

2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendments
Summary of August 16th Planning Commission Deliberations
(Not a verbatim transcript)

The Commission decided to consider action on each of the three parts of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments application separately. This business item begins at approximately 1 hour, 23 minutes, 45 seconds of meeting recording (media).

The media is available on the city calendar: <https://olympia.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. Once there, select 2021 and Planning Commission in the drop down menus, then click on Media (highlighted below in red).

Name	Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Meeting Location	Meeting Details	Agenda	Minutes	Media
Planning Commission	9/20/2021	6:30 PM	Room 207	Meeting details	Not available	Not available	Not available
Planning Commission	8/17/2021	5:30 PM	Online and via phone: Finance Subcommittee Register to attend: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81464909586?pwd=ZW0yUW92WDRUbESzOGHK2gv5mhOUtOQ	Meeting details	Agenda	Not available	Not available
Planning Commission	8/16/2021	6:30 PM	Online or via phone: Register to attend: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85273393519?pwd=TE5lb2dVZ0VBRVlFOZFE9ma0ZYnI0dz0Q	Meeting details	Agenda	Not available	Media

PART A (Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Text Amendments)

begins at approximately 1 hour, 33 minutes, 29 seconds of the meeting recording

MOTION

Commissioner Carlos: Motion to accept the revised amendments in Part A for transportation multimodal concurrency.

Commissioner Cunningham: Second the motion.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Nejati: Requested to see slide with Staff's recommendation for Part A. Commissioner Nejati stated she has no qualms with the recommendations for Part A.

Commissioner Millar: She likes the idea of removing level of service, which is kind of archaic, and focusing on capacity, and for all modes, to include bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. Also likes the idea that instead of addressing congestion this looks at capacity, which increases the opportunity for other modes to create that capacity. She's in favor of this.

Commissioner Quetin: In general he's also positive about these changes. Levels of service is still included in later parts, such as in 9.1. Should we suggest bringing more of that capacity language down farther in the document so that capacity is considered first?

[Note: Transportation Policy 9.1 states: “Require mitigation for new developments so that transportation level of service does not fall below adopted standards, except where policies allow.”]

Commissioner Cunningham: Agree with the comments on capacity and level of service. Some of the most iconic streets, such as at Pike Place Market, or Market Street in San Francisco, would have a level of service of F but are some of the most treasured, culturally relevant streets we have. Sometimes level of service is counter-intuitive.

Commissioner Nejati agreed with what has been said but did voice a concern that the changes Commissioner Quetin mentioned may be tied to traffic impact fees and may need to be part of a larger discussion before changes are made.

Joyce Phillips added that the City adopted new transportation concurrency measures, and related transportation impact fee changes were made, because measures now include all modes of transportation. She stated that the City is required to have a level of service for transportation and we are required to have concurrency standards for transportation. The change that was made was regarding what gets measured in determining level of service. It was based on levels A, B, C, D, E and volume to capacity for vehicles, but is now based on person trips for all modes for a complete system.

Commissioner Quetin indicated that the multimodal concurrency standards described satisfies the issue he had raised.

VOTE

The motion passed unanimously.

PART B (Future Street Connections in the Southeast Part of the City, Area Known as LBA Woods)

begins at approximately 1 hour, 47 minutes of the meeting recording

MOTION

Commissioner Cunningham moved to approve the amendments to remove the Log Cabin Road extension with the caveat that it be reviewed again in ten years.

Commissioner Adams: Second.

Joyce Phillips asked for clarification as to whether or not the motion included the other future street connections in this area that were also included in the application materials.

Commissioners Cunningham and Adams agreed to the clarification that yes, the motion included the removal of the additional streets, as proposed in the application.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Quetin stated he was excited for the opportunity to not have that road in the Comprehensive Plan and acknowledged that it was clear in the public comments that people were passionate about having access to this type of green space.

Commissioner Nejati stated she is excited for this future street to be removed from the plan. She stated that with the City's backlog on maintenance for streets it makes sense to not have new streets in the plan. Commissioner Nejati asked staff what the recommendation would be for those listening this evening to do, to stay involved on this issue, since this amendment does include that the issue will be reassessed in ten years, or to perhaps increase capacity of Morse-Merryman Road or Boulevard Road for buses, bikers, and sidewalks.

Joyce Phillips suggested that people who want to look at related opportunities should consider being involved in things like the work on the transportation chapter of the comprehensive plan during the periodic update; any work related to the transportation master plan (although it was just recently adopted so not likely to be updated right away); any personal efforts they can take to reduce the need for new roads (biking, walking, taking transit, etc.); and participating in regional transportation planning efforts.

Chair Millar stated she is excited about the option of removing the road and increasing the capacity of other modes. It is also consistent with many of the other goals of the comprehensive plan. We have so many roads that are in need of repair. Chair Millar stated her support of this motion.

VOTE

The motion was passed unanimously.

PART C (Equity, Inclusion, Neighborhood Character)

begins at approximately 1 hour, 55 minutes of the meeting recording

Chair Millar summarized the proposed amendments, modifications suggested by staff, and acknowledged that the Council of Neighborhoods Association subcommittee had also requested changes.

MOTION

Commissioner Nejati moved to approve the changes for Part C with the two modifications proposed by staff and incorporating the suggestions by Commissioner Richmond to the Values and Vision chapter.

Commissioner Carlos seconded the motion.

