

Memorandum

DATE: December 16, 2022

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, Community Development Department

RE: Memorandum in lieu of workshop for 62nd Avenue corner lot zone change from R-18 to R-22

CC: Eric Holmes, City Manager



As a follow-up to a 2021 zone change approved by the City Council from R-18 to R-22 in the above 2.5-acre area outlined in blue, the applicant has returned in 2022 with a similar rezone proposal from R-18 to R-22 of the 0.3 acre corner lot outlined in dashed yellow. At the time of 2021 rezone proposal, the applicant, PLS Engineering representing Serghei Cormanitchi, was not able to agree to terms with the current owner for purchase of the corner property. Now that they

have reached agreement, the applicant has come forward to request a zone change for the corner lot to achieve consistent zoning across the site.

The 2022 corner lot rezone proposal was unanimously recommended for approval by the Planning Commission at a December 13, 2022 public hearing, which generated no public testimony or Commission questions. This memorandum is provided to the Council in lieu of a workshop. A public hearing has been scheduled for January 23, following first reading on January 9, 2023. Any advance questions should be directed to Bryan Snodgrass, (360) 487-7946, bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us

The effect of the corner lot rezone would be to allow an already approved apartment site plan to add two more units. Following the 2021 rezone approval, the applicant received site plan approval for a 76-unit apartment complex. If the corner rezone is approved, the applicant indicates they will seek a revision to the site plan to increase the number of units to 78 but keep the indicated footprints of the buildings. Attachment A of this memorandum contains the application narrative, including the approved site plan. As contemplated in the original rezone, non-emergency vehicular access would be taken east of the site through 62nd Street.

No persons testified during the 2021 Council review of the original rezone. The primary issue in deliberation was the scaling back of the original proposal from R-30 to R-22, to better fit with less dense zoning north of 63rd Street, as shown in Attachment B herein.

Links:

2021 original zone change City Council [staff report](#) and [hearing](#)
2022 corner lot zone change Planning Commission [staff report](#)
2022 Planning Commission [hearing](#)

Attachments:

- A. Applicant narrative
- B. Regional zoning map

Staff:

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PLS

ENGINEERING

NARRATIVE

FOR

62ND STREET APARTMENTS REZONE

Submitted to

THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

FOR

SERGHEI COMARNITCHI

2804 NE 65th Avenue, Suite D

Vancouver, WA 98661

(360) 772-5563

September 2022

General Information

Applicant/Owner:

Sunlight Rentals LLC

Contact: Serghei Comarnitchi
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Project Contacts:

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Location:	SW ¼ of Section 8, T2N, R2E, WM
Address:	7300 NE 62nd Street Vancouver, WA 98662
Project Size:	2.82 acres
Zoning:	Split Zoned: R-18 (0.296 ac) & R-22 (2.522 ac)
Comprehensive Plan:	UH
Current Use:	Construction of apartment complex in progress.
Current Tax Lot Information:	TBD, the lot merger AFN 6055641 is not yet reflected on Clark County GIS
Former Tax Lot Information:	105120005 (area subject to rezone), 105137-000, 105120-000, and 105120-010
School District:	Vancouver
Elementary:	Walnut Grove
Middle School:	Gaiser
High School:	Fort Vancouver
Water District:	Vancouver
Sewer District:	Vancouver
Fire District:	Vancouver Fire
Park District:	B
Previous Case File:	PRJ-165296/PIR-78794
Transportation Impact Fee:	Pacific

Project Discussion

The 62nd Street Apartment Rezone proposes a zoning map amendment for former parcel #105120005 which contains 12,901 sf. Currently the site which also includes former parcels 105137000, 105120000, and 105120010 has a split zoning with the NW corner being zoned R-18 and the rest being zoned as R-22. The area currently zoned R-22 within the site was subject to a previous rezone. At the time the applicant had not yet purchased the corner parcel. After the rezone to R-22 was approved the applicant purchased the corner parcel and proposed an apartment development on the overall site. The 62nd Street Apartments project is currently under construction. The applicant is proposing to rezone the 12,901 sf corner parcel from R-18 to R-22 so that the site has a consistent zoning. While no site modifications are proposed, the rezone could result in 2 units being added to the project being constructed.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT APPROVAL CRITERIA

VMC 20.285.060.A. sets out the applicable zoning map amendment approval criteria not involving associated comprehensive plan map amendments. This approval criteria is the same as the previous rezone and in general the same justification apply to this request.

