



# City of Olympia

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8447

## Meeting Agenda

### Land Use & Environment Committee

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Thursday, April 17, 2014

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

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1. ROLL CALL

2. CALL TO ORDER

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A [14-0377](#) Approval of March 27, 2014 Land Use and Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A [14-0363](#) Comprehensive Plan Policies Regarding Scenic Views

Attachments: [OPC CPU Skyline White Paper 11/14/2011](#)  
[Minutes record RE: View Protection Goals and Policies](#)

- 4.B [14-0278](#) Require Alleys for All New Development and Other Considerations

Attachments: [Fact Sheet on Alleys](#)

- 4.C [14-0362](#) Draft Comprehensive Plan Update Regarding Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy

Attachments: [The Surprisingly High Value of Urban Greenspace](#)  
[Planning Commission Draft Goal and Policies with Rationale](#)  
[FSEIS Analysis - Green Space](#)  
[FSEIS Analysis - Urban Forestry](#)  
[Hyperlink - Planning Commission Special Presentation on Urban Greenspace](#)

5. ADJOURNMENT

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# City of Olympia

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## Meeting Minutes - Draft Land Use & Environment Committee

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Thursday, March 27, 2014

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

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### 1. ROLL CALL

**Present:** 3 - Chair Steve Langer, Committee Member Jeannine Roe and Committee Member Julie Hankins

### OTHER PRESENT

Parks, Arts and Recreation Director, Paul Simmons, Community Planning and Development Director Keith Stahley, Deputy Director Leonard Bauer, Downtown Liaison Brian Wilson, City Manager Steve Hall, Police Lieutenant Paul Lower, Planning Commissioners Roger Horn and Judy Bardin

### 2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Langer called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 3.A 14-0297 Approval of January 23, 2014 Land Use and Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were approved.**

- 3.B 14-0205 Approval of February 20, 2014 Land Use & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

**The minutes were approved.**

### 4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 4.A 14-0292 Oral Report: Percival Landing Status

Mr. Simmons gave a presentation on the status of repairs and restoration to Percival Landing which focused on goals, an inspection program, and the annual Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). He answered Councilmember questions about the budget, F Dock condition and cost for replacement, E Dock usage prior to water and power removal, deferred maintenance problems, and strategies for attracting boaters. Mr. Hall outlined the history of efforts to address the problems and why the costs have

risen dramatically since 2005.

**The report was received.**

**4.B 14-0273** Comprehensive Plan Policies Regarding Rezoning Criteria and High Density Neighborhoods Minimum Density Requirements

Mr. Bauer discussed the differences between the Planning Commission (PC) recommendations and the City Manager recommendations. He explained the annual process for rezoning and how criteria can help to define the need and scope for rezones.

Commissioner Horn stated the Commission is comfortable with the City Manager recommendations except for #3 and recommends instead: Compatibility with adjoining zones and transition where appropriate to ensure compatibility. He discussed how sub-area planning will define the criteria.

Commissioner Bardin mentioned the PC has discussed changing rezones to come before the Planning Commission rather than the Hearing Examiner. Council will eventually decide where they are heard.

Mr. Stahley directed the Committee to look at the Comprehensive Plan component.

Chair Langer asked for public comment and there was none.

Mr. Bauer discussed the high-density neighborhoods overlay areas. He described how the height of buildings and whether there is structured parking, or minimal off-street parking, can affect cost, site design, and density.

Commissioner Bardin detailed how the original formation of three density “zones” of high, medium, and low, were intended to create three distinctly different density areas.

Mr. Stahley explained how the impacts of a minimum density requirement can hinder or support certain types of development.

Public Comment:

Adam Frank of Olympia Master Builders spoke about the need to be responsive to the market and the problem with ordinances or policies that are too prescriptive.

Wildwood Neighborhood Association Chair Janae Huber spoke about the problem of sprawl and the production of uniform buildings and the need to preserve green space.

Teresa Goen Bergman spoke about the Forest Cemetery and how several widening projects on Pacific Avenue have displaced human remains. She is very concerned that historic cemeteries are shrinking because of these projects.

Eastside Neighborhood Association Board Member Brian Brannies expressed his concerns for the historic homes and neighborhoods in the overlay areas, although they do not occur on the eastside.

Red Door Owner Lara Anderson offered her perspective as a downtown business owner. She believes it is very important to have high density housing downtown and supports development.

Mary Wilkinson spoke of needing to keep density numbers high to achieve maximum housing resources.

Walt Jorgenson spoke about defining a balance desired by citizens, the need for finishing the CP, and better maps that clearly delineate the areas. He said density should be initially focused downtown.

The Committee discussed historic preservation, reuse and redevelopment of downtown buildings, considering intensity of use rather than number of people, optimal use of sites, focusing exclusively on downtown.

**Consensus was reached for recommendations to Council for inclusion in its public hearing draft:**

Rezoning Criteria - agreement with the criteria in the City Manager's recommendation on Attachment 2 of the packet with one change: the third of the four items will be changed to read "Compatibility with adjoining zoning districts and transitioning where appropriate to ensure compatibility."

High-density Neighborhood Minimum Density - retain a minimum density of 25 dwelling units per acre for residential developments, with the following exceptions: reuse or redevelopment of existing structures, and developments with mixed residential and commercial uses within a single structure, for which a minimum floor area ratio for commercial should be used in combination with a minimum residential density.

**The recommendation was referred.**

**4.C 14-0293 Oral Report: Downtown Project 3 - First Quarter Update**

Mr. Wilson gave an update on Downtown Project 3, a multi-pronged approach toward

accomplishing the City Council goal of creating a safe and welcome environment for all users of downtown Olympia. He outlined several projects highlighting infrastructure and safety improvements.

**The report was received.**

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

# City of Olympia

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360-753-8447

## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Comprehensive Plan Policies Regarding Scenic Views

**Agenda Date:** 4/17/2014

**Agenda Number:** 4.A

**File Number:** 14-0363

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**File Type:** recommendation

**Version:** 1

**Status:** In Committee

#### **..Title**

Comprehensive Plan Policies Regarding Scenic Views

#### **..Recommended Action**

##### **City Manager Recommendation:**

Recommend to City Council that the following replacement for Land Use and Urban Design policies 8.1 and 8.2 of the December 2013 Final Draft Comprehensive Plan be included in a Public Hearing Draft of the proposed Comprehensive Plan update:

*PL 8.1 Through a public process using appropriate methods, for example visual simulations, identify important landmark views and observation points and appropriate means of preserving and enhancing valued aspects of these public views.*

The Planning Commission's recommended policies 8.1 and 8.2 in the December 2013 Draft Comprehensive Plan currently read:

*PL8.1 Implement public processes, including the use of Olympia's digital simulation software, to identify important landmark views and observation points.*

*PL8.2 Use Olympia's digital simulation software to identify view planes and sightline heights between the landmark view and observation point.*

#### **..Report**

##### **Issue:**

Should Olympia's revised scenic view policies specifically call for use of "Olympia's digital visual simulation software" and other specific techniques?

##### **Staff Contact:**

Todd Stamm, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development,  
360.753.8597

##### **Presenter(s):**

Todd Stamm, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development

##### **Background and Analysis:**

At its February 25, 2014, meeting, the City Council referred five issues in the Draft Olympia Comprehensive Plan to the Land Use and Environment Committee for a recommendation. Among these were two scenic view protection goals and policies as recommended by the Planning Commission.

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.A**

**File Number: 14-0363**

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### Current Comprehensive Plan

Olympia's current Comprehensive Plan includes a policy to "Protect, to the greatest extent practical, scenic views of the Capitol Dome, Budd Inlet, Mount Rainier, the Black Hills, Capitol Lake, and the Olympic Mountains from designated viewpoints and corridors." (Comprehensive Plan Land Use policy 2.2.) One result of this policy is design requirement 18.110.060(A) of the Olympia Municipal Code, which requires, "In order to protect the existing outstanding scenic views which significant numbers of the general public have from public rights-of-way, applicants for development must consider the impact their proposal will have on views of Mt. Rainier, the Olympic Mountains, Budd Inlet, the Black Hills, the Capitol Building, and Capitol Lake or its surrounding hillsides. All development must reserve a reasonable portion of such territorial and immediate views of these features for significant numbers of people from public rights-of-way, and shall provide lookouts, viewpoints, or view corridors so that visual access to existing outstanding scenic vistas is maintained."

A referenced 'scenic vista' map is used to implement this requirement. That map identifies certain views from certain street rights-of-way - but no lookouts or viewpoints - for protection. In addition, some waterward views from East and West Bay Drives are protected by height limits of the zoning code. The current Plan also provides that, "The zoning ordinance will establish height limits which protect views of the Capitol Dome." (Excerpted from Capitol Campus and Commercial - High Density land use description at page 76 of the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter.) This provision is implemented by the "State capitol height district" which limits building heights in much of downtown Olympia. (See OMC 18.10.060.)