Commissioner Ehlers asked for clarification of **Commissioner Richmond's** suggestions. What is it intended to modify? **Chair Millar** stated it was intended to replace the Acknowledgement language

proposed in the Values and Vision chapter. This is in addition to the Neighborhood Character language discussed.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Richmond spoke to her proposed revisions. She stated the reason she wrote this was because her of her initial reaction to the proposed language. She wanted to change the style and tone of the language and shorten it as well. She wanted it to be brief but to retain the intent of the amendment. Headings were added. She did retain the language about the Tribe but proposed removing language about specific groups that were mentioned as being previously marginalized. Instead, language was based on the categories that are already protected by law. This can be politicized, so trying to work on tone. Not trying to politicize, offend, or debate this issue in the plan. Wants to add back the sentence that states “We envision a future where Olympia has a diverse and inclusive community, a robust and resilient local economy, with a strong multicultural arts and heritage presence for all to enjoy.” Commissioner Richmond stated that she deleted reference to redlining and displacement of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) people and reference to the history of the Chinese population. While these are important facts that people should be aware of, this didn’t seem like the right place for this language. Assertions are necessarily validated in the plan so it either needs more discussion in the body of the plan or it should be removed here.

Chair Millar stated it would be good to have a copy of Commissioner Richmond’s proposed wording shown in track changes, so the Commission could better compare the two versions of text. That should be distributed to the Commissioners before it is discussed further or voted on by the Commission.

Commissioner Richmond offered to provide a version in Track Changes.

Commissioner Carlos thanked **Commissioner Richmond** for the proposal and indicated she would like to review the two proposals side by side. Also, because some of the language is political, she would like to compare the two versions in more detail.

Commissioner Cunningham commented that the language about the Tribe should reflect the Tribe’s wishes. He thanked Commissioner Richmond for her work and indicated that he would like to compare the two versions, side by side as well, because it is a lot to keep track of without being able to do that. We have a lot in our plan that we talk about but without having discussion about the justification or why we are addressing it. So why would equity be held to that standard? It is important for undoing some of the racist policies of the past that we name them and work intentionally to overcome them, so it is for that reason he doesn’t support the bulk of Commissioner Richmond’s changes.

Commissioner Nejati asked about calling out the racially restrictive covenants or past redlining practices and asked for where the information could be found. She couldn’t find any redlining maps for Olympia online. **Chair Millar** mentioned articles she has read in the past about redlining and restrictive covenants – even if there are no maps there is documentation that it occurred.

Commissioner Adams stated that there are certainly some old covenants that have racial language in them, but many have been amended, or the associations are no longer active.

Commissioner Cunningham referred to Emmett O’Connell’s comments that had mentioned redlining practices and included links to reports.

Chair Millar stated that it is getting late and that she would like more time to consider **Commissioner Richmond’s** proposed language, in Track Changes. There is a motion on the table. Do other Commissioners have a problem with delaying the vote until the next meeting on September 20th? Chair Millar asked Commissioners to indicate, by way of raising their hands, if delaying the vote on this (Part C) until the next meeting, is acceptable.

Joyce Phillips informed the Commission that she is fairly certain that Councilmember Madrone shared the proposed language with the Squaxin Island Tribe for their review and consideration before it was submitted. Joyce also stated that the proposed language was reviewed by the City’s Equity and Inclusion staff. She wanted to share this information with Commissioners in case it helped as they continued to consider the proposed language.

Commissioner Cunningham stated that, in regard to the fourth bullet point proposed, he was also going to think about whether including it diminishes the language proposed by Council. The fourth bullet point may add back in some of the ambiguity the language was trying to address, so he wants to think about more.

Commissioner Nejati stated she would like it if Commissioner Cunningham could forward the articles about redlining in Olympia that he referred to since she hasn’t been able to find that. She encouraged Commissioner Cunningham to compare the fourth bullet to the proposed language from the CNA and to consider whether or not the definition, as proposed without the fourth bullet, still makes sense as its used throughout the plan. Commissioner Nejati shared that without the fourth bullet it is more about what Olympia values, and it isn’t really getting down to the neighborhood level. The fourth bullet expands on some of that a little bit (like building mass) without including the socio-economic piece that is often used to prevent development.

Chair Millar stated that the fourth bullet is more factual-driven than value-driven. She noted its relationship to development regulations.

Joyce Phillips encouraged Commissioners to go back to the Character Discussion handout, where places in the Comprehensive Plan that discuss neighborhood character are summarized, and the physical attributes are described and highlighted. It does relate to some of the City’s development regulations, but is also discussed in those other parts of the plan. The fourth bullet pulls those items together and puts them in one place, but the language it is based on still remains in other parts of the plan.

Joyce Phillips offered to provide the existing information to the Commissioners in any format the Commission would like.

Commissioner Quetin asked if there had been any examples of neighborhood character being used to prevent a development.

Joyce indicated she wasn’t aware of any specifically but that she would ask current planners to provide any examples.

Chair Millar clarified that earlier, when she said the fourth bullet was factual-based, what she meant was that it covers measurable attributes, which is really helpful when trying to describe neighborhood character.

Commissioner Richmond suggested that **Commissioner Quetin** may want to Google neighborhood character and project denial, that he would probably get several examples. The examples Commissioner Richmond is aware are from elsewhere, not the City of Olympia.

Chair Millar stated that it sounds like Commissioners have more work to do on this issue and that the Commission can pick up where it is leaving off at its next meeting in September.

Chair Millar delayed further discussion and action on this until the September 20, 2021, meeting.