



**Agenda for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, December 21, 2023 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/95353411299> or by calling (253) 215- 8782 and entering Meeting ID 953 5341 1299. Please see the Public Comment & Decorum section at the end of this agenda for information on options to make public comment.

This meeting may also be viewed live in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center.

- I. **Call to Order/Roll Call:**
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** December 7, 2023
- III. **Public Comment:**
- IV. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. Ordinance 1516 – Zoning Controls pertaining to Site Specific Rezones and Height Restriction Area Variance
- V. **Other Business:** Next meeting Thursday, January 4, 2024
- VI. **Adjournment:**

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

Commenters will be allotted 3 minutes per individual, unless revised by the Chair. Comments shall be made in-person from the microphone, first giving the speaker's name and address. When there are 30 seconds remaining, staff will alert you to summarize your comments. At the end of your comments, staff will notify you it has come to the end of your comment period. Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.

All remarks shall be addressed to the Commission as a body and not to any specific Commissioner. All speakers shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations with regard to any Commissioner, the Chair, or any member of

the staff or the public.

There will be no demonstrations during or at the conclusion of any public comment. These guidelines are intended to promote an orderly system of holding a public meeting, to give every person an opportunity to be heard and to ensure that no individuals are embarrassed by voicing their opinions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the City Clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



**Minutes for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, December 7, 2023 5:30 P.M.**

- I. **Call to Order/Roll Call:** Chair Krawczyk called the meeting to order at 5:35. Commissioner Burcar, Tessicini, Snodgrass, Bradbury, and Jordan were present. Commissioner Soltess was excused.
Staff: Community Development Director, Carl de Simas; Senior Planner, Jeremy Hammar and Planning Technician, Michelle Thomas
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Move to approve minutes for November 16, 2023 (Bradbury/Jordan) Unanimously approved.
- III. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment due to technical issues with audio.
- IV. **Agenda Items:**
 - a. Community Workshop: Comprehensive Plan Update – Charting Our Course 2044 – [Presentation](#) by Bill Grimes from SJC Alliance

Michelle Thomas

Michelle Thomas
Planning Technician



Planning Division

Staff Memorandum

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Robin Bolster-Grant, Principal Planner
Planning Division

SUBJECT: Ordinance 1516 – Changes to the Site-Specific Rezone Process (Chapter 17.100 GHMC)

DATE: December 14, 2023

At the November 16, 2023 Planning Commission meeting, staff presented an overview of Ordinance 1516, which was adopted by the City Council on September 7, 2023. The ordinance remedied inconsistencies in the existing zoning code regarding permit processing for site-specific rezoning applications. This ordinance also better defined the city's Height Restriction Area overlay (HRA) and provided clarity around variances from those standards (HRA variance) and the path for removing property from the overlay (site-specific rezoning). Ordinance 1516 was adopted as an interim zoning control (see [RCW 35A.63.220](#) and [RCW 36.70A.390](#)) because the Community Development Department was in receipt of two applications that would be subject to the amended code.

As you may recall, site-specific rezoning applications are quasi-judicial legislative actions which require the City Council to make the final decision and authorize the zoning map to be amended. The decision by the City Council is informed by and based on a recommendation from a lower body. The recommending body can either be the outside Hearing Examiner or the Gig Harbor Planning Commission. The only other restriction in state law that applies to this process is the limitation that only one public hearing be held for a site-specific rezoning application.

The consensus of the Planning Commission at the November 16th hearing was that the first hearing at which a recommendation is made, should be the public hearing. This makes sense in that the recommendation would be informed by public comment and participation rather than in a closed meeting absence public input.

The second topic of conversation on November 16th concerned electing which body would be most appropriate to hold the public hearing and provide a recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioners raised concerns about the level of expertise and/or experience required in order to adequately render a recommendation for this type of application. It should be noted that Commissioner Jordan expressed his view that a local body would likely be better suited to evaluate the impact of a site-specific rezone decision on Gig Harbor. However, in the end, commissioners made clear their preference for the Hearing Examiner to take the role of recommending body at a public hearing.

