senior house with affordable units available. The proposal is located next to a transit line as well as commercially zoned property. As such, this proposal implements policy HO 1.4.

HO 1.6: Fair and equal access. *Support the principle that fair and equal access to housing is available to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, familial status, source of income, or disability.*

As a senior house project with affordable units, this project implements HO 1.6.

HO 1.9: Concentrations. *Avoid actions that result in local concentrations of low-income and special needs housing.*

There is no other similar housing located nearby, hence this goal is met.

GOAL HO 2: *Achieve a diversity of housing types and densities to accommodate the spectrum of housing needs and preferences in the community, while recognizing that the primary form of housing stock will remain singlefamily.*

HO 2.1: Market demand. *Designate adequate land for various housing types and densities to match market demand, while ensuring that adequate capacity is available for a variety of housing opportunities.*

There is a need for more multifamily land; more senior housing; more affordable housing. This site cannot be used for those purposes without this comprehensive plan designation amendment.

GOAL HO 3: *Promote the design and scale of new residential development that will foster neighborhoods with stability, vitality, and character.*

HO 3.3: New development. *New development should enhance and be compatible with its surrounding neighborhood.*

The proposed change would provide a better transition between the existing Business Park zoned properties to the north and the medium density and single family zoned properties to the south.

GOAL TR I: *Develop an integrated and balanced transportation system in Snohomish that provides safe, efficient, and reliable multimodal transportation and improves the system's environmental outcomes.*

TR 22: Land use planning. *Plan for land use densities and mixed-use development patterns that encourage walking, biking and transit use in designated areas.*

This comprehensive plan amendment will allow residential development of this site at its highest density. It will allow this uniquely urban project to be constructed, which will provide senior housing with affordable units adjacent to retail amenities and next to a bus line.

SEPA Discussion

This proposal is a non-project action; changing the comprehensive plan and zoning designations for a parcel of land. The impacts are therefore all “on paper”; there are no physical environmental impacts associated with this proposal. This change, however, enables a different form of development of the property than previously allowed. The current designation is a more intense designation: it allows the site to be developed for either commercial use or a mix of commercial and multifamily use. The instant request would continue to allow multifamily, but disallow commercial. As such, the impacts to the site and vicinity would theoretically be lessened by virtue of this change. From a practical standpoint, however, this change would allow for smaller building setbacks from the south property line. As such, the site could be more intensely developed for residential use with the approval of the requested re-designation. Since this site is located on a bus line, and all urban infrastructure is available to the site, this represents a net positive for the community by placing density where it utilizes the least amount of resources. This request is also unique in that a plan to provide senior (55+) housing with some affordable units is herein expressed. This represents a special, positive impact to the community.

A SEPA checklist is provided with this submittal. The checklist includes the standard sections, plus the non-project action section.

Public Health, Safety and Welfare Discussion

The proposed change reduces the intensity of development type allowed on this site; from commercial to high density residential. This is beneficial to the medium density residential property located just south of the site, and the single family properties located south of that, because it will provide a transition zone, which is commonly recognized as a benefit.

The proposal will provide housing for seniors, including those with lower incomes. This is a need in the community not being adequately provided for.

The proposal is located where bus lines, adequate road systems, sewer and water lines, and other urban infrastructure already exists. The site is located near Snohomish Station and a bus ride from historic downtown Snohomish; Blackmans Lake; and Everett, allowing future residents access to local amenities. Vehicular access onto the highway is at a safe location.

The proposal will allow the development of a property which is otherwise difficult to use, resulting in an increased tax base; providing customers for nearby retail stores; and providing homes for people who need them. Jobs will be provided by the construction of the site, and future maintenance of the property.

The project can be constructed without negative impact to the environment. The wetland at the back of the site will be preserved. The new homes will utilize less energy and will be constructed from safer materials than older homes. The future occupants will be seniors, who drive less and utilize much of the public infrastructure at lower rates than others.

For these reasons, the proposal serves the public health, safety and welfare.