### Draft Comprehensive Plan Update

The proposed update of the Comprehensive Plan addresses scenic views in a variety of places including Goal GL8 and its policies:

*Land Use and Urban Design Goal 8. Community views are protected, preserved, and enhanced.*

*PL8.1 Implement public processes, including the use of Olympia's digital simulation software, to identify important landmark views and observation points.*

*PL8.2 Use Olympia's digital simulation software to identify view planes and sightline heights between the landmark view and observation point.*

*PL8.3 Prevent blockage of landmark views by limiting the heights of buildings or structures on the west and east Olympia ridge lines.*

*PL8.4 Height bonuses and incentives shall not interfere with landmark views.*

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.A**

**File Number: 14-0363**

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*PL8.5 Set absolute maximum building heights to preserve views of landmarks from observation points, such as those identified in the following matrix, as determined through public process:*

*Landmark Views (generally inclusive of the State Capitol Campus, surrounding mountain ranges, waterways, and hills):*

- *Olympia Mountains*
- *Puget Sound*
- *Mt. Rainier*
- *State Capitol Campus Promontory*
- *Olympia valley's forested hills and slopes*
- *Capitol Lake/Estuary*
- *Black Hills*

*Observation Points may be static or dynamic points-of-view from Puget Sound, State Capitol Campus, public parks, public rights-of-ways, the Olympia Waterfront Route (see 2010 Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan), downtown Olympia, or the surrounding community):*

- *Puget Sound Marine Navigation Channel*
- *Capitol Campus Promontory*
- *Parks: West Bay Park, Priest Point Park, North Point Park, Sunrise Park, Madison Scenic Park, and Percival Landing*
- *Streets: State Avenue, 4th Avenue, Harrison Avenue, Deschutes Parkway, West Bay Drive, East Bay Drive, the 4th Avenue Bridge, Olympia Avenue, Boulevard Road, Pacific Avenue, Martin Avenue, Brawne Street, Foote Street, and Capital Way*
- *The waterfront walkway and bikeway referred to as the "Big W"*
- *Hands-on Children's Museum*
- *Olympia City Hall*
- *Olympia Lee Creighton Justice Center*

Proposed Land Use and Urban Design Goal 8 and its policies shift the focus of current Land Use and Urban Design policy 2.2 from views from street rights-of-way to views from public viewpoints. See the attached 'minutes summary' for examples of other Plan policies that address scenic views. The downtown skyline and view protection in general were also addressed in the attached 'white paper' presented to the Planning Commission early in the Plan update process. Section 24 of the Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement specifically addresses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed view protection amendments. However, the analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement was on the examples included in the 2012 draft, and



**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.A**

**File Number: 14-0363**

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did not examine the list above.

### Methods for Evaluating and Protecting Views

In 2013, Mithun, Incorporated, used ESRI's CityEngine and architectural visualization software known as "Lumion" to analyze view protection scenarios in and around downtown. They also developed architectural visualizations of development alternatives for property along West Bay Drive and a CityEngine base map of downtown.

Substantial GIS and graphics expertise are required to utilize these tools and are City Staff does not presently have this capacity. Over the past two years, Olympia's IT and CPD staff have been focused on updating the enterprise software system for the department. The conversion to the new software known as ONESolution has been a resource intensive process that has left little capacity to grow the staff's architectural visualization capacity. The completion of the ONESolution update will facilitate a more robust GIS interface and staff has been expanding its GIS capacity to take advantage of this new resource through a structured incremental training process. Architectural visualization is a rapidly evolving segment of the digital world with simpler and more user friendly tools such Sketchup that may prove to be a better fit for the City's needs. Architectural visualization will continue to be an important part of the decision making process and one that staff will continue to develop as time and resources allow.

There are numerous alternative means of conducting a public assessment or evaluation of scenic views. Some utilize computer-based visualization tools, while others do not. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages.

Although it is likely that some computer-based visualization tools would be used to conduct the 'public process' directed by proposed policy 8.1, it is staff's opinion that committing in the comprehensive plan to using one particular tool would reduce the City's flexibility to use the appropriate set of tools when conducting this process. The City Manager recommendation is proposed to provide for flexibility in choosing appropriate visual assessment tools.

### **Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

The Comprehensive Plan, including scenic view protection, is of great interest to the community.

### **Options:**

1. Recommend that the Planning Commission's recommendation be retained in the public hearing draft Comprehensive Plan.
2. Recommend that the City Manager's recommendation be included in the public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Draft a different recommendation to be included in the public hearing draft of

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**  
**Agenda Number: 4.A**  
**File Number: 14-0363**

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the Comprehensive Plan.

**Financial Impact:**  
NA



**Todd Stamm**  
**Planning Manager**  
**November 14, 2011**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

## **Downtown Skyline and View Protection**

### **Introduction**

The scale of buildings and development in downtown Olympia and the relationship to views valued by the public have been topics of community interest since Olympia's prominent bluff-top location was proposed for the state's capital building. Although view protection and skyline form are planning issues common to all growing metropolitan areas, in Olympia they are heightened by Olympia's spectacular views of mountains and nearby water bodies and our role as the capital city of Washington and particularly the location of the capitol campus and the Capitol grouping of buildings.

### **Policy Questions**

- Should Olympia continue to emphasize protection of public views, as opposed to private property views?
- Should different views be protected than those identified in the current Comprehensive Plan?
- Should Olympia revise its plan and programs with respect to the permitted scale of buildings and other structures in the downtown area?

### **Origin of Question**

Multiple sources, but primarily downtown focus meetings.

## Regulatory Framework

The rules for implementing Washington’s Growth Management Act describe “view corridors” as one of pieces of information that “may be useful to inform future land use decisions.” The related Shoreline Management Act requires that local Shoreline Master Programs address public access including visual access to major water bodies. The Shoreline Act also requires that Olympia prohibit structures over 35 feet that would obstruct the view of substantial number of residences on areas adjoining shorelines except where “overriding considerations of the public interest would be served.” (Note, this is the only view protection provision in Olympia that directly protects private views.)

Although not a regulation, the State’s 2006 “Master Plan for the Capitol of the State of Washington,” references the State’s interest in view protection. In particular it includes a statement that, “view corridors (from outside looking in) should be protected. Likewise, there are views (from inside looking out) of the Olympic Mountains to the north, Capitol Lake to the west, and Mount Rainier to the east, all of which should be preserved.” (See attached ‘organizing elements’ map.)

## Existing Conditions

Land Use Policy 2.2 of the Comprehensive Plan reads, “Protect, to the greatest extent practical, scenic views of the Capitol Dome, Budd Inlet, Mount Rainier, the Black Hills, Capitol Lake, and the Olympic Mountains from designated viewing points and corridors.” Land Use Policy 2.10 adds, “Retain view corridors of Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake by: [a]voiding vacation of platted street rights-of-way which abut the water. This would include that portion adjacent to the water and the next block upland; [a]nd siting waterfront buildings on public lands in a way that avoids blocking view corridors on adjacent streets pointed toward the water.” Olympia’s Urban Waterfront Plan adds a policy that, “Key views, as mapped in Figure 9 [attached], should be protected when considering over-the-water development.” (Application of this last policy through SEPA authority has resulted in ‘considering’ including impacts of proposed upland development on views from existing over-the-water structures.)

These policies, and that of the Shoreline Management Act, are implemented by a variety of regulations. Among these are:

- A design requirement that impacts to significant views of Mt. Rainier, the Olympic Mountains, Budd Inlet, the Black Hills, the Capitol Building, and Capitol Lake and its surrounding hillsides where significant numbers of the general public from public rights-of-way must be considered by development applicants. Developments must reserve a “reasonable portion” of such views and provide viewpoints to maintain existing views. This requirement does not apply to small projects not subject to design review. (A copy of the ‘existing views’ map will be available at the meeting.)
- Shoreline Master Program requirements of a shoreline “variance” for any residential structures exceeding 35 feet and capping building heights on certain blocks east of Columbia Street at 70 feet. (Note that in general shoreline regulations only apply to projects within 200 feet of major water bodies.)
- Urban waterfront regulations generally limiting overwater structures to a height of 20 feet and requiring that key views of Budd Inlet, the Capitol, and the Olympic Mountains be protected and, if possible, requiring that view access be enhanced.
- Specific view protection zoning overlays include:
  - The State Capitol Group height district limiting building heights between the ‘Union Pacific’ (Seventh Avenue) railroad and the capitol campus.
  - The Sylvester Park height district limiting building heights on the half block immediately south of the Park.
  - Certain downhill properties east of West Bay Drive where buildings may not exceed five feet above the street centerline.
  - Certain properties west of East Bay Drive where view obstruction must be minimized while allowing “reasonable use.”
- And, West Bay Drive area zoning that includes bonus provisions for projects that make provisions for public views.

Note that unlike zoning height limits that allow portions of structures to extend above the height limit, Olympia’s view protection regulations generally are strict limits with only a ‘does not obstruct view’ exception.

## Best Practices

There are no known “best practices” for skylines and view protection that can readily be applied to all communities. Instead, the appropriate views to be preserved and building skyline form for each municipality are particular to the interests and circumstances of that community. However, successful policy decisions regarding views and skylines, i.e., those to which a community subscribes over a long period of time, do have a few elements in common. They usually balance the public interest with private property rights, they have broad public support, they address views valued by many members of the public, and they include a combination of regulatory and perpetual property right approaches.

## Options & Analysis

OPTIONS	OPTION 1: NO CHANGE - CONTINUE CURRENT POLICIES.	OPTION 2: EMPHASIZE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF VIEWS FROM KEY POINTS.	OPTION 3: INITIATE EXTENSIVE PUBLIC PROCESS REGARDING SKYLINE FORM AND VIEW PRESERVATION.
Budget Impact	Low	Medium	High
Focus	Maintaining <i>status quo</i> .	Shift from street view protection to views from public spaces.	Public process examining multiple aspects of building size and placement.
Examples	Olympia’s 1994 Plan - views not an issue.	Capitol Height district; e.g., create version for Madison Scenic Park.	Vancouver, British Columbia, mid-90s analysis; and “Shape Vancouver”
Timeline	Not applicable.	Begin now and complete in 2012.	Begin in 2013 or 2014 and complete by 2016.
Considerations	Difficult to apply equitably and fairly by regulation.	Would require selection of key public viewpoints.	Subject of broad and intense public interest.

## Preferred Option

Option 2. In staff's opinion, resources for an extensive view and skyline analysis probably will not be available in the next few years. The ongoing Comprehensive Plan update would provide a timely forum for a more limited shift from protecting views from streets, which seem to have been an auto-oriented policy dating from the 1980s, to an emphasis on a few selected public views.

