



Community Development Department

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STAFF MEMO

To: Planning Commission
From: Andrew Levins, Land Use Planning Consultant
Date: May 20, 2024
Subject: Snoqualmie Ridge Mixed Use Final Plan Amendments Update

PROPONENT: Barbara Yarrington, Murray Franklyn, inc. (successor organization to original developer of Snoqualmie Ridge, Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company)

LOCATION OF PROPOSAL: Snoqualmie Ridge Mixed Use Final Plan area, generally west of Downtown Snoqualmie along Snoqualmie Parkway.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proponent proposes an amendment to the Snoqualmie Ridge ("SRI") Mixed Use Final Plan ("MUFP") conditions 4 and 5, as approved on September 15, 1995, to increase procedural clarity so that the City may address current and future land use needs in SRI more effectively. The proposed amendments remove default settings, which accommodate the use of retail waivers within the SRI Neighborhood Center Retail area. Currently the default settings have allowed several retail waivers to be issued by the City. Many key retail spaces identified in the Development Standards of SR1 have been hindered by the existing default settings resulting in the loss or retail business in key retail spaces on Center Boulevard SE. Deletion of the identified SR1 conditions of approval will be processed along with proposed amendments to retail waiver requirements.

BACKGROUND:

On October 17, 1995, the Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company (now known as Murray Franklyn, inc.) filed an application for a Mixed-Use Final Plan ("MUFP") to develop the first phase of a master planned development known as Snoqualmie Ridge ("SRI"). The City conducted environmental review in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act, issuing the Snoqualmie Ridge Mixed Use Final Plan Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on April 26, 1995, and a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on August 21, 1995. The Snoqualmie City Council approved the MUFP application on September 15, 1995, and determined it was consistent with the purposes of the Mixed-Use District Regulations identified in Snoqualmie Municipal Code ("SMC") 17.30.020, subject to various conditions of approval. Since its approval in 1995, the development

contemplated by the MUFP has been substantially completed, including the designated mixed-use portion of SRI known as the Neighborhood Center. The SRI Development Standards envisioned four subareas within the Neighborhood Center, including a retail-oriented area along Center Boulevard. The purpose of the Neighborhood Center retail area was to provide a pedestrian oriented area within SRI for retail businesses and non-retail commercial uses intended to serve residents of the development as well as throughout the City of Snoqualmie.

Since the MUFP was approved in 1995, evolving market conditions have adjusted the demand for certain types of retail uses. The Snoqualmie Council Community Development Committee (“CD Committee”) has indicated a preference for additional retail uses on Center Boulevard within Snoqualmie Ridge, and directed staff to study amendments to the SRI MUFP conditions of approval that would allow certain land use regulations affecting the Neighborhood Center to be modified. While the MUFP Conditions of Approval generally limit the ways in which the City can modify standards within SRI, the item of concern specifically identified by the CD Committee is the potential for non-retail uses to occupy a space where retail use is required in the SRI Neighborhood Center. Currently, when a retail tenant space facing the intersections of Center Blvd and Maynard Ave, Center Blvd and Kinsey Ave, and Center Blvd and Ridge Ave becomes vacant, it must either be rented by a qualifying retail use, or, after a 120-day vacancy period, the owner/landlord may apply to the City for a waiver from this retail requirement. The CD Committee believes that this minimum vacancy period is currently too short and should be increased from 120 days to 180 days, an approach that has also been recommended by the Economic Development Commission, (EDC), in order to demonstrate that a good-faith effort has been made to find a qualifying retail tenant. However, because of the aforementioned MUFP Conditions, this increase cannot be implemented without amending the SRI MUFP in parallel.

Table 1: SR1 MUFP Proposed Amendments to Conditions			
#	Proposed Revisions	Summary of Change	Delete
4	The development standards specifically approved with this Final Plan shall govern future development applications in place of any conflicting standards found elsewhere in the Snoqualmie Municipal Code.	Changes in default settings existing in the SR 1 Development Standards making it more restrictive to permit issuance of retail waivers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Development standards adopted by the City after the date of the Final Plan which are different than those specifically approved in the Final Plan shall apply to SR only if determined by the City Council to be necessary to address imminent public health and safety hazards, or, in the case of subsequently adopted more restrictive standards that are not necessary to address imminent public health and safety hazards, shall apply if the applicant elects to use these	Allows the City to implement Development Standards effective for SR! making it more restrictive to issue retail waivers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	standards in place of those approved in the Final Plan.		
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The Planning Commission held a hearing on May 6, 2024, and considered the proposed amendments. Commissioners expressed a preference not to include amendments to the MUFP condition of approval 41 of the approved MUFP permit which would for the correction of a typo on Business-Retail District BR permitted uses. Furthermore, the commissioners expressed a desire to review the EDC recommendations to the downtown historic district overlay.

ANALYSIS:

The amendments to the MUFP propose to delete conditions 4 and 5 in their entirety. Table 1: Proposed Amendments, summarizes the reasoning for the modifications proposed to the SRI MUFP conditions of approval and depicts deletions in strikeout. In total, two conditions are proposed to be deleted from the MUFP.

Specific SRI Mixed Use Final Plan conditions of approval, originally part of SRI Final Plan approval in 1995, make it difficult for the City to modify existing SMC regulations, including the retail requirements. Modifying the MUFP to address retail use and waiver requirements. On May 6, 2024, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing. No written public comment or oral public comment was provided. However, the Staff held outreach sessions with the Downtown and Ridge Merchants Associations. Based on that outreach, the EDC recommended the minimum vacancy period be increased from 120 to 180 days as several other amendments which are specific to the downtown historic district overlay.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council deletion of MUFP Conditions 4 and 5 at the time of review and recommended approval of Downtown Historic District Overlay amendments. This approach allows the Commission to process mixed use final plan amendments simultaneously to that of the development code amendments.

NEXT STEPS:

Prepare the Downtown Historic District Overlay recommended amendments for further Planning Commission review, including draft code amendments, SEPA, public hearing and noticing.