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March 24, 2025

Greetings:

**Subject:** South Puget Sound Community College Master Plan

File Number 24- 3809

The enclosed decision of the Olympia Hearing Examiner hereby issued on the above date may be of interest to you. This is a final decision of the City of Olympia.

In general, any appeal of a final land use decision must be filed in court within twenty-one (21) days. See Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 36.70C, for more information relating to timeliness of any appeal and filing, service and other legal requirements applicable to such appeal. In particular, see RCW 36.70C.040.

Please contact the City of Olympia, Community Planning and Development Department, at 601 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue East or at PO Box 1967, Olympia, WA 98507-1967, by phone at 360-753-8314, or by email cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us if you have guestions.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Haner

**Program Specialist** 

Community Planning and Economic Development

Enclosure

# BEFORE THE CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARINGS EXAMINER

3	N RE:  OUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY  OLLEGE - CONDITIONAL USE  ERMIT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF  PDATED MASTER PLAN.  HEARING NO. 24-3809  FINDINGS OF FACT,  CONCLUSIONS OF LAW  AND DECISION  PDATED MASTER PLAN.	
5	APPLICANT:	South Puget Sound Community College 2011 Mottman Road S.W. Olympia, Washington 98512
7	REPRESENTATIVES:	Matt Lane, Principal of McGranahan Architects
9		Tysha Tolefree, Vice President of Finance and Operations South Puget Sound Community College
0	SUMMARY OF REQUEST:	
l1 l2	A renewed Conditional Use Permit for operation of the College's main campus consistent with the College's most recent update to its Master Plan. Several specific campus improvements are included including a new 4-story student housing building to accommodate approximately 150 students; improvements to the existing sports field including the addition of artificial turf, bleachers, lighting and other accessory structures, a pedestrian bridge over Percival Creek along Dr. Nels Hansen Way; and renovations to existing buildings along with other minor improvements.  LOCATION OF PROPOSAL:  2011 Mottman Road S.W.	
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18	SUMMARY OF DECISION:	
19	The permit application is ap	proved subject to slightly revised conditions.
20		BACKGROUND
21	In 1984, South Puge	t Sound Community College, or SPSCC, (then known as Olympia
22	Technical Community College) was granted a Conditional Use Permit by the City of Olympia to	
23	develop the College campus consistent with its Master Plan. The campus now encompasses	
24	102.7 acres. Most of the campus is located in Olympia but a 6.8-acre parcel in the northeast	
25	corner of the campus, and an 8.3-acre parcel in the southwest corner, lie within Tumwater.	
	Findings of Fact, Conclusions of and Decision - 1	Law CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 CHEHALIS, WASHINGTON 98532 Phone: 360-748-3386/Fax: 748-3387

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In 2009, the College's Conditional Use Permit was renewed consistent with the College's updated Master Plan. The College has been operating under this Conditional Use Permit since 2009.

Various other project-specific Conditional Use Permits have been granted to the College, including permits in 2003 to construct a family educational center and, separately, a humanities building; in 2007 to construct a science building and accessory facilities; and in 2018 to expand the health and wellness center.

The College has recently updated its Master Plan and wishes to have the Master Plan recognized by the City in the form of an updated Conditional Use Permit. The updated Master Plan envisions a new 4-story residential housing building to accommodate up to 150 students; proposes significant improvements to the existing sports fields including acritical turf, bleachers, lighting and other accessory structures; calls for construction of a new pedestrian bridge over Percival Creek along Dr. Nels Hansen Way; and make various other improvements to existing buildings and facilities. All of these proposed improvements are located within the City of Olympia and do not affect the portions of the campus located within Tumwater.

Previous Conditional Use Permits approving the College's Master Plans were to last ten years, although each continued in effect for a longer period. The College asks that the updated Conditional Use Permit no longer have a ten-year limit but instead be allowed to continue until the College next updates its Master Plan. City Staff concurs with this request.

City Staff recommends approval of the requested Conditional Use Permit so that the College's new Master Plan is formally recognized and proposed campus improvements have Conditional Use approval. The College has no objection to the City's proposed conditions of permit approval. There has been no substantive public opposition to the requested Conditional Use Permit.

#### PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing commenced at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, March 10, 2025. The hearing
was a "hybrid" hearing consisting of both a remote hearing utilizing the Zoom platform along
with the opportunity to appear in person in the Council Chambers in the City Hall. The City
appeared through Paula Smith of Planning Staff. Ms. Smith was assisted by several other City
Staff including Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner. The College appeared through Matt Lane of
McGranahan Architects, along with Tysha Tolefree, Vice President of Operations. There were
no members of the public present who wished to testify. Testimony was received from Ms.
Smith and Ms. Floyd on behalf of the City and from Mr. Lane and Ms. Tolefree on behalf of the
College. A verbatim recording was made of the public hearing and all testimony was taken
under oath. Exhibits considered at the time of the hearing were the following:
1 GDGCC Stoff Donart

- SPSCC Staff Report 1.
- SPSCC 2024 Campus Master Plan 2.
- SEPA Determination 011525 3.
- 2009 Hex Decision and Staff Report 4.
- Notice of Application 5.
- Informational Meeting Summary 6.
- **Public Comments** 7.
- Response to Eileen Webb Letter 080724 8.
- Tumwater Planning Response 112024 9.
- Tumwater Transportation Correspondence 10.

The only additional exhibit admitted during the hearing was the City's PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit 11).

City Presentation. The hearing began with the testimony of Paula Smith, author of the Staff Report. Ms. Smith's testimony was relatively brief and relied heavily upon her earlier written report as well as the PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Smith's testimony was at times supplemented by Ms. Floyd.

Ms. Smith began by providing some historical context to the current conditional use request. The primary SPSCC campus consists of approximately 102 acres mostly within CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 and Decision - 3

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Olympia but with some portions located in Tumwater. Additional satellite campuses are located in Tumwater, Lacey and elsewhere in Olympia. The current request for a Conditional Use Permit applies only to the main campus, and only to the Olympia portion of the main campus.

In 1984, or more than 40 years ago, the College was first granted a Conditional Use permit allowing the College to operate its campus consistent with its Master Plan. Over the next several decades the campus saw steady development. Several additional project-specific Conditional Use Permits were granted to allow construction of important new facilities and, in 2009, a new Conditional Use Permit was granted to recognize an updated Master Plan. At least one additional project-specific Conditional Use Permit has since been granted for additional facilities but otherwise the College continues to operate under the 2009 Conditional Use Permit.

The 2009 Conditional Use Permit was to have lasted ten years, or until 2019, but it has instead continued in effect well past its intended termination date. The College has recently updated it Master Plan and now seeks the City's approval of that updated Plan by a new Conditional Use Permit.

The College's new Master Plan envisions four important improvements to the main campus in Olympia, all of which are expected to be constructed within the next two to three years: (1) a four-story building to provide student housing for approximately 150 students; (2) significant upgrades to the existing, unimproved sports fields located on campus, including artificial turf, bleachers, seating, concession stands, field house building and outdoor lighting; (3) a new pedestrian bridge across Percival Creek along Dr. Nels Hansen Way just south of Building No. 28; and (4) various other, smaller projects including renovations to existing buildings, exterior site improvements and/or modifications to sidewalks, pathways and landscaping. Again, all of these improvements are to take place within the portion of the main campus located within the City of Olympia.

The public has been kept notified of the application as it has proceeded and informational meetings have taken place to allow public input. Very few public comments have been received, mostly relating to traffic concerns in surrounding residential neighborhoods. The informational meetings and other public notices have not produced material public opposition to the application, or to any of the specific campus improvements proposed to be constructed during the next few years.

Ms. Smith quickly reviewed the project in relation to the City's Comprehensive Plan and confirmed that the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the City's Plan. She then briefly discussed the project's compliance with environmental regulations and noted that a SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) has been issued for all of the proposed projects within the new Master Plan and that there had been no significant response to the SEPA Determination and no appeals had been filed.

The project must comply with all requirements imposed on Essential Public Facilities in the R4-8 Residential District. Importantly, the allowed uses within the R4-8 zone expressly exclude "collegiate Greek system residences, dormitories and apartments". This prohibition would appear to disallow the College's proposed student housing facility. Ms. Smith explained why this is not the case as City Staff interprets this limitation as only applying to new facilities, and that it does not apply to the proposed student housing as it serves as a customary and ordinary use within the approved College campus and, therefore, is an accessory use to the existing, approved use as an Essential Public Facility. This interpretation has not been challenged. Ms. Smith acknowledged that this interpretation would only apply to a student housing project within the campus: a similar student housing project proposed outside the College campus but within the surrounding R4-8 zoning designation would be prohibited.

