

3.5 LAND USE

This section describes the existing land uses on the site and surrounding area, and evaluates how the Proposed Action and alternatives would affect these land uses, either directly or indirectly. Consistency of the Proposed Action with relevant state, regional and local land use plans, policies and regulations is discussed in **Section 3.8** of this Supplemental Draft EIS.

3.5.1 Affected Environment

Existing Land Use Pattern

General Character

The site is located within the Littlerock Road area of the City of Tumwater, as designated by the City of Tumwater Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The Littlerock Road area generally comprises the area between Littlerock Road on the west, I-5 on the east, Costco on the north and the city limits on the south. It contains a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, industrial and public/institutional, along with vacant land. According to the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan (2003), the proportions of land uses within the Littlerock Road area include:

- 60 percent vacant land
- 20 percent residential
- 10 percent public/institutional
- 5 percent commercial
- 5 percent industrial

As indicated above, the largest proportion of acreage within the Littlerock area consists of vacant land, followed by residential uses. The majority of the public/institutional category acreage is occupied by the Tumwater Middle School, located about one-quarter mile south of the site and the Olympic Memorial Gardens and Bush/Union/Pioneer Calvary cemeteries to the west of the site. Commercial and industrial uses cover the remainder of the area.

Commercial uses in the Littlerock area are concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the site, including the Costco, Fred Meyer and Home Depot retail outlets. These large retail buildings and associated surface parking lots, along with the major vehicular transportation route of Littlerock Road and Tyee Drive, define the land use character of the immediate site vicinity as urban retail in nature.

Project Site

The approximately 21-acre site, which is vacant and relatively level, contains stands of trees and some cleared areas with evidence of past soil/sand excavation and removal from the site. The borrow areas are typically about 3 to 6 feet deep and up to 0.25 acre in size. A Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) easement traverses the southern portion of the site. The tree stands cover approximately 50 percent the site and include: Douglas Fir, black cottonwood, Oregon white oak and maple trees (see **Appendix F** for a more complete list of the existing trees onsite). The majority of the site contains understory consisting of Scot's Broom,

blackberries, and other shrubs. Based on site investigations, there are no wetlands or streams on the site (see **Appendix F** for details) and there is no evidence of previous passive recreational use of the site.

The site is bordered on the east by a light industrial operation (Albany International) with Tyee Drive and the I-5 right-of-way farther to the east, on the west by Littlerock Road, and on the north and south by large retail operations. The southern third of the site is separated from the main site area by Kingswood Drive.

West of the site, across Littlerock Road, is the Bush/Union/Pioneer Calvary Cemetery, which is listed on the National, State and City of Tumwater Registers of Historic Places. No known historical or archaeological resources exist on the project site. Further, no historical or archaeological resources were encountered in the development of the adjacent Costco, Fred Meyer or Home Depot stores. However, it is possible that unidentified resources may exist beneath the site. The Tumwater Municipal Code requires the City to use all practicable means to allow the state and its citizens to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage (TMC 16.04.150).

Surrounding Area

The area immediately adjoining the site contains a variety of uses. As previously mentioned, large retail outlets (each approximately 100,000 to 200,000 square-feet in size) border the site on the north and south, with Costco and Fred Meyer to the north and Home Depot to the south. The Albany International light industrial building is located to the immediate east, with the Tyee Drive and I-5 corridor farther to the east. The area immediately to the west of the site, across Littlerock Road, includes two cemeteries (the Olympic Memorial Gardens Cemetery and the Bush/Union/Pioneer Calvary Cemetery) and an automobile salvage operation. The Bush/Union/Pioneer Calvary Cemetery is listed on the National, State and City of Tumwater Registers of Historic Places. Residential uses in the vicinity of the site include multifamily residential to the south, separated from the site by an approximately 300-foot wide intervening parcel, a mobile home park to the northwest, across Littlerock Road, and commercial, single-family and multifamily uses to the east, across I-5. **Figure 3.5-1** provides an aerial photo of the site and surrounding area, with the site area and surrounding land uses identified.

Land Use and Zoning Designations

Comprehensive Plan

The site is designated General Commercial (GC) in the City of Tumwater Land Use Plan. The intent of the GC designation is to support and implement the goals of the Tumwater Economic Development Plan that was adopted in 1990. These goals include: the establishment of a new commercial center for the City of Tumwater, the preservation of areas with close proximity to Interstate 5 for commercial facilities, and the specified location of general commercial uses to minimize undesirable impacts that such uses may have on the residential neighborhoods which they serve. The portion of the site containing the BPA utility easement is designated Utilities.

