



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

April 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Gwinwood Retreat Center Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone Application. Project no. 23-83.

RECOMMENDATION: Call for a public hearing to consider the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone Application for approximately 7.5 acres located south of the intersection of Hicks Lake Road SE and 30th Avenue SE from High Density Residential to Open Space Institutional.

TO: Lacey Planning Commission

STAFF CONTACTS: Grant Beck, Planning and Development Services Manager
Ryan Andrews, Planning Manager *RA* *G*

ATTACHMENT(S): 1. Gwinwood CPA and Rezone Application
2. Aerial Photo and Map of Existing Zoning

**PRIOR COUNCIL/
COMMISSION/**

COMMITTEE REVIEW: Joint Worksession, February 9, 2023

BACKGROUND

The Growth Management Act requires that the City's Comprehensive Plan be amended only once a year. As part of the annual cycle of comprehensive plan amendments for 2023, the City received a request from Kate Ayers on behalf of the ownership of the Gwinwood Retreat Center for approximately 7.5 acres located at the southwest corner of Hicks Lake south and east of the intersection of Hicks Lake Road SE and 30th Avenue SE. The request was added to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket at the joint worksession with the Planning Commission and City Council held on February 9th.

The application is for a portion of four parcels totaling approximately 7.5 acres currently zoned High Density Residential. The Gwinwood Retreat Center property totals approximately 28 acres, however, the area zoned High Density makes up approximately 7.5 acres of the total area. The application is to rezone these parcels to Open Space Institutional.

The purpose of the request is to consider rezoning the property to Open Space Institutional to provide more consistency between the current and future uses on the property than what the High Density Residential zone provides. The existing High Density residential zone requires residential uses at a density of 12 units per acre or greater. This means that any future

development of the property will be required to be developed for multifamily units to meet the density requirements of the zone. The property is owned by a group of churches who wish to continue to utilize the property as a retreat center into the future. The High Density zoning district allows the use to continue, however, any future development of the property would have to adhere to the requirements of the High Density zone. Rezoning to Open Space Institutional would be more appropriate for the current and future use of the property.

An Open Space Institutional zone can also provide a transition to the environmentally sensitive areas to the east associated with Hicks Lake and to the south associated with a wetland that connects from Hicks Lake to Ruddell Road. The properties to the north are zoned High Density Residential. These properties have approval for two separate multi-family developments totaling 310 units.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Both Hicks Lake Road SE and 30th Avenue SE are identified as local streets by the "Functional Classification Map" within the *2030 Transportation Plan*. Both are connected to the nearest collector at 25th Avenue SE which connects to Ruddell Road SE. Hicks Lake Road is currently a two-lane road with very little improvement other than a two-lane paved section, however, there are sidewalks and frontage improvements installed adjacent to the Donegal Hills subdivision. As properties develop, they will be required to dedicate right-of-way and ultimately develop the improvements consistent with the project approvals. 30th Avenue is unimproved outside of an existing paved area providing access to the retreat center and residential parcels to the north.

City utilities are available on the site and will be further extended at the time of development. Water lines enter the Gwinwood site from 30th Avenue SE with a 6-inch line. The water lines on the Gwinwood site dead end in an 8-inch line. Sewer on site is provided by a small-diameter grinder line that runs east down 30th Avenue SE and eventually connects to a gravity line near the intersection of 30th Avenue and Hicks Lake Road. It is anticipated that any development on the Gwinwood site would be less intensive under the proposed zoning than under the existing High Density zone. Any development on the site would be required to extend and connect to City utilities. The proposed rezone would be adequately served by the existing utilities.

LAND USE

Zoning

According to the representative of the Gwinwood Retreat Center, the plans for the property are to operate the retreat center as such for the foreseeable future. The current zoning of High Density Residential is not consistent with the current or desired future use of the property. The proposed zone of Open Space Institutional would be more consistent with the desired use. According to LMC 16.48.020, Permitted Uses, the retreat center would be a permitted use under community meeting or recreation halls. Should the existing zoning of High Density remain, the existing use would remain as non-conforming with the underlying zoning.

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan contains few specifics to support the application. Primarily, the focus within the Plan is to protect and enhance the environmentally sensitive areas and to utilize environmental amenities. Specific policies from the applicable Comprehensive Plan elements are listed below.

Land Use Element Policies (from Lakes Planning Area):

Goal 1: Protection of environmental resources in this planning area shall be a priority.

Policy A: Require development to work around environmentally sensitive areas and take advantage of and promote environmental resources as an amenity.

Policy B: All development shall be sensitive to protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal 4: Improve infrastructure in the planning area particularly related to sewer and transportation.

Policy A: Consistent with the policies of the Shoreline Master Program, extension of sewer service shall be prioritized around lakes to protect water quality.

Policy C: Ensure that the various transportation elements identify strategies to improve corridors to meet growth projections.

The Environmental Element also addresses the request by stating the following related to critical areas:

Goal 1 (Critical Areas): Incorporate a systems perspective into policy, regulatory, and service decisions, recognizing the interrelationship of people, nature, and the economy.

Policy C: Continue to preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, shorelines, hillsides, and habitat areas to support wildlife and protect surface and groundwater resources.

Staff will provide an introductory briefing at the April 18th Planning Commission meeting related to the request. The full staff analysis will be presented at the Planning Commission public hearing. Public notice of the hearing will be published in *The Olympian* and directly mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. The applicant will also be available at the April 18th meeting to provide their insight and answer any questions.