

June 15, 2015

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Review of Planning Commission recommendations on the 2015 annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPA) as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan work program.

STAFF CONTACT

Paul Inghram, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager, 452-4070
Nicholas Matz, AICP, Senior Planner, 452-5371
Department of Planning and Community Development

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Growth Management Act:

The Growth Management Act states that comprehensive plans may be amended no more frequently than once per year (with limited exceptions) so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be considered. Bellevue's annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment work program includes privately-initiated amendment proposals that have advanced into the full review process.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

Action (seeking Council direction as outlined under Alternatives)

Discussion

Information

On June 15 Commission Chair Laing has been invited to present the Commission's recommendations and staff will provide a brief overview of the proposal. At Council's direction, staff will prepare ordinances for consideration. Action is tentatively scheduled for July 20.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS In 2015 the City received two requests for privately-initiated, site-specific CPAs. See Attachment B.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Review Schedule

The state limits amendments to local comprehensive plans to no more than once a year, except in limited circumstances. The City's annual amendment process typically occurs from January to about November each year, putting it out of sequence with this year's major Comprehensive Plan Update. To meet the state requirement, the Council agreed to accelerate the annual amendment process to fit within the timing of the major update, while continuing to follow all the necessary steps to allow for public review and for the applicants to have a fair opportunity to address their requests as required in the Land Use Code.

Bellevue's annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment process for privately-proposed applications consists of two steps:

- 1) Conducting Threshold Review of the list of applications submitted to determine which proposed amendments to initiate into the annual work program; and

2) Conducting detailed Final Review of the merits of each proposed amendment included in the work program.

At Threshold Review Council directs whether the privately-proposed amendment should be included in the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment work program for further review this year. Amendment proposals not included in the work program receive no further study. The Council's decision to include an amendment in the work program is a decision that the proposal warrants further review in accordance with LUC Section 20.30I.140 Threshold Review Decision Criteria.

On April 20, 2015 the City Council directed the application for Final Review following Threshold Review of the privately-initiated St. Luke's Lutheran Church Comprehensive Plan Amendment without geographic expansion, and directed the Public Storage Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) as geographically expanded.

In the second step, the Final Review process, the Planning Commission evaluates the proposed amendment, and the proposal undergoes analysis using LUC Section 20.30I.150 along with an environmental review and determination.

State Environmental Policy Act

The Environmental Coordinator for the City of Bellevue determined that the 2015 annual CPA site-specific amendments will not result in any probable, significant adverse environmental impacts. A threshold determination of non-significance (DNS) was issued on April 23, 2015.

Decision Criteria for CPAs

The Planning Commission may recommend and the City Council may approve, or approve with modifications, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan if Final Review Decision Criteria from Section 20.30I of the Land Use Code are met. The Commission's conclusions are detailed in the attached Planning Commission Transmittals for each CPA.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church CPA

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** (6-0) of the St. Luke's Lutheran Church proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan map designation on this 4.3-acre site from Single Family-Medium (SF-M) to Multifamily-Medium (MF-M). The Planning Commission Transmittal is included in Attachment A.

This site is located on Bellevue Way NE, and is developed with a church and building for associated uses and an existing internal women's shelter, existing parking, stormwater detention areas and open space. It has been a church for a number of years, with a stated twenty-five year history of service to host organizations that serve the needs of the homeless in the region.

The site is zoned single family, while adjacent on three sides are existing multifamily housing and office uses zoned multifamily and office, respectively. The fourth side is Bellevue Way and across that street are existing single family housing.

The applicant's stated purpose is to "increase opportunities for affordable housing to serve and practice inclusivity for all people and to seek partnerships to encourage and build economic diversity."

The Commission concluded that the proposed amendment is directly responsive to Comprehensive Plan policy supporting infill development:

- it addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city regarding the land use role that religious institutions have sought in providing affordable housing;
- it addresses the significantly changed condition of the evolving role for religious institutions in neighborhoods around their community-based missions that was not anticipated by the plan—that need to be addressed for the plan to function as an integrated whole;
- the proposal is suitable for development with adjacent land use and the surrounding development pattern; and
- it demonstrates a public benefit by addressing a growing need for affordable housing and roles that non-traditional providers play.

