

**BEFORE THE LAND USE HEARING EXAMINER
OF CITY OF RIDGEFIELD, WASHINGTON**

Regarding an application by the City of)	<u>FINAL ORDER</u>
Ridgefield for approval of a community and)	PLZ-25-0114(Master-25-0044)
recreation center in the CCB zone at 101 N.)	(Ridgefield Community
50 th Place in the City of Ridgefield, Washington)	and Recreation Center)

A. SUMMARY

1. The City of Ridgefield, the applicant, requests Type III preliminary site plan, variance, boundary line adjustment, SEPA, CAR, and archaeological review approval for the proposed Ridgefield Community and Recreation Center and supporting infrastructure on a 6.3-acre parcel located at 101 N. 50th Place; also known as Tax Assessor's parcel Nos. 213961000, 986044069, 214026000 and a portion of public right-of-way (the "site").

a. The applicant proposed to construct a single building with the property line bisecting the building into two uses: the Recreation Center will be 30,000 square feet and measure 40 feet 11 inches from grade and the Community Center will be 8,000 square feet and 20 feet above grade.

b. Three variances are requested for front and side setbacks, landscape buffer requirement, and retaining wall height.

c. There are two (2) Category IV wetlands on site totaling 0.49 acres, both of which will be impacted (filled), and Type F stream to the south between the project site and Pioneer Street.

2. City of Ridgefield Hearing Examiner Joe Turner (the "examiner") conducted a public hearing to receive testimony and evidence about the application. City staff recommended the examiner approve the preliminary plat subject to conditions. See the City of Ridgefield Staff Report to the Hearing Examiner dated December 8, 2025 (the "Staff Report"), as modified at the hearing. The applicant accepted the findings and conditions in the Staff Report, as modified. No one else testified orally or in writing, other than affected agencies.

3. Based on the findings provided or incorporated herein, the examiner approves the application subject to the conditions at the end of this final order.

B. HEARING AND RECORD HIGHLIGHTS

1. The examiner received testimony at the public hearing about this application on December 15, 2025. All exhibits and records of testimony are filed at the City of Ridgefield. The examiner announced at the beginning of the hearing the rights of persons with an interest in the matter, including the right to request that the examiner continue the hearing or hold open the public record, the duty of those persons to testify and to raise all issues to preserve appeal rights and the manner in which the hearing will be conducted.

The examiner disclaimed any *ex parte* contacts, bias or conflicts of interest. The following is a summary by the examiner of selected testimony and evidence offered at the public hearing.

2. Ridgefield consulting planner Eric Eisemann summarized the Staff Report, the applicable standards, and his PowerPoint presentation and described the proposed development on the site.

a. The applicant proposed to construct a single building with the property line bisecting the building into two uses consisting of a 30,000 square foot community center and an 8,000 square foot recreation center. The site contains a stream and wetlands on the south portion of the site and a second wetland on the east portion of the site. The applicant proposed to fill the wetlands and preserve the stream and riparian buffer. WDFW noted that it now requires larger riparian management zones based on mature tree height. However, this application is subject to the Ridgefield Municipal Code (the "RMC") which requires a 150-foot riparian buffer. The conditions of approval require a 150 foot riparian buffer and that the applicant ensure "[n]o net loss of functions and values in the critical areas" as required by RMC 18.280.020.A.

b. The applicant is requesting variances to the front and side setbacks, the landscape buffer requirement, and retaining wall height limits.

c. The applicant is also requesting a boundary line adjustment to accommodate the extension of N. 50th Place.

d. He identified two typographical errors in the Staff Report:

i. The minimum lot size in the CCB district is 10,000 square feet, not 110,000 as stated on page 25 of the Staff Report; and

ii. The headings for Sections B.1 and B.2 on page 43 of the Staff Report were reversed. Section B.1 should be headed "Boundary Line Adjustment" and Section B.2 should be headed "Shared Use Agreement."

e. The City received SEPA comments from the Department of Ecology (Exhibit C.2) and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (Exhibit C.3), in addition to the comment from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Exhibit C.1) noted in the Staff Report. He requested the examiner add conditions of approval B.12.a and B.12.b as noted in Exhibit E.2.

