



Olympia's Neighborhood Centers



The Olympia Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, November 17, 2014 to gather input on a proposed scope of future actions regarding Neighborhood Centers. An informational open house will begin at 5:30 pm, and the hearing begins at 6:30 pm, in Room 207 at City Hall. Preliminary input has revealed a range of possible actions, and public input will help to determine priorities for future work plans and resources.

The public is invited to provide oral testimony that night, or to submit written comments: c/o OPC, 601 4th Ave. E, Olympia WA 98501 or by email to cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us. For guaranteed consideration, please submit written comments by Sunday, November 23.

A summary of the proposed actions are provided inside. More information will be posted to the Commission's meeting agenda online at Olympia.legistar.com by Nov 12.

If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call 360.753.8314, at least 48 hours in advance and ask for the ADA Coordinator.

BACKGROUND:

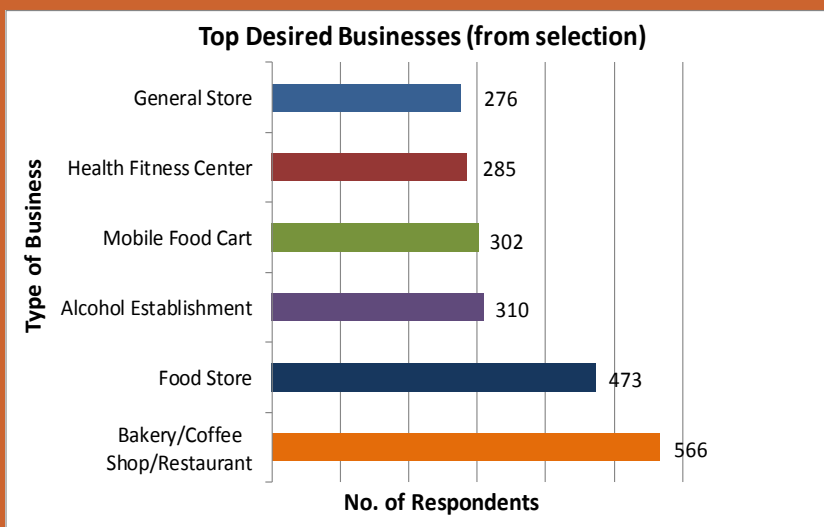
The City has had a policy of encouraging the development of neighborhood centers for over 20 years, however these have not developed as described in our Comprehensive Plan, with a few exceptions.

Neighborhood Centers are small walk and transit-friendly activity clusters within neighborhoods that serve the day-to-day retail and service needs of local residents and foster community interaction.

CURRENT CONDITIONS:

Today, only about 35% of Olympia households are within 1/2 mile of a neighborhood center that has at least one operating business. While the Comprehensive Plan identifies 17 areas for neighborhood centers (see back page), only 9 of these have an operating business.

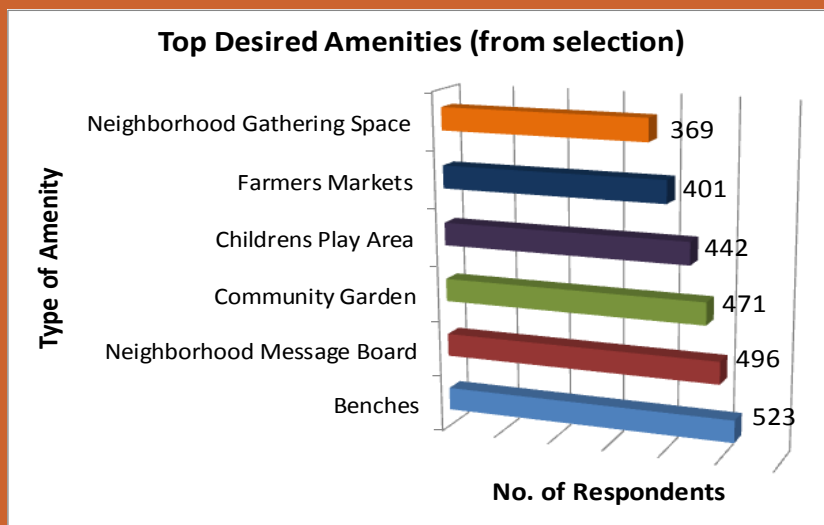
Neighborhood Centers are of high interest to Olympians, as evidenced by the 668 responses to our poll on OlySpeaks*. The following were revealed as respondents' top desires for neighborhood centers:



Anonymous Quotes:

“Good design is key to their acceptance, more important than allowed uses.”

“As someone who lived across the street from a westside NC, I loved it, but there were impacts from light and noise pollution, screening from garbage/recycling and customer on-street parking encroaching on our property.”



“Not everyone wants to or can walk everywhere. We need more parking ...”