This proposal is required to demonstrate the following:

1. How the proposal is more consistent with applicable policies of the Vancouver strategic plan and comprehensive plan than the existing designation; and
2. That a change in circumstances has occurred since the existing designation was established.

A. Consistency with Vancouver Strategic Plan

The City adopted a 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, and updated it in November 2018. The city is currently working on a new Strategic Plan, but it has not yet been adopted.

The request is consistent with Objective 6.2.1:

6.2.1 Develop a broader range of housing choices through incentives, changes in regulations and implementation of the Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations. Page 23.

In the final 2016 report the Affordable Housing Task Force discussed potential tools and programs to increase the supply of affordable housing units in the city. One of the high priority items discussed amending zoning/development regulations to encourage affordable housing options.

Option for Council Consideration	Description	Estimated Time for Staff to Develop and Present to Council	City Direct Costs/ Staff Time	Cost to Property Owner/ Developer	Potential to Increase Affordable Units	Considerations and Details Additional information to follow based on Council guidance and staff analysis.	Task Force Priority
EXPAND SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING							
Amend zoning/ development regulations to encourage affordable housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow/promote alternative housing, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster/cottage housing Corner-lot duplexes Micro-housing and single room occupancy (SRO) housing Shared housing, including rooming/boarding houses Reduced parking requirements 	Medium to Long	\$\$	\$	Medium	Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be effective at increasing overall supply over a long period of time, but affordability not guaranteed Marketing incentives/opportunities to property owners and developers Can use current staff, but may be contracted out Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires determination of priorities among several options Need to determine appropriate level of incentives Task Force comments: Support for allowing a wider variety of housing types and sizes. This option may also provide low-income homeownership units, an opportunity to address affordable housing apart from rentals.	High

The intent of the option would be to increase overall supply of housing in the city which would result in lower purchase prices and rental costs. While this does not provide “affordable housing” it goes a long way to make housing more affordable. Since the adoption of the strategic plan housing prices have continued to soar. This is partly due to a high demand for housing in the Vancouver region that far outpaces the new housing supply. In response to the strategic plan and the Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations, the City Council studied and approved housing code updates. The Housing Code Updates webpage states the following as a purpose of the update:

“Vancouver, like many communities, is facing a housing crisis. As the city continues to grow, there is a desire and need for new types of housing that would allow residents to live more affordably while also maintaining neighborhood livability. However, current city zoning rules prohibit many of these housing options. Changes to the development code can create opportunities for the private sector to deliver a more diverse, affordable housing stock.”

The project goals of the housing update are stated as the following:

“The goal of the project is to update City codes to allow for different, smaller and more affordable types of housing choices. Many are recommended in the Affordable Housing Task Force report (2016) and many are similar to what is allowed in Clark County and other Washington cities nearby and statewide.”

The specific goals include:

- Allowing for the development of diverse housing types to meet changing demographic needs and consumer preferences
- Expanding market rate, middle income, and affordable housing choices
- Maintaining neighborhood livability with incremental, rather than wholesale, change
- Providing more opportunities for people to live near where they work and attend school, and reduce costly commutes
- Facilitating development in areas with full existing public services

The previous rezone and the current proposal are consistent with this plan and will help meet the City’s goals. The general proposal associated with the zone change will accomplish the following:

- The 62nd Street apartment project will add diversity to the housing options in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- It will provide market rate housing including 1-bed and 2-bed units.
- The rezone from R-18 to R-22 represents an incremental change in density and neighborhood livability will be maintained.
- The site is located near schools, stores, and public transport that has the potential to reduce costly commutes.
- The project is in an area with full existing public services.

This policy is discussed more fully below in regard to the current housing crisis as a general change of circumstances since the existing zoning was established.

B. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

This request is consistent with the purpose of the existing Comprehensive Plan designation:

Table 1-5. Vancouver comprehensive plan land use designations

Comprehensive Plan designation	Corresponding Zoning	General Intent
Residential		
Urban Lower Density	R-2, R-4, R-6, R-9	Predominantly single-family detached residential development, with some allowances for duplexes, townhouses, and single-family homes on small lots using infill standards
Urban Higher Density	R-18, R-22, R-30, R-35, MX	Predominantly apartments and condominiums, with some allowance for attached housing (such as duplexes, townhouses, and small-lot single-family homes) and mixed use

While the current zone R-18 is also in the Urban Higher Density designation, the surrounding area zoned R-18 is largely attached single-family housing.

This request furthers the Community Development policies on page 1-14 to 1-15 of the Comprehensive Plan:

CD-2 Efficient development patterns Encourage efficient development throughout Vancouver to ensure achievement of average density of 8 units per acre set by countywide planning policies. Encourage higher density and more intense development in areas that are more extensively served by facilities, particularly transportation and transit services.

