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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Sep 17 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

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Comments for September 17, 2020 Shoreline Planning Commission Meeting

Submitted by Pat Anunsen, Richmond Beach

Comments related to Study Item 6b – Development Code Amendment Establishing a Point Wells – Planned Area 4 Zone and Regulations to Implement the Point Wells Subarea Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this Staff Report. While I found the document to be well organized, I believe two areas could be enhanced to help ensure processes are improved when future development of Point Wells is considered.

Transportation

During many meetings over the last 10 years, most of the emphasis of the impact of Point Wells traffic focused on Richmond Beach Drive, then Richmond Beach Road, then arterials further East and South (like 185th, Dayton, Aurora, Meridian and eventually 175th Street and I-5). Certainly, the analysis deserved to begin with these arterial streets since the incremental impact of extra vehicle trips would start there, but if vehicle volume increased, other streets would become stressed – especially if Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road began experiencing slowdowns. Building a road from Point Wells through Woodway would only add to the number of streets in both Woodway and Shoreline that drivers would be tempted to use as a short cut to save time and frustration.

As development of Point Wells is considered, the impact on additional residential areas and streets must be evaluated. This need was acknowledged at a City Council meeting in 2019, when one of the citizens who had spent a lot of time on Point Wells issues and processes pointed out that little time/effort had been placed on evaluating the potential impact on these back streets that will become part of the “transportation network” when traveling from or to Point Wells. City Council members nodded in response to these comments.

The draft language of the Development Code Amendment (in 20.95.045 Transportation) appears to be limited to the same primary Point Wells vehicle paths considered in the 2010s. Paragraph C refers to “the surrounding transportation network.” The ambiguity of this phrase should be reduced by enhancing Paragraph C (or adding an additional paragraph) to make clear that residential streets in Woodway and Shoreline must be included in the impact analysis.

The Transportation section already refers to Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road, as it should. As volumes of traffic increase – especially if the additional access point is added from Point Wells through Woodway, additional residential streets will become part of the Point Wells transportation network and need to be evaluated as part of the transportation study. For example, if traffic volumes on Richmond Beach Drive and Richmond Beach Road begin to cause slowdowns, residential streets will begin to be used as “cut

through” paths for drivers heading to Edmonds, Lynnwood, Shoreline, various Light Rail stations, I-5 and into Seattle via Meridian, Aurora and Greenwood. Examples of “cut through” streets include 116th Ave W/240th St SW, 114th Ave W/ Woodway Park Rd and Timber Lane; 23rd Pl NW/21st Pl NW, NW 204th St, NW 199th St, NW 198th St/NW 197th St, 20th Ave NW (and various streets in the Westgate, Firdale, Hillwood and Richmond Highland areas).

Public Participation

My observation of the Point Wells process during the 2010s was that there was no reliable way to obtain answers to questions raised by the public at events like Open House sessions, County, City or Town hearings. This became clear to me when I attended a project status meeting hosted by the Snohomish County Planning department in Everett. There were about four Snohomish County staff members showing PowerPoint slides, and maybe six Blue Square staff and lawyers nodding from time to time. I think I was the only “citizen” attendee.

When the meeting was coming to a close, the Snohomish County project manager asked if there were any questions. I raised my hand and said I’d attended a few meetings and read transcripts and noted that the developers were asked many questions about the project that had been left unanswered. I asked if there was some sort of collection of the questions asked and the answers to the questions. The Snohomish County staff and the Blue Square staff/attorneys looked at each other and shrugged. After the meeting the Snohomish County project manager told me there was not any organized collection of questions or answers available.

I feel any potential developer of Point Wells should be expected to provide answers to questions raised by citizens, Snohomish and King Counties, Shoreline and Woodway. To provide a reasonable level of transparency, an organized compilation of these questions and answers should be maintained and kept up to date. If something related to the project changes, an answer should be updated, as needed and appropriate. Shoreline or Woodway - or both, should provide oversight to this process, perhaps with a few citizens participating to help ensure transparency. This should be a requirement of the development code amendment being drafted.