

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND CONCURRENT REZONE

2007-M-02 – RAINIER AVENUE PUBLIC HEARING FINAL ISSUE PAPER – (REVISED JUNE 29, 2007)

DESCRIPTION: This map amendment request involves four parcels, two on Rainier Avenue South and two on Hardie Avenue Southwest. The parcels are back-to-back spanning the width of the block and forming a backwards “L” with frontage on Rainier. All parcels are located in the 100-block of their respective streets. This proposal is for a Comprehensive Plan map amendment from Residential Medium Density (RMD) to Commercial Corridor (CC) and a rezone from R-10 to Commercial Arterial (CA) at 188 Hardie Avenue SW. The proposal would also include an expansion of the Rainier Business District overlay to all four subject parcels and a zoning code text change to allow 60 dwelling units per acre in the Rainier Business District overlay. Currently, the maximum density allowed in CA is 20 dwelling units per acre.

The City in reviewing this request in the context of the Comprehensive Plan land use element expanded this application to include four additional parcels: 150, 176, 180 Hardie Ave SW, and 111 SW Victoria to be rezoned from R-10 to CA. The application has also been expanded to include the property at 196 Hardie which is zoned CA, but designated incorrectly for RMD land use. Also, the application has been expanded to include an additional 26 properties already designated CC with CA zoning in the Rainier Business District overlay.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. Should the Comprehensive Plan designation on Hardie Avenue SW be changed to Commercial Corridor and rezoned Commercial Arterial?
2. Should the Rainier Avenue Business District Overlay be extended to the subject properties and should it be extended further north and/or further south?
3. What is the City’s vision for multi-family and/or mixed-use development and should it be allowed in the Rainier corridor and if so, at what density?

RECOMMENDATION:

- The Comprehensive Plan designation for the requested parcels and the expanded area parcels on Hardie should be changed to Commercial Corridor and zoned Commercial Arterial.
- The City’s established vision for Rainier Avenue is that it is a gateway and that the design, function, and configuration should reflect its status as a key gateway (*Objective LU-UUU*). The

overlay should be extended to Airport Way because it facilitates this vision of Rainier as a gateway.

- The City's evolving vision for Rainier Avenue is that it serve as a higher intensity land use area with mixed use residential that enhances the commercial tax base but allows urban densities of residential use. 60 dwelling units per acre is the density allowed in the other business districts in the City, this same density should be allowed in the Rainier Avenue Business District. Further, it is recommended that residential use be restricted so that it is only allowed when it is mixed-use and within one building.

ANALYSIS

Issue One – Re-designation and rezoning from Residential Medium Density to Commercial Corridor

The O'Farrell properties total approximately 69,681 square feet, approximately 1.6 acres and have existing uses. Those uses include a 1,872 square foot retail store built in 1968, a 624 square foot storage garage built in 1957, a 316 square foot espresso stand built in 2004, a 1,733 square foot single family home built in 1908, and a 1,470 square foot single family home built in 1950.

- 1) In the R-10 zone:
 - a. Triplex, multi-family residential, built in 1942 and a duplex, multi-family residential built in 1944
 - b. Duplex, multi-family residential, built in 1941
 - c. Single-family residence, built in 1913
 - d. Single-family residence, built in 1940
 - e. Single-family residence, built in 1908
- 2) In the CA zone:
 - a. A-1 Clutch-Brake-Transmission, built in 1955
 - b. Paved parking area
 - c. Auto rebuild business, built in 1958
 - d. Retail store and an automotive garages, built in 1965
 - e. City of Seattle right of way, no buildings
 - f. Pizza Hut restaurant, built in 1978
 - g. Single story office building, built in 1980
 - h. Midas automotive, built in 1978
 - i. Walgreen's, built in 1999
 - j. Office building, built in 1941
 - k. Office building, built in 1982

