

Development Commission  
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**CITY OF ISSAQUAH  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MINUTES 2/3/16**

City Hall South  
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way  
Issaquah, WA 98027

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Randy Harrison, Chair  
Carl Swedberg, Vice Chair  
Michael Brennan  
Essie Hicks  
Mel Morgan, Jr.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Amy Tarce, Senior Planner  
Lucy Sloman, Land Development Manager

**APPLICANTS/OTHERS PRESENT**

Jim Bodoia, Via Architecture  
Greg Van Patten, The Wolff Company  
Jeff Schramm, TENW Company

HARRISON, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. HARRISON explained how public comment will be taken at tonight's meeting, and how audience members can sign up to speak on the items on tonight's agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED BY BRENNAN, SECONDED BY SWEDBERG that minutes of the Development Commission meeting on November 18, 2015 be approved as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**BRIEFING ON CIDDS AMENDMENTS**

Sloman made staff's presentation on the Central Issaquah Development and Design Standards (CIDDS). She briefly reviewed the nature of a quasi-judicial review process, and noted that the Commission's review of tonight's Site Development Permit (SDP) for the Gateway Senior Housing project falls into the category of a quasi-judicial process. She described both procedural due process and substantive due process. She asked Commissioners to review six questions pertaining to their ability to proceed with a fair process on the Gateway Senior Housing project, and asked members whether they could answer "no" to all the questions. All Commissioners indicated that they could. She also described ex parte contacts, and asked whether there have been any ex parte communications on this project on the part of Commissioners. All Commissioners indicated "no."

She continued with a description of the final Issaquah code amendments in "round 2" of the amendments approved by the Council in December 2015. On amendment #2, *Clarify building height measurement*, BRENNAN asked for clarification of the way building height is calculated using measurements of existing grade and finished grade. Referring to a diagram shown overhead, Sloman replied the orange line shown on this diagram represents the existing grade. When we determine building height from existing or finished grade, the street in front of the building becomes the new circulation facility from which the measurement will be made. In other words, the method for measurement is the same. The resulting building height measurement is an average grade of the circulation facility and the average finished grade, which results in the green line shown.

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She continued her presentation with amendment #6, *Primary and secondary through block passages*, and #7, *Clarify views and vistas*. HARRISON asked under item G, the first sentence reads, "Developments shall preserve...", and asked should that read "should" rather than "shall." Sloman replied yes; it reads "shall preserve" in the context of the four following elements. She added there is also an item that relates just to curvilinear streets, and in those cases we will do an Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) process to identify which views should be identified and preserved.

She concluded her presentation with amendment #8, *Use minimum density for residential projects*.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Administration Decision on Administrative Adjustment of Standards for Gateway Senior Housing (Parkway Standards for Newport Way; Neighborhood Street Adjustment; Building Setback Above the Third Story)**

Tarce said she will make staff's presentation on the proposed AAS for the Gateway Senior Housing Site, followed by an opportunity for public comment, then do the SDP review, followed by applicant remarks and additional public comment on the SDP. She noted the applicant has opted to apply for AAS independent of the SDP, which requires a Level 2 review. The final decision maker for a Level 2 review is the Development Services Department Director, she continued. She showed a diagram comparing the Level 2 and Level 3 review processes, and noted that the public comment opportunities and requirements are the same for both levels of review.

Tarce continued her presentation with highlights of the two AAS for the Gateway Senior Housing Project being sought by the applicant:

- (1) A request to provide flexibility on the neighborhood street requirements (e.g., no sidewalks, due primarily to steep slopes on part of the property). She noted no decision has yet been made on this request, and staff thought it would be a good opportunity to receive public comment at tonight's meeting prior to that decision.
- (2) A waiver of the requirement of standards that require setback buildings after the third floor. She continued the code is quite specific on this requirement, but the Gateway Senior Housing project will have a four-story building over a garage, and the applicant is seeking an AAS to avoid what will create an awkward break in the look of the building.

She noted staff will be fielding questions and comments during the two-week window for receiving comments on these two requests, so the viewing public is welcome to write letters and e-mails in addition to any comments given tonight.

BRENNAN asked for clarification of the process, specifically that the decision maker on the AAS requests is the Development Services Department Director. Tarce replied yes.

BRENNAN asked whether the option of moving the sidewalk over to create access was considered. He noted this would involve shifting the driveway entrance a bit, and recognized that the slope of the property would likely create challenges in doing so. Jim Bodoia, The Wolff Company and architect for the project, said the location of the driveway entrance was chosen because it offers the maximum access to the site, and also because of the property's topography. He explained where a crosswalk will be located that will offer a safe crossing, and explained how it will function. SWEDBERG said if the sidewalk is on the east side of the entranceway, then the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp will be on the other side of the building. Is the east side sloped, or could it utilize steps, he asked. Bodoia explained the

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physical limitations of having to build where the grade falls off pretty severely, and noted it is about a 12-percent grade there. We felt it was a safer to locate the sidewalk next to the bank, he continued, and showed where retaining wall structures would exist. SWEDBERG noted theoretically, it would be possible to put in a series of steps on both sides. Bodoia said we sought an AAS because we thought this configuration would be the safest option.

