



CITY OF SUMAS

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Memo

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Sumas City Council

From: Carson Cortez, City Planner

Date: November 7, 2024

Re: Heutink Preliminary Long Subdivision, Subdivision Variance, and Conditional Use Permit Application Planning Commission Recommendations

On September 19 and October 10, 2024, an application was submitted to request approval of a preliminary long subdivision, subdivision variance, and conditional use permit for a property located in the 1300 block of Sumas Avenue, within the Residential, High-Density and Business, General zoning districts. The application was submitted by Jason Heutink, who is a partial owner of the property. He has received and provided written consent from each of the other partial owners of the property to speak and act on their behalf.

The application would see the subdivision of two parcels, about 2.58 acres in area, into 18 parcels, with a large storm pond in the center and a minor access road for access to the proposed homes along the northern boundary of the site. Section 20.98.060 SMC allows the pavement width for minor local access streets to be reduced to 32 feet. The proposed minor access road is currently 30 feet in pavement width. The applicant has submitted a subdivision variance to allow the reduction of pavement width. 12 of the 18 proposed parcels are to be developed as attached single-family dwellings, allowed as a conditional use when on two adjoining lots in the Residential, High-Density zoning district.

On October 21, the Sumas Planning Commission met and reviewed the proposed layout submitted with the preliminary plat submitted by the applicant. The Planning Commission did not decide on a formal recommendation for whether to approve or deny. However, after lengthy discussion, the Planning Commission did compile a list of topics that they would like the City Council to discuss in further detail when considering this proposal. Currently, the Planning Commission has no follow-up meeting for these topics, so it is up to the City Council to ensure that these topics are addressed. The following are the topics of discussion that the Planning Commission addressed.

1. The sidewalk on the proposed minor access road. The Planning Commission is interested in connecting the sidewalk proposed with the minor access road to run, through the property labeled lot 1 in the preliminary plat, to the sidewalk within the Highway 9 right of way. For the purpose of not trying to disrupt the owner's yard as much as possible, the most efficient method would be to obtain a five-foot easement along the southern boundary of Lot 1. This plan would require allowing the sidewalk, which is currently on the north side of the proposed minor access road, to cut across to the south side. Further information will need to be gathered about whether the applicant will be okay with this addition and whether the Lot 1 property owner is okay with a pathway running along the south side of their property.
2. Streetlights. The Planning Commission would like to ensure that the applicant will be providing adequate street lighting as part of the overall design for the development.
3. Parking. Currently, each proposed lot would include a driveway. The proposed minor access road also includes an eight-foot-wide private parking and utility easement along its southern side. The City also allows street parking on Sumas Avenue in this area. The Planning Commission's concern is specifically with the proposed lots along Sumas Avenue. They are worried that the number of driveways to be installed will reduce the amount of space vehicles will have to park on the street.
4. Flood Control Measures and Storm Pond. The Planning Commission is concerned with how the current development proposal will affect flood levels for neighboring residents. They are concerned that the number of structures and impermeable surfaces created will decrease the amount flood storage capacity that the property currently has. They would like to hear more about the kinds of flood control measures that will be included with this proposal, including more details about the proposed storm pond and whether it will be large enough to handle flooding conditions.
5. Landscaping. The Planning Commission would like to know if the applicant will be providing a landscaping plan as part of this subdivision application.