



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
NEIGHBORHOODS, AND STRATEGIC
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 31, 2006
TO: Ray Giometti, Planning Commission Chair
CC: Planning Commission Members
FROM: Rebecca Lind, Planning Manager
STAFF CONTACT: Erika Conkling, Associate Planner x6578
SUBJECT: **Highlands Rezone- Text and Map Amendments**

DESCRIPTION:

Rezoning is proposed for the Highlands Subarea to better implement the current Center Village (CV) Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

- Does the existing zoning in the CV land use designation best implement the vision for this area as stated in the Comprehensive Plan?
- What type of zoning best implements the vision of the CV land use designation?
- How can the City allow flexibility in its zoning regulations to encourage innovation and accommodate changing market forces?
- What can be done to encourage the provision of affordable housing?
- How can the City ensure high quality design in both residential and commercial developments?
- Which areas of the Highlands require a rezone prior to the end of the development moratorium in May?

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

- Create two zones from the existing Center Village (CV) zone: Center Village Core (CV-C) and Center Village Residential (CV-R).
- Allow the CV-C zone as a high intensity, mixed commercial and residential use zone.
- Allow the CV-R zone as a medium density residential zone that allows higher densities with the provision of affordable housing.
- Create the Center Village Flex Bonus District in the CV-R zone, which allows flexibility in development standards and use types for projects over one acre in size.

- Change the R-10 zone to prohibit detached single family homes in the Highlands Subarea.
- Put design regulations in place to guide the development of the Highlands into an attractive, compact, urban development.
- Adopt development standards for cottage style development.
- Rezone that part of the Highlands Subarea that is currently designated for CV land use. Existing multifamily and commercial areas should be rezoned as Center Village Core (CV-C) and existing single family and duplex areas should be rezoned as Center Village Residential (CV-R).

BACKGROUND:

In May 2005, the Renton City Council adopted a development moratorium to prevent new development in the Highlands Subarea to give City staff time to conduct a land use study of the area. The moratorium is due to expire on May 14, 2006. New zoning should be in place at the time that the development moratorium expires.

ANALYSIS:

In the area proposed for rezoning, there are currently four zones in place. Three of the zones, Center Village (CV), Residential-10 (R-10), and Residential Multi Family (RMF), are currently implementing zones of the CV land use designation. One of the zones, Commercial Neighborhood (CN), has been mistakenly placed in the CV land use designation, which should be corrected with the recommended change.

There is a clear mandate in the Comprehensive Plan to alter the zoning that implements the CV land use designation. Strategy 319.1 states that the City is to:

Evaluate commercial and residential development standards in the Center Village and replace zoning designation or re-zone with the vision for a Center Village Designation.

City staff has conducted a land use study for the Highlands Subarea and determined that zoning changes are needed to better implement the CV land use designation. At the present time, the Highlands is the only place within Renton's planning area that has been designated for CV land use.

Under the purpose for the CV land use designation, a much different vision is presented for the CV than what now exists in the Highlands. The Center Village should be a pedestrian oriented community with opportunity for residential, commercial, and mixed use redevelopment. Densities should be planned in the medium to high range in order to modify the existing low density suburban land use pattern. Development should be well designed, compact, and transit oriented. Two new zones are proposed to implement the CV designation: the Center Village Core (CV-C) zone and the Center Village Residential (CV-R) zone.

The CV-C zone modifies and replaces the existing CV zone. Land uses are oriented toward creating a vibrant district of mixed commercial and residential uses, located along

Sunset Boulevard. This is the highest density area, with a minimum density of 20 units per acre and a base density of 60 units per acre. Development greater than 60 units per acre is allowed with the provision of affordable housing at a minimum of five units per net acre. Development standards are essentially the same as in the current CV zone, with two exceptions. Parking requirements are tougher in the CV-C zone, requiring structured, underground, or under building parking for residential projects, and disallowing surface parking in the front setback. The Center Residential Bonus District, which allowed bonus density with mixed use and adherence to design standards, has also been eliminated. Design standards are now required with or without a density bonus.