HICKS said she would like to go on record as agreeing with the applicant that the safest option is the way the applicant has proposed. MORGAN agreed. He said he agrees with both of the AAS that the applicant is seeking, and that they seem like reasonable adjustments.

HARRISON invited members of the public to make comments at this time.

Hart Sugarman, 2550 NW Oak Crest Drive, said he has lived in the City for about 20 years. Most people will be walking on the east sidewalk, he stated, and will take the ADA ramp as the shortest route. He pointed out the route on a diagram.

Mary Lynch, 2690 NW Oak Crest Drive, said she concurs with Mr. Sugarman's comments, but noted that this will be on the shadow side of Cougar Mountain, and could have a lot of black ice and be slippery in the winter. She said she is concerned about that, as well as about the turning radius for a larger ladder fire truck. She said she could envision a larger fire truck having to swing over the sidewalk, which would be unsafe. She spoke about her concern that the sidewalk will be on the uphill side and will get the least amount of sunlight. On the north side of the building, she continued, a little stair stepping would help more sunlight get into those public spaces. She concluded it seems like many parts of the Central Issaquah Plan, all the ideas of citizens and staff, are being deviated from. It is ironic that everything that is being approved for Central Issaquah is deviating from those ideas, she added. She said a design using steps would also make the buildings seem less tall.

#### **GATEWAY SENIOR HOUSING SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, SDP 15-00005**

**Site Development Permit approval for a 146-unit, five-story senior apartment building on 6.09 acres. The site includes approximately 1.8 acres of creek and wetland buffers, reducing the developable area to 4.29 acres. The project was described as Phase 2 of the Issaquah Gateway Apartments Housing, SDP15-00005.**

Tarce made staff's presentation. She noted that additional public comments were received in writing since the agenda packet was produced, and distributed copies of those comments. She continued she will provide a broad overview of how the Gateway Senior Housing project meets the Central Issaquah Plan standards and other City development requirements, and noted the staff report documents how staff looked at the CIP standards.

She continued her remarks on the project using aerial and street-level photos. She said her comments will be organized into two broad themes—connectivity (circulation facilities, Green Necklace, and views) and placemaking (Western Gateway, pedestrian-friendly public realm). Her description included details on the project's location; vision; views, including existing conditions, and views looking north and south; existing conditions on-site; the proposed site plan, including the concept for landscaping; zoning district standards, and the project's compliance with the standards; circulation facilities and how the proposal fits into the regional network; and connection to adjacent properties. She described two conditions for connectivity: a placeholder for a neighborhood street connection to the adjacent property, to be determined; and designing a 10-foot wide bridge for a pedestrian-bicycle-vehicle connection over Schneider Creek. She continued her remarks on how the project contributes to the Green Necklace, and

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described each of the seven elements that contribute to it. She gave details on the Schneider Creek and buffer area, noting that the buffer width will be reduced from 100 to 75 feet, and gave a description of how the buffer will be vegetated. She showed photos of views of I-90 from the green edge and depictions of the proposed community spaces, changes to Newport Way, planned ornamental vegetation, and so on. She said staff applauds the applicant's choice of using stone and timber elements on the bottom level of the building, but has included a condition intended to make the top floor of the building a stronger architectural statement befitting the gateway aspect of the project. She said staff has established that the proposed modulation and articulation of the building meets the City's design standards.

She concluded her presentation with a description of the next steps in the project review process. The Final SEPA determination is due on February 4, 2016, she continued, and comments are being collected now. She said staff intends to have the final determination on the AAS for this project ready to present to the Development Commission at its March 16 meeting.

### **Applicant Remarks**

Greg Van Patten, The Wolff Company, 911 East Pike Street, Suite 310, Seattle, gave some background on The Wolff Company, noting that it is a third-generation company established in 1949, and gave examples of projects it has been involved with around Puget Sound. He spoke about the intended population that the Gateway Senior Housing project will serve. It is not an assisted living, memory care, or rehabilitation facility, he continued, but rather offers for-lease, independent living housing units with full kitchens and either one or two bedrooms. Although it serves people 55 and older, he continued, the average age of residents tends to be upper 70s and 80s. He said a monthly lease includes a set number of meals per month that are served in a common dining facility, plus the services of a full-time activities director and many amenities to keep residents busy and active. He described the dedicated transportation bus that will be used to transport residents to appointments, social events, shopping, and so on. He said the company also has the opportunity to license a few units for supported living services on an as-needed basis, which will allow some residents to remain at the residence longer.

Jim Bodoia, Via Architecture, 1809 7th Ave., Suite 800, Seattle, thanked staff for their work to date and the Commission. He said Tarce has done a great job of going over the technical details of the project tonight, and added he will add to her perspective to help Commissioners better understand the factors that have shaped this project and why it is a good fit for the community.

He continued with some background on the physical challenges of the site, including the change in grade. He said he understands the concern about safety entering and leaving the project site, and said that the applicant team's analysis is that the optimum location for the driveway in terms of visibility and safety is where it is being shown now. He said that configuration also provides the longest possible distance with which to negotiate the grade change.