## Resources

- See Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 18.10 for zoning height overlay regulations.
- Official scenic view map of Olympia - to be presented at meeting.
- Three-dimensional illustration of permitted building heights in downtown Olympia - a 'work in progress' to be presented at meeting if available.
- Figure 9 of Urban Waterfront Plan (attached)
- Map M-9, "Organizing Elements," of Master Plan for the Capitol (attached)
- "Shape Vancouver" website (<http://www.shapevancouver.com>) - example of public participation tool.

## **Summary of Minutes Record Regarding View Protection Goals and Policies (PL8.1 & 8.2)**

### **Council Direction from February 25, 2014:**

Referred to Land Use and Environment Committee

### **OPC Lead for 2014:**

To be determined.

### **Background:**

The Commission passed this recommendation on March 4, 2013.

The OPC sponsor was Commissioner Bardin.

From the written sponsor proposal:

“OPC Sponsor: Commissioner Bardin

1. Describe the scope of the topic. (Don't just state, “housing.” What are the goal or policy issue(s) regarding housing to be discussed?)

In reviewing public comments on views and heights, I came across an email from Jeffrey Jaksich that very effectively addresses the scope of this topic. I have included a number of excerpts from his email, not his entire email.

“Scenic views were always an intrinsic part of this area, the quality of life, how locals live and enjoy the Olympia area, especially the views up Puget Sound to and from Olympia to the Black Hills from east to west, from west to east to Mt. Rainier, from Olympia, especially from the State Capital Campus up Puget Sound to the Olympic Mountains. The tree-lined hill tops and ridges planned by generations of Olympia Planning Commissions and elected officials surrounds south Budd Inlet with fabulous panoramic views. These views and view sheds have become part of Olympia and South Sound formalized in values, vision, goals, and supporting policies. These are largely reflected in numerous Olympia Comp Plans going back from many decades. A good example of these values and vision are reflected Wilder and White graphic visions and conceptual designs. The strategic vision in Wilder and White Washington State Capital Campus of 1911 Capital Campus design reflects a long held value to not only appreciate the local beauty, but to protect and preserve such views such as Olympia Capital Dome Sight Plain in Olympia Zoning Ordinances, etc.”

“The point is to recognize the importance of views to Olympia and the residents of this area of Olympia for hundreds of years and far into our future. We recently recognized in the Olympia Planning Commission in the 1980s and 1990s that views and panoramic views were important to our local Olympia quality of life. We wanted and still want a walkable community with beautiful views that can be enjoyed around the City. This is especially true along the saltwater and other shorelines. This value was formalized in the Wilder and Whites vision and designs in 1911 for the Capital Campus. Olympia was and still is a special place in the mind of most current residents largely because of its special views, like those over the Isthmus”.



“People” ” have often remarked and continue to make the point about the special view of coming into Olympia from the waters of Puget Sound. This is especially true looking up to the Capital Dome as you come into Olympia by boat from the water.”

2. Why does this issue demand attention? (i.e., why the treatment in the July draft is, to the sponsor, inadequate.)

The language in the Plan is not specific enough to protect scenic views/vistas/view sheds.

A high profile public process needs to be set-up to make sure all important views are identified and maintained.

3. Is this topic addressed in the July Draft? If so, where? (staff can help)

Substantive Change Policies:

PL6.9: Preserve and enhance water vistas by retaining public rights-of-way that abut or are within one block of water bodies and by not siting public buildings within associated view corridors.

PU6.10: Identify and designate significant public- viewpoints and – with consideration of trees and other enhancing landscaping—protect, preserve and enhance particular views of the Capitol Campus, Budd Inlet, Downtown skyline, Mount Rainier, the Black Hills, Capitol Lake and surrounding treed slopes, and the Olympic Mountains, such as:

- Capitol Group views of the Olympic Mountains
- West Bay Park views of Capitol Group
- Existing West Bay Park views of Olympic Mountains
- Olympic Way sidewalk and Fourth Avenue bridge viewpoint views of the Capitol Group
- Existing Fourth Avenue bridge views of the Olympic Mountains
- Upper Sunrise Park views of Mount Rainier
- Pacific Avenue sidewalk views of Mount Rainier from Boulevard Road to Steele Street
- Priest Point Park views of Capitol Group and Olympic Mountains
- East Bay Waterfront Park views of Olympic Mountains
- Existing Brawne and Foote intersection view of Budd Inlet
- Upper Madison Scenic Park views of Capitol Campus and downtown
- Capitol Boulevard west sidewalk views of Capitol Lake
- Percival Landing views of Capitol Group and Olympic Mountains

[Other] policy language in the July Draft:

PR3.3: Preserve and enhance scenic views and significant historic sites within Olympia’s park system.

PU 3.3: Protect historic vistas from the Capitol Campus to Budd Inlet and the Olympic Mountains and from Budd Inlet to the Capitol Group.

PU 10.2: Establish maximum building heights that are proportional to streets, retain scenic views and are compatible with adjoining development.

PU 12.5: In the West Bay Drive area provide for a mix of recreation and urban uses that enhance wildlife habitat and cultural resources; limit industrial uses to existing sites; minimize blockage of upland views of Budd Inlet; and connect the area to the south with an urban trail.

PU 14.1: Adopt a Downtown Master Plan addressing – at minimum – housing, public spaces, parking management, rehabilitation and redevelopment, architecture and cultural resources, building skyline and views, and relationships to the Port peninsula and Capitol Campus.

PU 15.5: Designate ‘pedestrian streets’ where most of the frontage will have ‘people-oriented’ activities and street-level buildings will have a high proportion of glass. Prohibit parking lots along these streets, except when preserving scenic views and instead provide for surface parking along other streets.

PU 15.8: Limit building heights to accentuate, and retain selected public views of the Capitol dome.

4. Provide the specific goal or policy language that you propose (or a motion if goal/policy language is not applicable.)

Heights and View Protection:

Goal 7: Establish building height limits to protect, preserve, and enhance treasured public and private views in the capital city of Washington state.

Policies:

PL7.1: Implement public processes to identify important landmark views and observation points. Involve 2013 digital simulation software to verify protection of landmark views.

PL7.2: Utilizes 2013 digital simulation software to identify and maximize view planes and sightline heights which provide the maximum development capacity for downtown between the landmark view and observation point.

PL7.3: Establish the maximum height for state office buildings north of the Legislative Buildings which are below the base of the World War I Memorial.

PL7.4: Provide public landmark views from all west Capitol Campus’s War and Law Enforcement Memorials to Puget Sound and Olympic Mountains.

PL7.5: Prevent buildings or structures 35 feet or more in height above the average grade level above the west and east Olympia valley ridge lines in all directions distracting attention from landmark views.

PL7.6: Delete all height bonuses and incentives in state capital city policies, and all development codes, and require that “height means height”. Delete maximum allowable heights from discretion of City staff or private individuals.

P L7.7: Delete “Visual Impact Assessment” analysis and requirements from all development permits.

PL7.8: Prevent interference from night light sources, utility poles, and light standards, radio communication towers, and street signage (public and private) that obstruct or distraction from landmark views.

PL7.9: Develop matrix between scenic Landmark Views and Observation Points.

Landmark Views: (Landmark views involve state Capitol Campus, mountains, waterways, and hills.)

- Olympic Mountains
- Puget Sound
- Mt. Rainier
- State Capitol Campus Promontory
- Olympia Valley's Treed Hill Slopes
- Capitol Lake Estuary
- Black Hills
- Observation Points: (Observations points are either static or dynamic from: Puget Sound, state Capitol Campus, public parks, public right of ways, "W", downtown Olympia, and the surrounding community.)
- Puget Sound's Navigational Channel
- Parks: West Bay Park, Priest Point Park, North Point, Sunrise Park, and Madison Scenic Park, and Percival Landing.
- Streets: State, 4th Avenue, Harrison, Deschutes, West Bay, East Bay Drive, 4th Avenue Bridge, Olympic Avenue, Boulevard Road, Pacific Avenue, Martin Ave, Brawne, Foote, Capitol Way, (portions)
- Washington "W" walkway and bikeway system (portions)
- Downtown: Hands-on Museum, and old/new City Hall

Height and view protection shall provide greater opportunities for the general public to enjoy the scenic qualities of the capital city of Washington state. Protection and enhancement of public and private views of Olympia are important objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

**From the OPC March 4, 2013 Minutes:**

"Vice Chair Bardin discussed her suggested changes to goals and policies related to heights and views contained within proposed Land Use Goal 7 and proposed Policies 7.1 -PL7.8. There was discussion about creating a matrix to reflect important heights and views and having a public process to determine the protected views. Commissioners decided to vote on the proposals by consensus unless a vote was requested.

There was discussion about whether the City can and should protect private property views, as Vice Chair Bardin and Commissioner Ingman are recommending. It was noted the Shoreline Management Act already requires protection of residential shoreline views. It was clarified that the proposal is for goals and policies related to heights and views to remain in the July draft, and the proposed policies are intended to be in addition to the existing goals and policies, with these exceptions: 1) The new PL7.8 would replace the existing PL6.10, and 2) move PL3.3 to be a new policy PL7.3.

1. Discussion of Goal 7 (see page 6). Commissioners discussed the goal and chose to rephrase it as: "Community views are protected, preserved and enhanced."
2. Discussion of PL7.1 (see page 6). Commissioners discussed the policy and chose to make the following changes: change "2013" to "Olympia's." "After processes," add "including the use of Olympia's digital simulation software."
3. Discussion of PL7.2 (see page 6). Commissioners discussed the policy and chose to make the following changes: Change "2013" to "Olympia's." Remove "maximize" and "which provide the maximum development capacity for downtown."

There was discussion of the possible need to define terms such as "sight line heights" and "view planes." Commissioners didn't feel this was necessary.

