

Preliminary Recommendation
of the
East Renton Plateau Citizens Task Force

November 2, 2006

City of Renton
Department of:
Economic Development, Neighborhoods, Strategic Planning
Alex Pietsch, Administrator
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The East Renton Plateau Citizen Task Force
was appointed by Mayor Kathy Keolker
on September 25, 2006

Task Force Members:

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The East Renton Plateau Citizen Task Force is composed of a group of citizen volunteers, appointed by the Mayor, approved by the City Council, and established to review community planning issues. The task force members were recruited through the Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council, the Citizens Alliance for a Responsible Evendell, the Five Star Athletic Club, and through advertisement in the Renton Reporter. Individuals on the task force represent themselves rather than any organizations.

Purpose: The purpose of the Task Force is to make recommendations on area pre-zoning for the portion of the East Renton Plateau that is within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Another purpose of the Task Force is to make recommendations regarding community planning issues relevant to the East Renton Plateau, such as transportation, parks, community character, and the transition from urban to rural areas. Finally, the Task Force will also review the adopted City of Renton Comprehensive Plan vision for the East Renton Plateau.

This report is an initial report identifying the proposed pre-zoning recommendations of the Task Force for the Plateau. These recommendations will be finalized after public input and then be presented to the Renton Planning Commission and Renton City Council as the Final Recommended Pre-Zoning Map and Report for the East Renton Plateau.

The Task Force: The Task Force membership is comprised of nine volunteer members of the East Renton Plateau community who are business owners, employees, property owners, and/or residents who represent locations throughout the Potential Annexation Area (PAA). Task Force members were appointed by the Mayor and ratified by City Council.

Mission/Goals: The primary goal for the Task Force, up to this point, has been to develop a Proposed Pre-Zoning Map for the East Renton Plateau within the UGB. The Task Force will continue to meet and after public input, the map recommendation will be finalized. Then members will begin working on the goal of making further recommendations regarding other issues they have identified as significant to the East Renton Plateau, such as transportation, parks, community character, and a possible new zoning designation.

In order to formulate this pre-zoning recommendation there was a significant amount of information that members were required to develop a familiarity with. Some of that information included:

- Pre-zoning proposals and processes
- Planning, Growth Management, and Zoning
- Existing City policies for the area and City responsibilities under Growth Management

Process: The Task Force has met weekly with City staff. After initial briefing sessions, each member developed his or her own recommendations for the pre-zoning map. These individual maps were then grouped into three general overarching concepts: a significant amount of R-1 low density residential, a blend of R-1 with R-4, and somewhat more R-4

residential. Members achieved consensus on the identification of critical areas, and on most of the areas to be identified as R-4 and R-1. City staff then examined the three concept maps for consistency with City of Renton zoning code and mapping criteria. The Task Force consolidated the three maps with City code to establish a proposed map that meets Renton Zoning Code and mapping criteria. The Task Force looks forward to input from fellow Plateau community members at the upcoming public meetings to help provide insight as they consider their final recommendation for the proposed pre-zoning map.

Constraints: The East Renton Plateau is an area with some significant environmental constraints. As a plateau it has areas with steep slopes of greater than 40 percent grade, streams that flow off the Plateau into the Cedar River and May Creek, and wetlands. As shown on Table-1 these environmental constraints dictate a zoning designation of either Resource Conservation or R-1 in the related areas.

The area is designated for additional growth under the King County and Renton Comprehensive Plans. Because there is vacant land the area has capacity for future growth. While there is pressure for development at the present time, the lack of sewer is a constraint on development. Steep slopes, streams, and wetlands make sewer extension costly and unlikely until growth pressure elevates the value of those areas. Due to these significant environmental constraints, the area is likely to remain on septic systems for the foreseeable future.

The City of Renton's Comprehensive Plan: All zoning is required by law to be consistent with the City of Renton's existing Comprehensive Plan and zoning policies. The current designation under the Comprehensive Plan is Residential Low Density (RLD), with a very small area designated Residential Single Family (RSF). The City's RLD Land Use designation allows for three possible classifications: 1 dwelling unit/10 acres (RC), 1 dwelling unit/acre (R-1), and a maximum of 4 dwelling units/acre (R-4). The RSF Land Use designation allows for densities from 4 dwelling units/acre to 8 dwelling units/acre.

The Proposed Pre-Zoning Map of the area meets all requirements of consistency with the Renton Comprehensive Plan. The Map almost exclusively RLD Land Use with a 6.15 acre area designated RSF. The Comprehensive Plan outlines the mapping criteria for each zoning designation and has been applied to this map. Table 1 outlines the details of the mapping criteria for each designation.

The Proposed Pre-Zoning Map: The attached map is the current Proposed Pre-Zoning Map for the East Renton Plateau. It reflects the areas of consensus identified by the Task Force. Members have proposed a map that is the best application of Renton's adopted policies and Comprehensive Plan. The Task Force will finalize the recommendation on the proposed map so that it reflects the goals and objectives of the community, as well as, the environmental constraints. Then the Final Recommended Pre-Zoning Map will be submitted to the Planning Commission.

