

# Memo

**To:** City Council

**From:** Bryan Myrkle, Community Development Director

**Date:** February 6, 2020

**Re:** Planning Commission recommendation – rezoning request for 600 S. Cochran Ave.

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The Planning Commission held the necessary public hearing on the rezoning request for 600 S. Cochran Avenue on Tuesday, February 4.

Representatives of the Helping Hands organization presented the need and reasoning behind its request. They said potential buyers have been reluctant to follow-through on the purchase due to the high level of Planning Commission involvement and the potential requirement for even more approvals in the future if they need to, in turn, sell the property themselves.

Several residents of the immediate neighborhood were also present, and expressed concern over possible future uses if the property is rezoned. In all cases, they indicated a preference for maintaining the current situation, because it allows them to weigh-in on potential new uses. There were also three written communications expressing the same views. One communication from city resident Ben Phlegar expressed an additional worry about the potential spread of commercial zoning south on Cochran Avenue away from downtown.

A number of residents also mentioned their specific concern about the potential for marijuana sales at the location. While we did explain that neither medical nor recreational marijuana sales are allowed in the City, the issue is obviously in the forefront of people's minds. Their concern is that allowing business zoning at this location could, down the road, open the door for marijuana sales if local regulations change.

**After discussing the matter, the Planning Commission voted 3 to 2 to recommend the rezoning be approved by Council.**

I believe there are good arguments and valid opinions on both sides of this issue, and this is reflected in the close vote by Planning Commission.

While it is not directly related to the decision-making on this issue, I would like to credit Planning Commission Chair Justin Brummett with the diplomatic way he led the meeting, and also note that the discussion was conducted respectfully on all sides.