3. City engineer Bryan Kast noted that the applicant must provide driveway access to the site from N. 50th Place. Due to the steep topography of the site, the applicant cannot comply with the maximum setback requirements of the Code and still provide reasonable access in compliance ADA requirements. The applicant will collect, treat, and detain stormwater runoff from all impervious surfaces on the site. The applicant will discharge treated stormwater into the on-site riparian area at less than predevelopment rates. The applicant will be required to design and construct the stormwater outfall to ensure it does not cause erosion.

4. Architect Steven Black appeared on behalf of the applicant, City of Ridgefield, and accepted the findings and conditions in the Staff Report without objections.

5. No one else testified about this application, orally or in writing, other than affected agencies.

6. At the conclusion of the hearing the examiner closed the record and announced his intention to approve the application subject to the findings and conditions in the Staff Report, as modified at the hearing.

C. DISCUSSION

1. City staff recommended approval of the application, based on the affirmative findings and subject to conditions of approval in the Staff Report. The applicant accepted those findings and conditions without exceptions.

2. The examiner concludes that the affirmative findings in the Staff Report show that the proposed development does or can comply with the applicable standards for alteration of a non-conforming use, provided the applicant complies with recommended conditions of approval. The examiner adopts the affirmative findings in the Staff Report as his own.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion provided or incorporated herein, the examiner concludes that PLZ-25-0114 (Master-25-0044) (Ridgefield Community and Recreation Center) should be approved, because the application does or can comply with applicable standards of the RDC and the Revised Code of the State of Washington, subject to conditions of approval necessary to ensure the final plat and resulting development will comply with the Code.

E. ORDER

The Hearing Examiner APPROVES PLZ-25-0114 (Master-25-0044) (Ridgefield Community and Recreation Center) subject to the following conditions of approval:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

A. General Conditions

1. Unless otherwise specified herein, at the time of construction and at all times thereafter, the development shall comply with all approval requirements established in applicable plans, policies, regulations and standards adopted at the time of this application, including but not limited to, the Ridgefield Urban Area Comprehensive Plan (RUACP), the Ridgefield Capital Facilities Plan (RCFP), the Ridgefield Development Code (RDC), the Ridgefield Engineering Standards for Public Works (Engineering Standards), current water and sanitary sewer plans,

and the Stormwater Management Manual for the Puget Sound Basin (Puget Sound Manual).

2. It is unlawful to remove or alter any archaeological resource or site without having obtained a written permit from the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Upon any discovery of potential or known archaeological resources at the subject site prior to or during on-site construction, the Developer, contractor, and/or any other parties involved in construction shall immediately cease all on-site construction, shall act to protect the potential or known historical and cultural resources area from outside intrusion, and shall notify, within a maximum period of twenty-four hours from the time of discovery, the City of Ridgefield Community Development Department of said discovery.
3. All utilities shall be placed underground.
4. Streets, sidewalks, and trails within the project shall be designed and built to City engineering standards.
5. A bond or other equivalent security, approved by the City attorney, shall be filed with the Community Development Director prior to final PUD and provided to the City prior to issuance of Building Permits, in accordance with RDC 18.401.120.