The proposed map reflects the work of the Task Force up to this point in time and is intended to balance the pressure of development inside the UGA while addressing environmental constraints and maintaining environmental quality. In general terms, the following pre-zoning designations have been applied to the following areas:

- Resource Conservation – proposed for the southwest and westernmost portion of the mapped area.
- R-1 – proposed for the eastern and southeast portion of the mapped area. Also, for a portion of the northeastern area.
- R-4 – proposed for essentially the remainder of the mapped area.
- R-8 – proposed for a small area (6.5 acres) on a western tip of the mapped area.

Application of these zoning designations will be consistent with the Renton Zoning Code purpose statements. These Zoning Code statements are available in Table 1.

Next Steps: The East Renton Plateau Task Force has identified many topics that they look forward to working on in the future. Some of those issues are: traffic, parks, community character, function as a transition area, community vision, design guidelines, and a possible new zoning designation. After the Task Force has completed their work on these issues, they will have completed the scope of the pre-zoning work. The Task Force will not act in an advisory capacity on any actual development activity in the area.

Table 1: East Renton Plateau Pre-Zoning Designations

Area on Plateau	Mapping Designation	Mapping Criteria in the Renton Comprehensive Plan	Zoning Purpose	Rationale for Pre-Zoning Recommendation
Generally on the Southwest portion of the Plateau and the Westernmost tip.	RC	<p>Policy LU-135</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Critical areas encumber a significant portion of the gross area; 2) Developable areas are separated from one another by pervasive critical areas or occur on isolated portions of the site and access limitations exist; 3) The location of the sensitive area results in a non-contiguous development pattern; 4) The area is a designated urban separator; or 5) Application of the Critical Areas Ordinance setbacks/buffers and/or net density definition would create a situation where the allowed density could not be accommodated on the remaining net developable area without modifications or variances to other standards. 	<p>Section 4-2-020 B Renton City Code</p> <p>The Resource Conservation Zone (RC) is established to provide a very low-density residential zone that endeavors to provide some residential use of lands characterized by extensive critical areas or lands with agricultural uses. This zone promotes uses that are compatible with the functions and values of designated critical. No minimum density is required.</p> <p>The Resource Conservation Zone is also intended to provide separation between areas of more intense urban uses; reduce the intensity of uses in accordance with the extent of environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains, wetlands and streams, aquifers, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, and other geologically hazardous areas.</p>	<p>Presence of significant and pervasive slopes of greater than 40 percent grade based on slope data in the City of Renton database, King County database, and USGS topographical survey.</p>
The Eastern and Southeastern portion of the Plateau. Also, a portion of the Northeast area.	R-1	<p>Policy LU-134</p> <p>1 home per acre on Residential Low Density (RLD) designated land with significant environmental constraints, including but not limited to: steep slopes, erosion hazard, floodplains, and wetlands or where the area is in a designated Urban Separator.</p>	<p>Section 4-2-020 C Renton City Code</p> <p>The Residential-1 Dwelling Unit Per Net Acre Zone (R-1) allows residential development of lands where limited residential development will not compromise critical areas. The zone provides for suburban estate single family and clustered single-family residential dwellings, at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per net acre and allows for small scale farming associated with residential use.</p> <p>It is further intended to protect critical areas, provide separation between neighboring jurisdictions through designation of urban separators as adopted by Countywide Policies, and prohibit the development of incompatible uses that may be detrimental to the residential or natural environment. No minimum density</p>	<p>Presence of streams or creeks and wetlands based on City of Renton and King County databases. Also, significant erosion hazard along southern portion of the Plateau. Extension of sewer lines to this area on the plateau is not anticipated in the foreseeable future. The eastern portion of the Plateau is bordered by the Urban Growth Boundary, thus the proposed R-1 area serves as a separator.</p>

Essentially, the remainder of the Urban portion of the Plateau.	R-4	<p>Policy LU-134 Density should be a maximum of 4-du/net acre on portions of the Residential Low Density land where these constraints are not extensive and urban densities are appropriate.</p>	<p>is required. Section 4-2-020 D Renton City Code The Residential-4 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre Zone (R-4) is established to promote urban single-family residential neighborhoods serviceable by urban infrastructure. The R-4 designation serves as a transition between rural designation zones and higher density residential zones. Larger lot subdivisions are preferred; however, "small lot clusters" are allowed on sites where open space amenities are created. Resulting development is intended to be superior in design and siting than that which would normally otherwise occur. Small lot clusters may also meet objectives such as the provision of efficient sewer services.</p>	Parcel specific environmental constraints can be addressed through applications of the Renton Critical Areas Ordinance.
An area of 6.15-acres along the Western boundary, adjacent to Renton City limits.	R-8	<p>There is no policy regarding mapping criteria for R-8 designation. Objective LU-FF states: Encourage re-investment and rehabilitation of existing housing, and development of new residential plats resulting in quality neighborhoods that: 1) Are planned at urban densities and implement Growth Management targets, 2) Promote expansion and use of public transportation, and 3) Make more efficient use of urban services and infrastructure.</p>	<p>Section 4-2-020 E Renton City Code The Residential-8 Dwelling Units Per Net Acre Zone (R-8) is established for single-family residential dwelling allowing a range of 4 to 8 dwelling units per net acre. Development in the R-8 Zone is intended to create opportunities for new single-family residential neighborhoods and to facilitate high-quality infill development that promotes reinvestment in existing single-family neighborhoods. It is intended to accommodate uses that are compatible with and support a high quality residential environment and add to a sense of community.</p>	Parcel specific environmental constraints can be addressed through applications of the Renton Critical Areas Ordinance.