4. Discussion of proposed policy PL7.3, regarding establishing the maximum height for State office buildings north of the Legislative Buildings which are below the base of the World War I Memorial. Commissioners discussed the policy and chose to make the following changes: Change "Capital" to "Capitol." There was a lengthy discussion about what views are currently visible from which memorials and how the policy would affect future building on State property. During the discussion of the proposed language Commissioner Tousley registered a "no" vote. Commissioner Ingman moved to adopt "Establish the maximum height for new State office buildings to provide public panoramic landmark views to Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains from all west Capitol Campus War and Law Enforcement Memorials." Vice Chair Bardin seconded it. No discussion was held. Vice Chair Bardin and Commissioner Ingman voted in favor, Commissioners Kizza and Reddick abstained, Commissioner Leveen, Chair Parker, Commissioners Richards and Tousley voted no and the motion failed.
5. Discussion of PL7.4 (see page 6). There was a lengthy discussion about which views and viewpoints were included. Commissioner Tousley registered a "no" vote on this proposal. Commissioner Kizza moved to adopt, "Prevent blockage of landmark views by limiting the heights of buildings and structures on the west and east Olympia ridge lines." Vice Chair Bardin seconded it, and there was discussion of the motion. Commissioner Richards, Vice Chair Bardin, Commissioners Horn, Reddick, Ingman and Kizza voted in support, Commissioners Leveen and Tousley voted no. The motion carried.
6. Discussion of PL7.5 (see page 6). Commissioners discussed the policy and possible changes to the wording. The final version is: "Height bonuses and incentives shall not interfere with landmark views." The language was approved by consensus.
7. Discussion of PL7.6: Commissioners discussed proposed policy PL7.6, regarding deleting all height bonus and incentives in state capital City policies, and all development codes, and requiring that "height means height." The proposal would also delete maximum allowable heights from discretion of City staff or private individuals. Chair Parker made a motion that the proposed PL 7.6 be rejected, Commissioner Horn seconded it and there was a discussion of the proper procedure for making the motion. It was decided that the motion should be in the affirmative so Chair Parker moved that the Commission adopt PL7.6; Commissioner Ingman seconded it; there was another discussion about the procedure of making the motion and whether the policy is too proscriptive. Commissioner Ingman, Vice Chair Bardin and

Commissioner Kiswa voted in favor, and Commissioner Leveen, Chair Parker, Commissioners Horn, Reddick and Tousley voted no. The motion failed and PL7.6 will not be included.

As 9:30 p.m. approached, Commissioners decided to extend the meeting in order to finish items on the agenda.

8. Discussion of proposed policy PL7.7 regarding deleting "Visual Impact Assessment" analysis and requirements from all development permits. Commissioners discussed how this policy relates to utilities and dark skies language, as well as how the policy may be re-worded. Commissioner Horn moved to eliminate PL7.7 and Commissioner Leveen seconded it; there was no discussion. Commissioners Leveen, Richards, Chair Parker, Commissioners Tousley, Horn and Reddick voted in favor of the motion. The motion carried.
9. Discussion of PL7.8 (see page 6). Commissioners discussed the policy and chose to make the following changes to the "matrix": "Capital" needs to be changed to "Capitol;" a colon is needed after "observation points;" there should be an apostrophe in "Valley's;" and "valley" shouldn't be capitalized; "Capital Lake" should be changed to "Capitol Lake/Estuary;" add (portions) to the end "streets" and "W" should be changed to "the Olympia Waterfront Route 22 Map in the Parks Plan." The final proposed policy language is: "Set absolute maximum building heights to preserve views of landmarks from observation points such as those identified in the following matrix, as determined through public process." Commissioners agreed to the language on consensus.

The following is the language that is being recommended:

Goal 7:

Community views are protected, preserved and enhanced.

**Policies:**

PL7.1: Implement public processes, including the use of Olympia's digital simulation software, to identify important landmark views and observation points.

PL7.2: Utilize Olympia's digital simulation software to identify view planes\* and sightline heights\* between the landmark view and observation point. [\*find a way to define words early on so public can understand.]

PL7.4: Prevent blockage of landmark views by limiting the heights of buildings or structures on the west and east Olympia ridge lines.

PL7.5: Height bonuses and incentives shall not interfere with landmark views.

PL7.8: Set absolute maximum building heights to preserve views of landmarks from observation points, such as those identified in the following matrix, as determined through public process:

Landmark Views: (Landmark views involve State Capitol Campus, mountains, waterways, and hills.)

- Olympic Mountains
- Puget Sound
- Mt. Rainier
- State Capitol Campus Promontory
- Olympia valleys' treed hill slopes
- Capitol Lake/ Estuary
- Black Hills

Observation Points: (Observations points are either static or dynamic from: Puget Sound, State Capitol Campus, public parks, public rights-of-way, the Olympia Waterfront Route, Map 2.2 in Parks Plan, downtown Olympia, and the surrounding community.)

- Puget Sound's Navigational Channel
- State Capitol Campus Promontory
- Parks: West Bay Park, Priest Point Park, North Point, Sunrise Park, Madison Scenic Park, and Percival Landing
- Streets: State, 4th Avenue, Harrison, Deschutes, West Bay, East Bay Drive, 4th Avenue Bridge, Boulevard Road, Pacific Avenue, Martin Way, Brawne, Foote, Capitol Way (portions)
- Washington "W" walkway and bikeway system (portions)
- Downtown: Hands On Children's Museum and old/new City Hall

The Commission voted not to include policies proposed in the packet: PL7.3, PL7.6 and PL7.7

# City of Olympia

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E.  
Olympia, WA 98501  
360-753-8447

## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Require Alleys for All New Development and Other Considerations

**Agenda Date:** 4/17/2014

**Agenda Number:** 4.B

**File Number:** 14-0278

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**File Type:** recommendation

**Version:** 1

**Status:** In Committee

**..Title**

Require Alleys for All New Development and Other Considerations

**..Recommended Action**

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Recommend policy language that encourages alleys in new development to the City Council. This language would be included in the Public Hearing Draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

**..Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to forward the City Managers recommended policies related to alleys to City Council for the Public Hearing Draft of the Comprehensive Plan. This issue was referred the LUEC on February 25 for their recommendation.

**Staff Contact:**

Sophie Stimson, Senior Planner, Public Works Transportation, 360.753.8497

**Presenter(s):**

Sophie Stimson, Senior Planner, Public Works Transportation, 360.753.8497

The Olympia Planning Commission has been notified of the meeting.

**Background and Analysis:**

Current Comprehensive Plan Policy on Alleys states that alleys are encouraged in residential and commercial development. They contribute to greater access and mobility in our transportation system. They also contribute to improved urban form by minimizing the need for driveways in front of a lot.

The Olympia Planning Commission recommends Comprehensive Plan policy language that requires alleys in new development.

More alleys will be difficult for the City to maintain because funding is not in place to maintain the alleys we currently have. Additional alleys will result in more impervious surfaces, increasing stormwater runoff that must be managed (treated, conveyed and detained).

For these reasons, staff recommends Comprehensive Plan Policy language that encourages alleys but does not require them. Policy Language is needed for the Council Public Hearing Draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.B**

**File Number: 14-0278**

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**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Public testimony gathered during the Imagine Olympia process did not address whether alleys should be required or encouraged. Several comments suggested alleys in the downtown because they can be used for placemaking, attractive bicycle and pedestrian paths with lighting, art, and landscaping.

**Options:**

Option 1. Recommend policy language to the City Council that encourages alleys in new development. This language would be included in the Public Hearing Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, as follows:

- *Encourage alleys and retain alleys as public right-of-way.(Policy PT 3.4)*
- *Encourage alleys behind lots fronting on arterials and collectors, so that houses or businesses can face the street, sidewalks are continuous, and vehicles can access properties from behind. (Policy PT 3.5)*

Option 2. Forward the Planning Commission recommendation to require alleys in new development to the City Council. This language would be included in the Public Hearing draft of the Comprehensive Plan, as follows:

- *Require alleys and retain alleys as public right-of-way. (Policy PT 3.4)*
- *Require alleys behind lots fronting on arterials and collectors, so that houses or businesses can face the street, sidewalks are continuous, and vehicles can access properties from behind. (Policy PT3.5)*

**Financial Impact:**

There is currently no budget for regular alley maintenance. Maintenance work is done on an as-requested basis.



## Fact Sheet on Alleys

### What is the definition of an alley?

The definition of an alley in the code is:

*A public or private way at the rear or side of property permanently reserved as a means of vehicular or pedestrian access to a property. Functionally, an alley is the minimum or lowest classification of a street.*

### What does the current Comprehensive Plan say about alleys?

*T 3.22 Alleys should be encouraged in new developments except where the site configuration or features (e.g., wetlands or steep terrain) impede their use, or where the additional impervious surface would cause stormwater problems. Alleys will:*

- a. Allow alternate access to lots for service functions;*
- b. Allow more options for locating the garage on a lot; and*
- c. Allow for fewer curb cuts, more continuous sidewalks for pedestrians and more curbside parking along streets.*

### Are alleys built in residential and commercial areas?

Yes, the Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS) states that alleys can be built in commercial and residential areas:

*Alleys may be permitted at the rear of single family residential, multifamily residential, commercial, or industrial property. Dead-end alleys are prohibited. (EDDS 2.040 Requirements B. Streets and Alleys, 11)*

### What surface are alleys required to be?

Alleys must be paved with asphalt in commercial areas. In residential areas, the requirement is for concrete in the wheel path and grass for the remainder of the alley. (See EDDS sections 4B.160 for Surfacing Requirements, and drawings 4-6A, 4-2J, and 4-4A)

### Can alleys be made of pervious materials?

This is not currently addressed in the EDDS. The reason for grass in residential alleys is to reduce impervious surfaces.

### Can alleys be used to treat stormwater?

Current stormwater regulations do not permit stormwater management within the right-of-way. In a subdivision, stormwater has to be managed on a separate tract maintained by the home owners' association.