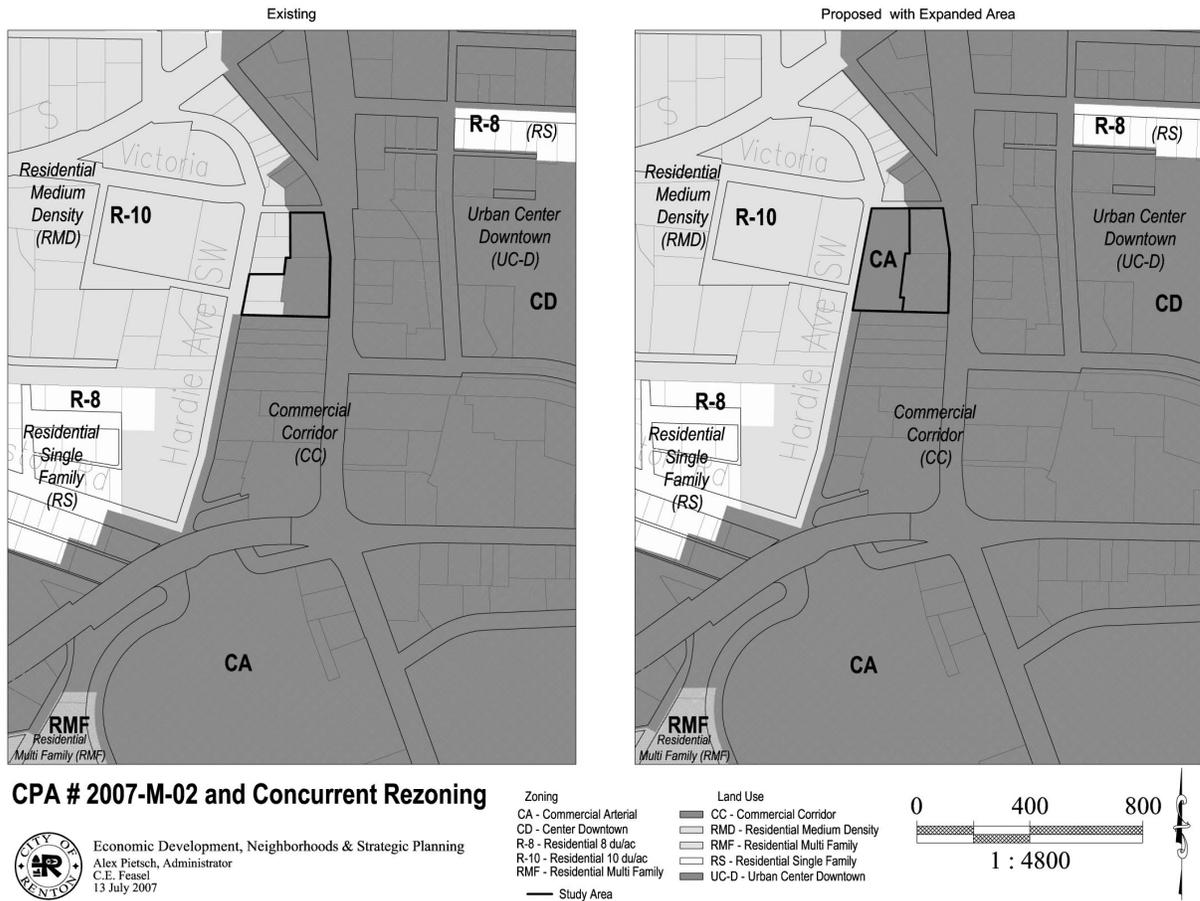
Mr. O'Farrell, the proponent of this land use action request, has proposed developing a mixed-use multi-story building that would utilize all four parcels. Surface parking to serve the commercial use on Rainier would be located at the front of the building on

The parcel located at 188 Hardie Avenue is one of five parcels in the block that are designated RMD and zoned R-10. To the north the four other parcels are designated as RMD and zoned R-10. To the south is 196 Hardie Avenue SW, a parcel that due to an error in 1994 was assigned a Comprehensive Plan designation of residential and is zoned CA. Further to the south and to the east and across Rainier, all parcels in this block are designated CC and zoned CA.

