



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
NEIGHBORHOODS, AND STRATEGIC  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**DATE:** September 1, 2006  
**TO:** Ray Giometti, Planning Commission Chair  
Planning Commission Members  
**FROM:** Erika Conkling, Senior Planner *elc*  
**SUBJECT:** **Upper Kennydale Rezone Community Meeting**

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**DESCRIPTION:** Staff meet with property owners from upper Kennydale to discuss a proposal to down zone a portion of the area to R-4 (Residential- four units per acre) from R-8 (Residential- eight units per acre). This paper reports the results of that meeting.

**ISSUE SUMMARY:**

- Should a portion of upper Kennydale be rezoned R-4?
- Should the Planning Commission hold a public hearing to consider this issue?

**RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:** The Planning Commission should take the original staff proposal to public hearing on September 20, 2006.

**BACKGROUND:** Last fall a group of property owners approached the City with concerns about the loss of critical areas and environmental degradation in the upper Kennydale area. Residents turned out to speak before the Planning Commission in opposition to the idea of rezoning the Kennydale Blueberry Farm. Citizens also took interest in an attempt to reclassify a type four waterway in the area. Prior to the events of the last year, there have been active groups of property owners who have spoken against, and appealed, development decisions in the area.

The concerns of property owners indicated that further investigation was needed to determine if the land use designation for this area was correct. Currently the area is in Residential Single Family (RSF) land use designation, with R-8 zoning- with the exception of the Blueberry Farm property which has a Residential Low Density (RLD) land use designation and RC (Resource Conservation) zoning. At the time in which the R-8 zoning was put into place for this area, the zoning choice was between R-1 (Residential- one unit per acre) or R-8. There was no intermediate R-4 designation, as now exists.

Development in the area has organically occurred at about the same level of intensity as an R-4 zone. The majority of the development in the area occurred prior to the

implementation of the R-8 zone. Permit history shows that development has affected the hydrology of the area. Although each project has complied with the rules and regulations in effect at the time of development, the cumulative effect of the projects has resulted in some changes. Recent development that has realized the full extent of the R-8 regulations has been especially noticeable and has resulted in neighbor response.

Critical areas are likely to encumber some the properties in the area. A sizeable wetland has been mapped on both sides of NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street, in the vicinity of the Blueberry Farm. Wetland determinations in some areas where the wetland has mapped have shown class II and class III wetlands, and in other areas there have been no wetlands found. A type four waterway meanders through the area with drainage ultimately ending up in Lake Washington via Kennydale Creek. Steep slopes exist between the area and the freeway, affecting some properties on Jones Road. The area as a whole gently slopes up toward the north, but the area could be characterized as rolling with a series of ridges and depressions. Specific properties that are free of critical area constraint are still part of the environmental and hydrological system.

Based on research and on land use designation and zoning criteria in the Comprehensive Plan, staff proposed an area for rezone to R-4. This proposal was explained and discussed with the potentially affected property owners. For a week after the meeting, Staff collected comment sheets from property owners and interested parties. 28 comment sheets were returned, representing 23 property ownerships. Nine respondents lived just outside the proposed rezone area, and they all favored the R-4 zoning proposal. Of the property owners within proposed rezone boundary, seven favored the R-4 zoning proposal and six favored keeping the zoning at R-8. One respondent was undecided.

Those in favor of R-4 cited a series of arguments favoring lower density. People were concerned about the character of the neighborhood. A general worry was expressed that those who wanted R-8 zoning did not intend to live in the neighborhood, and would not be around long enough to deal with the effects of development at R-8 intensity. Respondents who favored R-4 were concerned about intensive development and its effect on wetlands, streams, wildlife, and the natural features of the area. They expressed their dislike of recent developments that they feel leave too little space for yards, for open space, and for resident parking. Concerns about increased traffic in an area with few sidewalks and a growing number of children were expressed.

Those in favor of keeping the zoning R-8 also expressed a variety of arguments. This group of people purchased their property at least partially for investment purposes. Some plan to subdivide property or to sell to someone who will. Others purchased property to live on, but also to be banked for later development to finance retirement plans, or to be sold in case of family emergency. These respondents tended to believe that it was too late to preserve the truly natural features of the neighborhood. The critical areas that are left will be adequately protected with critical areas regulations. Owners who wanted to keep R-8 zoning tended to be owners with larger parcels, or owned adjacent parcels. They felt that the issue and its economic impacts had not been well considered.

Rezone of the area would require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and should be considered with the other proposed amendments this year. This will give the Planning Commission the opportunity to hear directly from property owners before formulating a recommendation.

**CONCLUSION:** There is no consensus, and not even a majority amongst potentially affected property owners, on a vision for the neighborhood. For this reason, staff recommends holding a public hearing on the proposed rezone area on September 20<sup>th</sup>.