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FAQs on YarrowBay proposals

The recent activity surrounding YarrowBay's Master Planned Developments (MPDs) seems to have created some confusion. Below are a few of the frequently heard questions and staff's answers.

1. Why are there signs posted? Did the City already approve the developments?

The City has not approved the developments. The City requires that signs be posted on properties where development is proposed. YarrowBay was directed to place signs at or near the project boundaries where they abut public roads. These signs are one way to make sure the public is aware of the applications and has an opportunity to comment at the beginning of the review process. It is also the reason the City notified neighboring property owners of the project by mailed notice. The signs indicate what the applicant has requested—such as 4,800 homes in The Villages at the west end of town. The City has not approved these developments; they will be undergoing review over the next several months.

2. So did the City staff tell YarrowBay they would approve 4,800 homes in the Villages and 1,200 homes in Lawson Hills?

No. The City staff has no authority to approve either development. Staff will review the applications and provide a staff report to the Hearing Examiner for his consideration, but ultimately the Hearing Examiner's recommendation will go to the full City Council. The City Council is the ultimate decision maker and will decide if/how to approve the developments, including the densities, number of units, etc. The EISs in no way constitute any type of approval or concurrence by the City; they are simply documents that identify the potential environmental impacts of the projects and suggest ways of mitigating those impacts.

3. Should I comment on the EIS or the MPD applications?

Depending on your interest, you should comment on both. The EIS is essentially a study. It will show what impacts the projects would have and suggest ways the impact could be lessened or "mitigated," such as putting in new roads and schools. It does not in any way bind the City to move forward with the applications as submitted. By law, the City has to study what the applicant has proposed, which is why one of the alternatives for each MPD is the applicant's proposal. The EIS will be considered by the staff, then the Hearing Examiner and ultimately the City Council when reviewing/considering the developments. If you comment on the EIS, you should focus on the impacts of the proposals, rather than simply state you are either in favor or against the projects. That type of testimony would be appropriate as part of the MPD review process.

4. What opportunities will I have to give my input?

Watch for the publication of the draft environmental impact statements (DEIS), the public hearing on the EISs, the Hearing Examiner hearing on the MPDs and the City Council public hearing on the MPDs. Watch the City's website or get on the distribution list for upcoming opportunities by contacting the Community Development Department at (360) 886-2560. You can communicate your concerns to staff at any time. However, if you want your comments considered as part of formal processes, be sure to comment after the DEISs are issued, to the Hearing Examiner and again when the MPD hearings are held by the City Council.