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305 NW Pacific Highway • La Center, WA 98629

May 1, 2017

Clark Board of County Councilors
1300 SW Franklin, Suite 680
Vancouver, WA 98660

Regarding: 2016-2035 La Center Comprehensive Plan: Reasonable Measures to Accommodate Residential Development

Dear County Councilors;

Background

The La Center City Council adopted the “2016-2036 La Center Comprehensive Plan” on March 23, 2016.ⁱ Since adoption, the City has implemented various plan policies to ensure that residential development makes efficient use of land within the La Center City limits. The primary implementation measures the city employed have been to annex land for medium density residential development and to amend the mixed use and medium density regulations to provide additional residential development options at higher densities. These efforts have yielded success and help the city meet its county-mandated target of four (4) residential units per acre. The city has also taken several reasonable measures to meet its goal of providing reasonable employment measures for its current and future citizens.

Measure A: Minimum densities for residential development

The La Center 2016-2036 Comprehensive Plan (LCCP) establishes minimum density goals for new residential development to ensure that the city develops land within its Urban Growth Area (UGA) consistent with Clark County Community-wide goals. The minimum residential density allowed is four (4) units an acre.ⁱⁱ LCCP Policy 1.2.3 establishes minimum densities in all zoning districts in which residential uses are allowed.ⁱⁱⁱ The mandatory minimum densities are:

- LDR-7.4 – minimum of 4 units an acre;
- MDR-16 – minimum of 8 units and acre and maximum of 16 units an acre;
- RP - minimum of 4 units and acre and maximum of 16 units an acre; and
- Mixed Use - minimum of 8 units and acre and maximum of 16 units an acre.

Residential development is regulated by La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) Title 18, Chapters 18. 110 through 18.150.

Measure B: Manufactured housing regulations and zoning

On July 8, 2015 the La Center City Council amended LCMC 18.140, Medium Density Residential Districts. The amendment facilitates the creation of manufactured home parks and subdivisions and establishes performance standards for parks and amenities within such developments. The Council’s action was a reasonable measure to meet the Clark County goal of encouraging a minimum of 25% of all new units to be a product type other than low density single family detached structures.^{iv} The minimum density



allowed in a manufactured housing subdivision or park is four (4) units per net acre and the maximum allowed is twelve (12) units a net acre.^v

On December 16, 2015 the La Center City Council adopted Ordinance 2015-011 rezoning a portion of Country Hills Estates from LDR 7.5 to MDR-16. The rezoning of approximately 8.54 net acres of land allowed for the creation of a 58 unit manufactured home subdivision. The resulting density of the subdivision is 6.79 units an acre.

Measure C: Residential options in Mixed-Use Districts

On February 23, 2017 the La Center Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on amendments to LCMC 18.150, Commercial-Mixed Use Districts 18.165, Mixed Use Districts. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the amendments which, in part, mandate that 65% of the net acres of a mixed use development shall include housing units, and the minimum density allowable is eight (8) units an acre, and the maximum density is sixteen (16) units an acre. The City Council will conduct a public hearing on the proposed amendments in June 2017.

The amendments apply most directly to the Timmen Road area which comprises approximately 43 gross acres of MX lands. The land will develop after the new sanitary sewer trunk line passes the intersection of La Center Road and Timmen Road in the fall of 2017. As the area develops 65% of the 43 gross acres will be dedicated to medium density residential uses. At a minimum of eight (8) units and acre, the Timmen Road MX zone could create approximately 223 new units of medium density units.

Measure D: Current zoning code amendments in process

The La Center Planning Commission is currently working on a sub-area plan for the La Center Junction. The plan would allow for the creation of approximately 15 acres of live/work mixed use development. The minimum allowed density is twelve (12) units and acre and the maximum allowed density is twenty-four (24) units a per net acre. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the net buildable area would be allowed for residential uses. The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing on the proposed Junction sub-area plan on May 17, 2018. The City Council will complete its review of the plan and take final action prior to July 27, 2017. When fully developed, the Junction residential mixed use area could generate between 63 and 126 new medium density units in a live/work environment at the Junction.