OMC 18.04.060.CC imposes several requirements specific to schools. These requirements also apply to colleges unless specifically excluded. Ms. Smith confirmed that all of Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law

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the school-specific requirements for site, size, buildings, screening, etc. will be met. Similarly, all development standards imposed by OMC 18.04.080 will be met. The same is true for all requirements for cultural resource protection.

Ms. Smith then turned to the City's requirements for protecting Critical Areas imposed under Chapter 18.37 OMC. Three of the projects proposed in the new Master Plan have some impact upon critical areas or their buffers:

- The proposed pedestrian bridge crossing Percival Creek along Dr. Nels Hansen Way will involve work within the stream's buffer, although exact impacts are not yet known. Staff believe that the project will fall under Critical Areas exemptions, either OMC 18.32.420 or OMC 18.32.425.H. Project approval has been conditioned upon requiring critical area review advance of requested permitting for the bridge.
- The proposed student housing facility is proposed to be located outside of any wetland buffers but is expected to be located close to at least one wetland buffer. Project approval has been conditioned upon constructing protective fencing along nearby wetland buffers together with wetland signage. Additionally, the project will likely require relocation of prior mitigation plantings that had been planted as part of an earlier stormwater pond project. Permit approval is conditioned on removing these plantings and reestablishing them within a degraded wetland buffer south of the sports field.
- Existing sports fields are presently located within the buffer of wetlands. Staff notes that these sports fields were in place long before current critical area regulations were imposed and wetland buffers were adopted. The City regards the existing fields as legally established and nonconforming. Some of the affected wetland buffers also fall within the City of Tumwater and compliance with its critical areas is therefore required as well. The College has provided a Wetland Report as part of its Master Plan (Attachment 2, page 148) which concludes that the upgrades to the sports fields will not have any negative impacts to nearby wetlands, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law

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while proposed mitigation measures will enhance and improve existing wetland buffers. Both the Olympia and Tumwater Planning Staffs concur that the existing sports fields should be allowed to be improved as requested subject to the required mitigation.

Ms. Smith next turned to the issue of on-campus parking. Although adequate parking is often a concern with any new campus development, the existing campus currently provides 1,514 vehicle parking stalls. The College has undertaken a Parking Demand Scoping Analysis (page 215 of the Master Plan) which calculates current need for 908 parking stalls based upon a projected student population of 4,125 students in 2034. As a result, current parking is well in excess of the forecasted need. The proposed student housing project will require elimination of 13 existing parking stalls but, at the same time, will result in fewer vehicle trips per day. Parking for the proposed student housing project will be provided at two nearby parking lots, Lots F and H. These lots will also provide parking for the use of the improved sports fields. The Traffic and Parking Demand Scoping Analysis also finds that if maximum attendance at a varsity game is combined with peak proposed student housing trips, 226 parking stalls will be needed to accommodate both uses. The report concludes that the available nearby parking can accommodate this need. In conclusion, the Master Plan finds that the College current parking is more than sufficient for both forecasted student needs as well as the improvements to the campus proposed in the new Master Plan. Staff also believes that adequate bicycle parking will be provided although exact bicycle parking details for both long- and short-term bicycle parking will be determined during later project review. The permit has been appropriately conditioned to ensure this.

Ms. Smith then discussed City requirements for lighting and noise standards as found in Chapter 18.40 OMC. The Applicant has provided a Lighting Analysis (page 232 of the Master Plan) demonstrating that the improvements to the sports fields will not have any impact upon nearby residential neighborhoods. It is also believed that noise impacts will be minimal as the CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 and Decision - 7

closest nearby residential uses are at least 200 to 700 feet from the fields. Permit approval has been conditioned upon requiring the College to adopt policies and procedures to address and minimize any noise generated from the sports fields. It is expected that these policies will be similar to those imposed in the facilities at other schools in Olympia.