A large portion of downtown is tributary to the LOTT wastewater treatment plant where it receives exceptional water quality treatment. At this time there is no need to detain and treat

stormwater for a majority of the downtown. In addition, infiltration is poor in the downtown so permeable pavements are infeasible.

### **Are alleys public or private?**

Alleys are typically public. Alleys can be private under certain circumstances:

*Alleys not required for fire suppression access, solid waste collection, or other public purposes may be privately owned. Unless City Council approves an exemption, private alleys will conform to all improvement standards for public alleys, will be posted, and will meet all other provisions applicable to private streets. (EDDS 2.040 Requirements B. Streets and Alleys, 11)*

Briggs Village and Woodbury Crossing are examples of where public alleys have recently been constructed. The Village at Mill Pond is an example of where private alleys are proposed to be constructed to City standards within private tracts. Stormwater management for the alley and adjacent roofs is being provided in infiltration trenches below the alleys. Maintenance of pavement and stormwater facilities in this case is all private.

### **Who maintains alleys?**

The Public Works Department maintains public alleys on an as-requested basis. In the past, a budget for regular alley maintenance was in place, but this was cut out of the operating budget in the late 1990s.

In 2013, 53 requests for alley maintenance were made. Maintenance activities typically include grading, pothole patching, vegetation control for waste collection trucks, and building berms to control stormwater runoff.

### **What are some examples of alleys in new development?**

Woodbury Crossing and Bay Hill are examples of subdivisions that built alleys. Whitmore Glen, Merryman Place and Whisper Ridge are subdivisions that did not build alleys. Briggs Village is an urban village that built alleys.

Along the Urban Corridors of 4<sup>th</sup> and State Avenues between Plum Street and Turner Street, alleys are generally retained with redevelopment. Examples include the dental office at 4<sup>th</sup> and Eastside, and the Salvation Army building on 4<sup>th</sup> and Central.

In the downtown, the new building and parking garage built by the Washington State Employees Credit Union is an example of new development that retained alleys. The planned state office building at 1063 Capitol Way proposes to vacate an existing alley. The Boardwalk Apartments on Capitol Way vacated alleys. The Port of Olympia East Bay Short Plat, which includes the Hands On Childrens' Museum did not build alleys.

# City of Olympia

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## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Draft Comprehensive Plan Update Regarding Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy

Agenda Date: 4/17/2014

Agenda Number: 4.C

File Number: 14-0362

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File Type: recommendation

Version: 1

Status: In Committee

#### ..Title

Draft Comprehensive Plan Update Regarding Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy

#### ..Recommended Action

##### Committee Recommendation:

Not applicable. The Olympia Planning Commission has recommended the December 2013 Draft Comprehensive Plan.

##### City Manager Recommendation:

Recommend the following revised language in Policy PL7.4 of the Public Hearing Draft Olympia Comprehensive Plan:

*PL7.4 Increase ~~the area per capita of urban green space and the tree canopy to area ratio within each neighborhood.~~*

#### ..Report

##### Issue:

The Planning Commission and City Manager have presented Council with recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan Update. City Council will hold a public hearing on a draft Comprehensive Plan Update at a date to be determined (most likely in June 2014). Guidance is needed regarding Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy.

##### Staff Contact:

Stacey Ray, Associate Planner, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8046

##### Presenter(s):

Stacey Ray, Associate Planner, Community Planning and Development  
Judy Bardin, Olympia Planning Commissioner

##### Background and Analysis:

At its February 25 work session on the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update recommended by the Olympia Planning Commission, the City Council referred several policy issues to the Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC) for consideration. LUEC scheduled consideration of Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy for Thursday, April 17, 2014.

#### Urban Green Space

Approximately one quarter of Olympia is currently set aside as open space, or urban

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.C**

**File Number: 14-0362**

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green space. Both the terms 'open space' and 'urban green space' are used interchangeably to describe land not occupied by buildings, "set aside" so that it is limited in its ability to be developed, and very likely to remain as open space for the foreseeable future.

Examples of green space in the City of Olympia include City-owned and managed parks, environmentally sensitive areas and required buffers, stormwater facilities, required building setbacks, and privately owned open space, such as landscaped areas, tree tracts or village greens. For the purpose of this discussion, however, the focus is largely on green space that is available for public use. This is because research continues to demonstrate that access to urban green space is an important component of a healthy and sustainable community. For additional information, see the attached research references compiled by Mr. Michael Mehaffy, Executive Director of the Sustasis Foundation, and provided by Commissioner Judy Bardin.

During the Planning Commission's deliberations on the July 2012 Draft of the Comprehensive Plan, Commissioners responded to community input on green space by recommending a new goal and series of policies. (See Attachment 2 for minutes from the Commission's discussion of the recommended policies). One of the recommended policies specifies that the total area of urban green space in Olympia will be increased per capita:

*PL7.4 Increase the area per capita of urban green space and the tree canopy-to-area ratio within each neighborhood.*

The intent of this policy is to maintain a specific ratio of urban green space per person, which would require increasing green space as Olympia's population increases. If the City were to implement this policy, it would need to pursue some combination of the following tools:

- Additional revenue for purchase of city-owned open space;
- Enhanced regulation for requiring open space as an element of new development;
- Increased open space impact fees; or
- Other conservation tools, such as land banks or conservation easements.

For example, there are an estimated 4,000 acres of open space currently set aside within the Olympia city limits. That total includes areas such as City-owned parks, subdivision tree tracts, and preserved environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands. At 4,000 acres, the current ratio of open space is approximately 82.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

In twenty years Olympia is projected to add 18,500 new residents within the current City limits, for a population of approximately 67,000. To maintain the existing ratio of open space, the City would need to either purchase or require be set aside an additional 1,528 acres of land.

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.C**

**File Number: 14-0362**

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### Urban Forest Tree Canopy

It is an accepted urban forest management best practice to measure tree canopy, and having a tree canopy goal is an effective way to ensure progress towards a healthy and diverse urban forest. To that end, the Draft Comprehensive Plan recommended by the Planning Commission includes the following policy in the Natural Environment Chapter that addresses tree canopy:

*PN3.2 Measure the tree canopy and set a city-wide target for increasing it through tree preservation and planting.*

This policy omits a specific target, intending that it will be determined as part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy PN3.2 also directs that tree canopy is measured city-wide and not on a smaller neighborhood scale. Ensuring fair and equitable distribution of tree canopy citywide is an important component of good urban forest management; however, specifying implementation on a neighborhood scale, as included in Policy PL7.4, limits flexibility to plant trees where appropriate and use resources efficiently citywide. This is especially true within an urban growth area, where both increasing density and tree canopy need to be thoughtfully planned for in balance with one another.

### Staff Recommendation

The staff recommendation is to revise Policy PL7.4 to reflect a desire to increase the total acreage of urban green space that currently exists, but without specifying a target based on population growth. Secondly, staff recommends removing tree canopy language from Policy PL 7.4, because Policy PN3.2 in the Natural Environment Chapter sufficiently addresses expanding the tree canopy. Under this approach, determination of an appropriate tree canopy coverage goal and scale at which to measure progress would be identified in the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategy.

Staff recommends Policy PL7.4 be revised as follows:

*PL7.4 Increase ~~the area per capita of urban green space and the tree canopy-to-area ratio within each neighborhood.~~*

### Attachments

See the following attachments and links for additional background information:

- 1) *The Surprisingly High Value of Urban Green Space: Overview of Recent Research* compiled by Michael Mehaffy, Executive Director, Sustasis

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**

**Agenda Number: 4.C**

**File Number: 14-0362**

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Foundation

- 2) Olympia Planning Commission draft goal and policies with rationale
- 3) 2010 Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan
- 4) Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) Analysis-Green Space (Staff SEPA Analysis)
- 5) Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) Analysis-Urban Forestry (Staff SEPA Analysis)
- 6) Olympia Planning Commission Special Presentation on Urban Greenspace (December 9, 2013 Regular Olympia Planning Commission Meeting)

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Public input collected during the Comprehensive Plan Update Focus Meeting Series, held in 2010-2011, expressed support for the retention and availability of urban green space and expanding tree canopy and led to the identification of the following policy considerations:

- Look for opportunities to create or enhance pocket parks, public plazas and open spaces downtown.
- Develop parks along or adjacent to HDCs to enhance the corridor's attractiveness for new development, and support the long-term quality of these urban corridors, particularly for residents.
- Add to the City's tree inventory as a means of reducing stormwater runoff.
- Allow for temporary-use gardens and open-space in downtown and other high-density, commercially zoned areas.

The Planning Commission also received comments supporting the preservation of large, mature, or historic trees in the urban area. Commenters felt there should be more done to preserve and protect trees, with a subset promoting either encouraging or requiring increased preservation of mature stands of trees to contribute to storm water management.

Other comments supported the necessity of open space, green space, and natural areas in the city. Commenters suggested that open space should include natural elements and be readily accessible to neighborhoods and urban corridors. One commenter also said that open space should be pursued through a variety of means, such as purchasing development rights or establishing conservation easements. All comments emphasized the value of open space for facilitating human engagement with the natural world.

**Options:**

Receive and discuss information; provide initial guidance on next steps.

**Financial Impact:**

None; this work item is an element of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Agenda Date: 4/17/2014**  
**Agenda Number: 4.C**  
**File Number: 14-0362**

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**SUSTASIS FOUNDATION**  
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November 17, 2013

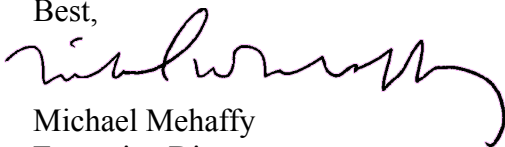
Judy Bardin  
City of Olympia Planning Commission  
1517 Dickinson Ave NW  
Olympia, WA 98502

Dear Judy,

As we discussed, there are a number of research findings on the value of urban greenspace, not only in direct economic benefit for things like property values, but in other indirect economic benefits as well as human benefits. One of the most interesting is the apparent link to public health.