He gave more details about circulation within the site, using a diagram. He showed where turning space will allow for vans and other vehicles to safely enter and leave the site. He showed conceptual drawings of some of the elements to be incorporated into the project, and described the traditional window details, dormers, and familiar palette of materials that would fit in comfortably with the neighborhood. He showed a conceptual drawing of units at street grade with front stoops, a parallel parking strip with trees, and so on. He noted that the plan creates an ADA-accessible route from Newport Way that arrives at the plaza, with a clear and safe route to the building's front door. He showed more conceptual drawings, including a landscaped buffer

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between the building and Newport Way. On the east side of the project, he continued, the grade drops down a full story; so essentially we are a four-story building with a daylight basement. The buffer has been enhanced so that the final version will end up with about the same density and coverage that the WSDOT conservation easement currently has. He showed an elevation diagram from Newport Way to Schneider Creek.

He said that, much like a lodge or resort, the design has a strong emphasis on the main entry. He described the common dining facility, entryway, and main waiting area, as well as the private dining area and series of other rooms to be used for community activities. He noted that facilities on the lower level are intended to be used for fitness, such as a small theatre, yoga studio, place for mail delivery, etc., and all connect back to the community area.

He showed a view looking from open space on the east side back toward the main living room and the rest of the building. He also showed a view heading west of I-90, with what will eventually be a grove of trees in the foreground. He said we paid a lot of attention to modulation of the building, both vertically and horizontally, and showed diagrams. He said there are two distinct wings to the building, and gave more descriptions of how the building will appear. He described the parking facility under the building, the indoor pool, proposed color palette, and access to the Creek.

He continued his remarks about the two conditions related to connectivity that Tarce referred to earlier. He said one condition is to connect through to the adjacent property to the south. He said we feel this is probably not the best approach for this project because we have no control over how that access could be used. It could be disruptive to residents of this senior community, he continued, and we would have no control over uses that could be incompatible with our residents.

Secondly, he continued, we support the bridge crossing Schneider Creek as a pedestrian-bicycle only connection. He said opening up the bridge to vehicular traffic would create a whole new set of issues, including wildlife access and preservation of fish habitat. He continued we totally support connectivity at the pedestrian level here, but not vehicular.

He concluded his remarks by expressing thanks for the work of City staff and the diligence of everyone involved with the project so far.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

HARRISON opened the meeting for public comment at 8:17 PM.

Tina Conforti, 1220 Oakcrest Place NW, said she appreciated the clarification of the intended residents who will live in these apartments. She spoke favorably about including activities such as a swimming pool, health club, gardening, and public common areas in the design, and said she didn't hear anything in the presentation about accommodating people with disabilities. As a resident of the neighborhood, she spoke about her concern that I-90 creates a lot of noise that makes it hard to sleep with windows open in the summer, so air conditioning should be included for residents as well as some special window treatments that will help block noise. She also spoke in favor of having private transportation for Gateway residents to move around the City.

Geraldine Carey, 955 17th Ave NW, said access to her home is off Newport Way, close to the intersection of Newport Way and SR-900. She asked the Commission what are you going to do to provide for all the issues that will be created from traffic jams as this road gets built out with all the development that is planned. She gave her understanding of the projects that are

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planned and coming that will affect traffic on Newport Way. She continued she didn't see plans for roundabouts or signals that will help control traffic on Newport Way. She said she has lived in the area for 37 years, and has seen traffic just building up and getting worse. These developments are not required to adequately help mitigate the traffic they cause, she stated, and need to be required to do more than just make the boulevards look nice. She said she has trouble seeing how this project will fit into Newport Way and all the other projects along that street. She said it is important that neighbors and residents understand how their access to Newport Way will be impacted, and said she can foresee vehicles on Newport Way getting broadsided from other vehicles going into and out of this project. She concluded it is important to think about how traffic will flow from Newport Way into these new developments.

Elizabeth Sanders, 2700 NW Pine Cone Drive, said she lives in the existing multi-family dwelling unit right behind the Gateway Senior Housing Apartments project. She said originally she was told the Gateway Senior Housing building would be one story, and now it appears it will be three to five stories. She expressed her concern about the increase in traffic on Newport Way that the project will create, and described current traffic problems there. She said construction is ongoing now, on weekends and holidays as well as weekdays, and traffic sometimes is backed up by 10 to 15 cars. She said she doesn't think the applicant is meeting the view requirements that they say they are. The residents of the new Gateway projects will have great views, it's true; the same views that she and her neighbors used to have before these projects. She said the only mention of existing residents tonight has been from the woman who just spoke during public comment. She said she would like to invite Commissioners and City staff to come to her house and see what she will be seeing, namely a three- to five-story building right across the street from her home. She said she feels she and her neighbors have been misled about this project.

