

**Suggested Talking Points for Public Comment on
Ashton Woods (formerly Trillium) Preliminary Plat
File Number 15-0071**

**Please send your comments by Friday, June 26, to Cari Hornbein,
chornbei@ci.olympia.wa.us. Or Cari Hornbein, City of Olympia Community Planning &
Development, 601 4th Avenue E., P.O. Box 1967, Olympia, WA 98501**

Please do not simply cut and paste all of these comments, but find those which are most important to you. Feel free to add in your own comments.

**Ask for these issues to be addressed via a *thorough* State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)
Review Process:**

If you are concerned about your natural habitat and water quality

- Olympia has lost over 30% of its natural habitat since 1994, according to the City's own 2013 *Habitat & Stewardship Strategy*. The mature upland forest and wetlands ecosystem of the Ashton Woods parcel is a key component of the Chambers Creek Basin—a sensitive drainage basin that is part of the Puget Sound watershed.
- Conversion of forest to impervious surfaces would decimate a last large remaining area of important wildlife habitat as identified in the Chambers Basin study and plan for the region. Ashton Woods developers are planning to clear all but about 8 of the 73 acres of trees on this property. A map in the City of Olympia's *Comprehensive Plan* shows the Ashton Woods parcel as part of an Open Space Corridor.
- The wetland report that DR Horton submitted appears to be incomplete. The report identifies two wetlands on the Ashton Woods property, and classifies them as “non-jurisdictional wetlands.” D.R. Horton is proposing to fill these wetlands, reduce off-site wetland buffers by at least 25%, and to drastically change the hydrological pattern of the site—though no specific details are provided about how they intend to do so. Please ensure D.R. Horton has conducted appropriate cataloging of the existing on and off-site wetlands.

If you are concerned about wildlife...

- Ashton Woods parcel is upstream from Chambers Creek, which offers three types of habitat for coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*). Coho salmon has been listed by NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service as a species of concern in the Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) encompassing Puget Sound drainages.
- The local Black Hills Audubon Society chapter has identified 58 bird species that use the mixed-aged forest and diverse understory of native plants for nesting, migratory stopovers, and wintering habitat. Twenty-one of these bird species are listed by the National Audubon Society as at-risk from climate change. The Ashton Woods parcel is a refuge for these species.

If you care about protecting open space for parkland in Olympia...

- Ashton Woods is one of two parcels in the forest known locally as the “LBA Woods.” In 2014-2015, the City of Olympia parks planning process documented that conservation of the LBA Woods is one of the top priorities for Olympia citizens. Support for saving the Ashton Woods and Bentrige parcels is broad across all quadrants of Olympia and continues to grow.

If you are concerned about Olympia’s water supply and flooding...

- Groundwater from the Ashton Woods parcel filters through the ground and into our regional aquifers. D.R Horton’s plans for Ashton Woods *do not adequately address* the impact to these aquifers of the removal of 70 acres of forest cover, significant re-grading and filling, changes to the hydrological flow regime, and paved/impervious surface cover.
- Increased stormwater flows are caused by the removal of forest cover and paving of the exposed soil. Impervious surfaces (streets, sidewalks, roofs, lawns) eliminate the significant capture of water through evapo-transpiration and infiltration. In 2008, the City of Olympia placed a moratorium on development in the upland area of Chambers Basin, including the Ashton Woods parcel (then called “Trillium.” In their *Chambers Basin Moratorium Report*, the city confirmed that development would increase the risk of flooding of Wiggins Road and properties downstream of the Wiggins Road Drainage Ditch. In attempt to reduce these impacts, D.R. Horton is proposing to re-route large amounts of stormwater, but hasn’t yet proposed how.
- As a result of the *Chambers Basin Moratorium Report*, a significant portion of the Chambers Valley has now been designated with a special zoning meant to promote low-impact development. Conservation of the forest in the upland area would promote the protection of this sensitive drainage basin.
- According to expert review of the Ashton Woods application documents, D.R. Horton has not provided sufficient geotechnical data to demonstrate the impacts of the proposed changes. In addition, D.R Horton should provide data on impacts to on and off-site wetlands, flows and water quality to Chambers Ditch/Creek system, and –given the proposal to direct significant volumes of stormwater to infiltrate next to LBA Park, investigate the potential for further saturation and flooding of LBA Park ball fields.

If you are concerned about traffic in your neighborhood...

- Ashton Woods is expected to generate 3,440 vehicle trips per day. Current streets in the vicinity of the development are ill-equipped to handle such high volume of traffic. For example, if the City of Olympia agrees, 600-900 daily trips are estimated to be directed into the Wilderness Neighborhood via Highline Drive—a road vacated by Thurston County for this type of through traffic years ago due to safety concerns. DR Horton is proposing no improvements to narrow Wiggins Road, a street that currently has no shoulders and is next to steep banks of Wiggins Ditch.

If you are concerned about overcrowded schools...

- Public schools that would serve Ashton Woods residents are at capacity or close to capacity. As of October 2014, Washington Middle School enrollment exceeded its capacity, Olympia High School, and McKenney and Centennial Elementary Schools are at capacity, or close to capacity.