

**Planning Commissioner's Written Comments  
January 12, 2016**

**Straw Valley (Z1400033)**

**BUZBY** – This is an appropriate development proposal for this parcel of land. I believe the proposed change in zoning and the proposed development plan is an improvement over the current zoning (and the likely development outcome). I was also heartened to hear the verbal commitment to continue discussions with the City Council regarding affordable housing options with this development. I urge the City Council to continue these discussions in the hopes of finding a positive outcome for more affordable housing. I vote to approve.

**HARRIS** – Voted for.

**MILLER** - I urge the council to approve this rezoning request. The request is consistent with the comprehensive plan which contemplates commercial use for the parcel. While changing the zoning from O-I and CN to MUD makes the regulatory environment on the land more convenient to the developer, it actually represents only a very small change when the developer's commitments are taken into account. The existing zoning would allow multifamily residential, commercial, and office. The new zoning will allow a combination of these same uses. The biggest change is that the requested MUD zoning would permit vertical integration of the residential and other uses – an option not available under the current zoning scheme. The development intensity limits contemplated under the proposed MUD development plan would actually cap development intensity at a level slightly less than what might be accomplished under the maximum build-out under the current scheme – at least as intensity is measured by traffic impacts.

In my comments concerning the proposed rezoning of the property on Farrington Road last month, I expressed a strong reluctance to allow significant rezonings in areas which are in the hopper to become new compact neighborhood tiers and design districts. My concern was then and continues to be that such rezoning's will interfere with and frustrate the planning processes now underway. In that case the developer wanted us to approve a rezoning from RS-20 and O-I(D) to an MUD zone allowing 500 residential units and a large office component – very dramatic change. While the land in this Straw Valley case is also in a proposed Compact Neighborhood Tier which is on its way to becoming a design district, I distinguish this rezoning from the Farrington Road case by pointing out that where the Farrington case involved dramatic changes in use and intensity, the proposed Straw Valley rezoning represents essentially no change in use or intensity. The Farrington Road land is located in the center of the proposed Leigh Village compact neighborhood/design district next to existing single family development. As the design district planning there moves forward, arguments could be made for that land to be designated core, support 1, or support 2 or a combination of these sub districts. How these district lines are drawn is a community exercise. Rezoning the land as the developer requested would effectively rob the decision about how it should be designated from

the community participants in the planning process. This happened at Ninth Street and the results were not entirely satisfactory. I see the situation at Straw Valley as being quite different. The property is not centrally located in the new tier. It is not next to a neighborhood which may require protection in the future planning process. The requested rezoning will not materially change the existing regulatory environment or development status quo and will not interfere with the community's ability to make correct decisions about its future designation when it is part of a new design district.

**WINDERS** – The development proposed appears to be a good fit for the situation developing for current conditions while anticipating major changes in regulation and infrastructure. The developer expects to negotiate some affordable housing contribution at the Council approval stage. My recommendation for approval is conditional on this expectation.