

Staff response to Planning Commission's comments for LUEC meeting – 03.27.25

Updates for study session in orange – 07.29.25

Planning Commission comment	Staff response
Requests new vision statement of: <i>A sustainable, equitable, and resilient transportation system that prioritizes public transit, walking, rolling, and biking over single-occupancy vehicles. We aim to create vibrant, connected neighborhoods where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can move safely and efficiently, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building a stronger, more inclusive community.</i>	We would request the addition of language to reduce vehicle miles traveled: <i>A sustainable, equitable, and resilient transportation system that prioritizes public transit, walking, rolling, and biking over single-occupancy vehicles. We aim to create vibrant, connected neighborhoods where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can move safely and efficiently, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions and building a stronger, more inclusive community.</i> Done
Regularize the use of definitive language in policy statements to make clear the practical difference between, for example, a policy that would “consider” something versus a policy that “will study” something. In the current updates this is particularly relevant to PT6.12, PT6.13, PT6.14, PT6.18....	Thank you for the specific policies to review. We can make this change. This change had already been made in a previous draft.
In the upcoming update to the 1994 Gridded Streets plan, pay particular attention to the potential VMT reduction benefits of gridded streets and the possible benefits to VMT reduction that walking and biking connections provided by pathway or non-vehicle street connections could provide.	Policy 9.22 addresses this: <i>Study the additional street connections Olympia needs in order to build a complete street network that serves everyone, whether walking, rolling, biking, taking transit, or driving. As part of the study, consider the impacts of building only pedestrian and bicycle connections instead of full streets.</i>
Consider how the word “incentivize” is used throughout the chapter. The planning commission found that “incentivize” brought to mind monetary approaches (e.g. Multifamily Tax Exemption), while a word like “encourage” might suggest a broader range of interventions (e.g. zoning changes, infrastructure investments or like streamline permitting) depending on the context.	We can make this change. Changed PT 16.2 and PT 17.3

Modify PT9.15: Existing: <i>PT9.15 Allow cul-de-sacs only when topographic and environmental constraints permit no other option. Cul-de-sacs that are built will have a maximum length of 300 feet and be built with pedestrian and bike connections to adjacent streets or to destinations such as schools, parks, and trails wherever possible.</i> Proposal (change in bold): <i>PT9.15 Allow cul-de-sacs only when topographic and environmental constraints permit no other option. Cul-de-sacs that are built will have a maximum length of 300 feet and be built with pedestrian and bike connections to adjacent streets or to destinations such as schools, parks, and trails unless infeasible.</i>	We can make this change. Done
Modify PT10.2: Existing: <i>PT10.2 Require new developments to provide direct bicycle and pedestrian pathways that connect to adjacent developed properties. These will be at the same interval spacing as street spacing requirements or at closer intervals.</i> Proposed (change in bold): <i>PT10.2 Require new developments to provide direct bicycle and pedestrian pathways that connect to adjacent developed properties and create rights-of-way and pathway stubs to ensure future connections to undeveloped properties. These will be at the same interval spacing as street spacing requirements or at closer intervals, unless environmental or topographical constraints make this infeasible. Rights-of-way and stubs will be recorded as part of the subdivision process to guarantee long-term connectivity.</i>	This policy is found under the goal of creating more pathways, which are short, off-street connections for pedestrians and bicyclists. Pathways are often created with easements and may not be in right-of-way. Adding language about creating rights-of-way and pathway stubs mixes the language used for pathways with that used for streets, which could create legal ambiguity and raise questions about the enforceability of this policy. This could prevent us from getting pathways with new development or leave the City vulnerable to a legal challenge. For that reason, we would prefer not to change the policy. Additionally, we already have language that ensures rights-of-way and street stubs are recorded: <i>PT9.16 Planned but still unbuilt street connections, or "stub outs," will be identified by signs at the location and in formal documentation, including plans and maps of newly platted areas.</i>

	And if a full street will not be built, we do require a pedestrian/bicycle connection be built: <i>PT9.20 If the City decides that a street connection will not be built, build bike and pedestrian pathways for safe and direct non-motorized access. Minimum spacing should be based on block sizes defined in the Engineering Design and Development Standards.</i> <i>PT9.21 If stub-outs exist for a future street connection, bicycle and pedestrian access should be provided in the public right-of-way as an interim measure.</i> During the discussion the Planning Commission Chair and LUEC opted not to proceed with this recommendation.
Consider the hierarchy of statements occurring the Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, and the Olympia Engineering Design & Development Standards (EDDS). In the planning commissions reading of the comprehensive plan, they found that there was some circularity and locations where either the comprehensive plan contained technical details better left to the Master Plan or EDDS or where the Master Plan or EDDS contained the more aspirational policy better suited to the Comprehensive Plan. Continuing to improve consistency in these documents would benefit the readability of the comprehensive plan. For example, in public comment the following change to PT7.12 was suggested that the planning commission supports: Existing: <i>PT7.12 Use Olympia’s regularly updated Engineering Design and Development Standards to ensure that transportation-related facilities constructed in Olympia and its Growth Area are safe, well-constructed, durable, and can be maintained.</i> Proposed (change in bold):	We can make this change. Done

<i>PT7.12 Regularly update Olympia's Engineering Design and Development Standards to ensure they reflect the Comprehensive Plan and that transportation-related facilities constructed in Olympia and its Growth Area are safe, well-constructed, durable, and can be maintained.</i>	
Consider further examples in PT 7.11 in regard to street treatments for safe crossing, such as signals.	We can make this change. Done