Hart Sugarman, 2550 NW Oak Crest Drive, said he wanted to speak to the AAS requesting a reduction in traffic lane width from 11 to 10 feet on Newport Way that is associated with the Gateway Senior Housing project. He noted that Newport Way is a very busy street, and getting busier with all these new projects. The street is already maxed out, and narrowing the lane does not make sense. The roadway has curves, elevation changes, sight line issues, and so on, and now this project will add elderly people trying to get in and out of their apartment facility onto Newport Way as well. He said the City needs to look at improving the road before building all these new projects. He said he is also not sure how residents will travel east-to-west on the roadway while construction goes on. He concluded his remarks by stating that the bridge over Schneider Creek should be limited to pedestrians and bicycles only.

David Kappler, 255 SE Andrews Street, made a correction to the proper name for Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. He spoke about the steep entrance to the site of the Gateway Senior Housing project, and noted that a sidewalk doesn't need to parallel the roadway. He also addressed the need for trails that are ADA compliant, meaning no bicycles and relatively straight. He gave information about the bicycles that will be coming from the trail on the south side of I-90 onto Newport Way and then on to Gilman. He said those bicyclists will not be recreational kids on bicycles, but rather will be riding fast and will need a major bike corridor. He said vehicles should definitely not be allowed on the Schneider Creek bridge crossing, and said that issue needs more work and clarification. He noted that the cottonwood trees along Schneider Creek will start to block views, and said it will be important to manage trees there. He said on a holiday such as Mother's Day, the amount of parking allowed for this project will not be adequate, and expressed concern about visitors going into existing single-family neighborhoods to find a place to park. He said on the old vet property adjacent to the site, he's

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not sure who the owner is, but mandating a connection between the project site and the old vet property could create a problem for that property owner.

Peggy Foster, 2254 Newport Way NW, said she has lived in the area for nine years. She asked about parking spaces for the apartment. Tarce replied the apartment will have 146 units and 110 parking stalls, 32 of which will be designated for employees. Ms. Foster continued she has friends over 80 years old who drive daily. So parking is a big concern, especially for nearby communities without gated entrances. She also expressed her concern that there is only one access point to the project. She said living on Newport Way, she constantly sees what happens when the area gets a lot of rain in terms of runoff and saturation, and said she doesn't see how building all these projects will help that situation. She said she is concerned about the foundations of buildings already on Sammamish Pointe. She said she would like the Commission and City to consider the quality of life for existing residents, and how putting in new projects with higher building heights will change their lives and lifestyles.

Martine Delmulle, 2654 Pine Cone Place, said she lives in the housing development directly above this proposed project. She said her neighbors and those of Bentley House all bought houses with views and open space. Now a five-story building is taking away both. She said perhaps some might say she should have looked at future plans when she came from Bellevue and bought her house in Issaquah, but it has come as a shock that her house will not have the valley views that she bought it for in the first place. She spoke of her concerns about lack of adequate parking and her sense that action on this project has been quick. She said the company involved clearly wants to get into the business of providing senior housing, and they looked around and found this great location. She said she can understand it from the developer's point of view, but it is selfish for them to just come into the neighborhood and say "to hell with the rest of you." It is selfish and unfair to just develop what you want to regardless of who is already living there. She said the building is also quite massive, and it could have been designed differently, such as breaking it up into sections connected by glass corridors and so on. To do so would make less money for the applicant, but it would avoid just obliterating everything and everyone around it. She continued she has a petition signed by about 30 people in her neighborhood and at the Bentley, and invited Commissioners and staff to come and see what this project will do to their homes. The petition also explains what we would like to see instead of what has been proposed, she concluded.

Connie Marsh, business owner at 1175 NW Gilman Blvd, Suite B-11, said she e-mailed her comments on the conditions to Commissioners earlier. She spoke of her perception that the entrance as proposed is unsafe, particularly for seniors, and said it would make better sense to provide access to this parcel by making motorized access over Schneider Creek with pedestrian access on either side. She said the proposal may be okay in terms of meeting standards, but she would not want her 86-year-old mother to access the project every day the way it is being proposed. She continued in the Central Issaquah Plan, it was clear that street owners would be responsible for taking care of the landscaping of the shared use trail, and it needs to be clear here whose responsibility it will be. She said this doesn't feel like an intuitive pedestrian crossing, and doesn't feel welcoming for pedestrians who want to go down to Schneider Creek. She said it's unclear whether or not the general public is welcome to go through the property. She referred again to her e-mail, which includes more detailed comments, and said she is also interested to know how feedback from the SEPA comments will be released.

Mary Lynch, 2690 NW Oakcrest Drive, said she has previously submitted comments about the proposed circulation plan, and stated the proposed entrance seems unsafe. She said residents of Providence Point, in retrospect, wish they had insisted on a stop light at the intersection that

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leads to Providence Point, and it isn't right to proceed with another uncontrolled access point onto Newport Way. She spoke about the plans for a bridge across Schneider Creek as a multi-modal path, and said the plans do not speak to wildlife. This parcel has been empty for 30 years, and SEPA notes that a lot of animals and birds use it. They will no longer be able to, and the buffer width will be reduced as well, so we need to hear more about a plan for a wildlife corridor there.