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Ms. Smith next addressed the issue of whether the proposed projects included within the new Conditional Use Permit would require separate land use approval pursuant to OMC 18.70.020, with Staff believing that the student housing and sports field projects would require land use approval as both are substantial revisions to the previously approved Master Plan. Although either project may be entitled to a waiver from land use review pursuant to OMC 18.70.020, City Staff recommends that the student housing project, sports field improvements, and Percival Creek Bridge projects be required to submit an application for a Presubmission Conference in order to review their impacts upon critical areas, at which time Staff can determine if a land use waiver would be appropriate. The proposed Conditional Use Permit has been conditioned upon this. The projects may also be exempt from Design Review pursuant to OMC 18.100.060.B. The proposed conditions of permit approval allow Staff to further assess whether Design Review is required at the time of the Presubmission Conference.

Ms. Smith then turned to infrastructure issues, especially traffic. She noted that Applicant has provided a Traffic Memorandum demonstrating that the student housing project is likely to result in a net reduction of seven trips during the weekday PM period, and that the housing project is not expected to generate additional offsite traffic impacts. The improved sports fields are not expected to have any net new trip generation impacts as the usage will be similar to what currently occurs. In addition, most games and events will occur during evenings and weekends when other campus traffic is much lower. The Traffic Memorandum concludes that Levels of Service at all nearby intersections be at LOS D or better as required by City standards. As a result, the Applicant will not be required to prepare a Traffic Impact Analysis. This suggestion CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 and Decision - 8

was not fully agreed to by the City of Tumwater, leading to further discussions between the two Cities as to how to address traffic generated by the sports field. It was ultimately agreed that the Applicant will be required to conduct a Traffic Scoping Meeting and present a memo as to traffic impacts. Following this meeting and memo, the City will then determine if a Traffic Impact Analysis is necessary. The project has been conditioned on this requirement.

Ms. Smith concluded her testimony with a discussion as to how long the new Conditional Use Permit should be effective. The original 1984 permit, as well as the 2009 permit, were both intended to last ten years at which time a new permit would be issued, although both continued in effect for much longer periods. Both the Applicant and City Staff recommend that the 10-year limit be removed from the next Conditional Use Permit and that it instead remain in effect until a new Master Plan has been approved. This would still require separate Conditional Use Permits for any new major projects not recognized in the new Master Plan. The Staff's recommended conditions of permit approval reflect this change in the length of time the new Conditional Use Permit remains effective.

Ms. Smith concluded her testimony by confirming that City Staff recommends approval of a renewed Conditional Use Permit consistent with the College's new Master Plan subject to the conditions found at the conclusion of the Staff Report.

Applicant's Presentation. Following the City's presentation the Applicant appeared through its architect, Matt Lane. Mr. Lane confirmed that the Colleges does not oppose any of the conditions of permit approval suggested by City Staff. He also responded to concerns expressed by the Hearing Examiner that the proposed student housing may affect the surrounding residential neighborhood in a different way than the rest of the College by noting that the College has already begun an outreach program with the surrounding neighborhood to help ensure that the student housing is well received.

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Following Mr. Lane's brief testimony the College appeared through Tysha Tolefree, Vice President of Operations. Ms. Tolefree confirmed that the College would like to get underway with soccer field improvements before the end of the year, with the student housing project to follow one or two years later subject to financing. Ms. Tolefree added that no other major improvements are currently envisioned for the Olympia campus and that the College does not have any applications before the State Board for either design or construction of major new facilities. As a result, the campus is expected to retain its current look and feel for many years to come with the exception of the new student housing, improved sports facilities and other miscellaneous improvements noted in the new Master Plan. The Applicant therefore recommends that the proposed new Conditional Use Permit be allowed to continue in effect until a new Master Plan is proposed.

Ms. Tolefree was asked by the Hearing Examiner whether the College had begun work on policies governing the use of the proposed student housing (noise, lighting, social gatherings, traffic) as its impact on nearby neighborhoods will be of a different type than current College operations. Ms. Tolefree responded that the College has not yet addressed such policies as the date of construction is still some time from now.

Public Comment. There were no members of the public present and no public comment was received. With the exception of some initial public comment during the early stages of this application there has been little or no public comment and no material opposition.

#### ANALYSIS

To date, SPSCC has operated under Conditional Use Permits granted in 1984 and 2009 which have regulated the College's steady development and maturity. During the same time the surrounding neighborhoods have also developed and matured. The net result is a handsome, well-developed college campus surrounded by well developed neighborhoods.