B. Planning Conditions

1. Boundary Line Adjustment. Prior to final engineering approval, the applicant shall record the boundary line adjustment as shown on the APEX BLA exhibit dated December 1, 2025 and shall provide the Community Development Director with a copy of the recorded instrument.
2. Shared Use Agreement. Prior to final Engineering approval, the city shall execute the Shared Use agreement provided for this application and shall provide the Community Development Director with a copy of the recorded instrument.
3. Common areas. The required common area amenities shall be installed prior to final occupancy.
4. Building materials and design. Prior to building permit approval, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with the applicable sections of RDC 18.235.055.A-I.
5. Critical Areas:
 - a. Prior to Engineering approval, the applicant shall provide the Community Development Director with a mitigation plan for the Type F stream for a 150-foot buffer and a buffer enhancement plan that results in no net loss of riparian functions and values based upon the WDFW Site Potential Tree Height of 200 years (SPTH200) standard.
 - b. Prior to final Engineering approval, in accordance with RDC 18.280.040.G, the applicant shall file a notice with the County auditor's office stating the presence of the critical area(s) and buffer(s) on the property, the application of

RDC 18.280 to the property, and the fact that limitations on actions in or affecting the critical area of buffer may exist. The notice shall run with the land. The applicant shall submit proof that the notice has been filed and recorded for public record before the City approves any site development or construction on the property.

- c. Prior to final Engineering approval, the applicant shall delineate and place temporary and permanent signs at the boundary of the outer edge of critical areas tracts and easements consistent with the requirements in RDC 18.280.040.F, Critical Areas Markers and Signs.
 - d. Prior to final Engineering approval, the applicant shall place temporary and permanent signs and fencing at the boundary of the outer edge of the wetlands and buffers consistent with the requirements in RDC 18.280.150.C.3.a-d, Signs and Fencing of Wetlands.
 - e. Prior to occupancy, the developer shall purchase a minimum of 0.439 acres of mitigation credits from the East Fork Lewis River Mitigation Bank and shall provide evidence of said purchase to the Ridgefield Community Development Director.
6. Signs. The applicant shall apply for any sign permits and obtain approval per RDC 18.710 prior to installation.
7. Exterior Lighting.
- a. Prior to final Engineering approval, to help ensure that light trespass does not occur, the applicant shall demonstrate *“All exterior lighting fixtures and accent lighting shall be designed, installed, located and maintained such that there is no light trespass.”* RDC 18.715.050.A, see [18.715.100](#)).
 - b. Prior to final Engineering approval, the applicant shall demonstrate that all exterior lighting fixtures and accent lighting are shielded and aimed downward. The shield must mask the direct horizontal surface of the light source. The light must be aimed at insuring that the illumination is only pointing downward onto the ground surface, with no escaping direct light permitted to contribute to light pollution by shining upward into the sky. RDC 18.715.050.B.
 - c. Prior to final Engineering approval, the applicant shall demonstrate that all street lights comply with Section 2.26, Street Illumination, of the city's Engineering Standards for Public Works Construction. RDC 18.715.040.A.2.
 - d. The applicant shall demonstrate compliance with the 25-foot parking area light post height maximum in RDC 18.230.070.B prior to final engineering approval.
 - e. The applicant shall demonstrate compliance with the building entrance lighting standard in RDC 18.230.070.C prior to building permit approval.
 - f. Further, lighting shall meet the requirements of RDC 18.715, Lighting.
8. Parking. Prior to final engineering approval, the applicant shall demonstrate that the parking areas meet the requirements of RDC 18.720.040.D.1-8.
9. Walls, fences and berms. All walls and retaining walls shall be earth-toned and have a stone appearance. (See RDC 18.725.030.D and 18.740.030.D)

10. Landscaping.

- a. At the time of final Engineering review, the applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed landscaping meets the requirements of RDC 18.725.
- b. At the time of final engineering review, the applicant shall ensure that the landscape materials do not include prohibited, nuisance or harmful plant materials as described in RDC 18.830.

11. Trees.

- a. Prior to Engineering approval, all healthy, existing trees having a diameter at breast height (dbh) of six inches or greater shall be identified and marked on the existing conditions site plan.
- b. Prior to Engineering approval, the applicant shall provide a tree plan consistent with the requirements of RDC 18.840.040.

