

AMENDMENT 2005-M-1– RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY

MOLINA APPLICATION FOR LAND USE REDESIGNATION FROM RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY TO SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

DESCRIPTION: Ms. Molina applied for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the land use designation on her property from Residential Low Density (RLD) to Residential Single Family (RS). The property is located in the NE Quarter of Section 6, Township 23N, Range 5E in the very southern portion of Renton’s Potential Annexation Area (PAA) near the Springbrook Watershed. The property is also part of the application for the Anthone Annexation, which is currently being processed by City Staff. In preparation for the annexation, the City has rezoned the property R-4 (Residential, four units per net acre), the maximum density allowed under the RLD land use designation. The applicant seeks to develop the property at a higher density, and is requesting the redesignation to RS in order to obtain R-8 (Residential, eight units per net acre) zoning upon annexation.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. Should the Molina property be redesignated for Residential Single Family land use from Residential Low Density?

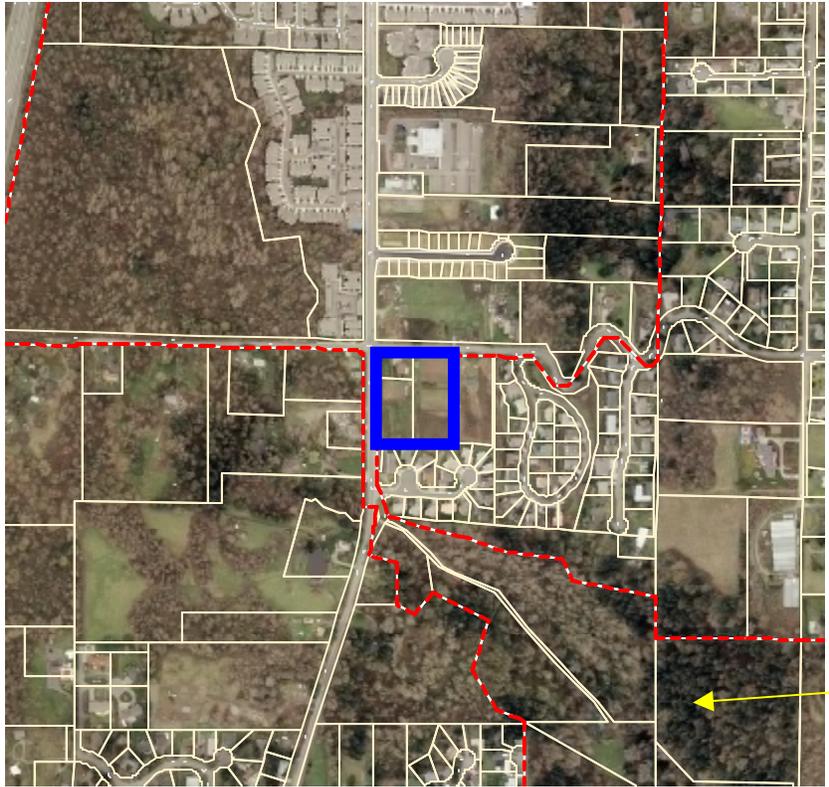
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

The Molina property should remain designated for Residential Low Density and rezoned R-4, accordingly.

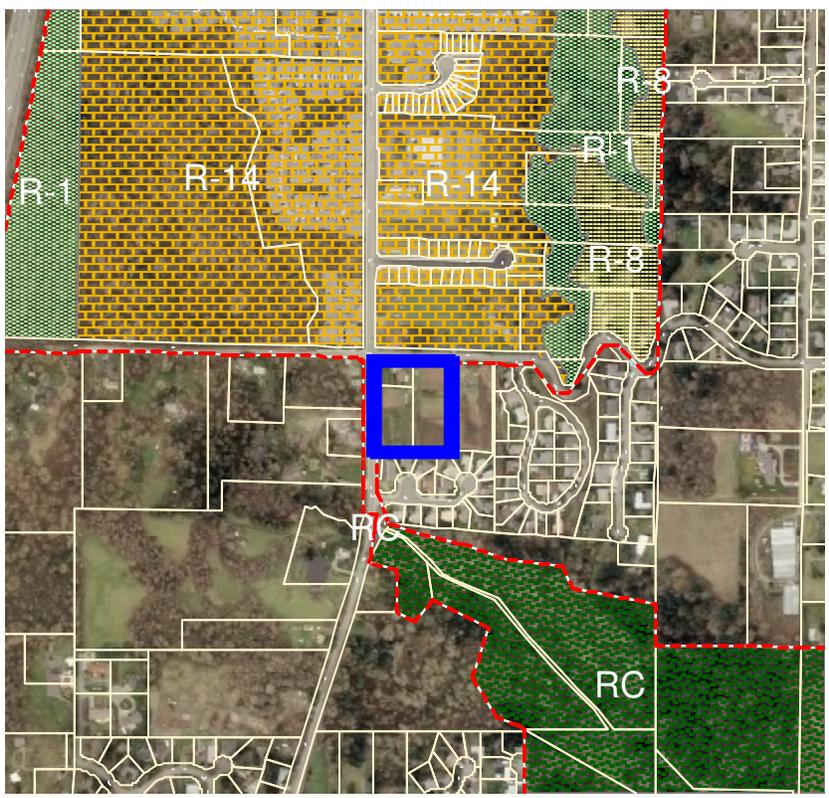
ANALYSIS:

In the application for Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Ms. Molina states six reasons in favor of Residential Single Family (RS) land use designation that can be summed up as three arguments. One argument is that there is a high demand for single family homes and the property is suitable for their development. Another argument explains that the proposed increase in density is too small to have negative impacts on public health, safety, welfare, schools, transportation, parks, or utilities. The third argument says that the proposed zoning is consistent with the surrounding area and will act as buffer from the higher density in the north.

The property in question is 3.2 acres south of S. 55th Street and east of Talbot Rd. It is a relatively flat piece of land that does not appear to be encumbered by critical areas. Two subdivisions lie south and east of the property- both have been developed at the equivalent of the R-4 standard (but are zoned King County R-6). One subdivision is currently designated RLD and the other RS in the Renton Comprehensive Plan, but the entire area is proposed to be redesignated RLD according to the analysis done for the inventory of low density residential lands. North of the subject property is a vacant lot that is zoned R-14 and designated for medium density development (RMD). West of the property is a large area designated RLD, which contains land owned by the City of Renton for future park development and the property on which the Trout Farm sits. Less than 500 ft. south of the subject property is the large City-owned Springbrook watershed area.

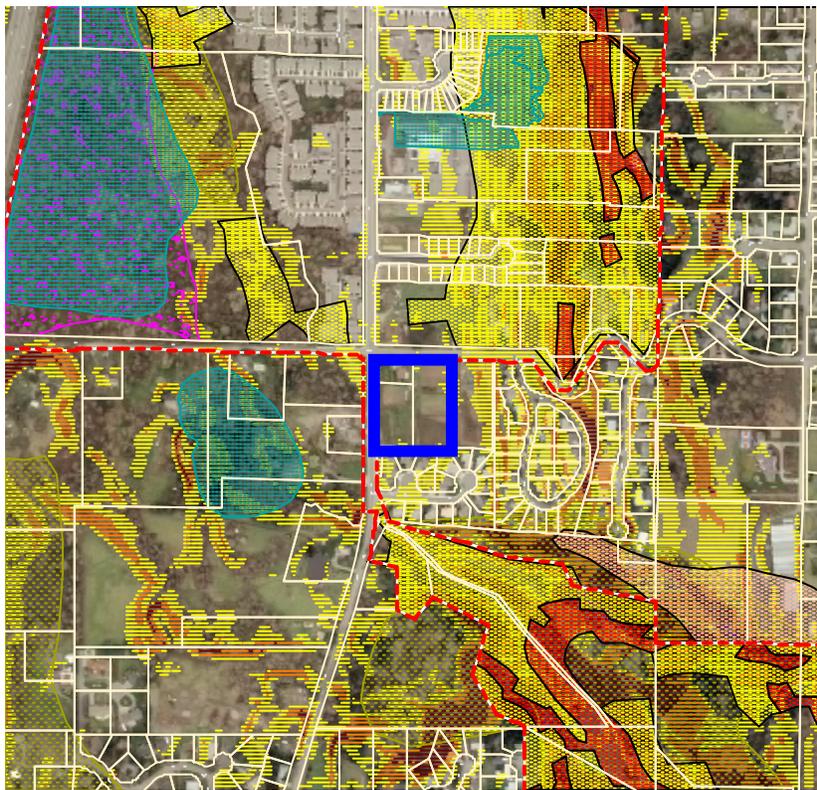
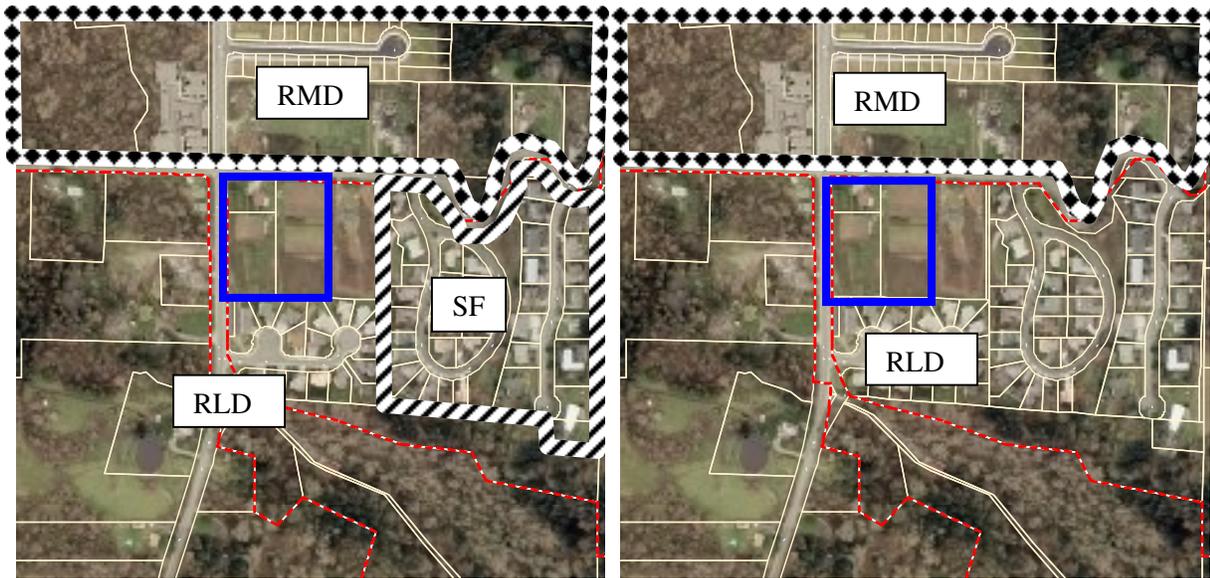