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The College's student population has grown to more than 4,000 students, with more growth in student population expected. Nonetheless, the College's new Master Plan envisions a slower pace of growth and no new campus facilities for many years to come. While the new Master Plan proposes the introduction of student housing on campus, no other significant new facilities are proposed with the only other campus improvements being upgrades to the outdoor sports fields and a new pedestrian bridge. Importantly, the College is currently not applying to the State Board for either the design or construction of new facilities, meaning that any State funded project should be many years in the future.

It is in the context of this mature, stable campus that the College seeks a new Conditional Use Permit in recognition of a its updated Master Plan. It is telling that there has been no public opposition, or even public comment, in response to the proposed new Conditional Use Permit. It is clear that a stable, comfortable relationship now exists between the College and its neighbors. The terms of a new Conditional Use Permit should take this into consideration.

With these observations in mind, the request for a new Conditional Use Permit raises three important questions:

- Should a new permit have the same 10-year limit as the two previous Conditional 1. Use Permits?
- Is the proposed student housing an allowed use within the campuses R4-8 zoning 2. district?
- Should the proposed new projects, especially the proposed student housing 3. project, be required to undergo additional public hearings?

Length of the New Conditional Use Permit. The 1984 Permit was issued when the College was young and just developing, while the 2009 follow-up Permit was issued while the College was in the midst of a dynamic growth phase. It is therefore understandable that the then Hearing Examiner placed a 10-year limit on each Permit to ensure that the College's planning CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 and Decision - 11

kept pace with its physical growth and with the growth of the surrounding neighborhoods. As noted above, the same is no longer true today: The pace of campus growth has slowed and the campus and surrounding neighborhoods have matured. The College and the City assert that on a 10-year limit on a new Permit has no real purpose, and that the better limit on the Permit's term is the approval of a new Master Plan by the College. In the meantime, should any significant capital projects be proposed (other than the ones recognized in the recent Master Plan) they will need their own Conditional Use Permits. Collectively, this assures that any important new development will undergo public review. I agree with this approach and am therefore removing the 10-year limit on the new Conditional Use Permit, making it instead effective until a new Master Plan is proposed.

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Is Student Housing an Allowed Use? All of the SPCCC campus within the City of Olympia has a zoning designation of R4-8. As earlier noted in the Public Hearing Section, City Staff recognizes that its zoning code expressly prohibits "student dormitories" in the R4-8 zone. On its face, then, the proposed student housing project appears to be prohibited by the City's' zoning regulations.

City Staff finds to the contrary. Instead, Staff finds that a student housing project located within a college campus operating under an approved Conditional Use Permit is exempt from the prohibition on student dormitories, and that the proposed housing is instead a usual, customary and accessory use within the College's larger approved use as an Essential Public Facility. This issue is one of first impression and no analogous issues have come before the Hearing Examiner in Olympia. It therefore must be decided whether the City's interpretation of its own ordinance is correct. In doing so, it is important to remember that the City Council has directed the Hearing Examiner to grant deference to City Staff when it is interpreting its own ordinances.

"Deference" does not equate to unquestioned acceptance of the City's interpretation but it does require acceptance if the City's interpretation is a reasonable one. I conclude that the City's

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Additional Public Review of the Student Housing Project. As proposed, approval of the requested Conditional Use Permit will eliminate a separate, future Conditional Use Permit for the student housing project. This results in there being no further public hearings before the housing project is allowed to get underway. I have some concerns about this result. Although the as-built campus has a good relationship with its surrounding neighborhoods, that relationship is based upon a long-established set of College operations, almost all of which occur during the daytime hours. The proposed student housing introduces an entirely different dynamic to the campuses operations - a dynamic that is almost exclusively occurring during the evening and nighttime hours. Although there has been no substantive concerns expressed by neighbors over this new dynamic, the reason for the lack of concern is not clear. While it may be that residential neighbors have no worries about student housing, it may also be that the project has not yet reached a definite-enough stage to get the public's attention. As mentioned during the public hearing. I have concerns over the housing project's "2:00 a.m. issues", that is, the way in which it might affect adjoining neighborhoods during nighttime hours as a result of traffic, noise, lighting, social gatherings, and public safety. Should some of the College's entrance/exit points be closed late at night to focus traffic to certain locations? Should campus lighting be increased for safety? - but in a manner which minimizes its impact upon neighbors? Should campus security be increased? A more careful review would likely raise additional questions about the project's interaction with surrounding neighborhoods. The College's administration acknowledges that it

has not yet given careful consideration to these issues and has not begun to develop a set of

policies for the operation of the housing facilities, as construction is likely a few years from now.

interpretation is reasonable and should therefore be accepted. Thus, a student housing project

which would not be allowed in that portion of the R4-8 zoning district outside of the campus, is

allowed within the campus as a usual, customary and accessory use.