After reflecting on the discussion and the implication for the community, staff requests that the Planning Commission reconsider their previous position. While this type of process is new for the current Planning Commission, it is the position of staff that commissioners are well-equipped to take on this role. The benefit of maintaining local control over local zoning decisions should not be overlooked. While the Hearing Examiner is also equipped to make such a recommendation, s/he does not live, work, or understand the dynamics unique to Gig Harbor.

It is the view of staff, that with adequate support and education regarding the permitting and processing requirements, the Gig Harbor Planning Commission can, and should, be the recommending body for site-specific rezone applications.

We look forward to answering commissioner's questions and concerns at the December 21, 2023 meeting.

ORDINANCE 1516

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING INTERIM ZONING CONTROLS PERTAINING TO SITE SPECIFIC REZONES AND HEIGHT RESTRICTION AREA VARIANCES, AMENDING CHAPTERS 17.62, 17.100, 19.01 OF THE GIG HARBOR MUNICIPAL CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, under the authority of RCW 35A.63.220 and RCW 36.70A.390, the City may impose interim regulations to be effective for a period of up to six months, and for six-month intervals thereafter; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 17.62 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code (GHMC) describes the city's height restriction area (HRA), related standards, and sets forth the procedure for processing an application to amend the HRA; and

WHEREAS, upon careful review of Chapter 17.62 GHMC city staff has found an ambiguity in how the HRA map is adopted and how amendments to the map are processed; and

WHEREAS, current code adopts the HRA as an overlay on the city's HRA map and amendments thereto are processed as a Type III permit application, which provides the city's hearing examiner with the authority to make the final decision and, if approved, results in removal of the subject site from the HRA map; and

WHEREAS, upon review of the historical legislative record relative to Chapter 17.62 GHMC, city staff found that the HRA map was originally adopted as a zoning overlay on the city's zoning map; and

WHEREAS, a proposal to remove a site from an adopted zoning overlay should be considered a site-specific rezone, while a proposal to vary from the standards of the city's development regulations, unless otherwise specified, is typically processed as a variance in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 17.66 GHMC; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 19.01 GHMC sets forth the procedures for processing the city's defined permit application types; and

WHEREAS, site-specific rezones are currently categorized as a Type III permit application whereby the city's hearing examiner holds a public hearing and makes the final decision; and

WHEREAS, site-specific rezones are considered a quasi-judicial decision which is the purview of city council; and

WHEREAS, quasi-judicial decisions are considered a Type IV permit application whereby the city council conducts a public hearing and makes the final decision; and

WHEREAS, due the technical nature of a site-specific rezone, it would be proper for the city council to cede the hearing and receive a recommendation from the city's hearing examiner relative to a specific proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Gig Harbor City Council would like to make certain changes to the city's development regulations and administrative development regulations on an interim basis to provide city staff and the planning commission time to study these matters and make recommendations on permanent regulations relative to processing applications for site-specific rezones and height restriction area variances;

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Gig Harbor, Washington, do ordain as follows:

Section 1. The recitals set forth herein are hereby adopted as findings of fact.

Section 2. Section 17.62.020 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.62.020 Map-adoptedHeight restriction area map. The standards of this chapter shall be imposed as an overlay zone shown on the city's official height restriction area zoning map, which depicts the property subject to the height restrictions. The boundary for the height restriction area overlay shall be that which was published on the city's former height restriction area map last updated on October 4, 2016.¹ The process for amending the city's zoning map is set forth in Chapter 17.100 GHMC. The standards of this chapter are supplementary to the regulations contained in the underlying zones.

Section 3. Section 17.62.040 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.62.040 Amendment to height restriction area map Height restriction area variance. ~~Amendments to the height restriction area map are a Type III permit procedure. The procedures established under Chapter 17.100 GHMC and GHMC Title 19 for the consideration of amendments to the zoning district map shall be followed for amendments to the height restriction area map. The criteria for approval shall be as follows: Variances from the standards of this section shall be project specific and subject to the complete application requirements, permit application procedures, required findings and duration of approval requirements set forth in Chapter 17.66~~

¹ City Ordinance Number 1342

GHMC for general variances. In addition, the hearing examiner shall make findings of fact setting forth and demonstrating that the following circumstances exist:

- A. ~~That the~~The request to ~~amend the height restriction area map~~ furthers the goals, policies and objectives of the comprehensive plan;
- B. ~~The property or area proposed for exclusion from the height restriction area map site~~ does not currently possess a view of Gig Harbor Bay, Mt. Rainier or the Puget Sound Narrows;
- C. The gradient of the land within 100 feet of the property or area does not have a slope of five percent or greater toward Gig Harbor Bay, Mt. Rainier or the Puget Sound Narrows;
- D. ~~That views~~Views from adjacent properties will not be adversely affected.