Hardie Avenue is a roadway that is currently used as a pass through street during peak traffic hours and also has experienced increased traffic volumes during off peak times in the last few years; this section of Hardie accommodates approximately 10,500 vehicles per day. These changes and the existing three-story retirement home across Hardie Avenue indicate higher intensity land uses than residential medium density and justify a change to a commercial designation for this block of Hardie Avenue. The inclusion of these parcels in a CC designation is consistent with *Policy LU-DDD* regarding the criteria for Commercial Corridor designations, it is highly visible from an arterial, the area surrounding it has commercial and office uses, and it likely would provide desirable or necessary goods or services to the larger community. The area is not as suitable for the R-10 designation as it is for Commercial Corridor. The R-10 criteria (*Policy LU-158*) states that the designation is to be in areas that have small-scale multi-family development, Renton Villa is a large scale multi-family development across the street. The traffic volume, development patterns, and presence of Rainier Avenue make the area more appropriate for high-density re-development rather than medium density. Additionally, an appropriate buffer between potentially incompatible uses would not be able to be provided. Thus, staff recommends that in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan designation change, the zoning should be changed from R-10 to CA on Hardie Avenue from 188 Hardie, north to SW Victoria Street. All the properties to be changed from residential designation with R-10 zoning to commercial designation with CA zoning are:

- 150 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 111 Southwest Victoria
- 176 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 180 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 188 Hardie Avenue Southwest

This amendment recommendation seeks to correct the aforementioned error at 196 Hardie Avenue Southwest where the Comprehensive Plan designation was incorrectly assigned in 1994 and correctly designate it with CC. This expanded recommendation is shown in the map below.



Issue Two – Expansion of the Rainier Business District

In reviewing this request in the context of the Comprehensive Plan land use element, City staff found that the properties north and east of the subject properties share many of the same features, such as underutilization and capacity for access points from streets other than Rainier, as the subject properties. Additionally, the properties form an area that is perceived as a gateway into Renton. The City would like to encourage this gateway area to be redeveloped with mixed-use development. The extended area is roughly, north to Airport Way bound by Lake Avenue S. on the east and on the west by Hardie Avenue until it reaches SW Victoria Street to include only the commercially zoned properties in that block and including the block bound by Hayes Place SW on the west and Renton Avenue on the north. The specific properties to be included in the proposed extend Renton Business District Overlay are:

- 54 Rainier Avenue South
- 59 Rainier Avenue South
- 64 Rainier Avenue South

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- 73 Rainier Avenue South
- 74 Rainier Avenue South
- 77 Rainier Avenue South
- 100 Rainier Avenue South
- 104 Rainier Avenue South
- 110 Rainier Avenue South
- 124 Rainier Avenue South
- 134 Rainier Avenue South
- 128 Rainier Avenue South
- 144 Rainier Avenue South
- 151 Rainier Avenue South
- 175 Rainier Avenue South
- 150 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 176 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 180 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 188 Hardie Avenue Southwest
- 106 Southwest Victoria
- 111 Southwest Victoria
- 81 South Tobin
- 85 South Tobin
- 100 South 2nd
- 125 Hayes Place Southwest
- 101 Lake Avenue South



Issue Three – What is the vision for multi-family development in the Rainier corridor and should the density be increased to 60 du/acre for mixed-use development?

The purpose statement of the Commercial Corridor land use designation states “*it is anticipated that the intensity of activity will increase over time as development of vacant space occurs, increased land value makes redevelopment feasible, and land is used more efficiently*” (Land Use Element, page IX-53). Amending the text to allow 60 du/acre is a way to facilitate this purpose statement and increase the intensity of the land use in multi-story buildings, encourage redevelopment, and it is a more efficient use of land than the current existing uses on Rainier Avenue. Mixed-use development places potential commercial users within the same building as their residential use. Encouraging mixed-use development along the Rainier Avenue corridor would also place commercial users within close proximity to an already existing vital commercial area. Thus, staff recommends the Rainier Business District Overlay be amended to allow 60 dwelling units per acre within mixed-use development as the other three business districts in the City currently allow.

This more intensive use of land is expected to result in a development pattern that is urban in its nature rather than the generally suburban development pattern that currently exists on Rainier Avenue South. Suburban development being more linear and characterized by single-story strip commercial, rather than an urban development pattern characterized by multi-story, mixed-use development patterns. This type of higher density development is appropriate for designated business districts in the City. These districts are located in areas that are outside the designated urban center, but serve as centralized nodes of commerce for the neighborhoods that surround them. A density of 60-du/acre helps to foster re-development of these designated business districts with mixed-use projects that can develop with urban characteristics. This fulfills the vision expressed in the Comprehensive Plan Vision section, “*current policies of the Comprehensive Plan direct future growth to the Urban Center, the core of an economically healthy, working city, and to mixed-use areas created outside of the downtown*” (page II-1).

