



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Phyllis K. Macleod, Hearing Examiner *PKM*
Shirley Schultz, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Services *SSS*
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance Request No. 16-1120 - Rezone – December 13, 2016
DATE: November 28, 2016

SUMMARY:

An ordinance rezoning approximately 1.5 acres from “R-2” Single-Family Dwelling District to “C-1” Neighborhood Commercial District to allow construction of 47 apartment units and associated parking for 60 vehicles at the intersection of 29th Street NE and Norpoint Way NE in Northeast Tacoma.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

N/A.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The proposed action would be aligned with the following strategic policy priorities:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Foster a vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.

BACKGROUND:

LPI Holdings, LLC is seeking the rezone of a 1.5 acre parcel of undeveloped property located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Norpoint Way NE and 29th Street NE in Northeast Tacoma. The site sits between the busy arterial Norpoint Way NE and existing townhomes and residences on large lots to the east and south. An apartment building and a day care center are located across Norpoint Way NE from the site and a gas station, mini-mart, and car wash are situated diagonally across the intersection from the property. The surrounding area includes a mix of zoning designations that are the result of a number of rezones over the years. In 2015, *Comprehensive Plan* amendments designated the property on all four corners of the intersection in question as “Neighborhood Commercial.” The requested rezone would implement the new *Comprehensive Plan* designation for the subject property.

The initial project design contains a 47-unit apartment complex with a mix of studio, one, two, and three bedroom units. The construction would comply with the City’s design guidelines governing such things as building layout, landscaping, parking, pedestrian access, and signage. The project would be accessed off of 61st Avenue NE, which would be upgraded to include a sidewalk and stormwater facilities. The complex would serve as a transitional buffer between the busy arterials at this location and the nearby residences.

Two neighbors with homes near the site testified opposing the project. Another neighbor submitted written comments in opposition. The neighbors were concerned with the impacts that more residents would bring to the area, particularly increased traffic. The Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council also opposed the project based on the existing traffic congestion at the intersection of Norpoint Way NE and 29th Street NE. During the peak evening hour, traffic often backs up on 29th Street NE because people are trying to turn left onto Norpoint Way NE. The Applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by a traffic consultant. The City accepted the Traffic Impact Analysis and concluded that the additional traffic impacts generated by the project would be offset by the Applicant modifying the traffic



signal at the intersection. The new design would include a flashing yellow arrow and sign governing turns from 29th Street NE to Norpoint Way NE. The Traffic Impact Analysis demonstrated that this modification would result in a net improvement in the backup on 29th Street NE, even considering the additional traffic from the project. The Recommendation in this case would require the Applicant to make the traffic signal modification as a condition of the rezone.

The apartment development would benefit the public interest by providing housing options for citizens of Northeast Tacoma. The project would participate in the City's affordable housing program by incorporating a percentage of units as affordable housing or by making a payment in lieu of units. The applicant expressed an initial intent to provide housing units. The street adjacent to the site would be enhanced to provide pedestrian and stormwater improvements. Overall, the Hearing Examiner concluded that the project would be a benefit to the public and that the rezone would bring the property into compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. While the traffic concerns at this location are real, the traffic analysis demonstrated that the project would account for the traffic it is adding, as well as provide a small net benefit to traffic flow at the 29th Street NE traffic signal. Accordingly, the Hearing Examiner is recommending approval of the rezone with conditions.

ISSUE:

Whether the requested rezone from R-2 Single-Family Dwelling District to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District should be approved.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could choose to deny the requested rezone, in which case, the apartment project would not be able to move forward at this location.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Hearing Examiner recommends that this rezone be approved, subject to conditions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.