Section 4. Section 17.100.010 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.100.010 Authority to amend. Whenever the public health, safety, general welfare, modifications to the comprehensive plan or good zoning practice requires, the city council may amend, supplement, modify, repeal or otherwise change these regulations and the boundaries of the districts in conformity with the comprehensive plan. ~~Site specific rezones are a Type III permit application and area wide rezones are a Type V permit application and shall be processed in accordance with Chapter 19.02 GHMC.~~

Section 5. Section 17.100.020 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.100.020 Manner of initiation. Changes in this title may be initiated in the following manner:

A. *Source.*

1. The city council upon its own motion may initiate changes in this title.
2. The planning commission upon its own motion may ~~initiate~~recommend to city council changes in this title.
3. Any individual, corporation or agency other than those listed above may initiate changes in this title. Amendments are processed as a ~~Type IV permit procedure~~ set forth in Chapter 19.01 GHMC and subject to the following:
 - a. ~~For an area-wide zoning map amendment~~, the initiating individual, corporation or agency must be the owners or owner of a majority of the land in the petition area; and
 - b. ~~For a site-specific zoning map amendment~~, the initiating individual, corporation or agency must be the property owner or authorized agent of the property owner; and
 - ~~b.c.~~ For an amendment to the text of this title, the initiating individual, corporation or agency must be an owner of real property within the city.

B. *Form.* An application for a change in the boundary of a district or the text of this title shall be filed with the planning department and shall be accompanied by such data and

information as are necessary to assure the fullest practicable presentation of the facts. It shall set forth reasons and justification for proposing a change.

C. Minimum Area. Except for the extension of existing district boundaries and amendments to zoning overlays, no change in any use district, classification or official zoning map shall be considered if it contains fewer than two acres, excluding public streets or alley rights-of-way.

D. Submittal Consideration. The city council shall not consider any proposed amendment to the zoning map that is substantially the same as any other proposed amendment submitted within the previous 12 months which was disapproved. (Ord. 710 § 97, 1996; Ord. 573 § 2, 1990).

E. Fees. Applications submitted by private individuals or groups, or private entities are subject to application and processing fees as set forth in the city's adopted fee schedule.

Section 6. Section 17.100.025 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby repealed.

Section 7. Section 17.100.030 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.100.030 Public hearing and notification. Public hearings and notifications related thereto shall be accomplished in accordance with the procedures and requirements established pursuant to Chapter [19.05](#) GHMC. ~~The planning commission's action shall be a recommendation to the city council.~~

Section 8. Section 17.100.035 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.100.035 General criteria for zoning ~~district~~ map amendment. Applications for amendments to the zoning ~~district~~-map (which include, but are not limited to, site specific rezones) may only be approved if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

A. The application for the zoning ~~district~~-map amendment must be consistent with and further the goals, policies and objectives of the comprehensive plan and Chapter [17.12.015](#) GHMC;

B. The application for the zoning ~~district~~-amendment must further or bear a substantial relationship to the public health, safety and general welfare;

C. No substantial detrimental effect will be caused by the granting of the application for the amendment; and

D. The proponents of the application have the burden of proof in demonstrating that conditions have changed since the original zoning or original designation for the property on the zoning ~~district~~-map.

Section 9. A new section is hereby added to Chapter 17.100 to read as follows:

17.100.040 General criteria for zoning text amendment. The city council's approval, modification, deferral, or denial of an amendment application must be based on the following criteria:

A. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies for the comprehensive plan; and

B. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent and purpose of the subject chapter or this title, generally.