She continued her comments about the inadequacy of the traffic circulation study that showed this project will meet concurrency. She said work on Newport Way is listed in the TIP, but no funding has been identified for the next 30 years, just a conceptual study. She spoke of her other concerns, including an inadequate turning radius for larger fire trucks; inadequate parking; no mention of Metro buses; and the need for access for deliveries. She said no trucks were allowed on Newport Way for 30 years, and now suddenly they are allowed with this construction activity. Citizens are putting up with diesel, vibrations, schedule delays, working on holidays and so on. She also said landscaping on the new Pine Cone development was supposed to be finished, but is not done yet. The City is just now starting to complete its work around the stormwater vault. There are no tree scapes on the uphill side because the City didn't hold the developer accountable. As a citizen, she concluded, she feels the City hasn't held the developer accountable for their responsibilities. She noted the property is zoned not just for multi-family but for mixed use, and mixed use was an option for this developer.

Tina Conforti, 1220 Oakcrest Place NW, spoke of the four or five large projects that have gone in on Newport Way since she moved there from Bellevue. She spoke about the traffic impacts, loss of views, and other impacts of these projects on residents along Newport Way. She referred to the tragic death of a four-year-old boy last summer on Newport, and said multiplying the bad traffic we already have by four or five more projects will create more terribly unsafe situations for everyone.

Hearing no additional requests to speak, HARRISON closed the public hearing at 8:59 PM.

### **Commissioner Discussion**

HICKS said the Commission heard several comments tonight on parking, and asked the applicant team to speak to the parking issue. Bodoia said the development industry recognizes that senior housing has different parking needs than typical apartments. The City's required ratio of parking stalls to residential units is not dissimilar to many other jurisdictions', and has proven adequate in past projects. This project calls for 32 employee parking stalls, he continued, but in reality those stalls will only be used on a part-time basis. There are another five stalls planned over the required number, he said. Our team's traffic consultant has indicated that we have adequately planned for parking. The typical resident will be in their late 70s or older, and likely will not drive on a regular basis if at all, and we also will have our regular private bus transportation for residents to use.

Jeff Schramm, TENW and Traffic Engineer for the project, 11400 SE 8th Street, Suite 200, Bellevue, said parking for the project meets all the City's code requirements and is appropriate for a senior housing project. He gave some information about how the industry standards are established in determining adequate parking for senior housing. He added the availability of a private van for residents could possibly even attract potential residents because they can get their transportation needs met without needing to own or operate a car.

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MORGAN asked what has been your experience with other senior housing projects. Van Patten replied senior housing is a new product type for our company, but many members of our project team have a lot of experience with this type of housing and a lot of data about parking at senior housing exists. He added the number of employees at the facility is likely to be something like 15 to 20 part-time staff who will not be working simultaneously at the apartments. The formula for determining parking takes into account the overflow from employees as well as from visitors, he stated. MORGAN asked will residents be allowed to bring multiple cars to the facility, and will they pay for parking. Van Patten said there will be no charge for surface parking, but covered parking will be on a fee basis. He added there is a balance to be achieved in charging for parking; the fee can't be so high that people will start to park around the surrounding neighborhood to avoid having to pay the covered parking fee.

SWEDBERG said he understands that the parking provided may be in compliance with City standards, but from a practical standpoint, when people come to visit, perhaps grandkids and their parents, where will they park. Are you going to encourage them to park at the transit center and walk a mile to the apartment complex, he asked. He continued his concern is for the neighbors if people start to look for parking in surrounding neighborhoods. Van Patten said the standards we are using have accounted for both visitors and employees. He continued it is not in our best interests to have inadequate parking, either for our residents or for our neighbors, he continued. He referred back to industry standards. To think that all 140 or so residents will have visitors coming simultaneously to the apartment complex in their own cars, even on Mother's Day, is simply unrealistic, he said. We feel that the parking standard we are using takes into account the typical visitor count, employee and resident usage, plus the private bus transportation that will be available to residents.

HARRISON asked whether the same parking standard was used at Talus Ridge. Sloman replied some of the parking ratios for properties in Central Issaquah are lower than for the rest of the City, but the standard is the same for all senior housing. So the same parking standard was used for Aegis, for example, and probably Talus Ridge as well. She said staff hears the concerns being expressed, and will address it in its briefing memo. HARRISON asked is the parking standard for the Gateway Senior Housing a change from what has been used in the past. Sloman said her understanding is that no, it is the same as what has been used for other projects, such as Timber Ridge.

BRENNAN asked for clarification of the shared use trail. Is it expected to be used by the general public, he asked. Tarce replied the trail along Newport Way would be for the public. BRENNAN asked what about trails on the property itself. Tarce replied the City's standards don't require the multi-use trail to go through the property, so basically trails on the property would be an amenity for residents of the apartment complexes that also improve connectivity with adjacent properties.

BRENNAN said some comments have suggested a pedestrian-bicycle-only bridge over Schneider Creek, not open for vehicular access, and asked what was staff's intent in suggesting vehicular access. Tarce said we looked at the City's standards that require connectivity for all modes of transportation, and tried to determine whether the project complies with the standards. We can certainly revisit it, she added. BRENNAN said he understands the need for connectivity and thinks that makes sense for certain dense parts of the City, but is struggling here to see the benefit of connecting properties with vehicular access.

