DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT:

STERINO FARMS

Robert Jenkins, Current Planning Supervisor
Pierce County Planning & Public Works

January 12, 2021  Mid-County Advisory Commission
Vicinity Map
The applicant requests a 10-year Development Agreement approval, per PCC Chapter 18A.100, for the 103.11-acre, 15-parcel Sterino Farm operation that will permit certain activities and uses on the property following the adoption of a master plan.

The uses include:

- A produce market facility, including new customer and employee parking areas, ADA restrooms, and pallet storage.
- A produce packing, cold storage and distribution facility
- Use of the former Pierce County Conservation District facility for greenhouse operations, records storage, and pipe and sprinkler storage.
The uses include:

- A primary and reserve septic drainfield for the produce market facility and produce packing, cold storage and distribution facility
- A stormwater facility for the produce market facility and produce packing, cold storage and distribution facility
- Existing single-family residences
- Existing outbuildings
- Continued farming activities
Future Canyon Road Widening on 52nd Street East
• A Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) was issued on November 12, 2020, with a comment deadline of November 26, 2020, and an appeal deadline of December 10, 2020. The SEPA determination was not appealed.

• A traffic impact analysis, prepared by Heath & Associates, Inc., dated October 2018, was approved by Planning and Public Works on June 19, 2019.
Background:

Resolution No. R2016-131 was adopted by the Pierce County Council on October 18, 2016, directing Planning and Public Works to negotiate terms and conditions for the above project to be incorporated into a Development Agreement for County Council consideration and authorization and signature of the Council Executive.
Findings of Fact

Project Elements:

• The property is approximately 103 acres in size and has approximately the following zoning designations: 19 acres of Rural Separator; 7 acres of Rural Farm; and 76.5 acres of Agricultural Resource Land. The Farm Property is located within the Mid-County Community Plan.

• Approximately 92 acres of the Farm Property is actively farmed agricultural land having long term commercial significance.
Findings of Fact

Project Elements:

• The produce packing, cold storage and distribution facility serves small local farmers. The facility combines and consolidates produce from a number of local farmers for resale to supermarkets and other large produce purchasers. The facility provides a market that might not otherwise exist for produce from other small farms in Pierce County.

• 3. Sterino Farms provides for a vertically integrated farming operation, and keeps over 92 acres of land in active agricultural uses with over 80% of that use being in agricultural use open space.
Findings of Fact

Project Elements:

• The Farm Stand and the trellis for hanging baskets adjacent to the Farm Stand building are for the purpose of providing fresh local produce and other agricultural and horticultural products for sale to the community, as well as to provide related products, in a rural produce stand atmosphere that helps with the economic sustainability of the adjoining agricultural uses.

• Applicable Regulations: As identified in Section 8 of the proposed Sterino Farms Development Agreement.
Neighbor Comments
• Public Comment was received on the initial proposal from four neighboring properties. The primary concern was to the potential impact of the proposed farmworker seasonal housing. The farmworker housing component of the project was eliminated from the proposal by the applicant in May 2018.

Agency Comments
• Comments have been received on the plat from the following departments and agencies:
  • Current Planning Section of Planning and Public Works (PPW)
  • Development Engineering Section of PPW
  • Resource Management Section of PPW
  • Sewer Section of PPW
  • Traffic Engineering Section of PPW
  • Pierce County Fire Prevention Bureau
  • Puyallup Tribe of Indians
  • Summit Water & Supply Co.
  • Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
  • Tacoma Power
  • Washington State Department of Ecology
Title 18A, Development Regulations - Zoning

Chapter 18A.100 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

18A.100.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to:

A. Create an optional application procedure that could authorize projects to be reviewed, approved, and conditioned according to the extent to which they advance the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

B. Provide assurance to a developer that a project may proceed to be developed per the rules and regulations in effect at the time of the approval. Consequently, the development will not be subject to subsequent changes in regulations that are addressed in the agreement. It may also provide for a streamlined regulatory review process.

C. Provide assurance that currently allowed uses for a property shall be maintained for a specified period of time in exchange for advancing the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

18A.100.030 Types of Development Agreements.

A. Project Development Agreement. A project development agreement shall address a specific development proposal. A proposal shall be defined through a detailed site design with the identification of specific uses and activity. The level of detail shall be such that the project can be reviewed to determine the appropriate level of mitigation related to, but not limited to, transportation, stormwater, and critical areas.
18A.100.070 Review Criteria.

A. The Director of Planning and Public Works (PPW), and such designee or designees as may be appointed for the purpose, shall negotiate acceptable terms and conditions of the proposed development agreement.

**Staff Comment:** A draft Sterino Farms Development Agreement has been negotiated between the applicant and PPW. The final draft is dated December 31, 2020. The associated Master Plan documents are dated September 22, 2020.

B. A development agreement shall conform to the existing Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. The agreement shall not allow for use types or densities currently not permitted through the existing zoning category or existing legally established uses.

**Staff Comment:** The proposal is consistent with, and further the policies and objectives of, the Mid-County Community Plan listed above. The Farm Project and proposed uses are compatible with other permitted uses in the area.
18A.100.070 Review Criteria.

C. A development agreement shall advance the goals and policies of the existing comprehensive plan. This may be demonstrated, but not limited to:

1. Achieving vitality of an area designated as a Regional, Countywide or Local Center;
2. The preservation of resource lands;
3. The promotion of community sustainability through complete, compact and connected communities; and
4. The dedication of lands for public facilities or services.

Staff Comment: Staff finds the following:

- The Agreement is in the public interest to enhance and encourage agricultural development operations within the County and for the County to promote public health, safety and welfare and to support and encourage agricultural operations in the County.
- The Agreement will support and encourage continued agricultural uses within the Mid County Planning Area.
- The development standards and other provisions in this Agreement will support and foster agricultural activities in the Mid-County Community.
- The public interest is served by the Farm Project and other proposed uses related to the Farm Project as described.
- The Farm Project is particularly valuable to the continued economic viability of small farming operations in Pierce County as it provides the support structure for the entire farming community through its produce cooling and local trucking operations for other small farms.
18A.100.080 Approval.

A. Planning and Public Works shall forward the proposed development agreement with their recommendation to the appropriate LUAC for its review and recommendation. The LUAC shall conduct a public hearing and forward their recommendation to the County Council.

*Staff Comment:* This Development Agreement is being presented to the Mid-County Advisory Commission at the regularly scheduled January 12, 2021 meeting.
Questions for MCAC Consideration

• Do the final draft Sterino Farms Development Agreement and exhibit plans adequately address the review criteria for a Development Agreement?

• Are there any proposed recommendations the MCAC has for the County Council to consider in its review of the proposed Development Agreement?

• Other Questions or Concerns?
QUESTIONS?
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