EXISTING AND PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING ALTERNATIVES: The parcels on Hardie Avenue SW are currently designated Commercial Corridor and Residential Medium Density and are zoned Commercial Arterial (CA) and Residential 10 (R-10). Both parcels on Rainier are zoned Commercial Arterial and one parcel on Hardie is zoned CA with the other parcel zoned R-10.

The Residential Medium Density Comprehensive Plan designation is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods that offer a variety of lot sizes, housing, and ownership options, but at significantly lower density than needed to create a viable mixed-use commercial/residential project at this location. The zoning for the subject property is R-10; in R-10 attached residential is allowed but only at 10 du/acre (*Policy LU-162*).

The requirements for residential development in the R-10 zone essentially disallow multi-story residential projects. The requirements include:

- at minimum 50 percent detached or semi-attached dwelling units are required for multi-family developments on parcels greater than ½ acre ,
- a maximum of 4 units may be consecutively attached,
- a maximum of 4 residential units are allowable on any legal lot within the R-10 zone, and
- the maximum number of building stories allowed is two with a maximum building height of 30 feet.

In the Comprehensive Plan, the Commercial Corridor designation purpose statement states that the purpose of the CC is to facilitate areas evolving “*from strip commercial linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities, and boulevard treatment*” (Land Use element, page IX-53). The Commercial Corridor purpose statement states that these areas may include “*designated districts including*

concentrations of specialized uses such as the Auto Mall, or features such as transit stops and a combination of businesses creating a focal point of pedestrian activity and visual interest” (Land Use element, page IX-53).

The Commercial Corridor designation is implemented with Commercial Arterial zoning (*Policy LU-336*). The purpose statement also states the areas are “characterized by concentrated pre-existing commercial activity, primarily in linear form, that provides necessary goods and services for daily living, accessible to near-by neighborhoods, serving a sub-regional market and accommodating large volumes of traffic”. Further, “the areas may also include features such as transit stops and a combination of businesses creating a focal point of pedestrian activity and visual interest. In these districts, provision of pedestrian amenities is encouraged, as are opportunities to link adjacent uses and neighborhoods”.

The CA zone is to evolve into more concentrated forms in which structures and parking evolve from suburban form to more efficient urban configurations (*Objective LU-GGG*). The intensity level of development is expected to increase over time (Commercial Corridor purpose statement, page IX-53). The increased density to 60 dwelling units per acre is more urban configuration than the existing 20 dwelling units per acre. CA zones should include an opportunity for residential uses and office as part of mixed-use development (*Policy LU-338*). Other policies that these proposed changes facilitate are: support the redevelopment of commercial business districts located along principal arterials (*Policy LU-346*), implement development standards that encourage lively, attractive, medium to high-density commercial areas (*Policy LU-347*), and encourage consolidation of individual parcels to maximize flexibility of site design and reduce access points (*Policy LU 348*).

The land use element in the Comprehensive Plan states that the City seeks to promote new development and neighborhoods in the City that are developed at densities that make efficient use of infrastructure and public transportation, as well as, offer a variety of housing types (Land Use element goal, page IX-23). Mixed-use development should be allowed in the Rainier corridor as it facilitates stated goals while preserving and enhancing commercial viability of the corridor.

In the Rainier Business District Overlay all parcels are zoned CA. The residential uses that are allowed in the CA zone is exclusively semi-attached or attached dwelling units in a mixed-use residential/commercial building at a maximum density of 20 dwelling units per acre. Within other designated business districts in the City (Sunset, NE 4th, and Puget), 60 dwelling units are allowed for mixed-use in the same building. The Rainier Business District Overlay currently is not eligible for this additional density but instead requires standards pertinent to commercial development. Those development standards include: consolidated entry points, monument signage, 15 foot setbacks, and parking is limited to the minimum requirements of the CA zone.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS: Development of these parcels with the current zoning could possibly yield a fifty-foot high building. Based on buildable lands methodology, in the R-10 zone a single-family or multi-family residence would develop with a density of 8.44 du/acre. Thus, the parcel that is currently designated R-10 could develop with 2 dwelling units with no change in designation. The same methodology indicates that Commercial Arterial properties develop with a floor area ratio of .19. The three parcels currently with CA zoning total 57,221 square feet, 1.3 acres, would yield a commercial development of 10,759 square feet. The buildable lands methodology also assumes that in the CA zone, there is one employee per 400 square feet, thus this property could employ 27 people if developed commercially.