Public Storage CPA

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** (6-0) of the Public Storage proposal to amend the Comprehensive Plan map designation on this 2.9-acre site from Office Limited Business (OLB) to Light Industrial (LI). The Commission also recommends a condition be attached to any subsequent rezone action that would limit the permitted uses of the site to warehouse and storage services, consistent with the current use. The Planning Commission Transmittal is included in Attachment B.

This site and the immediate surrounding area of the Richards Valley Subarea is a mix of Office-Limited Business, Light Industrial and Multifamily-Medium land use designations and existing land uses in this area roughly between Bellefields Office Park, I-405, SE 8th Street and the Mercer Slough. In several cases the current uses are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use designations. Much of this area is also environmentally-constrained. The OLB-designated sites in this area were established in 1981.

The proposed amendment is located on 118th Avenue SE, south of the SE 8th Street park and ride facility. Site uses include the existing Public Storage mini-warehouse and storage facility.

The applicant's stated purpose is to "reconcile the existing zoning designation (which causes the existing use to be nonconforming) with the current and long-term future use of the site, which will allow Public Storage to invest capital in aesthetic and structural improvements to the building and site and decrease impacts on the Mercer Slough."

As directed from Threshold Review the Commission considered expansion of the geography of this proposal to include other property to the north of Public Storage. Davey Tree and a third, now vacant, property that was previously used for solid waste disposal and recycling vehicle storage are on these parcels. Although these properties currently contain light industrial-type uses, Commissioners acknowledged a desire to understand the potential impact on Mercer Slough of the full range of light industrial uses that could be permitted. The Commission ultimately declined to expand the proposal to include these adjacent properties, concerned that

potentially allowing light industrial uses onto the larger, seven acre-plus designation would then be inconsistent with Plan intent.

The Commission concluded that the proposed amendment:

- is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goal for the Richards Valley Subarea, to develop (and redevelop) areas designated for light industrial uses with sensitivity to the natural constraints of the sites;
- addresses the interests and changed needs of the entire city by accommodating light industrial uses;
- addresses significantly changed conditions that call into question the appropriate designation for this site and area;
- demonstrates that the site is suitable for redevelopment in this area in consideration of Environmental Element policy and with a rezone restriction to limit redevelopment to the current use; and
- demonstrates a public benefit by accommodating a long-time use in a manner consistent with policy and regulation.

PUBLIC HEARING

A Final Review public hearing with the Planning Commission was held on May 13, 2015. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Weekly Permit Bulletin and in *The Seattle Times* on April 23, 2015. Public testimony is summarized here:

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Public comment letters were submitted by the applicant and by its partner Imagine Housing in support of the proposal and the church's longstanding roles in social advocacy. Two parties of record submitted comments, and provided testimony at the hearing addressing concerns about pedestrian safety in the area due to high traffic volumes and about traffic increases in an area already experiencing congestion. These are included in the Electronic Document Library materials.

Other public testimony at the hearing was provided by the head of student services at the Bellevue School District and a counselor at Newport High School. They noted in their testimony that the district's homeless student population and its ability to have a safe and suitable learning environment is directly affected by a lack of affordable housing on the Eastside in this growing school district. Efforts such as this application should continue to be encouraged and developed.

Public Storage

Public comment letters were submitted by the applicant and on behalf of the applicant by the law firm McCullough, Hill and Leary PS. The applicant's letter detailed their reasons for seeking redevelopment but noted the existing zoning, which does not allow the use, makes that infeasible. The law firm's letter emphasized that the application should not be geographically expanded and that the proposal was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Richards Valley Subarea Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to return with proposed Ordinances approving the CPAs as recommended by the Planning Commission, as part of the overall Comprehensive Plan Update.
2. Direct staff to return with proposed Ordinances approving the CPAs with modifications, as part of the overall Comprehensive Plan Update.
3. Direct staff to return with proposed Ordinances denying the CPAs, as part of the overall Comprehensive Plan Update.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Planning Commission Transmittal for St. Luke's Lutheran Church CPA
- B. Planning Commission Transmittal for Public Storage CPA
- C. Map of 2015 CPA locations

AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT LIBRARY

The application file materials, public comments, staff recommendation and other related materials are located in the Council Document Library.