

## Correspondence



### **RABBIT CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCCC)**

A Forum for Respectful Communication & Community Relations



**1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 / Anchorage, AK 99503**

Planning and Zoning Commission  
Municipality of Anchorage  
PO Box 196650  
Anchorage, Ak 99519-6650

December 14, 2020

Dear Commissioners –

Please accept these comments from the Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) on the Sky River Estates proposed Planning and Zoning Commission Case Numbers 2021-0007 and 2021-0008 to rezone two R-6 lots to R-7 and shift the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility boundary to match that rezone. At our December 10, 2020, publicly-noticed meeting, the RCCC voted to support these comments (16 in favor, 1 opposed and 6 abstained).

1. Our preference is to maintain current R-6 zoning.

The Hillside District Plan's number one policy is: **Maintain the Hillside's existing Low-density, rural residential character.** (HDP Summary of Plan Policies, page 1-21)

The intent of R-6 is to protect and enhance the physical and environmental features that enhance the desirability of large-lot living (Title 21.04.020.L.1.).

These features of rural residential character are not spelled out in Title 21, but they are clearly spelled out in the Hillside District Plan: natural terrain, native vegetation, separation from neighbors, quiet, buffering from traffic, and dark night skies among them.

2. The proposed re-zoning does not meet two of the criteria for approving a Zoning Map Amendment under Title 21 as stated here:

*'21.03.160.E.3 The rezoning is generally consistent with the zoning district purpose in the requested zone and the purpose of this title.'*

The purpose of R6 zoning is low-density. Doubling the density through a re-zone to R7 is not consistent with the purpose of the Hillside District Plan, to maintain the Hillside's existing low-density, rural, residential character.

'21.03.160.E.8. *The rezone does not extend or exacerbate a land use pattern that is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.*'

This proposed rezone extends high-density into another corner of the Hillside District, creating a precedent counter to the number one policy of the Hillside District Plan. Our Council is concerned about cumulative encroachment through recurrent upzoning.

3. Cost to municipal taxpayers of urban/suburban development.

Large-lot rural residential units provide the highest property tax revenues. Smaller lots at urban and suburban densities may negatively impact the municipal budget. Tischler and Associates (2000) did a financial impact analysis of residential growth and Anchorage's property tax regime. The Tischler report showed that property taxes on urban and suburban residences do not pay for the per-household municipal costs in road, school, and other services for that new household (Tischler, Executive Summary, page 2). In this time of extreme municipal budget stress, the municipality should support Hillside large-lot rural residential housing, which generates the highest property taxes.

4. In terms of the need for additional housing units in the Anchorage Bowl, the Hillside has already been effectively "re-zoned" to allow a gradual increase of up to 100 % of the number of housing units, through liberalized Accessory Dwelling Unit allowance. Piecemeal rezoning of the Hillside is not needed for expansion of the housing supply.

5. Piecemeal rezoning of the Hillside contributes more vehicular use (longer mileage trips) than infill and redevelopment of central parts of the Anchorage Bowl. This runs counter to the Comp Plan Policies for reducing dependency on vehicular travel and for LUPM 2040 policies of infill and compact development.

6. If the Planning and Zoning Commission votes to approve this re-zone, we request the following conditions of approval in order to mitigate the impacts to nearby large-lot residential neighbors and to the general character intended by the Hillside District Plan:

A. **Require larger lots along the eastern boundary of the subdivision.**

There is currently one, acre-sized lot: all lots on the eastern boundary should be one acre, to maintain the large-lot values of existing R-6 homesites to the east. Where acre-sized lots are required, onsite water and sewer are allowed, and the AWWU service area boundary will not need to encompass those lots.

B. **Ensure a forested buffer along the eastern and northern boundaries of the subdivision.**

This can be achieved by a common private open space, or by building setbacks and vegetated screening easements on individual lots.

This protects the characteristics of privacy and natural setting intended in the Hillside District and implements 2020 Comprehensive Plan policy 50: *Healthy mature trees and forested areas shall be retained as much as possible.*

**C. If the re-zone is approved, it should be with the caveat that the increased density allowed for this particular site is due to the close proximity of major roads and consumer services.**

Our Council seeks to support those projects that are compatible with the Hillside District Plan and Anchorage Comprehensive Plan and we have discussed here how the current proposal does not meet these plans. If you have any questions about these comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Ann Rappoport, Co-chair  
Rabbit Creek Community Council



Ky Holland, Co-chair  
Rabbit Creek Community Council