Response:

- The site is near a full-service grocery store/commercial area, elementary school, community park, and C-Tran Bus route 78 on NE Andresen Rd.
 - Safeway and Walgreens are both approximately 1/4 mile from the site. This is approximately a 5-minute walk. There is also a Starbucks (inside Safeway), Chase Bank, State Farm Insurance, The UPS Store, Sprint Store, Great Clips, Nail Salon, Drive through Coffee, and Subway.
 - Walnut Grove Elementary is directly south of the site.
 - Raymond E Shaffer Community Park is located ¼ mile to the southeast. This is a 10 acre park that connects to another 7 acre park to the south.
 - C-Tran Bus route 78 stops at NE Andresen Rd and NE 63rd Street. This is less than a ¼ mile from the site.
 - The northbound and southbound busses arrive every 30 min from 6:00am to 9:00am and 3:00pm to 6pm
 - The northbound and southbound busses arrive every 60 min from 9:00am to 3:00pm and 6:00pm to 10pm

CD-3 Infill and redevelopment Where compatible with surrounding uses, efficiently use urban land by facilitating infill of undeveloped properties, and redevelopment of underutilized and developed properties. Allow for conversion of single to multi-family housing where designed to be compatible with surrounding uses.

Response:

- The applicant is in the process of developing 4 parcels (2.82 acres total) each of which contained single-family residences on underutilized land. This is a relatively small infill project, where the intent is to convert the existing underutilized land into a multi-family housing project.

In addition, the request fulfills both CD-9, facilitating compatible uses adjacent to each other, and CD-10, placing housing near services (complementary land uses).

Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan contains the City's Housing element. The Plan recognizes the need for diverse housing:

As the baby boom generation ages over the next 20 years, there is likely to be a greater need and demand for smaller units, retirement homes, and assisted living.

Page 3-3.

The plan notes that most residential housing is single-family housing (57%). *Id.* Housing affordability is also a City concern:

The Growth Management Act requires local jurisdictions to demonstrate that regulations allow and encourage housing for all economic segments of the community. Table 3-3 provides a breakdown of local households by income ranges, and the general share of Vancouver housing they can afford to buy or rent without having to spend more than 30% of their income.

There are several policies that would be furthered by this request, including:

H-1 Housing options

Provide for a range of housing types and densities for all economic segments of the population. Encourage equal and fair access to housing for renters and homeowners.

H-2 Affordability

Provide affordable housing by formulating innovative policies, regulations and practices, and establishing secure funding mechanisms. Target affordability programs toward households with incomes below the median.

C. Change in Circumstances

When the site was in Clark County, on the County's 1994, 2004, and 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the site had a Mixed Use Comprehensive Plan designation. In 2016, with its updated comprehensive plan, the County applied the Urban Medium Density Residential to the site. In 2017, the City annexed the site. The City does not have a Medium Density Residential designation or a R-12 zone, so the site was converted to a Urban Higher Density designation and a R-18 Zone.

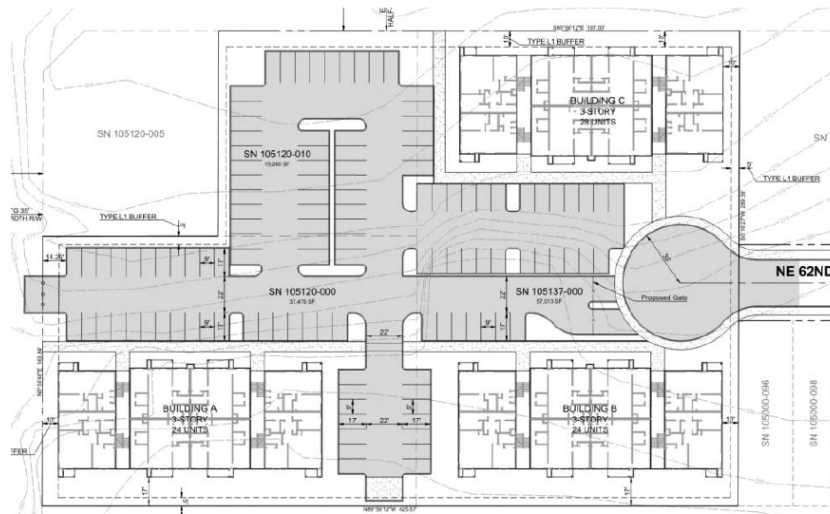
The proposed zone change is in response to the current housing shortage and affordability crisis that is currently occurring in SW Washington. This shortage of housing within the area that the subject property lies represents a change in conditions or circumstances since the zoning designation was established. The proposed zone change will result in addition rental units that will increase the housing supply in the area and contribute to improving housing affordability.