Section 10. Section 19.01.003 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

19.01.003 Project permit application framework.

A. Action Type.

	PROCEDURE FOR PROJECT PERMIT APPLICATIONS (TYPE I – IV)					LEGISLATIVE
	TYPE I	TYPE II	TYPE III	TYPE III-A	TYPE IV	TYPE V
Recommendation made by:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A; <u>hearing examiner for site specific rezones</u>	Planning commission
Final decision made by:	Director	Director	Hearing examiner	Hearing examiner	City council	City council
Notice of application:	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Open record public hearing or open record appeal of a final decision:	No	Only if appealed, open record hearing before hearing examiner	Yes, before hearing examiner to render final decision	Yes, before hearing examiner to render final decision	No	Yes, before planning commission which makes recommendation to council
Closed record appeal/final decision:	No	No	No, only if site-specific rezone appealed,	No	Yes, before council to render	Yes, or council could hold its own hearing

			then before council		final decision	
Judicial appeal:	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

B. Decisions.

TYPE I	TYPE II	TYPE III	TYPE III-A	TYPE IV	TYPE V
Final short plat	Preliminary short plat	Plat vacations and alterations	Preliminary plats/major preliminary plat revisions	Final plats	Comprehensive plan amendments
Minor site plan review	Major site plan review	Conditional use permit	Preliminary PRD/PUD	Final PRD/PUD	Development regulation amendments
Minor amendments to PUD/PRD	Alternative design review ¹	General variances, sign permit variances, <u>height restriction area variance</u>	Major amendment to PRD	<u>Site-specific rezone</u> ²	Zoning text amendments; area-wide zoning map amendments
Special use permits	Binding site plan	Shoreline substantial development, shoreline variance, shoreline conditional use			Annexations
Temporary trailers	Revisions to shoreline management permits ²	Major amendments to PUD			
Sign permits	Administrative variances	Amendment to height restriction area map			
Administrative design review ¹	Administrative interpretations	Mobile/manufactured home park or subdivision			

² A site-specific rezone may have only one public hearing to be conducted by the city's hearing examiner.

Land clearing	Shoreline permit exemptions ²	Performance-based height exception			
Home occupation permit	Short-term rental permit	Changes from one nonconforming use to another			
Alternative landscape plan		Site-specific rezone			
Nonconforming review		Critical area variances			
Minor preliminary plat revisions		Critical area reasonable use exceptions			
Boundary line adjustment					

Section 11. Transmittal to Department of Commerce. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, this ordinance shall be transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce, as required by law.

Section 12. Hearing. In accordance with the requirements of state law, a public hearing on these interim regulations will be held within 60-days of adoption of this ordinance.

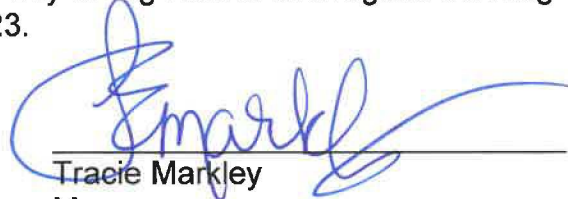
Section 13. Duration of Interim Zoning Control. The interim zoning control adopted herein shall be in effect for a period of 6-months, commencing on the effective date of this ordinance unless the city council shall adopt appropriate permanent development regulations which replace this interim ordinance, or unless the same is extended as provided in RCW 35A.63.220 and RCW 36.70A.390, or unless terminated sooner by the Gig Harbor City Council.

Section 14. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance shall be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance.

Section 15. Correction of Errors. The city clerk and codifiers of the ordinance are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

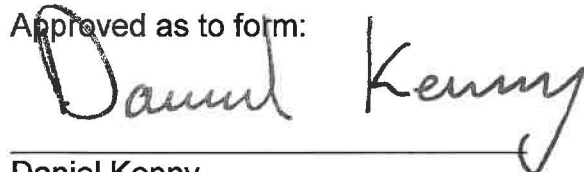
Section 16. Effective Date. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after passage and publication of an approved summary consisting of the title.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Gig Harbor at a regular meeting thereof, held this 7th day of September, 2023.



Tracie Markley
Mayor

Approved as to form:



Daniel Kenny
City Attorney

Attest:



Joshua Stecker, CMC
City Clerk