MORGAN said in Exhibit 5 of SEPA on the Gateway Apartments project, the trail was shown as a pedestrian-bicycle trail and the project was approved that way. If vehicular access from the

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Gateway Senior Housing Apartments project was approved, where would it go, as it was not approved as part of the Gateway Apartments project. Tarce said it would be reviewed at the construction permit stage. Sloman said what is presented here falls within the footprint of what has already been approved. MORGAN said it appears that the trail would be 10-feet wide from the Gateway Apartments, then go maybe 100 or 150 feet to the parking lot of the Gateway Senior Housing Apartments. Tarce showed it on a diagram. Sloman said essentially it would act as a queuing street, similar to ones in Talus and the Highlands.

HARRISON asked what is the design objective of having a vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle bridge, where many of the pedestrians will be seniors. Why take a queuing approach rather than, say, a two-lane bridge. Sloman replied the bridge would be considered a secondary connection that would maintain a minimal footprint in terms of its impact to the Creek. Rather than have more impacts to the Creek, she continued, the design was intended to provide connectivity between projects while minimizing the footprint. HARRISON said given the way traffic tends to “flow” like water does, people will try to use this “secret road” in seeking alternatives to beating traffic on Newport Way. HICKS agreed, and said since we are not expecting people who live in these senior apartments to do a lot of driving, a vehicle bridge doesn’t seem like a good idea for this project. She asked the applicant for any comments.

Van Patten said our desire was to not have a vehicular connection over Schneider Creek, and to restrict the crossing there to pedestrian and bicycles only. Our other concern was to leave the vehicular access open to the area where the vet clinic formally was located. The unpredictability of how that parcel might be used is a concern for us, he continued, as security and safety are paramount for senior residents of the Gateway Senior Housing Apartments. Even a very low-intensive use that might go in there, like three or four townhomes, could generate traffic that would create unsafe conditions for residents, plus create noise issues. Sloman said she is somewhat surprised to hear the applicant’s comments, as the applicant agreed to these two conditions in previous discussions with staff. She said staff and the applicant will have additional discussions and include further information in the briefing memo.

SWEDBERG referred to page 11 of 41, which says that “A new street.... is required to connect from Newport Way through the project...” He asked why not just make a loop through the project, with another entrance onto Newport Way. Bodoia referred to the amount of grade change on the site, and said the only way to negotiate it safely is to negotiate down the slope, which is probably 15 feet below Newport Way at that point.

MORGAN asked why is the ADA ramp and bicycle lane configuration not straighter. Bodoia replied the intent was for people to walk their bikes down the ramp, not ride them, and get back on their bikes once they get to the bottom of the ramp. The idea was to meet ADA requirements but also make it a more interesting, meandering experience.

HICKS said she would like to bring up some issues that were raised in public comment, starting with impacts to surrounding properties. She referred to the views on page 33 of “existing views” and “proposed views” from Pine Cone Place, and asked staff to comment on view impacts on those properties. Tarce referred to the slide, “Site Design: Existing Features and Context.” The property was zoned Professional Office Zoning in the early 1990s, which allowed for building heights of 45 to 60 feet. Current zoning allows for building heights of 40 to 68 feet, she continued, so the zoning has always allowed for taller buildings. She showed views of existing and proposed views from Pine Cone Drive and Pine Cone Place, and noted that the views do not show street trees planned for Newport Way. HICKS asked what about views from Bentley House. Tarce referred to the existing conditions slide. The ground floor and perhaps

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second floor units at Bentley House may have obstructed views, as they are above Newport Way, she said. MORGAN asked for clarification of the proposed building height. Tarce replied the project qualified for the maximum building height as an incentive to provide parking in a garage under the building, which they are doing. The developer could have gone as high as 65 feet with bonus density, but they opted not to do that, and the proposed building height is actually 54 feet.

HARRISON asked staff to comment on the stages of traffic improvement for Newport Way, and to address the comment made during public comment that no funding currently exists for the improvements. Tarce said the concern is the same as for the Gateway Apartments. The City did a systemwide analysis two years ago, and based on the concurrency model, the City identified mitigation measures for Newport Way. Currently there is only one two-lane road on Newport Way with no median turn-lane, which does cause congestion. The relief valve required would be a center turn lane so that cars that are now slowing down traffic on Newport Way could use the turn lane. Another mitigation measure would be to provide a roundabout to allow more free flow of traffic and to benefit the intersection of Newport Way and Pacific Elm as well as Newport itself. The applicant is required to pay traffic impact fees that will be used to pay for projects that will create additional systemwide improvements, she added.

Jeff Schramm added staff did a good job on the traffic study Tarce just referred to, which is summarized in the agenda packet. The project does meet all zoning and concurrency requirements, and the City did plan for growth at this level of density and development, he continued. Parkway improvements for Newport Way include a center turn lane, bike lanes on either side of Newport, a left-turn lane with access into and out of the Gateway Senior Housing Apartments project, improvements to the old vet side, and a transitional section to maintain the center turn lane. The project is consistent with the City's plan for the parkway, and as the site location is near a curve along Newport Way, the entrance was located where the sight distance standards and safety were optimal. He continued Newport Way is anticipated to handle traffic from four planned construction projects plus more, and does have adequate capacity to handle those projects. We are pursuing lanes on Newport to be 10-foot wide, he added; today the lanes are 10- and 10.5-foot wide. The applicant's mitigation responsibilities are not just for frontage improvements but also in terms of impact fees for improvements systemwide to meet the demands of growth, he concluded.