I fear that the lack of any real consideration about these issues to date, coupled with the lack of any future opportunity for public comment, may have unintended consequences.

I therefore conclude that the College should be required to present a set of proposed policies for the operation of the student housing facility at the Presubmission Conference. These policies should address issues such as noise, lighting, traffic, visitors, social gatherings, campus safety, etc. This requirement is similar to that imposed on the sports field improvements with respect to noise (Condition 7A.3). Staff can then review those policies, determine if they are suitable, and also determine whether any public input should be solicited.

Subject to this additional condition, I conclude that the proposed student housing project should not require a separate Conditional Use Permit.

In summary, I concur with with Staff that the new Conditional Use Permit should be granted subject to the conditions by Staff with the one exception that an additional requirement should be imposed on the student housing project requiring the College to submit proposed rules of operation at the time of the Presubmission Conference. Proposed Condition 7.B (first paragraph) should therefore be revised as follows:

#### "B. Student Housing.

A Presubmission Conference should be requested by the applicant to obtain land use review process details of what plans and reports are needed and if a land use waiver could be given. The applicant shall present a proposed set of rules for the operation of the student housing facility at the Presubmission Conference. The proposed rules shall address, among other things, the regulation of noise, lighting, traffic, visitors, social gatherings and other potential impacts to the campus and to the surrounding neighborhood, especially the project's evening and nighttime impacts. Design Review applicability would also be reviewed by staff to determine if exceptions under OMC 18.100.070.B applies."

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I also concur with Staff that the College's new Conditional Use Permit should not require a 10-year limit on its effectiveness and should instead remain effective until the campuses next Master Plan.

Accordingly, I make the following:

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

- The Applicant, South Puget Sound Community College ("SPSCC" or "College") 1. requests a new Conditional Use Permit, replacing its existing Permit issued in 2009. The proposed new Conditional Use Permit would adopt the College's recent Master Plan which, in turn, proposes four new projects or improvements to the campus: (1) a new 4-story residential housing building to accommodate approximately 150 students; (2) improvements to the existing sports fields including artificial turf, bleachers, lighting, and other accessory structures; (3) a pedestrian bridge crossing Percival Creek along Dr .Nels Hansen Way; and (4) various other, minor improvements to the building, pathways and landscaping. These proposed changes are set forth in detail at pages 36-38 of the revised Master Plan, Attachment 2 to the Staff Report.
- Any Findings of Fact contained in the foregoing Background, Public Hearing or 2. Analysis Sections are incorporated herein by reference and adopted by the Hearing Examiner as his Findings of Fact.
- Any Findings of Fact contained in the Decision approving the previous 3. Conditional Use Permit, Case No. 08-0095, are incorporated by reference except for any Findings in conflict with the Findings contained in this Decision.
- The requested Conditional Use Permit applies to the College's main campus at 4. 2011 Mottman Road SW and, in particular, to that portion of the main campus located within the City of Olympia.
- The majority of the College's 102-acre main campus is located within the City of 5. Olympia, but small portions are located within the City of Tumwater as earlier noted in the CITY OF OLYMPIA HEARING EXAMINER Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law 299 N.W. CENTER ST. / P.O. BOX 939 and Decision - 15

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- 14. A virtual information meeting was conducted on July 22, 2024. A few members of the public were present and expressed concerns largely relating to increased traffic (Attachment 6).
- 15. Additional public comment was received from members of the public as well as several agencies, including the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce and the Thurston Economic Development Council (Attachment 7).
- 16. The Applicant responded to public comments through a letter dated August 7, 2024 (Attachment 8). No further comments were received and there has been no additional public comment since.
- 17. Agency comments have been received from the Squaxin Tribe and from the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA). Tribal concerns have been addressed through a condition of permit approval requiring an Inadvertent Discovery Plan in place during any construction.
- 18. Notice of the hearing before the Hearing Examiner was issued on February 25, 2025, to property owners within 300 feet and parties of record, posted on the site and published in The Olympian on February 28, 2025, in conformance with the OMC 18.78.020.
- 19. As noted in earlier Findings, there has been no additional public comment in response to the Notice of Hearing and there is no public opposition to the requested Permit.