The CV-R zone is a completely new zone, modeled after the existing R-14 zone. Uses are limited to residential uses and those uses that support residential use. One of the major differences between the CV-R and the R-14 zone, though, is that residential uses are further limited in the CV-R zone to only cottages and townhouses. Cottage housing developments have their own set of development standards because the cottage style of development relates to the site in a very different way than traditional residential development. Since the R-14 standards have been successful in building quality townhouse projects in the City, those standards were used for townhouse development in the CV-R zone, with a few minor changes. Changes include requiring a larger lot depth, to prevent the creation of flag lots on the existing deep parcels in the Highlands, and requiring alley access, consistent with the CV vision in the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the standard regulations in place for the CV-R zone, property owners also have the option of participating in the Center Village Flex Bonus District. The Flex District allows three types of bonuses: a density bonus of up to 80 du/acre; a use bonus which allows accessory dwelling units, detached and semi-attached units, and flats (flats only allowed east of Kirkland Ave.); and the ability to vary the underlying development standards. In order to participate in the Flex District, properties must be greater than five acres in size, and must provide affordable housing at the minimum rate of two units per net acre.

Projects in the Flex District would be negotiated between the City and the proponent using two possible processes. One process would be to complete a master plan. Master plans are used to arrange the siting and phasing of projects with multiple buildings on the same site. The purpose of a master plan is to review the project to ensure that it complies with existing City plans and policies. Master planned projects must comply with general criteria to ensure health, safety, and welfare. There are additional criteria proposed for projects in the Highlands Subarea, to ensure that development meets the intent and vision that is created for that district. The second process that could be used to process projects in the Flex District is a Planned Unit Development (PUD). It is the purpose of the PUD to act as a master variance to alter the underlying development regulations. In order to receive PUD approval the plan must demonstrate a public benefit. These two processes could be combined and handled at the same time, or, the master planning could be accomplished first and future builders or developers could work through the detailed PUD work last. Alternately, if there were an approved master plan, the property could be developed under the normal development standards without further processing.

In addition to the underlying development standards in the CV-C and CV-R zone, and the criteria for approval of projects in the Flex District, the entire subarea would be subject to design guidelines. Within the Highlands Subarea, the CV-C zone will be designated as District 'D' and the CV-R zone will be designated as District 'E' in the Urban Design Regulations. With only a few tweaks and alterations, the existing regulations for the downtown and the South Renton neighborhood are proposed to be used.

There will also be a small text amendment that affects the R-10 zone. A portion of the Highlands Subarea zoned R-10 is not in the CV land use designation, but in the Residential Medium Density (RMD) land use designation. During the annual amendment cycle, a comprehensive Plan amendment will be needed to change the land use designation of these areas from RMD to CV. Prior to the adoption of that amendment, it is necessary to prevent the development of new single family homes and duplexes in an area that will eventually be designated for higher intensity development. The proposed code amendment does this by prohibiting the development of detached or semi-attached dwellings in that portion of the R-10 zone that is in the Highlands Subarea.

Based on the proposed zoning text changes, changes have also been proposed to the zoning map as well. Changes proposed in this rezone effort only affect properties the Highlands Redevelopment Core. The Redevelopment Core includes the blocks within the Highlands Subarea that are slated for the most intensive redevelopment effort. The new CV-C zone is proposed to include the commercial development along Sunset and the existing multifamily areas that surround it. The new CV-R zone is proposed to take the place of the residential areas currently characterized by the prevalence of old World War II duplexes. Additional changes to the zoning in the Highlands will be proposed concurrent with the adoption of the Subarea Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: The recommended changes comply with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Strategy 319.1 requires a review of zoning implementation of CV land use policies.

ZONING CONCURRENCY: The proposed rezones and text amendments better implement the purpose of the CV land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

DECISION CRITERIA FOR CHANGE OF ZONE CLASSIFICATION

The proposed rezone must meet the review criteria in RMC 4-9-180F:

- a. *The proposed amendment must meet the review criteria in RMC 4-9-020G; and*
- b. *The property is potentially classified for the proposed zone being requested pursuant to the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan; and*
- c. *At least one of the following circumstances applies*
 - i. *The subject reclassification was not specifically considered at the time of the last area land use analysis and area zoning; or*

- ii. *Since the most recent land use analysis or the area zoning of the subject property, authorized public improvements, permitted private development, or other circumstances affecting the subject property have undergone significant and material change.*

The proposed rezone is mandated by the Comprehensive Plan and meets the above criteria.

CONCLUSION:

Approval of the recommended changes would ensure that zoning in the Highlands Subarea is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use designations for the area. Immediate action will result in the zoning being put in place prior to the expiration of the development moratorium in the Highlands.