“Postal services!”

“Model innovative design practices. Follow principles of local sourcing and renewable, non-toxic energy & materials.”

“I don't actually favor this idea. Get people downtown.”

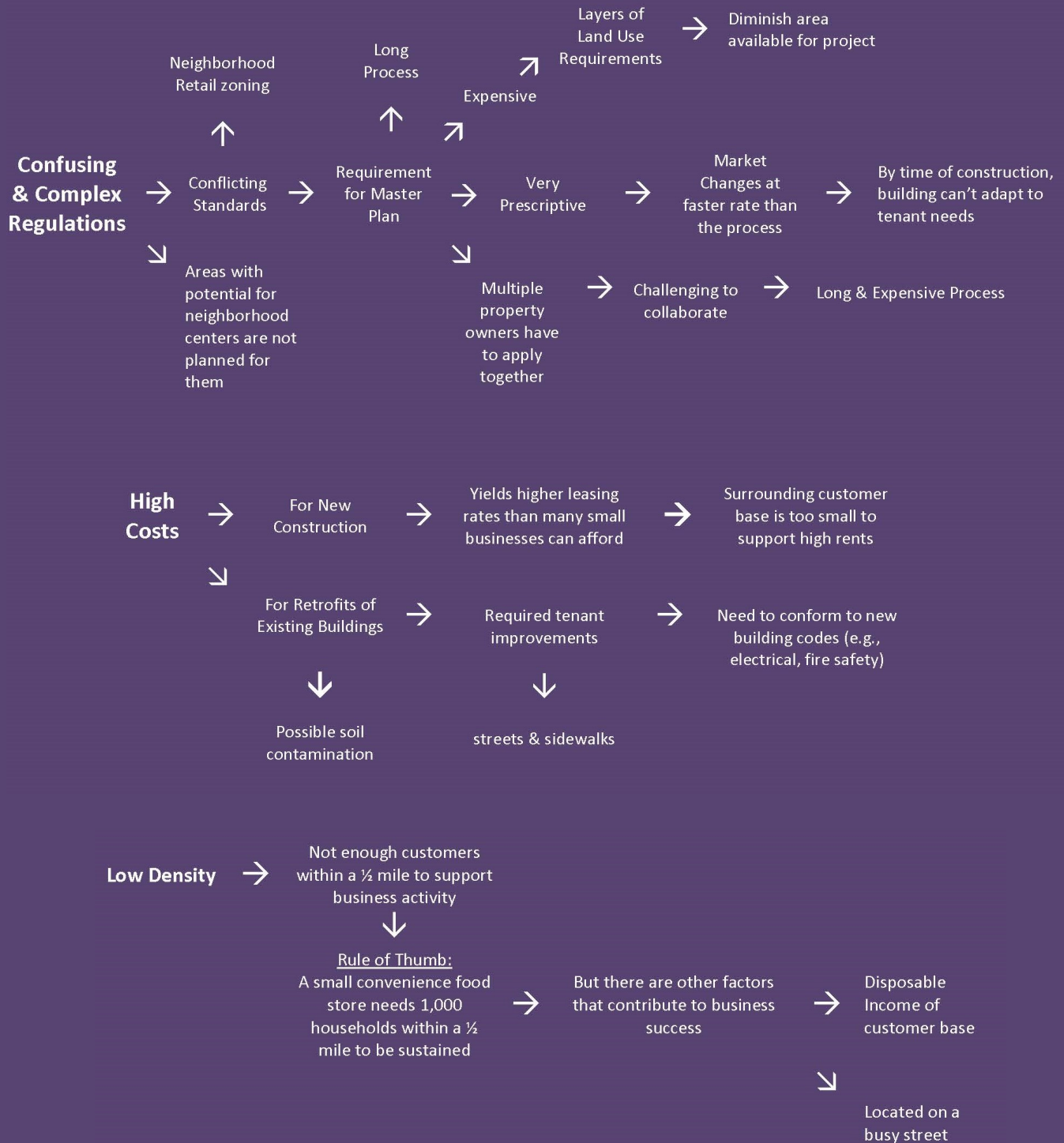
TARGET:

Within 20 years, at least 65% of Olympia households will be within 1/2 mile or a 20 minute walk from a neighborhood center with an operating business.