If developed with the proposed zoning change to CA without a text amendment for the higher density on the extended area, the capacity for the 2.48 acre area is for 21 dwelling units and 12,315 square feet of retail employing 31 people. This assumes that, as in the buildable lands report, the CA zone developed with a 60 percent commercial and 40 percent residential. If the proposed request for a rezone and extension of the overlay to the four requested parcels were redeveloped as a mixed-use project, it has been proposed that the project would have 99 residential units, yielding a density of approximately 61.88 dwelling units/acre. The retail/commercial portion of the proposed project would be approximately 7,500 square feet. Using buildable lands methodology in the CA zone, the one employee per 400 square-foot standard would yield a development that would employ 18 people if developed as proposed.

An extension of the overlay north to Airport way would encompass approximately 18 acres including roads and 11.92 acres of properties. Using two potential pipeline projects the buildable lands methodology for the 2007 five year update, it was estimated that projects in the CA zone with the overlay would develop at a density of 44.56 du/acre, a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.40, and a residential-commercial split in mixed use projects of 80% residential and 20% commercial. Thus, it is estimated that there is a total gross capacity for 425 residential units and 145,386 square feet of commercial development. Assuming the same 400 square feet per employee, this area has the total gross capacity to employ 363 people.

The Rainier Business District with its current boundaries is 31.51 acres in size. Using the same buildable lands numbers from the above calculation for the 11.92 acre area, the proposed amendment to the zoning text to allow a maximum density of 60 du/acre has the total gross capacity for 1,950 residential units and a gross capacity for 495,699 square feet of commercial, employing 1,239 people. In the Buildable Lands report the densities in the CA zone without the overlay and the 60 du/acre maximum density, residential development develops at 21.38 units per acre, with .19 FAR for commercial development. If the existing Business district area were to develop at 20 dwelling units per acre, it would yield 674 units and 260,789 square feet of commercial development, assuming 400 square feet per employee is a capacity for 652 jobs. Thus, the text amendment to the overlay would allow capacity for an additional gross of 1,276 residential units and 587 jobs.

The buildable lands methodology uses a discount for the expected market factor in zoning categories. The market factor for this CA zone with the overlay has not been accounted for in this calculation. Staff believes that the market factor for mixed-use development in the Rainier Business District will be high, seventy-five percent (75%), because the area is generally very developed with local and national chain commercial developments that are successful. Thus, the chart below reflects a 75% market factor deduction for the Proposed Text Amendment and Proposed Overlay with Extension and Text Amendment calculations. The buildable lands market factor for the CA zone without the overlay is fifteen percent (15%) and is also reflected in the table below. No market factor has been discounted from the two zoning change calculations.

	Acres	Dwelling Units (Gross)	Commercial Square Feet (Gross)	Jobs (Gross)
Existing Zoning	1.6	2	10,759	27
Proposed Zoning Change (with expanded area)	2.48	21	12,315	31
Existing Overlay (20 du/acre)	31.51	573	215,151	538
Proposed Text Amendment (60 du/acre)	31.51	488	123,925	310
Proposed Overlay with Extension and Text Amendment (Total)	43.43	594	160,271	401

* These gross calculations do not reflect the number of existing dwelling units, commercial buildings, or jobs. They are strictly the capacity for what could be developed on vacant land with appropriate market factor deductions.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: The proposed map amendment from Residential Medium Density to Commercial Corridor of the northern portion of the 100-block of Hardie Avenue, the extension of the Rainier Business District Overlay and the Comprehensive Plan must meet at least one criteria in RMC 4-9-020G. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The request supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan, or
- 2) The request supports the adopted business plan goals established by the City Council, or
- 3) The request eliminates conflicts with existing elements or policies, or
- 4) The request amends the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate new policy directives of the City Council.

