



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, MOA
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, Ak 99519-6650

June 25, 2021

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC), we are submitting these comments on the Sky Ridge proposed Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) Case Numbers 2021-0007 and 2021-0008 to rezone R-6 lots to R-7 and to amend the Hillside District Plan (HDP) sewerage boundary.

The RCCC previously discussed these cases at our December 10, 2020 publicly-noticed meeting and voted to submit comments (16 in favor, 1 opposed and 6 abstained). Those comments were sent in a letter dated December 14, 2020 (enclosed, and incorrectly referring to the development as “Sky River”). We are also providing other considerations discussed at our May 13, 2021 publicly-noticed meeting and as a result of Assembly action on March 23, 2021 (AO 2021-25) to remand the case to PZC.

The Assembly remanded the case, and the petitioner has proposed special limitations (SL) for Sky Ridge that primarily appear to be suited for the plat. There appears to be no change in the request for rezoning to R7 nor an amendment to the HDP’s sewerage boundary.

This case is confusing, in part, because the Assembly and the Planning Department use the same adopted plans to support opposite conclusions; however, the RCCC is in favor of two of the SLs that are proposed.

We, the RCCC:

- support landscaping on the east border (see 6 B below from 2020);
- support a pedestrian facility, per Title 21 requirements for subdivisions, to connect to 112th Avenue. This connection would allow for safe access to a paved street and a sidewalk along Lake Otis Pkwy (see Google maps);
- oppose an amendment to the HDP’s sewerage boundary. Keeping these two large lots provides a transition zone for the area – should the up-zoning be approved. See AM 193-2021 for detailed rationale to deny the amendment.
- oppose the request to rezone to R7, and support maintaining the current R6 zoning. AM 193-2021 provides evidence from the HDP and Land Use Plan (LUP) to deny the

request to rezone to R7. The main points supporting our opposition are:

1. The rezone does not meet criteria according to Title 21.03.070C.2;
2. The LUP map 1.2 (adopted in 2017) does not project the need for higher density in this location;
3. This project is not along the western border of the lower hillside where the HDP (p.2-13) and LUP (p.27) anticipate increasing density for housing needs; rather it is in mid-hillside.
4. The HDP does not recommend a change in the Furrow Creek Drainage – which this case proposes to change;
5. The amendments would be inconsistent with the 2020's goal for increasing density from core areas outward. The LUP Map 1.2 shows this location as "Area of Little Growth." Sprawl is expensive for the Municipality of Anchorage to maintain.

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.

Sincerely,



Ann Rappoport, Co-chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council



Carl Johnson, Co-chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council

Enclosure: December 14, 2020 comments

Correspondence



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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