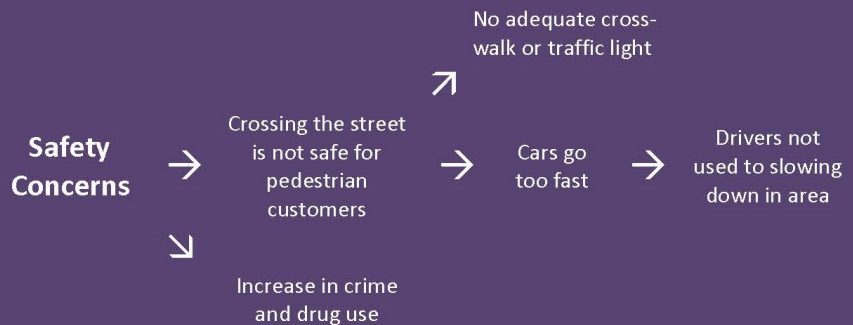
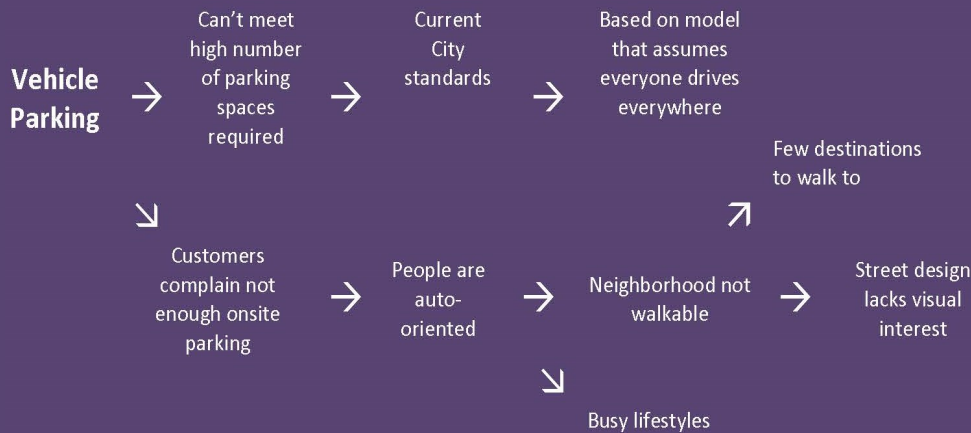
* A full summary of results from staff interviews with business & property owners and the community-wide OlySpeaks questionnaire will be available at the Commission's public hearing and posted online November 17.

PRELIMINARY INPUT & ANALYSIS—Logic trees are based on City staff interviews with 21 business and property owners/developers of existing neighborhood centers, including some further analysis:

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER DEVELOPMENT?



WHAT ARE THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER BUSINESSES?



SUMMARY SCOPE OF ACTIONS:

CAUSE:	PROPOSAL:	EXPECTED OUTCOME:
<p>The Master Plan process is too onerous.</p> <p>Certain development regulations may be outdated.</p> <p>There are neighborhood concerns about design, primarily about the mass and scale of buildings.</p>	<p><u>Consider</u> code amendments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the master plan process for neighborhood centers, and update neighborhood retail zoning regulations as the alternative process. (update allowed uses and other development standards) Decrease the number of required vehicle parking stalls for neighborhood center businesses. Update the sign code to allow businesses to have more visibility, while also balance this with public concerns about sign clutter. Expand design review to all neighborhood center developments. Consider adoption of standards that provide more certainty, yet maintain flexibility for variety of tenants. Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards. 	<p>The process and regulations around neighborhood centers will be easier to understand, apply for and administer.</p>
<p>In some areas, surrounding population densities are too low to support neighborhood center businesses.</p>	<p>As part of the neighborhood subarea planning process, provide a data profile of planned neighborhood center locations within the subarea. (e.g., current & projected number and income of households within 1/2 mile, nearest park, transit route, other commercial area, etc.)</p> <p>As an option for the subarea planning process, facilitate a visioning, followed by a feasibility analysis to determine whether higher densities or other characteristics are likely needed to support the subarea’s vision for its neighborhood center.</p>	<p>Subarea stakeholders explore options for feasibility, including increased population around centers, or may rethink vision for these locations.</p>
<p>Costs are prohibitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of new mixed-use buildings Rehabilitation of existing, underused sites 	<p>Explore possible partnerships between the City, neighborhoods, business and property owner/developers to reduce costs associated with neighborhood center development or improvement (e.g., assistance with addressing contamination, constructing improvements, and place-making.)</p> <p>Provide info about tax incentives associated with upgrading older buildings. See also #1, #2 and #4</p>	<p>Provide a ‘tool-kit’ of potential partnerships & other incentives to help overcome financial hurdles to developing or operating a center business.</p>
<p>There is not enough land onsite to stage garbage, recycling and compost bins.</p>	<p>Consider allowing shared space among neighborhood businesses for staging garbage, recycling and compost.</p> <p>Continue to explore the City’s options for picking up commercial recycling through the City’s Zero Waste Plan, and consider prioritization of centers.</p>	<p>There is adequate collection & space to manage waste and recycling.</p>
<p>Inadequate pedestrian infrastructure</p>	<p>Prioritize improvement of pedestrian infrastructure and amenities in neighborhood center areas as they develop.</p>	<p>Improve pedestrian safety and walkability.</p>

