

An excerpt from the Comprehensive Plan Update Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Design Review Areas (Issue 'L9')

Proposal

Expand policy subjecting development to design standards to include all development adjacent to public streets. Specifically proposed:

- Policy L6.1. *Require [that] residential and commercial development adjacent to freeways and public streets be subject to a design review process.*

Background

Many communities require that development conform with certain architectural and aesthetic standards. Olympia first adopted such standards in 1988. Initially, only development downtown and along entrance and exit corridors was subject to such requirements. Gradually the types and locations of development subject to 'design review' have expanded until there are only a few exceptions – primarily single-family housing and a few commercial and industrial areas. In some areas, the design criteria are focused on the portion of the project abutting residential uses and not on the public street face. The few remaining commercial areas are generally in the vicinity of Fones Road, along Lilly and Ensign Roads (Providence St. Peters Hospital area), the portion of Olympia Auto Mall not adjacent to Cooper Point – Auto Mall Road, and the Yauger Road - Capital Mall Drive - McPhee Road area near Capital Medical Center. (Note: The Evergreen Park PUD has privately-adopted design standards and not the City criteria.) Except for the older portions of the city near downtown, most single-family development on ordinary-sized lots is NOT subject to design criteria.

Options

Option 1. The proposal: Expand design review requirement to all development along public streets.

Option 2. Expand design review requirement, but do NOT extend to single-family housing on lots larger than 5,000 square feet in newer parts of community, i.e., those built after World War II; and continue to exempt industrial development in industrial areas and small institutional structures.

Option 3. No action: Designated design review areas would remain 'as is.'

Option 4. Alternative to the proposal: In addition to commercial development, require industrial and institutional development along all public streets to meet design criteria.

Analysis

Olympia's design criteria generally apply to the exterior architectural forms of buildings, but extend to other aesthetic components of development such as landscaping. These standards are intended to enhance the appearance of the community and mitigate some of the impacts of development. But they also reduce flexibility and options and can increase costs. Expanding the geographical area subject to these requirements would expand these impacts into new areas. The architectural quality of projects not subject to design review varies greatly. For example, compare the award-winning offices at 2415 Heritage Court SW in Evergreen Park with the NAPA Auto Parts store at 1319 Fones Road SE.



The proposal would extend design review requirements to nearly all new building and major exterior remodels throughout the community. Further, a new set of design criteria would be needed for ordinary single-family housing. Reviewing the architecture of single-family housing throughout the City add up to one-quarter full-time-equivalent to the staff's workload and add about \$250 in review fees – plus whatever costs were associated with revising the design of such structures.

Option 2, which would extend design review only to all commercial structures along public streets, would not require any new design criteria (the City already has a set of 'basic' commercial design criteria) and would expand commercial design review to the vicinity of Capital Medical Center and Providence St. Peters Hospitals, the portion of the Automall not along Cooper Point Road, the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development (aka courthouse hill), and commercial buildings in industrial areas (such as Mottman and Fones Roads).

Staff Recommendation

Option 2. Expand design review to commercial projects along all public streets.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Option 1. Expand design review to all buildings along public streets.