In the site vicinity, the GC designation is applied to the areas to the immediate north, south, and east. The area to the west, across Littlerock Road, is designated Public/institutional (cemeteries and middle school), General Commercial, and Multifamily High Density.

Figure 3.5-1
Existing land Use map

Zoning

The site is zoned General Commercial (GC) by the Tumwater Municipal Code. The intent of the GC zone is to: provide for commercial uses that are dependent on convenient vehicular access; promote in-filling in areas where substantial auto-oriented commercial development already exists; and, provide development standards that encourage pedestrian traffic and amenities.

Uses permitted in the GC zone include general retail services, restaurants, motels/hotels, and automobile service stations. Building heights in the GC zone are limited to 50 feet and there are no limitations related to lot coverage or setbacks, except when structures are adjacent to residentially zoned property.

In the site vicinity, the GC zone is applied to the areas to the immediate north, south, and east. The area to the west, across Littlerock Road is zoned Open Space (OS) and Single-Family Residential Low Density (SFL). Farther to the east, across I-5, properties are zoned GC, SFL, and Multifamily High Density (MFH). **Figure 3.5-2** shows the zoning classifications of the site and surrounding area.

3.5.2 Impacts

The types of land use impacts that could occur from implementation of the Proposed Action and alternatives relate to conversion of land use, changes in land use intensity, changes in activity levels, changes in the character of the area, compatibility of proposed land uses with surrounding uses, and the potential for indirect/cumulative impacts. These types of potential impacts are discussed below. Impacts generated from changes in the visual and aesthetic character of the site are discussed in **Section 3.10, Aesthetics, Light and Glare**.

Land Use Conversion

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in the conversion of approximately 21 acres of undeveloped area to a retail center with associated surface parking and a future lease lot (gas station) use. Site preparation, infrastructure development, and building construction would occur over an approximately one-year construction period.

At buildout, approximately 85 percent of the site would be in built area, including approximately 20 percent of the site covered by the proposed retail center building, 2 percent of the site covered by the proposed gas station building and canopy, 63 percent of the site in surface parking/roadway area, and approximately 15 percent of the site would be in natural vegetation or landscaped area.

The proposed approximately 207,700 square-foot retail center building would be built to a height of 30 feet, consistent with the 50-foot height limit for the General Commercial (GC) zone. The proposed building design is intended to be consistent with applicable Tumwater Municipal Code landscape and architectural design guidelines to ensure that the proposal is visually compatible with surrounding uses and general community characteristics. Building facade treatments and materials to create interest and reduce the perceived scale of the main building are proposed, including: sloping metal roofs and canopies, varying facade heights and colors, and vertical elements (including pilasters). Refer to **Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives**, and **Section 3.8, Relationship to Plans and Policies**, for more detailed discussions on proposed building and site design features.

**Figure 3.5-2
Zoning**

Site development under the Proposed Action would result in a substantial change from the existing vacant and vegetated site, and would intensify the level of development in the area. However, the general character and bulk/scale characteristics of the proposed retail center would be consistent with the existing urban retail land use character of the area established by the Home Depot retail center to the south, and the Costco and Fred Meyer retail centers to the north, and would represent a continuation of the existing commercial land use character along the eastern side of Littlerock Road. In addition, the proposal would be consistent with the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan and Littlerock Road Subarea Plan and Economic Development Plan goals and policies calling for commercial development in the area.

There is no indication that significant historical or archaeological resources are present on the site. However, it is possible that unidentified resources may exist onsite that could be discovered during site development of the Proposed Action. If found, all work would cease until such materials can be assessed by a professional archaeologist. If confirmed, the proper authorities would be notified and all work would cease until the find has been assessed and a course of action agreed upon.

Relationship to Surrounding Land Uses

Development of the proposed retail use would be consistent with the GC Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations that call for commercial use on the site and in the site vicinity. The proposed use would be similar to the Home Depot retail center to the south, and the Costco and Fred Meyer retail centers to the north, and would not introduce a new type of use or scale of building development to the area.

The relationship of the proposed new land uses with surrounding land uses is primarily a function of the intensity of the new uses (such as the type of site uses, density of development, and levels of activity associated with new development), intensity of the surrounding uses, proximity of the new uses to surrounding uses, and existence of buffers and/or intervening uses between new and surrounding uses.

Overall, the amount of building area on the site would increase from no building area under existing conditions to approximately 207,700 square feet under the Proposed Action. Because the site is vacant with no employment or customer activity, activity levels on the site would increase commensurate with large-scale retail use. Proposed development would create new jobs and generate new customer visits to the site, and the activity levels on the site would substantially increase compared to the existing vacant condition. This new site activity would generate new vehicular traffic, pedestrian activity, and noise reflective of an urban retail center.

