

Heron Commons SAP Public Comments

My name is Nancy Baskin and I live at 3688 N. Willowbar Way, Garden City. My subdivision abuts the eastern property line for the proposed SAP. I appreciated the opportunity to meet with Jenah and discuss some of the WFD's concerns. We all want to help Garden City grow, but in the right way.

1. CONSIDER OTHER POSSIBILITIES.

I have attended the P&Z hearings and have requested the decision on the new ordinance be given more thought and consideration. The current Draft 5 is moving in the right direction, but needs further revisions. It is your job to get it right after proper due process. There is no pending sale of the ACHD property that requires a decision on Sept. 16th on this matter. As Idaho law requires, there needs to be a decision the property is excess property, an appraisal, an opportunity for surrounding neighbors to purchase all before a public auction. Moreover, the statute does not prevent public entities from exchanging property. Has any effort been made to see if there is some other property in Garden City the City could purchase and then facilitate an exchange for a portion of the ACHD property before the parcel is sold? If not, these discussions should be pursued. Perhaps the City knows of persons who would be generous and willing to contribute towards purchasing property to extend Heron Park. Or the Ada County Commission has property they would be willing to exchange. There is still time to pursue this option or at least determine if ACHD would be willing to entertain such an idea for the benefit of the community. This should be explored by the City Council, Ada County and ACHD. Working together it might just be possible to do something that protects the river and public access.

2. MIXED USE

To be clear, I am in favor of mixed use development in the SAP. What I strongly disagree with is the City's plan for buildings as tall as 104 feet. Pages 40-41 (6 stories up to 72 from grade and then allow roof access enclosures [what does this include a roof top bar?], mechanical equipment and similar rooftop amendments may extend above 72 feet, then add ground floor additional height of 8 feet, then add 2 additional stories or 24 feet for receiving height limitation from other area = **104 feet plus stuff on roofs and not counting below grade parking**. This is one and a half times higher than existing neighbors of three stories and approximately 40 feet in height. While the number of allied stories appears to have been reduced, the total height has actually increased since the last draft! That height of a building combined with unreasonable setbacks or protection of the Greenbelt NOT compatible with existing surrounding neighborhoods. Any SAP must comply with the Comprehensive Plan and this proposal allows too tall of buildings compared to the WFD and the neighborhoods west of the property line along Heron and Adams to be compatible.

I walked the neighborhood again this weekend paying close attention to heights and neighborhoods. On 36th street there is a 4 story apartment building across from the Learning Lab. All other buildings seem to be from one to three stories in height. This should be the goal for the SAP. Even if you think there should be some further density, we certainly do not need a mammoth structure of 6 stories like the Boardwalk. The Boardwalk is located near Veterans

Parkway and there are numerous tall structures in that area from Crosshatch and other residential structures. Thus, the Boardwalk arguably “fits in” or is compatible with its existing neighborhood.

Do not fool yourselves into thinking the Boardwalk “beach” areas are open to the public. The businesses are open to the public, but unless you live in the Boardwalk or are eating at one of the bars or restaurants, the beach seating is NOT for the public. It is a sea of concrete which has destroyed habitat for wildlife and birds.







Surrounding the SAP are mixed uses: single family, live work townhomes, condos, apartment buildings, two parks (Waterfront Park behind the Learning Lab and Herons Park), the Learning Lab, Headstart, Learning Lab, Head sSart, Lucianos, coffee shop, bars, wineries, car repair, businesses in the warehouses. None of these structures exceed 3-4 stories and most are two stories in height. Do not ruin the existing neighborhoods with something so large and non-compatible. Moreover, there is no evidential support for such tall buildings with extreme density requirements anywhere in the record.



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(36th Street Apartments - four stories high)



(This photo also shows blue residence along Willowbar Lane that is slightly taller than existing warehouse height and the WFD house is ot taller than 40 feet high.)





4. LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

High amenity and high end housing does not equal affordable housing. Comp Plan requires satisfaction of the goal of more affordable housing where is this goal even discussed in the Ordinance?

5. THURMAN MILL THE PATH TO NOWHERE?

Is the intent for Thurman Mill Path to bring bikes and pedestrians east-west from 36th to Adams Street in a safe manner? Where does this easement run and how can this deadend into Gossett Nursery Property or WFD? City would need to condemn property of private landowners not in Herons Commons. Can Thurman Mill Pathway go into Waterfront Park and then to 36th street to head to Orchard or the bridge crossing the river at Luciano's?



Without a traffic study of pedestrian and bike traffic, why is Adams bike pedestrian path needed if you have Thurman Mill and you don't need a third fire access to the WFD. If this is true, and it is, then why can't Thurman Pathway be the bike and pedestrian link to Herons Commons SAP? Won't the majority of bike and pedestrian access come from the Greenbelt?

6. EMERGENCY ACCESS VIA ADAMS STUB IS NOT NECESSARY

Second fire access is at 35th street via Bridgetown Homes to roundabout in WFD. This second EMERGENCY access was on the PUD approved by the City. Along with 36th street access, there are 2 EXISTING fire emergency access routes to WFD. Clearly, Herons Commons has multiple emergency access points via 37th, Adams to pedestrian spine, Heron Park Street and any other local roads added. **The City should not in any way require or advocate to ACHD that Adams needs to be open to ANY vehicular traffic at all!**





5. LACK OF TRAFFIC STUDIES

No traffic studies by applicant for estimated vehicular or bike/pedestrian traffic? You know the density range so why can't traffic be studied before you decide if roads surrounding can even handle an additional 3000 vehicle visits a day or the anticipated increase of bike and pedestrian traffic on Greenbelt. I am sure volunteers could be enlisted to count bikes and walkers and then a traffic expert could extrapolate to an additional number of residents in Herons Commons. Simply saying the City does not have the money for these studies creates speculation as the source for the density, but no factual evidence for this Ordinance. This could lead to an arbitrary and capricious adoption of the Ordinance that could be challenged in court. The City should not be exempt from the requirements any other applicant would need to do to comply with the Comprehensive Plan.

6. LOTS UNDER 1 ACRE

The requirement for density of 15 residence to 1 acre is offensive to the small parcels ever being able to develop their property how they want to. Perhaps one of these lots south of Adams wants a single family home with a large backyard. That would simply not be allowed and they would be forced to develop the acre to have at least 15 residences per acre and this would require them to get financing for such a project or sell. The ability to get financing for such a

project by current landowners is pure speculation. The WFD density averages 7.5 residences per acre. Any lot under 1 acre, should not have double the comparable existing neighborhood density. I suggest not requiring 1 acre or less (primarily all south of Adams) not to have any density restrictions so that Garden City is not being overly restrictive to these limited parcels that now exist. The purpose of this Ordinance is clearly directed at the ACHD properties and the 3+ acres of the warehouses parcel next to the WFD. By eliminating the restrictions on these limited lots, nothing prevents the owner from building a dense housing area, but they should not be required to build 15 residences per acre. The City should protect the private property interests of these small lot owners.



7. CONCLUSION

These are my initial thoughts on the new Draft #5. We all want a sustainable community. A fine balance is necessary without losing the feel and vibe of the existing neighborhoods. Do any Commissioners or City Council members have a 100 foot building next to their residence? I would guess not, and such should not be forced when such would be a violation of the Comprehensive Plan. Herons Commons is not the “heart of Garden City” and this area is not even a transit hub in the Comprehensive Plan. Words matter. Simply using a description in the Ordinance does not make it so. Transparency, honesty and fidelity to the Comprehensive Plan is required by the City. Increasing taxes is more effectively done via residential versus

commercial apartment or building taxes. Your thoughtful consideration of these issues is appreciated.

Respectfully,

/s/ Nancy a. Baskin (electronically signed)