

PLANNING COMMISSION WRITTEN COMMUNICATION



October 4, 2017

Planning Commission Meeting

Cullen, Terry

From: Roberts, Karin
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2017 12:24 PM
To: Robert Zeinemann; PlanningCommission
Subject: RE: Planning Commission Opening/Application

Hi Robert,

Thank you for following up on your Planning Commission application. The opening on the commission has not yet been filled.

The applications have been forwarded to both the Council and Staff Liaisons to the Planning Commission. They are currently in the process of reviewing them. All applicants will be notified, whether they are selected to continue with an interview or not. We will be in touch with you soon.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Karin

Karin Roberts, CMC | Deputy City Clerk
City of Bellevue | www.bellevuewa.gov | P: 425.452.6806

From: Robert Zeinemann [mailto:robert.zeinemann@uwalumni.com]
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2017 10:27 PM
To: PlanningCommission <PlanningCommission@bellevuewa.gov>; Roberts, Karin <KRoberts@bellevuewa.gov>
Subject: Planning Commission Opening/Application

Hi,
I applied for an opening on planning commission several months ago: I believe it was in June. I never heard anything from Bellevue in return. What is happening? Is the City still reviewing applications?

Robert Zeinemann

McCULLOUGH HILL LEARY, PS

September 19, 2016

The Honorable Stephanie Walter, Chair
City of Bellevue
Planning Commission
PO Box 90012
Bellevue, WA 98009
Email: planningcommission@bellevuewa.gov

VIA Electronic Mail

Re: Eastgate Office Park – 15325 SE 30th Place
Comprehensive Plan Amendment Application

Dear Chair Walter & Planning Commissioners:

On behalf of Eastgate Office Park Property, LLC (“Applicant”), thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the land use designation of its property located at 15325 – 15395 SE 30th Place in the City’s Eastgate neighborhood (“Property”) from an Office to an Office Limited Business designation (“Proposal”).

As the Planning Commission may recall, the Applicant voluntarily deferred their consideration of the substantive merits of the Proposal until the City Council adopted the Eastgate Land Use Code update. As you know, the City Council recently adopted the Eastgate rezone.

We look forward to the Planning Commission’s review of the Proposal. We have provided a short refresher on the Proposal’s compliance with the Land Use Code (“Code”) criteria for adopting Comprehensive Plan amendments to assist with the Planning Commission’s review.

A. The Proposal is Consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies and Addresses the Interests and Changed Needs of the Entire City.

We applaud the City’s vision for Eastgate as a major employment center that promotes economic development through encouraging new, high-quality offices, supports transit-oriented development and enhances the City’s park-like setting by encouraging sustainable design and park connections. The Proposal can help support the City’s vision for Eastgate by, among other items:

- Encouraging office and retail land uses that take advantage of freeway access, transit service and non-motorized transportation alternatives without adversely impacting residential neighborhoods (Policy S-EG-3);
- Improving connectivity within the subarea for pedestrians and bicycles where opportunities exist by integrating land uses, improving roadway safety for all modes of travel, and linking commercial, office, parks, and public spaces with trails and pathways (Policy S-EG-17);

- Providing graceful edges and transitions between more intense development and existing residential lands uses by maximizing the use of existing vegetation and topography to buffer and maintain compatibility between different land uses through land use regulation (Policy S-EG-20); and
- Creating and encouraging an interconnected system of non-motorized trails as part of public and private development within the subarea that will link community amenities, provide recreational opportunities and offer transportation benefits (Policy S-EG-31).

As you can see, the Applicant's vision for the Property aligns well with the City's Eastgate policies. *Attachment A*. If adopted, the Proposal could support the addition of context-sensitive infill office development to help accommodate some of the projected 1.5 million square feet of office demand while still preserving the Property's wooded character and buffer to the adjacent residential uses. This new office may also help support more vibrant retail along 156th Avenue SE.

The Property is also ideally positioned to fulfill the purpose of the new Eastgate office-limited business zoning. The Property has direct and convenient access to I-90 and 148th Avenue SE. The Property is well served by Metro transit, located on SE Eastgate Way, and with the potential for future light rail service once Sound Transit 3 is completed out to Eastgate. The Property's unique transit connectivity will help support the City's vision for a more vibrant Eastgate.

The Proposal would also enhance the City's parks and multi-modal transit networks. The Property is adjacent to Robinswood Park with an existing trail pathway running east to the future Airfield Park and south towards Eastgate Way. However, access to these networks could be improved. If adopted, the Proposal may support enhanced trail connections, including the completion of a missing link to connect Eastgate Way into the regional trail network. This benefits Eastgate by strengthening links between parks and providing more pedestrian and bike pathways. This furthers the "City in a Park" character and serves as a regional benefit to all Eastgate residents.