Springbrook Watershed



Existing Land Use Designations

Proposed Land Use Designations



The Springbrook watershed area is a sizable natural area and one source of drinking water for the City of Renton. In the inventory of low density residential lands, it is proposed that the subject property (and surrounding lands) remain RLD, and the surrounding properties designated RS be changed to RLD in order to provide an additional measure of protection for the Springbrook watershed. Topographically, the watershed area sits in a low spot with the areas to the north and west sloping down toward it. Critical areas encumber the entire area of the watershed and significant portions of the undeveloped property in the vicinity of the watershed, with the

exception of the existing platted subdivisions and the subject property. The platted subdivisions have all been developed at a density of about four units per acre. The development standards in the existing developments also most closely match the development standards of the City of Renton R-4 zoning designation. R-4 zoning implements the RLD land use designation at urban densities, but the lowest urban density, in order to protect the vicinity of the watershed from intensive development. In the inventory of Low Density Residential lands, designating the entire area RLD allows for new development of about the same intensity as existing development to be built. This respects the character of the existing neighborhoods, as well as protects critical areas and the City's watershed.

Changing the land use designation for the Molina property creates inconsistency in the land use and zoning designations in this area. There is property zoned for densities of fourteen dwelling units per acre (R-14) north of South 55th Street and immediately north of the Molina property. This R-14 area will never be developed to its full intensity due to critical area constraints consolidated on the back part of the parcels, away from Talbot Road. Everything south of South 55th Street is developed at minimum urban densities. Arterials are an appropriate dividing line for changes in land use intensity and changes in zoning. Approval of the Molina application would create a spot zone- a 3.2 acre island of SF land use, with R-8 zoning upon annexation that would not match the land use or zoning anywhere else.

In the Comprehensive Plan, the purpose of the RLD designation is to provide use for lands encumbered by critical areas and to provide for larger lot housing stock at urban densities. Objective LU-DD maintains that the purpose of RLD is to provide for a variety of lifestyles and uses on lands within the City and PAA. This objective is applied through Policy LU-134, which states that application of R-4 zoning is appropriate in areas suitable for urban development and without environmental constraint, like the property subject to this proposal. This situation is also supported by Objective LU-EE: *Designate Residential 4 du/acre zoning in those portions of the RLD designation appropriate for urban levels of development by providing suitable environments for suburban and/or estate style, single-family residential dwellings.* According to Policy LU-143, one purpose of this objective is to provide a location for upper income housing consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's housing element. Designation of this property as RLD is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

On the other hand, the proposed property does not clearly fit into the goals and policies for the RS land use designation. The stated purpose of the RS designation is to allow for larger subdivisions, infill development, and the rehabilitation of existing housing (Comprehensive Plan at IX-28). Changing the land use designation on this property would not accomplish the purpose of the RS designation.

CONCLUSION:

Although the applicant states several reasons why the property is suitable for development of single-family residential units, there is no compelling reason why the property is suitable for redesignation from RLD to RS. In fact, the designation of the property as RLD best complies with the Comprehensive Plan.