

## **SILVER BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

### **I. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

The Silver Beach Neighborhood is an interesting study in contrasts. Much of the area was platted into small lots and developed long before the suburban life style became popular. The undeveloped portions of the neighborhood, primarily in the northwest and eastern sections, will develop in the suburban style.

As a result of this pattern, there is a wide variety of ages and styles of housing in the neighborhood. The majority of the housing is in good shape and the fact that people take pride in the area is reflected by the well-landscaped lots and well-maintained homes throughout the neighborhood.

The neighborhood has the amenity of Lake Whatcom, which provides beautiful views, recreational opportunities, and a unique setting. The undeveloped backdrops of the hills that surround the neighborhood also help give the neighborhood part of its character.

Streets vary greatly in different sections of the neighborhood. Where recent development has taken place such as the Big Rock Estates, the Silver Shores plat, etc., streets are developed to standard with curbs and gutters. In other sparsely settled or older residential areas the streets are relatively narrow and lack improvements.

Traffic generated both from within and outside of the neighborhood is an element of this neighborhood's character. Specific discussion regarding this element is found in the circulation section of this plan.

### **Neighborhood Plan Proposals**

### **II. OPEN SPACE**

In most residential areas like the Silver Beach Neighborhood, people commonly associate open space with recreational use, especially parks. However, a high value is associated with other amenities of open space including scenic views, a wooded backdrop for the area, plant and animal life, the relief from crowding as well as recreational opportunities afforded by the land. The open space in this area, also provides the basic setting for the rural character of the neighborhood.

Other values associated with maintaining open space would be utilitarian in nature and include items such as the preservation of natural drainage systems; decreasing water runoff rates and volumes as compared to urbanizing the area; the preservation of steep slopes, marshes, wet spaces, and other sensitive areas.

The opportunity exists to maintain the open space character of the neighborhood while still allowing for residential development. The designated densities in the land use section of the neighborhood plan will help maintain the openness of the presently undeveloped areas in the northern and eastern portions of the neighborhood.

In undeveloped, unplatted residential areas, open space is a required part of plat approval. It is intended that by designating particular future open space patterns and areas, a more usable and integrated open space system can be achieved concurrent with development. Many of the open space patterns follow steep hillsides and stream corridors. Both these types of areas are inherently unsuited for development. Stream corridors are also a recreation resource and have value as wildlife areas. Hillside areas provide the scenic backdrops, which are an important element of both Bellingham and Silver Beach's character.

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IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE OPEN SPACE PATTERNS IDENTIFIED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED PRIOR TO, OR CONCURRENT WITH, DEVELOPMENTS.

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Because of the existing recreational opportunities that are available in the neighborhood, very few additions are recommended to the system. However, it is realized that something more than linear greenbelt natural areas and trails are necessary to meet the recreational needs of the new residential areas.

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IN LIEU OF HIGHLY DEVELOPED "NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS", NATURALLY LANDSCAPED, LOW MAINTENANCE "PLAY LOTS" ARE PROPOSED. THESE AREAS SHOULD BE ACQUIRED BEFORE OR WITH SUBDIVISION OF THE LAND TO ASSURE THE SERVICES AS NEEDED. PLAY LOTS SHOULD ALSO BE ACQUIRED OR DEDICATED PRIOR TO, OR CONCURRENT WITH, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

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ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL SITES THAT ARE PROPOSED FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARE THE FOLLOWING STREET ENDS THAT FRONT ON LAKE WHATCOM: GEORGIA, DONALD, EAST NORTH, AND CONNECTICUT. NO SITE IMPROVEMENTS ARE RECOMMENDED: HOWEVER, THE CITY SHOULD NOT VACATE THEM TO PRIVATE INTERESTS.

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Recommendations dealing with bicycle facilities are dealt with in the circulation section of this plan.

No additional open space or recreation land is being recommended for purchase by the city out of its general fund or by bond issues for the neighborhood. It is anticipated enough land could be acquired through dedication to meet anticipated needs as developments occur.

### III. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

#### Storm Water Drainage

Urban development has a profound effect on the amount, duration, and timing of runoff. It has been estimated that urbanization, with its inherent impervious surfaces, may cause a three to ten fold increase in surface runoff. There are two basic ways to deal with drainage problems, the most common one being the extension of the storm sewer network on the basis of urgency and the availability of funding. Unfortunately, this solution tends to treat the symptoms rather than the cause of the problem. Furthermore, in many cases the costs of treatment are paid by the people who will suffer damage to their property rather than by the individuals who, in fact, caused the problem.

