

To: Planning Commission
From: Doug Fortner, Town Planner
Date: February 4, 2021
Subject: Re-designation and Rezone of Industrial Site
Review of Comprehensive Plan Revisions

Attachments: Housing, Utilities, Transportation, Capital Facilities, Economic Development Elements and the Goals and Policies section of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan with proposed amendments

Summary:

The owners of the old Abitibi Mill have proposed that the property be re-designated from Industrial to Master Planned Development, a new designation, in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Current Status:

The area occupied by the former Abitibi Paper Mill consists of five parcels at the northern edge of the Town along Chambers Bay. The parcels are designated Industrial, Industrial Open Space, Commercial/Recreation and Open Space/Recreation under the current Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Background:

The Town's Comprehensive Plan is mandated by the 1990 Growth Management Act, or GMA. The mandate comes from RCW 36.70A.070, requiring each city and town subject to the act (including Steilacoom) to adopt a Comprehensive Plan containing at least the following elements:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Capital Facilities
- Utilities
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation

Each element consists of a chapter within the overall Plan that addresses certain requirements spelled out in the law. The Plan is to be internally consistent, and also consistent with regional plans and policies.

The Town's first GMA Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1996. It was updated in 2004 and again in 2015. The next mandated update is in 2024.

Issues raised at previous hearing:

1. Notice to tribal entities. Staff sent notices of this application and hearing to representatives of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, Steilacoom and Yakima tribes. The Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island tribes all have traditional fishing rights in Chambers Bay. Although not a federally recognized tribe, the Town regularly includes the Steilacoom tribe in important land use notifications. The Yakima Nation has requested that the Town provide it with all SEPA notifications.
2. Sea level rise. This application should have no impact on sea level rise. Further review of this sea level rise as it affects the Town will be included in the upcoming 2024 Comprehensive Plan update.

Analysis of Comprehensive Plan Elements:

Each element consists of text about the topic, goals and policies to implement those goals. The attached Elements are shown in legislative style. Changes are shown with wording proposed for removal is shown ~~stricken~~, wording proposed for inclusion is shown underlined. Changes proposed by the applicant are highlighted in **yellow**; changes proposed by staff are in **green**.

The applicants' proposal is to create a new Master Planned Development designation in place of the designations covering the former Abitibi Mill site. In this staff report, the new designation will be referred to as MPD, or the MPD area.

Housing Element

This element has numerous charts and graphs that will be updated during the 2024 Plan update, after updated source documents, including the 2020 Census, are released. For this staff report the focus is the application, not on bringing the Comprehensive Plan up to date.

Staff recommends a few minor changes to the existing text to acknowledge that the area is re-designated MPD; that no housing was allocated to the area in the graphs, charts and tables; and that until an actual site plan and development agreement is approved, the scale of the development will not be known. See the proposed statements on pages 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 15 of the attachment. Staff also recommends deleting two sentences on page 6 regarding platting that are no longer true.

Town staff recommends one addition to the existing Housing Policies. Proposed Policy H 1.4 on page 17 encourages a variety of housing options in the MPD, to be integrated with commercial development. Otherwise, the existing goals and policies on Neighborhood Identity, Households and Community, and Housing Affordability each address those issues adequately in the context of the application.

Utilities Element

This element contains a review of the Town's utilities; drinking water, sanitary sewer, electric power and storm sewers; along with other utility providers. The charts, tables and other data in the element are out of date, and will be revised in the 2024 update. The focus of these proposed amendments is on the application for the Master Planned Development, although correction of the name of Tacoma Power is also recommended.

Staff recommends a few minor changes to the existing text to acknowledge that the area is re-designated MPD; and that until an actual site plan and development agreement is approved, the scale of the impact to the Town's utilities will not be known. See the proposed statements on pages 3, 4 and 10 of the attachment.

Town staff recommends one addition to the existing Utilities Policies. Proposed Policy U 2.10 on page 13 directs the Town to use its SEPA authority to require a study of the impact the development will have on the Town's utilities. Otherwise, the existing goals and policies on Cost Effective Service, Providing for Growth, and Respecting the Environment each address those issues adequately in the context of the application.

Transportation Element

This element contains a review of the Town's transportation system. The charts, tables and other data in the element are out of date, and will be revised in the 2024 update. The focus of these proposed amendments is on the application for the Master Planned Development.

