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Developers file application for Bachtold property

The public has until Aug. 12 to comment on the development agreement application.

By DIAN VER VALEN
of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

The application for a subdivision project known as the Bachtold annexation has now been filed with the city.

A proposal to subdivide and annex about 105 acres south of Walla Walla on Cottonwood Road has drawn strong opposition, particularly from homeowners in the adjacent Table Rock subdivision, but it has also garnered support — and some

“wait and see” comments.

“I can tell you that we need more housing,” City Councilman Riley Clubb wrote in a June 9 column for the Union-Bulletin. But what he couldn’t say was anything specific about the project because no paperwork had been officially filed.

“Only God and Hayden Homes know what they would like to build on the Bachtold property,” he wrote.

But on Monday, developer Hayden Homes and property owners Jon and Mary Christine Bachtold filed a development agreement application with the city’s Development Services Department.

That application and relevant documents are available online at [ubne](#).

FYI

Comments on the development agreement application for property on Cottonwood Road, between Eaglecrest Drive and Kendall Road, known as the Bachtold annexation, must be submitted in writing to the city of Walla Walla Development Services Department at 55 E. Moore St., Walla Walla, WA 99362. Comments must be received by the department before 5 p.m. on Aug. 12.

[ws/32A5Cqq](#).

The public has until 5 p.m. on Aug. 12 to comment on the application. Future chances to comment on the project and the city’s annexation will happen during the required public hearing by City Council, said Development Services Director

Elizabeth Chamberlain.

That hearing has not been scheduled yet, she said, but is likely to be in September or later.

The current comment period, for the application filed this week, “is maybe the only opportunity people will have to comment on the environmental component of the project before we issue a SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) determination,” Chamberlain said this morning.

In 2016, the city accepted a 10 percent annexation petition for the Bachtold property, meaning property owners representing 10 percent of the assessed value

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✓Hayden Homes has indicated they’d like to begin work next year

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of land within the proposed annexation boundary signed a petition to annex into the city, according to city records online.

That year the city also hired Aspect Consulting to conduct an independent flood analysis for the location. This touches on one of the biggest concerns expressed by opponents of the project. The property is prone to flooding, they have said. Other concerns have included traffic congestion, the minimum density of four dwelling units per net acre, and, as Brad Walker put it in his April 21 letter to the editor, “it’s about the long-term look and feel of our

community in Walla Walla.”

In 2017, city staff told annexation petitioners that their request couldn’t go forward without a conceptual, full build-out master plan for development, a plan for transportation, and a plan for flood control. Last year, as required in the city’s annexation process, property owners representing 60 percent of the assessed value of land within the proposed annexation boundary signed a petition confirming a majority of property owners commit to the annexation, the city’s online records show.

Just before City Council’s December 2018 meeting to decide on the annexation, the city attorney

discovered a special provision in state law that allows a city to enter into a development agreement concurrent with an annexation proceeding. This provision had not been used in Walla Walla before because cities typically do not assert their development regulations, such as zoning, until a property is annexed into its jurisdiction, city records state.

Given the size and complexity of the Bachtold annexation, city leaders felt it would be best to prepare a development agreement for the property to clearly identify expectations of development before annexation was finalized, according to information on the city’s

website.

Elements typically considered in a development agreement may include permitted uses, densities, mitigation measures, design standards such as setbacks and heights, drainage requirements, parks and open space preservation, project phasing, and other appropriate development requirements or procedures. And the agreement must be consistent with applicable development regulations adopted by the city, city records state.

Now that the development agreement has been filed and is under review, the city will take public comment, review those

comments, determine if any environmental measures are needed or any revisions required, issue an environmental determination, and then send the project to a public hearing before City Council, Chamberlain said.

The petition to annex this property into the city is being processed concurrently, she said.

Hayden Homes has indicated they’d like to begin developing the property next year, she said. The developer’s website has more information on their plans, under Cottonwood Community at [ubne](#). [ws/2JDPYTp](#).

Dian Ver Valen can be reached at [dianvervalen@wwub.com](#) or 526-8320.