It is felt that, in the Silver Beach Neighborhood, a better solution for areas that have yet to be developed is to handle the runoff problem at its source rather than downstream. Methods that are suggested include the retention of natural drainage ways, preservation of as much of the natural vegetation as possible, and the reduction of impervious surfaces by means of clustering and urban design criteria. This approach makes it difficult to specify individual recommendations as they are, of necessity, site specific. The recommendations take the form of limiting the amount of runoff allowed from new developments, with the means of meeting the criteria dependent on specific project design.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DRAINAGE PROGRAM THAT WILL EVENTUALLY DO AWAY WITH THE EXISTING OPEN DITCH DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN THE COMMUNITY IS IMPERATIVE.

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RUNOFF FROM NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD ALSO BE LIMITED TO A SPECIFIC LEVEL AND/OR, IF THE SITUATION DEMANDS A FLEXIBLE SOLUTION, DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE OFF-SITE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS SO RUNOFF DOES NOT CAUSE DAMAGE TO ANY DOWNSTREAM PROPERTIES.

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Without the above recommendations being adopted, it is feared that undesirable situations similar to those that have occurred in other parts of the city will repeat themselves in the Silver Beach Neighborhood. The situation referred to is when a new development installs a satisfactory drainage system to serve the area but discharges the flows into an inadequate open ditch system below, causing flooding that would normally not have occurred.

### Water

Areas in the Silver Beach Neighborhood above an elevation of 500 feet above sea level must be served from the high elevation system on top of Alabama Hill. Additional transmission capabilities must be developed between the water filtration plant and Dakin reservoir to allow continued development in the Silver Beach area.

### Schools

Recent improvements for vehicular access to and from the Silver Beach Elementary site have relieved many of the traffic problems associated directly with the school and the recent addition has made the physical plant more than adequate for present use. The major adverse impact of the Burnes Way route would be the barrier formed between the school and children's homes north of the arterial. The school walkway program is discussed in the circulation section of this report.

### Libraries

There is an expressed need by the Library Board for a full service library in the Alabama Hill/Silver Beach area.

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NO SPECIFIC SITE HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED. BECAUSE OF THE TRAFFIC SYSTEM AND THE NUMBER OF TRIPS GENERATED BY A LIBRARY, THE PLAN RECOMMENDS THAT AN AREA OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

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## MAP, SILVER BEACH ARTERIAL ROUTES

## IV. CIRCULATION

### Existing

There are three secondary arterials located within the neighborhood: Electric Avenue, North Shore Drive, and Van Horne. All of the arterials have existing problems associated with them, ranging from a lack of a walkway or path to being what has been called totally inadequate to safely handle existing traffic loads. Many residential streets do not meet current subdivision or the proposed standards.

It is anticipated that, because of growth both within the neighborhood and in the county, North Shore Drive and Electric Avenue will experience traffic volume growths of 25 percent or more during the next 3 or 4 years. This projected increase in traffic, combined with the condition and alignments of the existing arterial system, makes it imperative that action be taken in the near future to resolve the situation.

### Proposals

The new Burnes Way arterial route is proposed as a diversionary route for present and future traffic volumes on North Shore Drive between Alabama and Britton Road. North Shore would be channeled directly into the new arterial as a westward projection from Britton Road. An extension of Skyline Drive northeast from the new arterial to Lahti Drive would become a "drainage route" from Tweed Twenty and other county developments west of Britton Road as a more direct route to Bellingham via Burnes Way, rather than using Britton Road and North Shore Drive. Sylvan Street is recommended as a neighborhood collector street and should be improved with curbs, underground drainage and sidewalks. Burnes Way is proposed to be a two lane secondary arterial designed to carry a traffic volume of from 5-15,000 cars per day.

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THERE SHOULD BE NO DIRECT COLLECTOR ACCESS TO BURNES WAY UNTIL BURNES WAY IS DEVELOPED FROM BRITTON ROAD TO WOBURN STREET AND THE WOBURN STREET ARTERIAL IS COMPLETED.

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North Shore Drive, is assigned a neighborhood collector status. However, it will nonetheless require improvements to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. A 36-foot curb-to-curb cross section is proposed with parking on the north side and a bicycle lane on the south side. A similar, though slightly wider cross section, is suggested for Electric Avenue.

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A 36-FOOT CURB-TO-CURB CROSS SECTION IS PROPOSED FOR NORTH SHORE DRIVE WITH PARKING ON THE NORTH SIDE AND A BICYCLE LANE ON THE SOUTH SIDE. A PAVED PEDESTRIAN WALK IS SUGGESTED ALONG THE NORTH SIDE AND A CINDER JOGGING AND PEDESTRIAN PATH IS SUGGESTED ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE.

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## Neighborhood Street Standards

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IN ALL AREAS, THE RECOMMENDED STANDARD IS 28 FEET WITH CURBS, GUTTERS, DRAINAGE, AND SIDEWALKS.