As promised, attached is a short “discussion piece” that reviews these findings and their policy implications. I hope you find these useful.

Best,



Michael Mehaffy  
Executive Director  
Sustasis Foundation



# The Surprisingly High Value of Urban Greenspace:

## *Overview of Recent Research*

Michael Mehaffy

Delft University of Technology

Urban greenspace is almost always a popular amenity, and most people sense that it's an important asset in community development. But research suggests the return on investment is considerably higher than is commonly recognized. Furthermore, the benefits are not just in property values, but in many other areas – notably including public health. Among the findings:

**1. *Economic benefit for the surrounding real estate.*** A number of studies show the greater economic value of homes and businesses that adjoin greenspaces (Conway et al., 2010). In addition, studies also show a consistent economic benefit for wider areas, perhaps for whole cities, when they feature extensive greenspace (McPherson, 1992).

**2. *Ecological benefits.*** It is well known that greenspace contributes to improved air quality, and can reduce runoff of pollutants. In addition, greenspace can reduce solar gain in summer, reduce the albedo effect, and reduce urban heat island effects (Swanwick 2003; Irvine et al., 2010). While these factors are of greater concern in warmer climates, they do play a role in Western Washington.

**3. *Value in promoting walking and active recreation.*** Greenspaces have been shown to encourage walking and recreational activities, particularly in combination with a mix of destinations and uses (Barton et al., 2009). Of course it is intuitively obvious that a beautiful greenspace area will be more inviting to pedestrians and to those seeking recreation, and the research bears this out.

**4. *Value in fostering psychological health.*** There is intriguing evidence that greenspaces, and the presence of vegetation and natural areas more generally, play a powerful role in psychological well-being (Irvine et al., 2007; Fuller et al., 2010). Particularly in urbanized areas, greenspaces can provide relief from the psychological discomfort of unpleasant urban conditions. The research topic of “biophilia” – the apparent affinity for natural environments – is suggesting that this factor is much more important than we thought.

**5. *Value in fostering physical health related to stress.*** Even more intriguing, there is now compelling evidence that views of greenspaces can have measurable effects on physical health and well-being (Grinde and Patil, 2009; Heerwagen, 2009). In a classic study published in the journal *Science*, Ulrich (1984) demonstrated that recovery times in hospitals were markedly better, with fewer complications, when patients had a view of greenspaces. Subsequent studies have demonstrated this rather startling link in other settings outside of hospitals (e.g. Ulrich et al., 1991; Ulrich, 1999).

**6. *Value in promoting the well-being of children and other vulnerable populations.*** The above studies suggest that the impact on the well-being of children might be particularly great, and other research has borne this out (Charles and Louv, 2009). The investigator Richard Louv has coined the term “nature deficit disorder” to describe the rising number of children who do not have any meaningful access to natural environments, carrying serious implications for their health and well-being. There are similar implications for seniors, the disabled and other vulnerable populations (Jackson and Kochtitzsky, 2000).

This research is continuing to mature, but it is already clear that an evidence-based best practice will respond to the findings of this field, and place an active greenspace plan at the center of any urban development strategy.

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## Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy

### Planning Commission Recommended Policy Language

February 11, 2013, the Olympia Planning Commission passed the following recommended goals and policies regarding Urban Green Space and Tree Canopy:

*Commissioner Tousley moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, that the proposed Urban Green Space goal and policy language reflect the following:*

*Urban Green Space is available to the public and located throughout the community and incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, which are easily accessible and viewable so that people can experience nature daily and nearby.*

- a) Provide urban green spaces in which to spend time. Include such elements as trees, garden spaces, variety of vegetation, water features, green walls and roofs, and seating.*
- b) Provide urban green spaces that are in people's immediate vicinity and can be enjoyed or viewed from a variety of perspectives.*
- c) Establish a maximum walking time to urban green space for all community members.*
- d) Increase the per capita area of urban green space and the tree canopy-to-area ratio within each neighborhood.*
- e) Establish urban green space between transportation corridors and adjacent areas.*

*Commissioner Leveen moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingman, to amend Policy #3 to remove the words "walking time" and replace with "distance."*

*The motion, with the proposed amendment, passed unanimously.*

### Planning Commission February 11, 2013 Discussion Minutes:

"The sponsor, Vice Chair Bardin, described her proposal. The focus was on green spaces apart from parks and open space for health, psychological, and social justice benefits. Vice Chair Bardin noted the Commission had in front of them revised language from the last time this topic was discussed.

Commission Discussion:

- Policy #3 should be listed as the first policy under the goal language.
- The goals and policies would be new language and not replacing any existing language in the July Draft; possibly within a new section titled "Urban Green Space" in the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter.
- Concern expressed that the policies include performance measures and about how those measures would be achieved; in particular by what means would additional open space be dedicated or acquired?

- Key provisions within the policy language are accessibility and establishment of performance targets.
- Tree canopy may be better addressed through sub-area planning, as it can vary throughout the City. Can anticipate challenges in implementation of expansion in certain areas.
- Suggestion made that Commissioners present proposed language exactly as it would appear in the Draft, and within the proposed context.
- Population increases need to be met with a constant ratio of green space to people through planting of more trees and limiting the removal of trees.
- A clearer definition of "green space" is needed; clarify that this isn't the traditional definition of open space so that it is clear that implementation can and should happen in a variety of ways. Example cited: funding the street tree program.
- Concern about who is providing the green space to meet the policies; existing development, new development, or both? Sponsor noted it should be a combination and that a variety of tools should be used, such as acquiring land and requiring it be set aside through private development.
- Language has same meaning as "require," in that it states "provide."
- Requirement should apply to all new development, including infill in the downtown, like townhouses.
- Concern noted that the City has a fixed amount of space and an increasing population; at some point it becomes impossible to continue to expand open space.
- Concern expressed that much of the existing tree canopy and urban green space is on private property and would require more extensive restrictions on removal or development to retain. Sponsor noted the environmental benefits of retaining trees.
- Concern expressed for how to define a maximum walking time. Walk speeds differ widely among the population. Sponsor noted the policies also include a combination of visual distance and accessibility, and that the Commission may wish to establish an average walking time.
- Concern expressed for how this might apply to already-developed areas.
- Discussion on how widely the goal and policies apply to residential areas, but instead may be focused more on new development and downtown. There may be adequate green space in residential neighborhoods.
- Further definition needed as to whether green space must be public.
- Add to the goal language: "Urban green space is *available to the public and located* throughout the community..."
- Move policy #3 to position #1.
- Remove the word "current" from policy #4.
- Remove "and maintain" from policy #2. Sponsor noted that maintain is purposely included to ensure no net loss of walking time. Other policies fulfill this intent.
- Concern about focus on walking time; sponsor noted current literature cites walking as the most effective metric.

## **Policy Discussion Background Information—Provided by the Planning Commission Sponsor**

Olympia Planning Commissioner Judy Bardin sponsored the recommended policy language. In support of the proposed language, she submitted the following information.

*Describe the scope of the topic.* Green space provides a number of benefits including ecological, environmental, health, economic, and social. It is an essential component of the urban environment and will become even more important for people's well-being as Olympia's population increases and the region becomes denser.

- Ecological and Environmental—Green space provides habitat for a variety of birds, fish and other animals. Trees can remove air pollutants that are prevalent in the urban environment such as particulate matter, ozone, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide. They also sequester the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide<sup>1</sup>. A tree can remove 48 pounds of carbon dioxide a year and sequester a ton of carbon dioxide by the time the tree reaches age 40<sup>2</sup>. The heat island effect is caused by large areas of heat-absorbing surfaces in combination with high energy use. Heat islands are likely to occur as Olympia becomes more urbanized and climate change causes warmer temperatures. Trees provide natural air conditioning; they shade and cool buildings and streets; and they use evapotranspiration (tree sweating) to cool themselves and surrounding areas<sup>3</sup>. Trees also reduce energy costs for buildings, both for heating and cooling. Increased vegetation reduces storm water runoff and improves water quality by filtering water. A mature tree in a year can intercept about 760 gallons of rainwater and cause evapotranspiration of 100 gallons of water<sup>4</sup>. Trees will also help diminish the flooding predicted with climate change. Noise reduction is another benefit of trees. Wide tree belts can reduce noise by 4-8 decibels<sup>5</sup>.
- Health – Green space has a direct effect on people's health. Studies have shown a relationship between the amount of green space in the living environment and the degree of physical and mental health and longevity<sup>6</sup>. Increased green space has been found to decrease death rates<sup>7</sup>. People living closer to green space have greater levels of physical activity and are less likely to be obese<sup>8</sup>. Fifty percent of Washington's population is either overweight or obese. Having places where people want to exercise will aide people in living healthier life-styles. The public's perception of their general health has been found to be related to the amount of green space in their environment<sup>9</sup>. Views of nature can improve people's health and well-being by providing relief from stress and mental fatigue<sup>10</sup>. Hospital patients have been found to make quicker recoveries and need less pain medications when they have a view of a park compared to patients who only had a view of a wall<sup>11</sup>.
- Economic – Green space increases property values<sup>12</sup>. Property values are directly related to the distance to green space and the type of green space. People living in multi-unit dwellings value living near an area with green-space while people in houses value living near a park<sup>13</sup>. Businesses are more likely to locate near an area having green or open spaces<sup>14</sup>. Places with urban natural capital tend to attract skilled workers. Having a skilled

work force further enhances the attractiveness of an area for businesses<sup>15</sup>. Places that are beautiful also increase tourism.

- Social Capital – Urban green spaces provide opportunity for people to gather and interact with family, friends and neighbors. People living near these areas feel a greater sense of cohesion and are more likely to help their neighbors<sup>16</sup>.