HICKS said the SEPA review says on page 5 that the building sits on silt and peat, and asked the applicant to comment. She said she would also like to know if there have been any thoughts on the type of fill to be used and accommodations for earthquakes. Bodoia said the soils on this site are much better than those on the Gateway Apartments site. We will be using an adequate foundation material, for which we are still in the analysis phase. Any fill brought in will be compacted, structural fill. We are in the early stages of the foundation analysis, he said, and we do have a series of engineered walls in the design that will be a structural solution as well as other engineered block walls. HICKS asked how long trucks will need to haul in fill. Bodoia said we don't have an accurate answer at this point, but he can get that information from the construction engineer. HICKS replied that would be helpful.

BRENNAN referred to the condition to add architectural interest to the upper levels of the building ("The top floor of the building... should be further refined to create a strong architectural statement..."). He said he agrees with that condition, which would be beneficial overall to the project. He said the intent of the through-block connection seems to be to break down blocks for pedestrian access and to create variations in long, massive buildings. Tarce said that is correct. In this type of building, she continued, we also had to consider how the building would best

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function internally for the intended residents. The common spaces are all in the center of the building, so while we could have required breaking the building into two sections, we considered what real benefits that can accomplish. In the end, we concluded it's good to have a covered through block passage. Staff did an interpretation of the through-block passage requirement and this is the result, she concluded.

MORGAN noted on page 15 of 41, the through-block passage is required to be "accessible to almost everyone who will use the site." Is this intended to be used by the public, or is it for private use only, he asked. Tarce replied the through-block passage is required to break up super-blocks into more walkable lengths, and is not meant to require public access. There will probably not be a lot of public walking through the Gateway apartment complex unless they have business or live there, she continued. Sloman added this is similar to what we faced with the Costco development. With the creek right there and a limited number of crossings, it is likely to be used by people in the facility only.

MORGAN noted a lot of the plan views show either the north or the south wing, but taking in both together, it is a really large building. He said he would like to see more done architecturally to the center portion to emphasize the separation of the two sections. From the black-and-white drawings we have, it doesn't appear like there is much of a break, he continued, and added his comment is more of a suggestion than a question. Tarce referred to condition 17, "The top floor of the building... shall be further refined..." and said that condition will also address that concern.

HARRISON said he was favorably impressed by the proposed color palette and materials included in the packet. He said he hopes the final design sticks as closely as possible to what has been shown here, which reflects a Northwest identity. He added he has been surprised occasionally by some of the color choices, for example, in completed developments that ended up quite different than what was presented. MORGAN said he agrees that the palette colors are attractive. He questioned whether the use of white stone on the base tended to separate the building visually and make it look even taller from the east view. He asked whether the applicant had considered using a darker base and a lighter color above. Bodoia referred to the materials board. He said we planned to use architectural concrete on the parking level, which will also have trees and landscaping. We can look at adding color or a stain to the concrete, and present it as an option at the next meeting. HARRISON asked whether a darker color would be easier to maintain in pristine condition given the amount of rain our region receives. He said he was thinking of mold, moss, and so on. Bodoia replied routine, proper maintenance should keep it looking exactly as it is shown here.

HICKS referred to conditions 13 and 14 on page 26 of 41, "The community garden...", and said as a gardener herself she would suggest adding a greenhouse for seniors to start seeds and plants in the spring. HARRISON asked what are the City's codes for dogs on- or off-leash on this property. Sloman said she doesn't know of any City restrictions for leashing dogs on private property.

MORGAN said condition 7 on page 39 reads, "... this area should be well lit..." and asked whether it should read "shall" or "should." Tarce required the City's lighting standards apply, and if those standards didn't exist, we would probably use "shall." But because they do, in this case staff feels that "should" is correct.

SWEDBERG said in condition 7 on page 39, it reads, "... the north wing of the building shall be designed such that visitors and non-residents know the sidewalk is not a primary connection."

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How do you design so that people not know something, he asked. Tarce said the designers are on board with this condition. We have talked about having some sort of visual terminus of the sidewalk that would signify it is a private walkway for residents.

HARRISON asked whether a vehicular bridge over Schneider Creek would have to be illuminated, and what issues might be raised given that this is an environmentally sensitive area. Tarce replied the design could use low lighting to make sure it is safe enough for people to walk on at night and in the dark, such as is used with Tibbetts Creek. HARRISON asked so it would not conflict with existing code. Tarce replied that is correct.

MORGAN said on condition 10, "Consider using City Street Standard T-37, Crosswalk Stripe for Decorative Pavement, at pedestrian crossings..." does it mean the applicant has to use T-37, or shall use T-37. Tarce said again this reflects what we did for the Gateway Apartments project. We made a general condition that all crosswalks have to be paved T-37, and came to the eventual conclusion that all crosswalks have to be visually striped but in more natural areas, a more decorative crosswalk would be more appealing. MORGAN said so the applicant doesn't have to use T-37. Tarce said that is correct. They will work with staff to determine which crosswalks will need special striping or treatment, she added.