12. SEPA

- a. Department of Ecology (Ecology). The Developer shall comply with the Department of Ecology SEPA recommendations relating to Shorelands and Environmental Assistance including obtaining a 401 Certification related to impacts to wetlands, and recommendations relating to Solid Waste Management regarding grading, fill and debris removal.
- b. Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DHAP). Prior to ground disturbance the Developer shall comply with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation SEPA recommendations including consultation with DAHP and the Tribes relating to archaeological site CL01012 and the installation and maintenance of a 50-foot buffer around the archaeological resource on the project site.

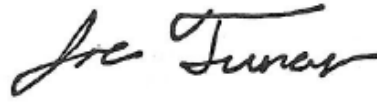
C. Engineering Conditions

Engineering Approval is required prior to commencement of any on-site construction.

1. The applicant shall provide alignment of Pioneer Canyon Drive and dedicate ROW for future construction. Ensure that proposed cut slope is compatible with future roadway alignment and grades.
2. The applicant shall re-align driveway entrance to provide a minimum 100 feet of separation from the roadway installed with 50th Place Subdivision, or a design modification shall be submitted for Engineering review. The existing driveway drop across from the entrance in the site plan will be abandoned at some point in the future.
3. The driveway shall be designed to accommodate ADA vans and all anticipated delivery vehicles.
4. The existing ingress/egress utility easement within the project site shall be vacated.

5. The development shall contribute Transportation Impact Fees toward citywide impacts on the basis of 1,239 new net daily trips prior to building permit issuance. The applicant shall submit a trip generation memo reflecting the trips for each of the two buildings at the time of building permit submittals.
6. The site shall provide external and internal pedestrian circulation meeting ADA requirements.
7. The applicant shall provide separate utility connections for each building.
8. The applicant shall provide a waterline stub with a temporary blow-off to the north or provide domestic connection for one of the buildings off of the dead-end water line that serves the north end of the site to prevent stagnation.
9. Any water lines not located within the public right-of-way (ROW) to be dedicated to the City shall be located in a minimum 15-foot-wide easement dedicated to the City of Ridgefield.
10. All fire flow testing must be completed by the applicant with City of Ridgefield and Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue personnel present.
11. Plans approved and stamped by Clark Regional Wastewater District must be submitted prior to issuance of the Master Engineering approval and Permit.
12. The applicant shall provide an engineered flow-spreader at the storm outfall.
13. The applicant will submit plans and a Technical Information Report (TIR) for the on-site stormwater system for Engineering Approval.
14. The applicant will follow the 2019 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington in the design of water quality and quantity treatment facilities as required by the 2024 Ridgefield Engineering Standards.
15. The applicant will grant an access and inspection easement over the on-site stormwater facilities and infrastructure.
16. The applicant shall provide a geotechnical analysis for 2:1 slope over 10 feet in height. Slopes above 10 feet are not covered by the site Geotechnical report.
17. The applicant shall provide groundcover that does not require mowing for slopes over 4:1.
18. A Construction Stormwater Permit shall be required prior to approval of any final engineering or early grading plans.
19. An existing public trail is located on the West and South portions of the site. Prior to Engineering approval, the applicant shall demonstrate how this trail is being tied into the new structure and roadway. All paved trails are to be 3" Hot Mix Asphalt over 3" Crushed Rock. Prior to Engineering approval, the applicant shall submit a trail plan that includes trail classifications, alignment and profile, material specifications, and maintenance access routes for engineering review.

DATED this 2nd day of January 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Joe Turner, AICP
City of Ridgefield Hearing Examiner

NOTE: Only the decision and the conditions of approval are binding on the applicant as a result of this order. Other parts of the final order are explanatory, illustrative and/or descriptive. They may be requirements of local, state, or federal law, or requirements which reflect the intent of the applicant, the city staff, or the Examiner, but they are not binding on the applicant as a result of the final order unless included as a condition.

APPEAL

This decision is final but may be appealed to the Clark County Superior Court as provided in RDC Section 18.310.100.D and RCW 36.70C within twenty-one (21) days from the date of this decision.