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An exception to this standard is that a street, which traverses a steep slope that requires a cut on one side should not be required to have a sidewalk on the uphill side.

### Bikeways

A 1978 report entitled Bicycle Facilities Planning, done for the Bellingham Office of Planning and Development, details, on both a 5 and 25 year focus, what actions are required to provide a safe and adequate city wide bicycle transportation system. The general focus of the 5 year program is to provide for safe cycling on existing streets. The 25 year focus is a combination of bikeways, open space, and greenbelts that will serve as a recreational facility as well as a transportation system. The recommendations presented here are excerpted from that report and are included to present the type of developments that will be required in the neighborhood to meet its aforementioned 5 and 25 year goals.

The five year plan identifies improvements for arterials only. Those, which relate to the neighborhood are as follows:

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REPAVE AND STRIPE SHOULDERS ON ELECTRIC AVENUE FROM WHATCOM FALLS PARK TO ALABAMA. PAVE AND STRIPE WESTBOUND SHOULDER ON ALABAMA FROM THE HILL'S CREST TO NORTH SHORE DRIVE. PAVE AND STRIPE SHOULDERS ON NORTH SHORE DRIVE FROM ELECTRIC TO THE CITY LIMITS OR INCLUDE A 15 FOOT CURB LINE IN THE ROADWAY UPGRADE.

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The details concerning the 25 year program for bikeways are spelled out in greater detail than is required for this report. Those who are interested in them are referred to the Bicycle Facilities Plan.

The Department of Public Works recently published a report entitled Safe School Routes in which details were spelled out for a walkway from North Shore Drive north to Pullman and then to the elementary school. Specific details are presented in the report, which is available from the Department of Public Works.

## MAP, SILVER BEACH LAND USE

## V. SUBAREA DESCRIPTIONS AND LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

### Area 1

Area 1 is designated as a Residential-Single area. The density is 15,000 square feet per unit; however, cluster development would be allowed at a density of 10,000 square feet per unit with no minimum lot size. The density figure is based on the topography of the area and the fact that it serves as the northern backdrop of the neighborhood. By allowing clustering at a higher density than a normal subdivision, the cluster concept of development is encouraged.

The use of clustering is extremely desirable for this parcel of land in that it allows greater flexibility in the location of dwellings, thus protecting to a greater degree the natural amenities of the land.

The special conditions are related primarily to topographic and drainage problems. Sewer service will have to be extended into the area as development occurs and as such is a prerequisite consideration.

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**AREA 1 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY**

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### Area 2

This area is in public ownership and is the site of the Silver Beach Elementary School. The existing use will remain the same, with the possible addition of some recreational facilities. Off-site drainage impacts should be considered if any major expansion occurs.

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**AREA 2 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC**

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### Area 3

This area, which includes newer and older platted areas, is developed as a single family area. There are some topographic and drainage problems in this area. The integrity of the Lake Whatcom shoreline should be preserved.

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**AREA 3 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY**

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### Area 4

The area is currently sparsely developed but could be some of the most desirable property in the neighborhood because of the views of the lake, the city, and the bay. It has not been fully developed yet because of the cost of providing services to the area.

Low density, 20,000 square feet per unit is designated for the area because of the value in preserving the open space character of the hillside, the backdrop that it offers to the city, which helps to maintain its rural atmosphere, and potential environmental problems that would be associated with development. These problems might include erosion, drainage, and increased runoff, the loss of wildlife habitat, traffic problems regarding access to North Shore Drive, and water quality degradation of the city's water supply.

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**AREA 4 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY**

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**Area 5**

This is a single family residential area with some views of the lake and the city. The plan calls for a single family designation of 12,000 square feet/unit with clustering allowed north of Silver Beach Drive. This is based upon the existing development in the area and the need to minimize road cuts on Sylvan, which is classified as a collector to serve a rapidly urbanizing area. The rationale for clustering north of Silver Beach Drive is based upon the topography of the area.

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**AREA 5 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY**

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**Area 6**

Most of this area was developed using lots of record and the average developable density of the area is 6,000 square feet per unit. As such, a density of 6,000 square feet per unit is consistent with development patterns and platting characteristics. Access to North Shore Drive should minimize traffic hazards. The integrity of the Lake Whatcom shoreline should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

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**AREA 6 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY**

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**Area 7**

This is a small neighborhood commercial area, which is designated as such to provide for the needs of the immediate neighborhood while minimizing the impact on the surrounding residential uses. Access on to North Shore Drive should be carefully planned as there is a sharp and potentially hazardous corner adjacent to the properties in this area. Parking areas should be buffered from abutting residential uses.