Finally, the Proposal may also advance the City's sustainability goals by preserving the existing forested character through sensitive, infill office design, supporting sustainable building design through low-impact development and providing ecological micro-habitats for local wildlife.

As shown in the Property's conceptual vision, we believe that the Proposal can become a catalyst site to implement the Eastgate vision for transit-oriented, sustainable office development. The Property is an excellent candidate to support job growth in the Eastgate subarea. For these reasons, the Proposal fully supports the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan vision for Eastgate.

B. The Proposal Addresses Significantly Changed Conditions on the Property.

The Proposal is appropriate now because of significantly changed conditions on the Property. Most importantly, the City has now adopted the Eastgate rezone. This is a major milestone in reshaping the future of Eastgate. The time is right to review the Property's potential role in supporting and implement the City's new vision for a more transit-oriented neighborhood.

Moreover, the Applicant believes there is a significantly changed condition in the market dynamics. In 2010, the City's consultants released a study of development opportunities in the Eastgate corridor ("Spinnaker Report"), which served as a foundation for the Eastgate Citizen's Advisory Committee visioning efforts. Yet, the Spinnaker Report provided scant analysis regarding the Property. At the time, that made sense as the Property's existing buildings had remaining useful economic life since they were built in 1984. As a result, the Property was included in the Eastgate planning study area, but appears to have never been seriously considered as a redevelopment option.

Today, we are nearly eight years removed from the Spinnaker Report. The Property's buildings are now nearly 35 years old and the market conditions better support the potential for redevelopment. In short, the Property presents an opportunity that appears to have been overlooked in the Eastgate process. We understand why the City's Eastgate efforts were prioritized based on the Spinnaker Report. Yet, in the intervening seven years, these efforts have overlooked the significantly changing conditions on the Property that occurred. Where it once made sense to assume the Property would not be a likely candidate to redevelop, that logic no longer holds. If the Eastgate effort was to start anew today, it is clear that the Property would be a viable project site due to the aging existing buildings and the improved market conditions. Thus, the Proposal provides an opportunity to better align the Property's land use designation with the new Eastgate Comprehensive Plan vision in order to support implementation of the City's land use goals.

C. The Proposal is Suitable for Development with Adjacent Land Uses and Surrounding Development Patterns and the Proposed Future OLB Zoning.

The Proposal also fits with the surrounding Eastgate land uses and development patterns.

Eastgate Vicinity Map



To the west, south and east, the Property is surrounded by commercial uses. The Proposal will support and encourage future retail and service uses along 156th Avenue SE by adding office density. The Proposal supports enhanced trail connections along the Property boundaries that will help connect both residents and employees to the retail uses, parks and transit throughout Eastgate. These outcomes are both consistent with the City's adopted Eastgate vision (e.g., Policy S-EG-3).

The Proposal also respects the adjacent single-family residential uses to the north by contemplating transition buffers between uses and deep vegetation screening (e.g., Policy S-EG-20). Together with the Code's development standards for the OLB zoning designations proposed in the Eastgate rezone, including transition areas, landscaping and design guidelines, this will help ensure a graceful transition between the Property's potential office uses and residential uses to the north.

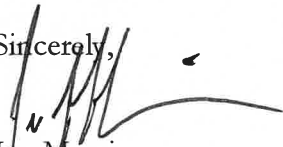
Lastly, the Proposal is consistent with the City's proposed Eastgate rezone standards for the OLB zoning designations. The Eastgate Citizen's Advisory Committee recommendations proposed that the new OLB zoning designations provide integrated complexes of office, hotels, eating and drinking establishments and retail sales within walking distance. The Proposal helps achieve those goals through infill development that will also promote more retail vibrancy along 156th Avenue SE.

The Proposal also is aligned with the proposed OLB zoning design guidelines, which calls for integrating the natural environment through sustainability and promoting architectural compatibility. As noted in the visioning concepts, any potential redevelopment here will reduce urban sprawl by adding context-sensitive infill office space that uses low-impact development techniques such as incorporating natural landscaping, water recycling and energy conservation. For these reasons, the Proposal is suitable for redevelopment under the potential OLB zoning standards.

D. The Proposal Provides Public Benefits and Enhances the Public Health, Safety and Welfare of the City.

The Proposal provides a public benefit to the City through encouraging implementation of the Eastgate vision. If adopted, the Proposal would help support Eastgate's success as a major transit-oriented development employment center while also enhancing the City's park-like character. Indeed, the Property could be a catalyst site to reflect the Eastgate vision with completed trails between Robinswood Park and Eastgate Way and new employees shopping along 156th Ave SE.

For these reasons and many more, we respectfully request that the Planning Commission recommend adoption of the Proposal. As always, thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ian Morrison

Enclosures: Attachment A, Visioning Concept
cc: Nicholas Matz, Planning & Community Development

