AMENDMENT 2006-M-7 – FORMER AQUA BARN SITE

DESCRIPTION:

The tenants of two ± 1.5-acre parcels at the southeast corner of 152nd Avenue SE and the Renton – Maple Valley Highway (SR 169), the former Aqua Barn site, have requested that the City amend its Comprehensive Plan land use designation for this area from Residential Low Density (RLD) to Commercial Corridor (CC), with concurrent Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning. The City has agreed to sponsor this request because of a large eminent annexation that will change the area's zoning from the County's designations to City's designations. The subject site is currently zoned Neighborhood Business (NB) on the County's Zoning Atlas. This zone does not restrict the size of individual uses; rather parcels are restricted by a Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which in this case is 1.0/1.0. Thus, a 3.0-acre site could theoretically support 130,680 square feet of neighborhood business uses.

City staff believes this review should be expanded to also evaluate the land use designation for the two multi-family developed lots to the south because they were part of the original parcel and project reviewed by the County in 1998. These two additional parcels and Tract A associated with them are currently designated Urban Residential, Medium, 4-12 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), by the County.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. What is the appropriate land use designation and zoning for the commercial portion of the former Aqua Barn site fronting on SR 169 (3.02 acres)?

2. What is the appropriate land use designation and zoning for the residential multi-family portions of the former Aqua Barn site (27.22 acres)?

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

Staff is recommending that commercial Parcels 9210 and 9211 of the former Aqua Barn site which front on the Renton – Maple Valley Highway (SR 169) be redesignated on Renton's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map from RLD to CC and that residential Parcels 9209, 9185, and Tract A (open space), be redesignated Residential Medium Density (RMD), also from RLD.

ANALYSIS:

Background: The Aqua Barn site, located in Renton's PAA, has been a historical recreational site for picnicking, swimming, and horseback riding for generations of families both in the immediate Renton area as well as the region. In the late 1990's, the original owners approached King County and sought to change the land use designations and zoning on the 33-acre site. In 1996 the County had proposed rezoning the front ten acres of the site to NB. At that time the applicant had a conditional use permit that allowed a proposed 240-unit lodge.

In 1998, the County proposed reducing the ten-acre portion fronting on SR 169 that was designated Neighborhood Business Center to three acres. The remaining seven acres were to receive their Urban Residential, Medium designation and R-6 zoning that could potentially be increased to R-12 (12 units per gross acre). Under this proposal, approximately 16 acres would eventually be available for residential development at a density of 12 units per gross acre, allowing up to 192 new multi-family units on the site. The proponents, in exchange for this density increase, agreed to set aside the southern steeply sloped 16.3 acres as permanent open space. The resulting average density over the non-commercial portion of the site was estimated to be 6.2 du per gross acre using the King County system and 17.58 du per net acre using Renton's system that would have excluded the steeply sloped open space tract. For the two residential parcels currently under consideration, the average density is now 17.58 du/acre. The City supported this revision. Fewer vehicular trips would be generated with less commercial business, and the steep slope set aside were both seen as positives.

The current review is looking at the five properties that made up the original Aqua Barn site. These include four parcels and one tract: Parcels 9210, 9211, 9209, 9185, and Tract A. The first two, 9210 and 9211, are designated Neighborhood Business Center on the King County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map and zoned NB. Parcels 9209 and 9185 are designated Urban Residential, Medium, 4-12 du/ac on this same exhibit and zoned R-12, 12 du/ac by the County. The northern five acres of Tract A are zoned R-12 and the southern nine acres are zoned R-1. The County allowed the density on Tract A to be transferred to Parcels 9209 and 9185 to the north.

The subject site as well as most of the 340-acre expanded Maplewood Addition Annexation site is currently designated RLD on the Renton's Comprehensive Plan. The City needs to modify its Land Use Map to better reflect the existing land uses in this area. Currently, there is a proposed retail development on the commercially designated parcels fronting on SR 169 that would be jeopardized if the land use designation and zoning are not changed this year.

<u>Commercial Neighborhood:</u> For the purpose of mapping the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) land use designation, areas should have the following characteristics:

1) *Within one-quarter mile of existing and planned residential areas;*

2) *To the extent possible, outside of the trade areas of other small-scale commercial uses offering comparable goods and services; and*

3) *Contiguous to a street no smaller than those classified at the collector level.*

The subject site would appear to meet the mapping criteria for the CN land use designation. Clearly, the subject two commercial parcels are within a quarter mile of existing residential areas that abut the site to the south and east. The subject site is outside the trade areas of other small-scale commercial uses since the nearest commercial area is more than 1.9 miles to the west on the Renton – Maple Valley Highway. Also, the site abuts a major arterial. However, given the high numbers of vehicular passersby and the likelihood that most patrons will arrive by automobile, CN seems inappropriate for this major location between the highway and the area's major north-south connector.

Commercial Neighborhood is implement through the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) zone, which allows uses to have a maximum gross floor area of 5,000 square feet. This is clearly oriented more to neighborhood walk-in uses than those catering to passersby on a major highway and north-south arterial (152nd Ave SE/154th Ave SE/156th Ave SE).

