



September 25, 2024

To: La Pine Planning Commission

Subject: File # 01TA-24 – Flag Lot Comments

Commissioners,

At the hearing held on September 18, 2024, the Commission requested additional evidence towards the proposed width of flag lot poles. During the hearing, development constraints were discussed through public comments, and staff initially agreed that if the Commission saw fit, a 20 foot wide pole would be acceptable for flag lots.

At the direction of the Planning Commission, Staff reached out to the City's Contract Engineer, Erik Huffman. His comments have been included in the record. His comments acknowledge that although other jurisdictions typically require a 20 foot wide pole, there are however two reasons why making the pole wider would be advantageous for the City.

1. It would provide extra width to allow for septic tank/water meter/franchise utilities placement at the property line; and
2. Would meet a general desire for larger lot sizes and greater setbacks than other communities in the region, which is how the City's development code is setup now.

Huffman goes on to elaborate his reasoning on item 1, stating that "if the flag pole was 20 feet wide there wouldn't be enough room to place the driveway, septic tank, water meter and franchise utility connections with any separation from each other at the property line, so the developer would have to put the septic tank within the driveway. And when the septic tank is in the driveway it needs to be constructed with a reinforced concrete cap with manhole lids over the septic tank risers. If the preference is to keep septic tanks out of driveways, I would recommend a minimum of 30 feet of width for the pole."

An important factor to consider moving forward when comparing La Pine to other jurisdictions within the area is that the City's wastewater system is unique, and not like other systems in the region. STEG systems do not rely upon gravity to transport wastewater to the wastewater facilities, and instead rely upon a system of pumps. As wastewater leaves a property within the City of La Pine, it first travels from the building or use on a subject property to a septic tank. This tank holds the solids, and allows the liquids to travel to the mainline, and is eventually pumped to the wastewater treatment facility. Periodically, the City will visit the property to empty the solids out of the tank, and transport them to the wastewater facility for treatment. The landowner is responsible for all wastewater components leading from their building or use, to the mainline at the street.

When a new development is proposed, the Public Works Department requires septic tanks to be located as close to the adjacent road as possible. This requirement alleviates safety concerns when City Staff is visiting a property to pump septic tanks. It also removes the need for additional access easements leading onto the property, which are required for City Staff to access the tank. This would meet the City

of La Pine Design Standards, which currently require septic tanks to be located at the property line. Additionally, as Huffman states, there must also be room for a water meter, and franchise utility connections.

The City agrees with Huffman's statements in his first point, but do not acknowledge the sentiments raised in his second point. As initially proposed, Staff identified a 50-foot-wide pole requirement for flag lots. Comments received from the public advocated for a 20-foot-wide pole, or whatever is in the best interest of the city to allow for higher density development. Taking into account the unique wastewater system that the City utilizes to serve its citizens, Staff supports Huffman's comments regarding the utilization of a 30-foot pole requirement. Not only does this better allow for a higher density of development than a 50-foot pole would, but it also ensures that all City utilities are accounted for and can be easily maintained by the City.

The Planning Department thanks the Planning Commission for its consideration of this code amendment, and ensuring it meets the needs of the community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Bybee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brent Bybee
Principal Planner