Staff recommends a few minor changes to the existing text to acknowledge that the area is re-designated MPD; and that until an actual site plan and development agreement is approved, the scale of the impact to the Town's transportation system will not be known. See the proposed statements on pages 3, 4, 5, 10, 18 and 19 of the attachment. Additionally, staff is recommending some minor housekeeping changes regarding parking (page 7), truck traffic (page 8) and passenger trains (page 11).

Town staff recommends two additions to the existing Transportation Policies. Proposed Policy T 2.5 on page 30 suggests that any new development have bike and pedestrian friendly internal design, and bike and pedestrian connections to the immediate area.

Proposed Policy 3.9, page 31, directs the Town to use its SEPA authority to require a study of the impact the development will have on the Town's transportation system. Otherwise, the existing goals and policies on Traffic Reduction, Pedestrian Focus, Maintenance and Expansion, Parking, Funding, Environmental Concerns and Regional Network each address those issues adequately in the context of the application.

Capital Facilities Element

This element contains Town's policy plan for the financing of public facilities for 20 years, and includes the six-year financing plan for capital facilities current when adopted (2015-2020). The charts, tables and other data in the element are out of date, and will be revised in the 2024 update. The focus of these proposed amendments is on the application for the Master Planned Development.

Staff recommends a few minor changes to the existing text to acknowledge that the area is re-designated MPD; and that until an actual site plan and development agreement is approved, the scale of the impact to the Town's capital facilities will not be known. See the proposed statement on page 3 of the attachment. Additionally, staff is recommending some minor housekeeping changes regarding JBLM nomenclature (page 2) and bi-annual budgets (pages 3 and 33).

Otherwise, the existing goals and policies on Needed Services and Facilities, Funding, Concurrency and Needs Assessment each address those issues adequately in the context of the application.

Economic Development Element

This element contains Town's policy plan for economic development for the next 20 years. The charts, tables and other data in the element are out of date, and will be revised in the 2024 update. The focus of these proposed amendments is on the application for the Master Planned Development.

Staff recommends a few minor changes to the existing text to acknowledge that the area is re-designated MPD. See the proposed statements on pages 2, 3, and 4 of the attachment. Additionally, staff is recommending an explanatory note regarding the size of the former industrial area following Figure 8.3 on page 4.

In the Goals and Policy section, staff recommends substituting Master Planned Development for "industrial" in Policy Econ 2.5 on page 5.

Goal 3, which is devoted to re-development of the former industrial site, has recommended changes to all three policies, swapping out industrial for Master Planned Development in policies Econ 3.1 and Econ 3.2. Policy Econ 3.3 is re-written to direct creation of new regulations for the MPD area, rather than business parks. See page 6 of the attachment.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element

This element contains Town's policy plan for the Town's parks, recreation and open space for the next 20 years. The charts, tables and other data in the element are out of date, and will be revised in the 2024 update. The focus of these proposed amendments is on the application for the Master Planned Development.

Because this element contains a description of the Town's parks and recreational facilities, it is over 40 pages in length. There are no references to the industrial area in the textual portion of the element, and only passing reference in the Goals and Policies section. For these reasons, staff has opted to only attach the Goals and Policies section of this element rather than the complete element. The entire element, as part of the Comprehensive Plan, is available on the Town's website under the Community Development page.

Staff is recommending only one change to the Parks policies, in Policy PROS 3.3, on page 2. The current policy references the Town working with the "mill site" and other entities to co-operatively use the shoreline. Staff suggests replacing "mill site" with "Master Planned Development area".

In addition to Policy 3.3 above, there are other existing Parks policies that are relevant to the development of the MPD site, on page 2 of the attachment. Policy PROS 2.6 directs that land development regulations include provisions for the dedication of open space. Policy PROS 2.8 provides for a town-wide trail system. Policy PROS 2.9 directs future land use regulations require walkways, trails, paths or sidewalks connecting the new development with contiguous areas. PROS Goal 4 commits the Town to a town-wide trail system.

Recommendation

Staff recommends continuing this hearing to a special Planning Commission meeting on February 22 to continue to review this application.

Motion

I move to continue this hearing to a special Planning Commission meeting on February 22 to continue to review this application.