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**AREA 7 LAND USE DESIGNATION: COMMERCIAL**

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**Area 8**

This is the site of some recently developed condominiums built along the shoreline of the lake. The plan calls for a continuation of this kind of use in the area at a density of 3,500 square feet per unit. The shoreline of the lake should be protected in future development, parking areas should be buffered from abutting single family residences, and access to North Shore Drive should be designed with maximum traffic safety in mind.

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**AREA 8 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, HIGH DENSITY**

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**Area 9**

The area, which includes the Lakeview residential complex, is designated as a planned residential area. Important features and concerns for the area include maintaining access to the lake, minimizing traffic problems with access design, maintaining on-site vegetation, and protection of the Lake Whatcom shoreline.

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**AREA 9 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL**

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**Area 10**

This area includes a lagoon and some land adjacent to Bloedel-Donovan park. A little known fact concerning this area is that the land immediately adjacent to the impounded water west of Electric Avenue is entirely in public ownership and that the privately held properties fronting Electric do not abut the lake. This linkage from Whatcom Falls Park to Bloedel-Donovan should be maintained in public ownership and in the existing natural to semi-natural state.

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**AREA 10 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC**

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**Area 11**

This is a residential area along Electric Avenue. Cluster development would be appropriate on some of the land parcels and the designation for the area allows this. Structures should be set back 30 feet from Whatcom Falls Park, and access to Electric Avenue should be consolidated where possible. The steeper hillside areas should be sensitively developed and significant vegetation retained where possible.

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**AREA 11 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY**

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**Area 12**

This parcel of land is Bloedel-Donovan Park and is designated as public.

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**AREA 12 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC**

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**Area 13**

This area includes Old Mill Village, a large planned apartment complex. The site offers a unique setting on the shoreline of Lake Whatcom. Future expansion in this area should maintain the integrity of the shoreline to the greatest extent possible. The views from other areas of the Silver Beach neighborhood should be considered as the area develops. Access on to Electric Avenue should be designed with maximum traffic safety in mind and single family uses adjacent to this area should be buffered.

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**AREA 13 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL**

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**Area 14**

This residential area, in close proximity to Lake Whatcom, is similar to Area 6 in that a 6,000 square foot single family density would reflect existing development patterns. Protection of the Lake Whatcom watershed should be encouraged by a close review of topographic and drainage impacts and shoreline regulations. Views of Lake Whatcom are a valued asset in this area and should be protected where possible.

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**AREA 14 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY**

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**Area 15**

The land use designation for this area would maintain the existing use and reflect the existing lot size of the area as well as the surrounding area. Access to Electric Avenue should be designed with maximum traffic safety in mind.

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**AREA 15 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY**

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**Area 16**

This is the site of the City owned Dakin Street Water Reservoir.

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**AREA 16 LAND USE DESIGNATION: PUBLIC**

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### **Area 17**

This is a large area adjacent to the Tweed Twenty subdivision and Britton Road. The new Barkley Boulevard arterial will pass through this property. The area has relatively steep topography, the steepest portion being in the south central section. Clustering in this area could help to minimize potential topographic and drainage related impacts. The area is in the Lake Whatcom Watershed and measures should be taken to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff water are adequately handled. Since the Barkley Boulevard alignment passes through this area, development plans should be designed so as to minimize the number of residential streets accessing onto the arterial. Maintaining a vegetated buffer along Barkley Boulevard can help to mitigate traffic related impacts. One additional feature of this area is its proximity to Big Rock Pond. Access to the pond area should be made available as development occurs. Trail linkages to Silver Beach School should also be encouraged.

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**AREA 17 LAND USE DESIGNATION: SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, LOW DENSITY**

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### **Area 18**

This 19.50 acre parcel is south of the Barkley Boulevard arterial and Plat of Brentwood, a cluster subdivision. It contains four parcels from the Brentwood Plat and one parcel from the Brentwood South Plat. The area has relatively steep topography and is located in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Measures should be taken to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff water are adequately handled.

The area is situated east of a two acre open space parcel dedicated by the Brentwood Plat and was once contiguous with that property. Access to this area by a trail system as well as trail linkages to Silver Beach School should be encouraged. The Barkley Boulevard arterial alignment forms the northern boundary of this area. Development plans should be designed to minimize the number of curb cuts along the arterial and maintain a vegetated buffer along Barkley as opposed to parking lots. Spacing and species of street trees along the arterial should be the same as the subdivision to the north.

The integrity of this site's development relies upon a consistent development pattern and compatibility with surrounding development. All parcels should go through site plan review at the same time. This requirement is not intended to preclude phased development. The density has been computed to maintain an overall 12,000 square foot density with the cluster subdivision to the north.

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**AREA 18 LAND USE DESIGNATION: MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL, MEDIUM DENSITY**

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As adopted by Ordinance No. 8868 and amended by Ordinances 8946, 9018, 9041, 9674, 9702 and 2004-12-087.