MORGAN suggested that the wording of condition #17 be changed from "should be further refined" to "shall be further refined." Tarce agreed, and said we will change it.

MORGAN asked whether project signage will be presented to the Development Commission at the project construction permit stage. HARRISON noted that some of the new signage he has seen on recent projects seem to create unsafe conditions because they block vision, are too close to access roads, and so on. Tarce asked are you concerned with safety or aesthetics. HARRISON replied both, and referred to a specific example of a readerboard. Sloman replied every monument sign should be reviewed by staff in terms of giving it an engineering/technical review. She said she will do additional research on whether signage for this project will come back to the Commission for review and get back to Commissioners.

### **Commissioner Comments**

HICKS thanked the applicant for their presentation and for their attention to the details of the plan, especially provisions for wildlife, setbacks, landscaping, and the inclusion of a P-patch and gardening spaces.

BRENNAN complimented the applicant on the submittal packet and staff for a thorough staff report. He said he appreciates hearing concerns from the public, even though some of what was expressed tonight is out of the purview of the Development Commission. He said he senses there is some tension between the applicant and staff over a few unresolved issues, and encouraged resolution of those issues. He said he thinks the design is architecturally interesting. He continued he likes the view of the back of the building, especially the central piece of the dining area, and agrees with MORGAN that more could be done to break up the building's appearance. He said it is difficult to see from the drawings how the building will appear as cars travel down Newport Way, but it would be good to be attentive to that in the design. Overall the trail system and connectivity approach will be nice for residents in both projects. He said he thinks a pedestrian-bicycle bridge would best serve the needs here, and doesn't see the need or benefit for vehicle access on the bridge. He thanked the public for coming tonight and to those who spoke for contributing their thoughts.

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MORGAN thanked the applicant, staff, and public for their contributions to the project so far. He said he feels the amount of parking proposed for the project is adequate. It should be our goal to provide less parking, not more parking, he continued. One of the goals of the CIP was to reduce vehicles and vehicular traffic in the City, and we should not be designing parking to address the demand on a few days a year such as Mother's Day.

He continued the bridge over Schneider Creek should be just a pedestrian-bicycle bridge, and said he doesn't see the benefit of making it open to vehicular traffic as well. He said he would strongly encourage staff to eliminate that condition. He said he would like to see a darker color used at the base of the building, as he mentioned earlier. He said he favors the AAS that would allow the parkway standards for Newport Way to be reduced from 11 to 10 feet because narrowing the roadway would help calm traffic.

He said at the next meeting, he would like to see some interior views showing the retaining walls, how large they will be, and so on. He said he would also like to see more consideration given to connecting to the old vet property at the southeast corner of the site. Tarce showed the option on a diagram, and clarified are you saying you support a connection but in a more eastern location. MORGAN replied yes. He said he shares the concern about so many cars coming into the site from the east, and if they could come in from the old vet property and then access the parking lot and garage, it would be very helpful. Finally, he said this site is a gateway to the City, and feels it is important that signage be presented to the Development Commission for review and discussion.

SWEDBERG thanked all parties for their patience with Commissioners' questions. He said he appreciated seeing the photos with what the views will look like superimposed on them. He said it can be hard to visualize what is being proposed and visual depictions really help. He continued unlike MORGAN, he thinks adequate parking is an issue, and doesn't think it's realistic that everyone in the City and region is going to just stop driving. He said the parking as presented is in compliance, though, so we will just have to see what happens. He gave an example of visiting a friend in Seattle who lives in senior housing and having to search adjacent streets to find parking.

HARRISON also thanked staff and the applicant for their work, the public for coming tonight, and to those who spoke. He agreed with other comments that the bridge over Schneider Creek should be a pedestrian-bicycle only bridge. He said the City makes routine adjustments in its code requirements, and in this case, connectivity isn't negatively impacted by making it a pedestrian-bicycle only bridge. He encouraged the applicant and City staff to come together on a suitable design. He said similar to discussions of the Gateway Apartment project, having a visual screen of conifer trees that would block views of I-90 would be beneficial. He said he doesn't know all the landscaping work that is planned, but not having to look at I-90 from the project could be a significant benefit for residents. He said he also thought the photos shown as part of the presentation were very helpful.

He continued he shares many of the concerns expressed tonight about blocked views of the surrounding mountains, and has found that the careful planning of recent projects has started to pay off in that views are being preserved. Some views will need to change, of course, he continued, but overall the evidence is that our efforts to preserve views are working. Lastly, he said he is sensitive to the impact of development on existing neighborhoods, and the obvious importance to people whose homes are in an affected area. He said he believes the City has participated in a lengthy, positive effort to engage the public in planning for our collective future, and the result is the Central Issaquah Plan that we are doing our best to implement. People

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want to come to our community to live and work, and we have to accommodate them to the best of our ability, and public participation is a critical part of that process.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, HARRISON adjourned the meeting at 10:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe  
Recording Secretary