In general, I-5 functions as a physical and visual barrier that isolates the site from surrounding land uses to the east of I-5, and significant land use impacts to these uses across I-5 from the proposal would not be anticipated. The proposed retail center would be similar in size, use, and activity level as the Home Depot retail center to the south, the Costco and Fred Meyer retail centers to the north and the Albany International light industrial use to the immediate east, and would not significantly impact these land uses.

The proposal would be greater in building size and activity level than the cemeteries and automobile salvage yard uses to the west, and the middle school to the southwest. However, because the proposal would be similar in size and character to existing uses on the east side of Littlerock Road, and considering that the intervening Littlerock Road would provide a separation

between the proposed and existing uses, retail use on the site would not significantly impact these uses to the west and southwest. The proposal would not impact the historic status of the Bush/Union/Pioneer Calvary Cemetery to the west. The approximate 500-foot distance between the site and the middle school site would provide additional separation and further limit the potential for land use impact.

The building size and activity level of the proposal would be greater than that of the residential uses located to the south (multifamily), northwest (mobile home park) and east (single-family and multifamily) of the site. The residential use to the south would be separated from proposed development on the site by the approximately 300-foot wide intervening commercially-zoned parcel adjacent to Littlerock Road and the existing Home Depot center (note that the onsite parking lot would be the closest proposed use to this residential area; the proposed gas station would be located approximately 550 feet from this residential area and the main retail building would be located approximately 800 feet from this residential area). The residential uses to the northwest, which are approximately 500 feet from the site, would be separated from site development by the intervening Costco retail center and Littlerock Road. I-5 would separate the residential uses to the east from the proposed retail use. Considering the distance, and intervening uses and transportation corridors between the site and existing residential uses in the vicinity, significant land use impacts to residential use from the proposed commercial use would not be anticipated.

Indirect/Cumulative Impacts

Consistent with Tumwater Comprehensive Plan policies, the Proposed Action would contribute to the cumulative employment growth and intensification of commercial land uses in the City of Tumwater and within the Littlerock Road area. To the extent that the proposed retail center continues and reinforces the trend of commercial development along the Littlerock Road corridor, the Proposed Action could increase the potential for additional commercial development in the area. Any future commercial development in the area would be assumed to be consistent with the applicable provisions of the City of Tumwater Municipal Code (zoning) and Comprehensive Plan designations and would help to achieve the intent of the GC Comprehensive Plan designation for the establishment of a new commercial center for the City of Tumwater.

Alternative 1 – Relocation of Kingswood Road

Under Alternative 1, the land use along the southern perimeter of the site would change from the parking lot use under the proposal to roadway (relocated Kingswood Drive), and the gas station would be located in the northern portion of the site. Vehicles on the relocated Kingswood Drive would be located closer to uses to the south. Land use impacts to the area to the south under Alternative 1 would be similar to those under the Proposed Action, although the retail building would be located approximately 100 feet farther to the south; the building would be located approximately 700 feet from the residential area to the south compared to approximately 800 feet under the proposal. As noted previously, the residential area to the south would be separated from the development on the site by the approximately 300-foot wide intervening commercially zoned parcel and the existing Home Depot. No significant impacts to nearby areas would be expected. The gas station under this alternative would be located in the northern portion of the site and in proximity to the commercial and residential uses to the west. The gas station would be situated adjacent to the existing gas station at Costco. Given the similarity of size and character to existing uses on the east side of Littlerock Road and that the

intervening Littlerock Road would provide a separation between new and existing uses, development under this alternative would not significantly impact land uses to the west.

Land use conditions for areas to the north and east would be as described for the Proposed Action.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, development of the proposed retail store on the site would not occur and the existing site condition would remain. City of Tumwater goals for the establishment of a new commercial center for the City would not be furthered. However, based on the existing GC zoning of the site, it is likely that some form of site development under the GC zoning designation would occur at some point in the future.

3.5.3 Mitigation Measures

No significant land use impacts would occur from implementation of the Proposed Action. Development would occur consistent with applicable City of Tumwater land use and zoning regulations and additional mitigation is not warranted. Mitigation measures related to increased lighting and building bulk/scale are discussed in **Section 3.10, Aesthetics/Light and Glare**.

- There is not indication that significant historical or archaeological materials are present onsite; however, if archaeological materials are discovered during construction onsite, all work would cease until such materials can be assessed by a professional archaeologist. If confirmed, the proper authorities would be notified and all work would cease until the find has been assessed and a course of action agreed upon.

3.5.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in an increase in intensity of development on the site. This is consistent with the site's zoning designation, and City of Tumwater planning goals and policies for the Littlerock Road area, and no significant unavoidable adverse impacts to land use would occur.