# Findings Relating to Consistency with the Citty's Comprehensive Plan

20. The Staff Report, at page 4, addresses the application's consistency with the Olympia Comprehensive Plan. Staff finds that the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and, in particular, is consistent with Goal GL1 and Policy PL161; Goal 15 and Policy 15.6; Goal GL20 and Policy PL20.1; and Goal GE6 and Policy PE6.7. The Hearing Examiner concurs.

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<u>Findings Relating to Compliance with the Requirements for Residential Districts</u>, Chapter 18.04 OMC.

- 21. As noted earlier, the College's campus within the City of Olympia is entirely within the R4-8 residential district.
- 22. Pursuant to OMC 18.04.040 and Table 4.01, student dormitories and apartments are not permitted in the R4-8 zoning district.
- 23. The College's updated Master Plan proposes for the construction of a 4-story student housing project to provide housing for up to approximately 150 students.
- 24. City Staff finds that the prohibition on student dormitories and apartments does not apply to the College campus, as the College is an approved Essential Public Facility and the proposed student housing is a usual and customary activity within the approved use, and serves as an accessory use to the College's approved use. Thus, while a similar facility would not be allowed off-campus within the R4-8 zoning district, it is allowed within the campus as an accessory use. The Hearing Examiner concurs
- 25. Pursuant to OMC 18.04.060.CC, all schools, including colleges, located within residential zoning districts must satisfy various requirements for site and size, outdoor play area, building size, screening, use of portable classrooms and building expansion. The Staff Report, commencing at page 5, analyzes the project with respect to each of these requirements and finds that the project, as conditioned, satisfies all applicable requirements for schools as imposed by OMC 18.04.060.CC.
- 26. The project must also satisfy the development standards set forth in OMC 18.04.080 with respect to maximum building size, impervious coverage, maximum hard surface, building height and setbacks. The Staff Report examines these requirements at page 6 and finds that the project, as conditioned, complies with these requirements or will be confirmed to comply at time of building permit issuance.

or OMC 18.32.425. Has either an improvement to an existing improved right-of-way or as a

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road/street expansion to an existing corridor. Project approval has therefore been conditioned upon allowing Staff to undertake Critical Area review well in advance of any actual permitting.

- 32. The proposed student housing is anticipated to be located near the 140-foot buffer associated with a nearby wetland as shown on page 146 of the College's Master Plan (Attachment 2).
- 33. Although not directly affecting this wetland buffer, the College's wetland biologist finds that student housing activities could impact the buffer unless it is protected from encroachment. The City therefore recommends that, as a condition of project approval, the College will comply with the project biologist's recommendations and provide fencing and signage as needed to prevent encroachment.
- 34. The proposed location of the student housing building will impact previous mitigation plantings that had been installed in mitigation of an earlier stormwater pond project. Project approval has therefore been conditioned on requiring that these mitigation plantings be reestablished in degraded wetland buffer areas located south of the existing sports fields.
  - 35. All replanting must be consistent with the requirements of OMC 18.32.136.
- 36. As noted elsewhere, the updated Master Plan proposes significant improvements to the existing sports fields including the addition of artificial turf, bleacher seating, concession stands, a field house building and outdoor lighting. The existing sports fields have been located in the same location and predate the City's wetlands and other Critical Areas regulations.
- 37. The existing sports fields are located within the buffer of an adjoining wetland as calculated by current wetland regulations.
- 38. The affected wetland buffers lie partially within the City of Olympia and partially within the City of Tumwater.
- 39. The City of Olympia finds that the existing sports fields are a legally established nonconforming use and are allowed to continue in use pursuant to OMC 18.37.070. In Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law