Measure E: Rezoning low density residential land to Residential Professional

On February 22, 2017 the City Council approved Ordinance 2017-04 rezoning a 10,004 S.F. parcel from low density residential to Residential Professional (RP).^{vi} The RP zone allows development consistent with LCMC 18,140, Medium Density Residential. The RP zone allows the developer to construct three units on 10,004 S.F. rather than just one unit. The density on the site will increase from 4.35 units and acre to 13 units an acre.

Measure F: Annexation and development of medium density residential development

On May 11, 2016, the La Center City Council approved a petition to annex the Goode properties which were in the city UGA and contiguous to the La Center city limits.^{vii} The land added 46.59 acres to the corporate limits. The adoption ordinance zoned the land from Clark County low density residential use (one acre minimum) to La Center LDR-16 residential use. La Center LDR-16 zoning requires a minimum of eight (8) units an acre and allows a maximum of sixteen (16) units an acre.^{viii} Therefore, annexed land could yield 372 to 652 new medium density housing units.

In 2016-2017 the developer of the property submitted a preliminary plat application to develop 40.59 acres of the site with 379 medium density units. (The remaining six acres are a reserved tract.) The

effective density of the development, called Riverside Estates, is 10.70 units per acre. Within a two year period La Center's density will increase from 1.94 units per acre to more than 3.875 units per acre.

Table 8 of the 2015 Clark County Buildable Lands Report indicates that between 2006 and 2014 La Center developed 66 single family units on 34 acres of land and no medium density units. The resulting density was 1.94 units per acre. The Riverside Estate development alone will result in a 574% increase in housing, all of which are medium density units.

Measure G: Employment lands

The LCCP Table 3, La Center Planning Assumptions and Targets, adopts a 'jobs to housing balance' ratio of 1 job per 0.92 households. This target is less than that adopted by Clark County but indicates the city's reasonable measures to increase employment opportunities. The LCCP anticipates that under the current zoning regime and by enhancing employment opportunities at the La Center Junction can generate 2,051 new jobs over the following 20 years.

The LCCP Policy 1.3.2 includes four commercial districts to encourage commercial development; 1) Downtown Commercial, 2) Residential/Professional, 3) Card Room, and 4) Mixed Use. LMC 18.145 and LMC 18.150 are consistent with policy 1.3.2.

These policies and development regulations are likely to increase employment density within the City of La Center. In 2016 Clark Regional Economic Development Council completed work on the "Land for Jobs" study. The study included approximately 89 acres of employment lands at the La Center Junction. In the spring of 2017 the city will adopt a new Junction sub-area plan which includes an assessment of the city's employment opportunities within its traditional market area and the impact of the opening of the Ilani Casino and resort at the western edge of the city limits. The CREDC study and the city's study indicate that the La Center Junction can generate approximately 150,000 – 200,000 S.F. of new office campus use and 200,000 S.F. of new commercial uses over the next 20 years.

Sincerely,



Greg Thornton, Mayor

ⁱ ORDINANCE NO. 2016-01 ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE LA CENTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RCW 36.70A, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. MOVED AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY THAT "THE CITY COUNCIL FINDS THE CITY OF LA CENTER HAS FULFILLED ITS OBLIGATION UNDER RCW 36.70A.130 WITH AMENDMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE COUNTY'S CHANGES IN POPULATION; AND FURTHER MOVES THAT THE CITY ADOPT ORDINANCE 2016-01, INCLUDING EXHIBIT A, B AND C, AMENDING THE LA CENTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN."

ⁱⁱ LCCP Table 3, page 16.

ⁱⁱⁱ See also, LCCP Policies 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 reiterating the city's commitment to securing a minimum of four units an acre in low density zones and eight units an acre in medium density zones.

^{iv} See Ordinance 2015-06.

^v See LCMC Table 18.130.030.

^{vi} An Ordinance Approving a Zone Change for a 10,004 SF lot from Low Density Residential (LDR 7.5) to Residential Professional (RP); and amending the La Center Zoning Map to reflect this Change.

^{vii} ORDINANCE NO. 2016-003, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY TO THE CITY OF LA CENTER (Goode, et al.) and REZONING THAT PROPERTY CONSISTENT WITH THE LA CENTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

^{viii} The effective maximum density allowable in the MDR-16 zone is 14 units an acre. See LCMC Table 18.140.030.