CURRENT STEPS:

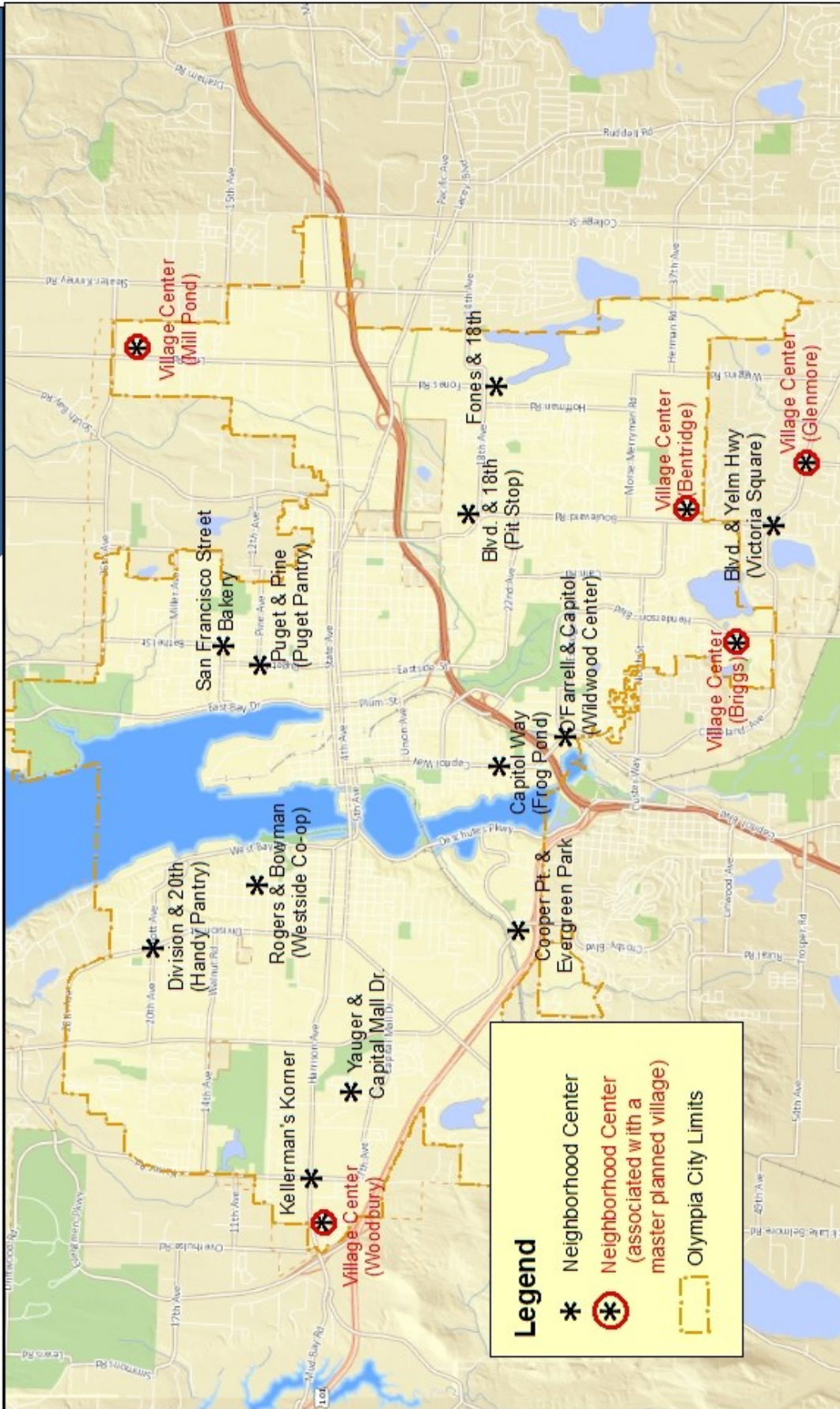
1. Gather input and identify the barriers to neighborhood center development.
2. Hold a Planning Commission public hearing on a proposed scope of actions that will create a clear process and feasible measures for neighborhood centers to develop according to community vision. (The hearing is November 17 – see front cover for more info.)
3. Make a recommendation to the City Council (December 1)



The Frog Pond Grocery on Capitol Way.

Neighborhood Center Areas

From Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map



Victoria Square & Glenmore are currently in the jurisdiction of Thurston County, but are planned to be annexed into the City of Olympia within the 20 year planning period.

1 inch = 5,000 feet

0 0.5 1 Miles
 Map printed 11/9/2014
 For more information, please contact:
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 (360) 570-5847

This map is intended for 8.5x11" landscape printing.

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