

Plat of Semiahmoo West

Preliminary Long Subdivision Application

Exhibit PR 2

Narrative Description of the Preliminary Long Subdivision

A. Introduction

The Semiahmoo Company is proposing to develop Semiahmoo West, a subdivision and Planned Unit Development (PUD) covering approximately 624 acres of land on the uplands of the Birch Point peninsula. The site lies within the unincorporated area of Whatcom County but in the Urban Growth Area of the City of Blaine. The proposed Plat of Semiahmoo West has been prepared and submitted to divide the property into large tracts for additional future subdivision in accordance with the PUD and to implement Phase 1 of the development of the Semiahmoo West PUD by creating 28 residential lots and associated open space and infrastructure.

B. Proposal Overview

The Semiahmoo West proposal is a planned residential community with 1,246 residential units and up to 60,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial space. Semiahmoo West includes a significant amount of dedicated open space as well as park space. The open space areas are comprised of areas that are not developable due to wetlands and their buffers and areas that could otherwise be developed but have been retained as open space to provide trail corridors connecting the larger open space areas.

C. Preliminary Plat Overview

The proposed Plat of Semiahmoo West has been prepared to divide the property into large tracts for future subdivision in accordance with the PUD, and to create the first phase of residential lots in the Semiahmoo West PUD. For phase one of the PUD, the plat would create 28 single family lots in Zone 8 in the Meadows Neighborhood of the planned Semiahmoo West community.

In addition to creating 28 single family residential lots, the Plat of Semiahmoo West would create eight open space tracts, one park tract, four large residential tracts for residential development under the PUD and a mixed use tract also for development under the PUD with commercial uses and multifamily housing.

The table at the lower left hand corner on Sheet PR 1.1 provides area and intended use information including unit counts for the individual parcels. The table on the right hand side of Sheet PR 1.1 provides area and size information by type of parcel.

D. Existing Site Conditions

The set of sheets numbered PR 1.2 and 1.2A-L provide an aerial view of the site and surrounding property at a scale of 1" to 100'. As the photograph shows, the site is substantially cleared except for the forested wetlands and their buffers and other forested corridors through the site. Clearing and grading of the site in preparation for future development was conducted fairly recently and was completed in 2007. All tree harvesting and clearing activities were conducted under a Conversion Option Harvest Plan approved by Whatcom County. The site was evaluated for the presence of critical areas. The only critical areas identified were forested wetlands. These areas and their buffers were excluded from the clearing plan approved by the County.

As part of the harvest and clearing activity, a stormwater management system was installed to collect, store and treat runoff from the cleared areas of the site. This stormwater system, including detention ponds is still in place and functioning. The existing stormwater system is shown on Figure 1 (Sheet 1 of 6) of Exhibit PR 3.

The existing cleared and forested areas are clearly shown on the aerial photo. The 28 lots proposed in Zone 8 of the Semiahmoo West PUD are located on a cleared area of the site.

E. Critical Areas

Tree harvesting, clearing and grading on the Semiahmoo West site was recently completed under forest practices approvals and Clearing and Grading Permits. The harvest and clearing activities were approved by both the state Department of Natural Resources and Whatcom County under the Conversion Option Harvest Plan (COHP) rules of those agencies. To meet the requirements of these approvals, the entire site was reviewed for the presence of critical areas. The only critical areas identified on the site were wetland areas. No other critical areas were identified.

The wetland areas had been identified and reported in previous studies. The previously identified wetlands were re-examined and perimeters verified or changed to reflect their current status. The perimeters of the wetlands were used to establish buffer areas, which were flagged prior to clearing. A map of the current wetland boundaries and buffers is provided in Exhibit PR 4.1 together with a letter-report prepared by the wetland biologist we retained to assist us in complying with county critical area standards. The letter-report discusses the work that was conducted to locate and map wetland areas and buffers. The critical area information developed during the process of obtaining the necessary approvals for the harvesting, clearing and grading of the site was used in the planning of the Semiahmoo West PUD.

In addition to the information provided in Exhibit PR 4.1, Exhibit PR 4.2 contains a more detailed critical areas review of the portion of the plat covered by the proposed 28 single-family lots. The boundary of the adjacent wetland to the southeast was delineated by flagging and surveyed to accurately locate the wetland boundary in preparation for the future development of lots and roads in this area of the plat. Similar delineation work will be completed for future phases of the Planned Unit Development as preliminary plats are prepared for those phases.

We have completed the Endangered Species Act Checklist. There is no FEMA designated floodplain and/or floodway on the subject site or any channel migration zones. The first questions on the ESA form ask if there are any ESA listed species within the potential impact area of the site. The answer is no. The second question asks if there were any ESA listed species historically within the potential impact area of the site and while there is no data we are aware of that affirmatively shows listed species, we decided to conservatively answer this as uncertain. Because neither of our answers were yes, as directed, we did not complete the remainder of the form. We are proposing to have an environmental impact statement prepared for this project and therefore anticipate that additional analysis with regard to the presence of ESA species will be conducted as part of this environmental review under SEPA.

F. Land Disturbance Permit

A land use disturbance permit has been included in our application. We noticed in the application materials that the County recommends that the land disturbance permit application not be applied for until after preliminary approval. While we are mindful of this suggestion, we have submitted the land disturbance permit application now because it is included in the list of submittal requirements.

G. Service Level Standards

We are not aware of any circumstances regarding the provision of public services to this site that would raise a public service issue beyond those that would normally be addressed and handled through the plat approval process. The plat we are proposing at this time is for a total of 28 residential lots and large development tracts that will be developed at a later time. With regard to the services listed we have provided the following information:

We have been notified in writing by the Birch Bay Sewer and Water District that, consistent with their approved comprehensive plan, they will provide sewer and water service to the Semiahmoo West site in accordance with the District's service policies. A copy of the letter is provided as Exhibit PR 9.1 of this application. We have also included excerpts from the Birch Bay Sewer and Water District's Sewer and Water Plans that discuss utility service to this part of their service area. These excerpts are provided as Exhibits 9.2 and 9.3. All water and sewer lines will be constructed to district standards.

The property lies within the boundary of the Northwest Fire and Rescue Service (Fire District #21). The district, having approved a new capital facilities plan within the last 60 days, has adopted a process for implementing mitigation fees to maintain level of service standards within the district. This project will be subject to the mitigation fee process and the Semiahmoo Company will pay those fees at the time they are required to be collected.

The property lies within the Blaine School District. School Districts are typically funded by property taxes; however they are also allowed to establish impact fees. We are not aware that the Blaine School District has implemented an impact fee. If and when they do so, we will pay the fees required for this development at the time they are required to be collected.