There is a correlation between the lack of housing units and affordable housing where increased demand and reduced supply drive up housing costs.¹ According to the AWB Institute, during 2018 in Clark County, there were an estimated 12,608 renting households spending 50% or more of household income on shelter, or 21.5% of all renting households.²

¹ See <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/83656/2000907-strategies-for-increasing-housing-supply-in-high-cost-cities-dc-case-study.pdf>.

² <https://www.awbinstitute.org/indicator/renters-spending-50-or-more/>.

An application for rezone of the original two parcels and parcel #105120010 was submitted on October 15th, 2020. The following is the plan that was submitted for rezone:



Site Plan Submitted for Original Rezone Application

This site plan was subject to city staff review, planning commission review, and review by city council. The corner parcel which is the subject of this current rezone proposal (former parcel #105120005) was of particular interest to the planning commission and was discussed and studied in detail. Discussions were related to how the corner parcel could either develop on its own or be absorbed into the current proposal. The city also contemplated including the corner parcel in the previous rezone.

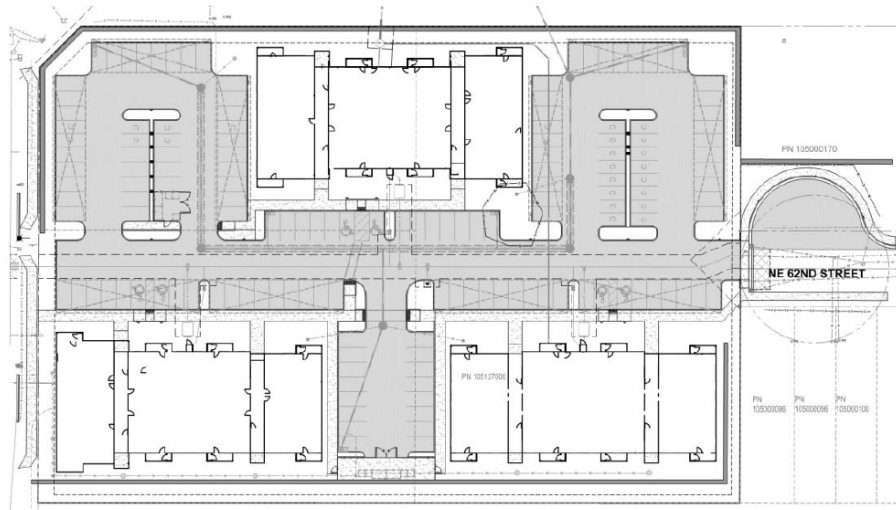
The following are the meetings that occurred in the rezone process of the rest of the site. Many of the comments are directly applicable to the current proposal.

- Planning commission meeting: January 12, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/pc/page/planning-commission-workshop-and-hearing-13>
- Planning commission meeting: March 9, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/pc/page/planning-commission-workshop-and-hearing-15>
- City Council Workshop: April 19, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-218>
- City Council Meeting: May 10, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-community-forum-1>
- Public Hearing: May 17, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-220>
- City Council Meeting: August 9, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-community-forum-5>
- City Council Meeting: August 16, 2021
 - <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meeting-226>

The original rezone proposal was for the site to be rezoned to a R-30 designation. As shown in the meeting links above, City staff and the Planning Commission supported the proposal. The City Council was also in support of a rezone but felt that the R-22 destination would be better suited to the site based on the surrounding neighborhood. The City Council eventually approved the site to be rezoned from R-18 to R-22.

Once again, the site area that was subject to the rezone did not include the corner parcel that is currently part of the apartment site plan.

After the rezone approval the applicant was able to make a deal with the owner of the corner parcel and purchased the property before submitting the apartment site plan to the city. A concurrent site plan was prepared including all 4 parcels and submitted to the city on January 28, 2022. The project had site plan approval issued on May 9th, 2022 and subsequently the final engineering drawings were approved on June 23, 2022. The approved plan is shown below:



Approved Final Site Plan for the 62nd Street Apartments

CONCLUSION

We respectfully request that staff recommend approval of this zoning map amendment. Approval of this application would result in an overall site that has a consistent R-22 zoning. In addition, the approval criteria that was shown to be met in the previous rezone is directly applicable to the current rezone.