*References:*

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*Why does this issue demand attention? (i.e., why the treatment in the July draft is, to the sponsor, inadequate.)* The issue of urban green space in the immediate vicinity of where people live is not addressed in the July draft or if it is addressed the language is too vague.

*Is this topic addressed in the July Draft?* There are goals, but they do not address the issue of green space in people's immediate vicinity. However, there are couple issues that should be discussed in the language for the below objectives (see underlines).

Parks, Arts, and Recreation Chapter:

PR 3.1 Provide parks in close proximity to all residences.

*This goal is vague. Perhaps we should have a more specific measurable goal such as:*

Set targeted goals for parks, such as people will be within a five minute walking distance of a park.

PR 3.2 Ensure that Olympia's park system includes opportunities for experiencing nature, solitude, and an **escape from the fast pace of urban life.**

Why would some need to escape urban life, aren't we designing a city that people would want to live in? If people have green space nearby they may not have to escape to parks

PR 4.2 Use existing rail, utility and unopened street rights-of-way, valleys, streams (where environmentally sound), and other corridors for urban trails.

PR 4.3 Preserve unimproved public rights-of-way for important open space, greenway linkages, and trails.

Natural Environment Chapter:

Policy PN11.1: Ensure that all members of the community have nearby access to a natural space with opportunities to see, touch, and connect with the natural environment.

Land Use and Urban Design Chapter:

Policy PL18.3: Include housing, a food store, and a neighborhood park or civic green at all neighborhood centers.

Policy PL20.2: Create sub-area strategies that address provisions and priorities for community health, neighborhood centers and places of assembly, streets and paths, cultural resources, forestry, utilities, and open space and parks.

Policy PL21.5: Require a neighborhood center, a variety of housing connected trails, prominent open spaces wildlife habitat, and recreation areas in each village.

Policy PL21.9: Limit each village to about 40 to 200 acres...require at least 5% of the site be open space with at least one large usable open space for the public at the neighborhood center. This seems like very limited land allocation (5%, why not 35%)

*Provide the specific goal or policy language that you propose (or a motion if goal/policy language is not applicable.)*

People will have non-park urban green space in their immediate vicinity so that they can experience nature daily and nearby. Green space can include: gardens, community gardens, trails, plazas, waterfronts (sounds, lakes and streams), fountains, stands of trees and tree canopy.

- Establish a ratio of green space per person (population).



- People will have visual access to urban green space from where they live, work and play
- People can reach green space quickly. Set a targeted goal for walking to green space such as: people will be within one minute walking distance to green space.
- Include plans for seating next to green space for new office and apartment buildings and multifamily housing.
- Include a green buffer between arterial corridors and housing.
- Place green belts along civic boulevards.
- Plan buildings with sufficient set-backs for trees that will grow as tall as the lesser of building height or 50 feet, featuring a proportionate, un-pruned canopy.
- Plan new development with sufficient tree canopy such that canopy will increase by 1.5% annually until an average of 35% has been reached for the City overall.
- Require new development to meet these standards.

## 36. Green Space

### Proposal

Supplement the Natural Environment and Parks and Open Space goals and policies of the Plan with a Land Use goal and related policies as set forth below. These policies are generally more specific and call for more open space than the provisions in other chapters.

### Background

Olympia's Comprehensive Plan and implementing practices and regulations address open space by a variety of means. (Note: The terms 'open space' and 'green space' have no specific definitions. As used here they are roughly interchangeable and refer to land not occupied by buildings, storage areas or parking lots. However, 'green space' may include a greater emphasis on public use of open space.) Among these are establishing building setback and separation requirements, requiring open space buffers adjacent to streams, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas, requiring creation of permanent tree tracts and stormwater facilities, acquiring public open space and parks, incorporating planted areas into public rights, and requiring that private development includes landscaped open spaces. Although the specific acreages and types of areas set aside have varied over time and by location and development project, so far these activities and regulations have resulted in nearly 4,000 acres, almost 25% of the Olympia urban area, being permanently set aside as parks, tree tracts and other forms of open space.

### Options

Option 1. Adopt Land Use Goal 7 and related policies as recommended by the Planning Commission:

- *GL7 Urban green space is available to the public and located throughout the community and incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, which are easily accessible and viewable so that people can experience nature daily and nearby.*
- *PL7.1 Provide urban green spaces in which to spend time. Include such elements as trees, garden spaces, variety of vegetation, water features, green walls and roofs and seating.*
- *PL7.2 Provide urban green spaces that are in people's immediate vicinity and can be enjoyed or viewed from a variety of perspectives.*
- *PL7.3 Establish a maximum distance to urban green space for all community members.*
- *PL7.4 Increase the area per capita of urban green space and the tree canopy- to- area ratio within each neighborhood.*

- *PL7.5 Establish urban green space between transportation corridors and adjacent areas.*

Option 2. No action: Do not add the above provisions to Comprehensive Plan; instead continue the open space approaches set forth elsewhere in the Plan.

## **Analysis**

The goal and in particular the related policies set forth above would establish a new focus on open space as part of the urban landscape of Olympia. It could differ from current policies and practices in four respects:

- Providing urban green space in the “immediate” vicinity of people would be a shorter distance than the City’s ‘one mile of all residences’ policy for neighborhood parks. If a maximum distance of less than one mile were established, new actions would be needed to provide a more dispersed distribution of urban green spaces.
- Increasing the acreage of urban green space per capita – if taken literally, is probably not viable as it would require reducing the existing acreage of buildings and parking lots as the population grows. But, if interpreted as providing for more urban green space associated with development than in the past, it would imply either requiring more open space in association with development (possibly including landscaped rooftops) or acquiring such open space. If overall development densities are not to be reduced, these approaches would require increasing the development density of the built portion of each or most sites.
- Increasing the tree canopy within each neighborhood would also require new actions. In general the City has sought to ensure that as development occurs about 10% of the community is planted with trees. Today over 30% of the urban growth area is canopied with trees. Increasing the canopy would require planting of open spaces that now lack trees.
- Establishing urban green spaces between transportation corridors and adjacent areas could require a change in either the City’s street standards or building setbacks. Although planter strips and street trees are standard features of many streets and landscaped building setbacks are required in most locations, in the more intensively used area such as downtown and along commercial arterials only street trees are generally required. Commercial land users may object to further separation of commercial land uses from streets if it would reduce the visibility of business from the ‘stream of traffic.’

## **Original Staff Proposal**

No Recommendation.

## **Planning Commission Recommendation**

Option 1. As described above.

## 12. Urban Forestry

### Proposal

Add policies to recognize the importance of preserving and growing the urban forest through the establishment of long-term goals and implementation of strategic planning for a vital resource that is continually threatened by increasing urban density. Specifically:

- *PN3.2. Measure the tree canopy and set a city-wide target for increasing it through tree preservation and planting.*
- *PN3.4. Evaluate the environmental, ecologic, health, social and economic benefits of the urban forest.*
- *PN3.5. Provide new trees with the necessary soil, water, space, and nutrients to grow to maturity, and plant the right size tree where there are conflicts, such as overhead utility wires or sidewalks.*

### Background

The City of Olympia has had an established Urban Forestry Program since 1991, and has been a ‘Tree City USA’ for over 16 years. Urban Forestry has long been a valued program in Olympia; residents have come to know and value trees through such education and planting programs as NeighborWoods, which provided free street trees to Olympia residents for over ten years. Community members recognize that trees contribute greatly to the livability of the City and provide a multitude of important environmental benefits.

Chapter 16.60 of the Olympia Municipal Code regulates tree protection and removal in the City. New land development sites are required to retain existing trees, and plant new ones. Existing properties are required to maintain a minimum number of trees. While these regulations have been very effective in bringing attention to the need for mature tree preservation, and have retained hundreds of acres of mature trees that might otherwise have been removed, the City is still experiencing an overall loss of tree canopy. Reasons for this vary, but include new land development, removal of mature trees in residential areas, removal of trees in downtown or dense commercial areas that have “outgrown” their planting locations, removal of trees that have become hazardous to people or property, and competition from invasive species, such as English ivy.

Tree canopy coverage goals have been successful nationwide as catalysts for tree planting campaigns and other kinds of community involvement in urban forest management. To date, the City has completed an initial tree canopy cover measurement, but has not used the data to determine an appropriate tree canopy coverage goal. When last measured in 2010, Olympia had approximately 30% City-wide tree canopy coverage. Many communities strive for 30% overall tree canopy. Further analysis could identify how that percentage may be preserved or increased by examining where tree coverage is minimal, where there are potential locations for planting more trees, and where it can be anticipated we

will see future tree canopy losses due to new land development. A detailed canopy cover analysis, or an on-the-ground tree inventory, can also provide the information needed to calculate precisely the amount of environmental benefits trees provide and associated savings. For example, trees intercept water, store some of it, and potentially reduce the need for urban flood control or stormwater treatment.

Trees need a large amount of uncompacted soil to allow for oxygen exchange and the water percolation necessary for long-term growth. A large tree, such as an American elm, needs more than 1,000 cubic feet of soil to reach the size where it significantly contributes to a healthy urban ecosystem. Existing standards for planting trees are very limiting in the amount of soil and growing space available to an urban tree, in particular street trees. Some new street tree spaces are only 4' by 4' and may include only two feet of uncompacted, nutrient-rich soil.

At the moment, there are very few options for community members who wish to participate in organized tree planting. The City still hosts planting opportunities with native vegetation in wetlands and near streams, and the Park Stewardship Program provides some restoration planting opportunities. The local non-profit Native Plant Salvage salvages native plants from land slated for development and also hosts local planting opportunities; sometimes in partnership with City programs.

## **Options**

Option 1. The proposed policy could lead to measuring the tree canopy, evaluating the environmental benefits of the urban forest, and providing new trees with the necessary soil, water, and space to grow to maturity.

Option 2. No action: Continue administration of the tree ordinance.