All three portions of this request meet the first criterion, that the change supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan that Renton is “*a community that is healthy*”

and safe, that has cohesive, well-established neighborhoods and a growing diversity of housing to match the diversity of the population with its various needs and wants” (page II-1). A mixed-use multi-family project would help to provide a diverse housing stock in the City. The adopted Comprehensive Plan Land Use goal calls for the promotion of new development and neighborhoods that contributes to a strong sense of community and neighborhood identity, as well as, being developed at densities sufficient to support public transportation and make efficient use of urban services and infrastructure (*Land Use element, page IX-23*). This request also furthers the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan in that it provides vibrancy with higher intensity land use in an area that has been targeted for such growth. It would provide retail and/or employment opportunities and housing to area residents fostering Renton’s continued vibrancy. The amendment to the Rainier Business District amends the direction of the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate a new policy direction: To extend the characteristics of urban mixed-use development to the Rainier Corridor. This urban rather than suburban vision of residential character on Rainier Avenue shifts the current commercial focus.

ZONING CONCURRENCY: This request complies with the decision criteria for rezones in RMC 4-9-180. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The proposed amendment meets the review criteria in RMC 4-9-020G;
and
- 2) The property is potentially classified for the proposed zone being requested pursuant to the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan;
and
- 3) At least one of the following circumstances applies:
 - a) The subject reclassification was not specifically considered at the time of the last area land use analysis and area zoning; or
 - b) Since the most recent land use analysis or the area zoning of the subject property, authorized public improvements, permitted private development or other circumstances affecting the subject property have undergone significant and material change.

This request meets all of the required zoning change criteria above. Criteria number three is met through subpart b. The Rainier Avenue corridor has experienced significant and material change due to authorized public improvements in Downtown. The area has also experienced significant and material change due to permitted private development in Downtown. This request is compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed zoning is consistent with the adopted policies for the CA land use designation.

PUBLIC PROCESS FOR EXPANDED AREA: A letter was mailed to all property owners with a property that is adjacent or abutting the proposed expanded overlay area informing them of the proposed changes, including changing the designation to commercial for residentially designated properties and allowing 60 du/acre, and requesting their input. From the sixty-three letters sent, six responses were received.

Staff also hosted a focus group meeting to discuss all of the proposed changes. Three area property owners and the proponent attended the meeting.

Of the six responses City staff received two from people who own property in the small area that is proposed to be redesignated from residential (R-10) and rezoned to commercial (CA). Both of them responded stated that they are in favor of the CA zoning. Thus, including the proponent, of five property owners in this area proposed to be zoned CA, three contacted the City and all three are in favor of the change.

Of the six total responding property owners and meeting attendees, four stated that they are in favor of extending the overlay and also of amending the text so that the Rainier Business Overlay is included with the other business overlays that allow 60 dwelling units per acre. One owner of property in the vicinity did not disclose his opinion, but indicated he was in favor of positive change in the area. A different owner of property in the vicinity expressed concern that a fifty-foot building height would disrupt the territorial view from his home. The CA zone allows a fifty foot building height, that zoning designation is already in place on all parcels directly in front of his property and to the southeast of his property. The R-10 zone allows a building height of thirty feet. Staff investigated his concerns and found that due to the topography of the area, it is highly unlikely that allowing properties to build to fifty feet (or an additional twenty feet in height) to the northeast of his property would disrupt his view to any greater extent than if they were built to thirty feet. Also because of the topography, those properties to the southeast of him will not impede his territorial view even with a fifty-foot building height.

City staff recognizes that Rainier Avenue is a high traffic volume commercial corridor and does not wish to erode the viability of commercial uses, but to enhance them with the allowance of residential use. High-density residential uses in this corridor will place potential customers in walking distance of a multitude of restaurants, shopping, and services. In order to foster a balance between the residential and the commercial uses, staff recommends that stand-alone residential use not be allowed in this corridor. The allowance of lower density townhouse dwellings, at 20 dwelling units per acre, as is allowed as an administrative conditional use in other business districts would detract from the urban environment the city wishes to encourage in the Rainier business district. Therefore, staff recommends that residential use at 60 dwelling units per acre, be only allowed in mixed-use buildings.