Commercial Corridor: For the purpose of mapping the Commercial Corridor (CC) land use designation, areas should have the following characteristics:

1) *Located on, and having access to, streets classified as principal arterials;*

2) *High traffic volumes; or*

3) *Land use pattern characterized by strip commercial development, shopping centers, or office parks.*

The 200-feet deep 3.0 acres comprised by Parcels 9210 and 9211 are located on the Renton - Maple Valley Highway (SR 169), a designated principal arterial, and have access from it. Also, SR 169 is characterized by high volumes of traffic. The land use pattern in this area, however, is not characterized by strip commercial development, shopping centers, or office parks. Redesignating this area CC seems to be a better alternative than the CN designation since the proposed uses are larger, more community than neighborhood oriented, and most likely would serve a larger sub-regional market area. Also, they are located along a high volume traffic arterial.

Commercial Arterial: For the purpose of mapping Commercial Arterial (CA) zoning, areas should meet the following criteria:

1) *The corridor is served by transit or has transit within one-quarter mile;*

2) *A historical strip commercial urban development pattern predominates;*

3) *Large surface parking lots exist;*

4) *Primary development on the site is located at rear portions of the property with parking in front of the buildings;*

5) *Parcel size and configuration typically is defined by a larger parcel fronting the arterial street with multiple buildings and businesses; and*

6) *The corridor exhibits long block lengths and/or an incomplete grid street network.*

Metro transit currently provides bus service along SR 169 and historically, the Aqua Barn Ranch entertainment complex fronted on the highway. Whether this could be considered historical strip commercial is up to one's interpretation. Large surface parking lots historically existed both on the Aqua Barn site and the Renton Assembly of God church next door has a large surface parking lot that accommodates hundreds of cars. Future development on the three-acre site is anticipated to have parking in front, oriented to the

SR 169 with retail/service uses located towards the back of the site. Until the original Aqua Barn site was subdivided into its current configuration in the late 1990's, it was defined as a larger parcel fronting an arterial with multiple buildings located throughout the site. And, finally, the SR 169 corridor does not exhibit a grid system. Where cross streets exist, they are often hundreds of feet and in some cases miles apart. Therefore, it would appear that the subject 3.0-acre site (Parcels 9210 and 9211) does meet the mapping criteria for Commercial Corridor zoning.

Residential Medium Density: For the purpose of mapping Residential Medium Density (RMD), areas should have access, topography, and adjacent land uses that create conditions appropriate for a variety of unit types including both single-family and multi-family development types.

Policy LU-159 states that RMD designated neighborhoods may be considered for R-14 zoning where a site meets the following criteria:

1) *Adjacent to major arterial(s);*

2) *Adjacent to the Urban Center, Highlands Neighborhood Center, or Commercial Corridor designations;*

3) *Part of a designation totaling over 20 acres (acreage may be in separate ownership);*

4) *Site is buffered from single-family areas or other existing, potentially incompatible uses; and*

5) *Development with the density range and of similar unit type is achievable given environmental constraints.*

The site is adjacent to SR 169 with access from it. If the front site is designated CC, it meets criterion 2 in that it would be adjacent to a CC land use designation. With the inclusion of the 16.3-acre open space tract (Tract A), owned by the homeowners association of Parcel 9209, the rezone area totals more than 20 acres, meeting the intent of criterion 3. Since the density on Tract A was transferred to Parcels 9209, it seems appropriate to include this area in any subsequent rezone. The net density for these three parcels is estimated to be 17.6-du/net acre, slightly less than the maximum density of 18-du/net acre, allowed under the R-14 zone.

In regard to criterion 4, the site abuts a manufactured home park to the east with the nearest single-family area over 600-feet to the east. Neither of these nearby uses are considered incompatible with the existing multi-family developments on these two parcels. The density on these two parcels, as noted above, is ±17.6 units per acre. This density is below the maximum 18 du/net acre allowed in the R-14 zone. If the 14-acre steeply sloped permanent open space set-aside (Tract A) is averaged in, the net density of the resulting 27.22 acres would be slightly more than seven units per acre, somewhat less

the minimum density for this zone. Rezoning Parcels 9209, 9185, and Tract A would appear to generally comply with the criteria for R-14 rezoning set out in Policy LU-159.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS:

The 10.92-acre residential portion of the site has an estimated 192 dwelling units on it at an average density of 17.6 units per acre. This is slightly less than the estimated total of 198 units estimated in 1998 with the transfer of 78 units of the 16.3 acres set aside as permanent open space. Because the site is fully developed, there is no additional capacity left on it.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE:

The proposed rezone of the existing two commercial parcels and the existing two residential parcels on the former Aqua Barn site must meet at least one of the criteria in RMC 4-9-020 G. These rezones would appear to meet the criterion that the change supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan. The adopted Comprehensive Plan vision calls for a diversity of housing types to cater to the variety of needs and wants in the community. It also calls for a commitment to protect environmental quality in the City, which the set-aside of the steeply sloped portions of the site to the so do. And by providing nearby retail and service uses that serve the immediate, as well as the surrounding community, transportation impacts within the City will be reduced.

ZONING CONCURRENCY:

This request complies with the decision criteria for rezones in RMC 4-9-180. It is compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed zoning is consistent with the adopted mapping policies for RMD land use designation. Zoning of the subject parcels and the surrounding neighborhood has not been considered since 1998.

CONCLUSION:

Changing the land use designations for the two commercial zoned parcels fronting on the Renton – Maple Valley Highway (SR 169) from RLD to CC, with concurrent CA zoning, appears to be consistent with relevant mapping criteria and policies. Also, this appears to be the only viable alternative, since the area does not comply with either the CN or Commercial/Office/Residential land use designation mapping criteria.

Changing the land use designation for the two residential zoned parcels abutting and south of the commercial zoned parcels from RLD to RMD, with concurrent R-14 zoning, appears to be consistent relevant mapping criteria and policies.