Option 3. Alternative to the proposal: Reduce the amount of urban forestry planning and management; and shift decisions regarding the planting and preservation of trees to private parties.

## **Analysis**

The existing Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies that recognize trees as a defining characteristic of the City but focus on an urban forest made-up of street trees. Option 1 recognizes that the urban forest should be more broadly defined as all the trees in the City: those along streets, in parks, and on private property. The proposed policies would provide direction for establishing a tree canopy goal, determining the environmental and community benefits realized from the urban forest, and intentionally creating the space needed in an urban environment for trees to be preserved or grown to maturity.

The urban forest is a community asset with a value that can be quantified. Research has demonstrated the environmental benefits of the urban forest: how much carbon dioxide is being captured, how much stormwater runoff diverted, and how much energy saved through natural shading. By measuring

changes in canopy coverage over time, one can visually assess and demonstrate success or not in the retention of existing trees and planting of new trees. This kind of information could provide the basis for either maintaining or improving upon the existing tree preservation and protection regulation and standards.

Option 2 recognizes that long-term urban forestry management requires an investment in technical expertise. Long-term urban forest management requires an understanding of trees and how they respond and grow in urban conditions. Providing new trees with the necessary soil, water, space, and nutrients to grow to maturity means planning for and installing infrastructure that accommodates larger soil volumes in dense urban areas. This may mean evaluating and investing in new design standards, or potentially more costly tree installation techniques, such as structural soil, silva soils, or something as simple as larger tree planter strips or larger tree wells and tree grates. Trees are a community asset, and City involvement ensures that that asset is preserved and available equally to all members of the community.

While traditionally a role of the City, Option 3 notes that urban forest management can be turned over to the community; this typically means the responsibility of homeowners adjacent to street trees, neighborhood associations or homeowners' associations, or local non-profit groups. This is largely the state of new tree planting in Olympia; however, overall urban forest management is still under the purview of the City. Not all community members have an incentive or belief that more trees or larger trees are beneficial. A majority of the new trees being planted now are due to City requirements, and often commercial business owners would rather forgo trees in exchange for more business signage and visibility, combined with reduced maintenance costs.

The proposed approach is primarily intended to mitigate the impacts of urbanization by ensuring a viable urban forest. Possible adverse impacts include localized risks of property damage due to tree failures or flooding caused by leaves clogging drainage systems, and secondary impacts from slightly less urban density.

### **Original Staff Proposal**

Option 1. Option 1 is a commitment to trees providing an essential environmental contribution to Olympia.

### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

Option 1.



# City of Olympia

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## Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

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**Monday, December 9, 2013**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### 1.A ROLL CALL

**Present:** 9 - Chair Jerome Parker, Vice Chair Judy Bardin, Commissioner Kim Andresen, Commissioner Jessica Bateman, Commissioner Max Brown, Commissioner Darrell Hoppe, Commissioner Roger Horn, Commissioner Carole Richmond, and Commissioner Missy Watts

### OTHERS PRESENT

#### Staff:

Community Planning and Development Deputy Director Leonard Bauer, Associate Planner Amy Buckler, Associate Planner Stacey Ray

#### Guests:

University of Washington Research Social Scientist Dr. Kathleen Wolf, Anchor QEA Landscape Architect Betsy Birmingham, Forterra South Sound Green Cities Project Coordinator Jennifer Chang, Parametrix Landscape Architect Darren Sandeno, former Planning Commissioner Paul Ingman

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Parker proposed, with all Commissioners in agreement, to postpone public comment until after the presentation on Urban Greenspace.

**The agenda was approved with a change. Public comment will come after the presentation on Urban Greenspace.**

### 3. BUSINESS ITEMS

[13-1006](#) Special Presentation: Urban Greenspace

Ms. Ray discussed the importance of urban greenspace and introduced the panel of four regional experts.

Dr. Wolf discussed the wide range of health and community benefits that result from



integrating nature into the urban environment. She shared information about preserving, creating, and managing urban greenspace for long-term physical, mental, emotional, social, environmental, and economic benefits. She stressed the need for incorporation of greenspace into the built environment and shared how environmental benefits can be determined using the software tool i-Tree.

Ms. Chang spoke about the work of Green City Partnerships which involves volunteers from across generations working to restore and maintain urban greenspace in Tacoma. She talked about some of the projects that the organization Forterra is involved in and shared strategies used to manage invasive species.

Ms. Birmingham highlighted her experience with various public recreation and shoreline projects. She was involved in the Percival Landing project and described the efforts to balance restoration objectives with recreation .

Mr. Sandeno shared information about his experience with green retrofit projects. He believes the principles of understanding the forces in play; having an opportunistic spirit; encouraging resourcefulness, innovation and synergy; and scalable ideas are critically important. He used the Spring District project in the city of Bellevue to illustrate a successful re-zone from industrial to a blend of mixed-use commercial, residential and retail uses.

Discussion:

- Role of trees in the Spring District project.
- How walkability, greenspace and density requirements work together.
- Place and site appropriate use of plants.
- The use of greenspace in dense communities for respite.
- Effects of vegetation in the built environment.
- Transportation "context sensitive" solutions and narrowing the width of automobile lanes.
- Differences between being in nature and having a view of nature
- Biophilic cities.
- Strategies to encourage developers to incorporate greenspaces.
- How mature trees increase property values using hedonic property pricing.
- Nature versus Cityscape walking benefits.

**The reports were received.**

- 4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**
- 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**
- 6. INFORMATION REQUESTS - None**

**7. BUSINESS ITEMS CONT.****13-1043** Recommendation on the Urban Neighborhoods Proposal

Ms. Buckler spoke about the need to structure the meeting to enable the Commission to make a recommendation included in the staff report, considering the shortened time for discussion due to the presentation. She suggested a timeline for considering issues in the matrix the staff had prepared and submitted to the OPC. Mr. Bauer outlined the decision points with regards to the future land use planning map in the Comprehensive Plan for policy recommendation to the Council. He detailed the specific recommendations for discussion purposes from staff. He reviewed key decision points and summarized policy text recommendations.

## Discussion:

- Vice Chair Bardin voiced concern about protection for current low density neighborhoods.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and density.
- Vice Chair Bardin expressed concern about the matrix changes and changes in the language of the urban neighborhood proposal.

**Chair Parker moved, seconded by Commissioner Andresen, to move through the matrix. Motion carried with Vice Chair Bardin dissenting.**

-Mr. Ingman discussed the intention of and the reasons for the language in the 1994 plan related to gateways. He informed the Commission about the gateways in the Urban Neighborhood Proposal.

## Discussion of Matrix:

- On item L14 to replace the language “continuously” with “thorough”.
- Language relevant to landscaping and the difficulty of adequately describing intentions for placement of trees, gateways, etc.

**It was moved by Chair Parker, seconded by Commissioner Andresen, to adopt the language in Option 2 on item L14.1: Establish eight gateways with civic boulevards that are entry/exit pathways along major streets to downtown Olympia and our Capital. Vote - Chair Parker and Commissioners Andresen, Bateman, Watts and Brown in favor, Commissioners Bardin and Hoppe opposed, Commissioners Richmond and Horn abstained.**

- It was agreed that all issues with no recommendation changes will be accepted.
- Consensus was not reached to extend the meeting until 10:00, so with inadequate

time in tonight's meeting it was agree to postpone a recommendation until next week's meeting.

-Zoning requirements for R6 to 12 that allow duplexes, triplexes and townhomes, and zoning requirements for R4 to 8 which do not allow these properties.

-Commissioner Andresen has done a sketch showing a density of 14 units per acre. She will work with staff to develop the document to be distributed at the next meeting.

**The recommendation was discussed and will continue at the next Planning Commission meeting on December 16, 2013.**

## 8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[13-1018](#) Approval of November 4, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**Approval of the minutes was postponed.**

[13-1019](#) Approval of November 18, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**Approval of the minutes was postponed.**

## 9. REPORTS

Leadership:

Met and discussed the structure for the meeting tonight.

Design Review Board:

Met last Thursday to discuss a redesign of the Thurston First building. Next Thursday they will discuss the Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU) parking structure. Chair Parker urged the Commissioners to look at that project online. It will be a unique approach using a glass wall.

Heritage Commission:

Meeting was cancelled. Vice Chair Bardin is the liaison and she not getting notified of meeting dates. Staff will remedy that.

Utility Advisory Commission:

Commissioner Andresen reported that the last meeting covered the waste resource master plan update with City of Olympia Waste Reduction Specialist Ron Jones.

Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee:

Commissioner Horn attended the last meeting with nothing to report.

Leadership Team Elections:

Commissioner Bateman spoke with Vice Chair Bardin who is interested in Chair and Vice Chair, and with Commissioner Brown who is interested in Chair. Commissioner Brown spoke with Commissioner Bateman who is not interested in either position, with Commissioner Horn who is interested in continuing as Finance Sub-Committee Chair, and with Chair Parker who is not leaving in March, but did not disclose if he was

interested in remaining Chair. Chair Parker spoke with Commissioner Andresen who is interested in Vice Chair, and with Commissioner Richmond who is interested in Vice Chair.

The interested candidates gave 30 second speeches.

Chair Parker shared that he had been contacted by Phil Schulte of the Coalition Of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) after their presentation to the Commission on sub area planning. Mr. Schulte wanted to know if the Commission could collaborate with the CNA on stormwater management. The possibility of holding a forum was suggested with the involvement of the Utilities Advisory Committee.

Vice Chair Bardin spoke about the scheduling conflict with CNA meetings, as they often occur on the same night and the possible need of a liaison from the OPC to the CNA. Because of holiday scheduling this month, the Planning Commission has met on the 2nd Monday of the month, the night of the CNA meeting, but typically they meet the 1st and 3rd Mondays.

## 10. OTHER TOPICS

[13-1044](#) Information from South Sound Estuary Association (SSEA)

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Parker adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.