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- 40. The City of Tumwater finds that, as the sports fields have been in use since at least 1990 pursuant to historical aerial photos, they are an existing legal nonconforming use pursuant to TMC 16.28.290 as they are uses that were legally existing or approved prior to the passage of Chapter 16.28 TMC effective August 20, 1991, subject, however, to the requirement that the allowed use shall not be expanded, changed, enlarged or altered in any way that increases its nonconformity. Tumwater Staff finds that the proposed improvements to the sports fields do not increase their nonconformity.
- 41. As a result, both Olympia and Tumwater concur that the existing sports fields are an existing use and are allowed to remain consistent with each City's regulations on nonconforming uses.
- 42. An issue has arisen as to whether the proposed conversion of the fields to artificial turf is an allowed improvement within the wetland buffer. In response, the College has obtained a wetland report as part of its updated Master Plan (page 148 of Attachment 2) which concludes that the artificial turf will have no negative impact to wetlands, and that proposed mitigation measures will enhance and improve existing degraded wetland buffers, thus increasing wetland functions. Both Cities concur with these Findings subject to the requirement that permanent fencing and signage be installed at the edge of the improvements to the field adjacent to the wetlands to protect against any further encroachment.

### Findings Relating to Parking.

43. The current Conditional Use Permit for the College, as well as the original 1984 Conditional Use Permit, imposed a parking requirement of 0.22 parking spaces per student (based upon headcount, nor FTE). This requirement was to be reevaluated every ten years to ensure that available parking is consistent with the student population.

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- 44. The College has provided a Traffic and Parking Demand Scoping Analysis prepared by SCJ Alliance (page 215 of Attachment 2). This analysis finds that 0.22 parking stalls per headcount continues to serve as an appropriate ratio for College parking.
- 45. The projected headcount for the Olympia campus for in-person students during the 2034-2035 school year is projected to be 4,125.
- 46. Applying the 0.22 stall per headcount ratio to forecasted student population, the College has a current need for 908 parking stalls to support its projected population growth.
- 47. There are 1,514 vehicle parking stalls currently found on the campus. The number of current parking stalls therefore significantly exceeds the projected need for parking.
- 48. The proposed student housing project will eliminate 13 parking stalls. This minor reduction in the available parking will not affect the College's compliance with its parking needs.
- 49. There are two existing parking lots located in close proximity to the proposed student housing (Lots F and H). Collectively, these lots provide 648 parking stalls.
- 50. The parking analysis referenced above finds that the maximum possible attendance at a varsity game at the nearby sports fields, coupled with parking needed for the student housing project, would total 226 needed parking stalls for this combined occurrence. Nearby Lot F and H have more than sufficient parking stalls for this occurrence
- 51. College administration officials believe that the growing reliance on virtual teaching, coupled with increased attendance at the College's satellite campuses, will likely decrease the future need for parking at the main campus. As a result, College officials believe that the campus currently has sufficient parking for all existing and projected College activities.
- 52. City Staff concurs with the College's analysis and finds that the campus' current parking is sufficient for all current and anticipated activities. The Hearing Examiner concurs.

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Findings Relating to Compliance with Property Development and Protection Standards, Including Lighting and Noise, Chapter 18.40 OMC.

- 53. Pursuant to OMC 18.40.060, all display and flood lighting shall be constructed and used so as to not unduly illuminate the surrounding properties and not create a traffic hazard.
- The Applicant has provided the City with a Lighting Analysis (page 232 of 54. Attachment 2) to demonstrate how the lighting for the sports field improvements will affect surrounding properties. The Lighting Analysis concludes that the proposed improvements to the sports fields will result in nearly zero lighting reaching adjoining neighborhoods, and that the only nearby properties potentially affected by the field's lighting will be the campuses adjoining parking lots to the east and west.
- The project must also comply with the noise standards found in OMC 18.40.080. 55. City Staff acknowledges that the improved fields are likely to increase the use of the fields and therefore generate more noise than historical uses.
- As noted in the Staff Report at page 10, the nearest residential properties range 56. from 200 feet to 700 feet from the fields. The updated Master Plan does not identify what policies and procedures will be imposed to ensure that noise standards are met. City Staff has therefore conditioned permit approval upon the College adopting policies and procedures addressing noise generated from the sports fields consistent with the noise regulations (proposed Condition No 7.A.3).

# Findings Relating to Future Land Use Approval.

The Staff Report, beginning at page 10, discusses whether the projects identified 57. in the updated Master Plan (student housing, improved sports fields, pedestrian bridge, etc.), will require land use review pursuant to OMC 18.70.020. Staff finds that the proposed projects are likely to require land use review as substantial revisions to existing site plans.

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- 58. Staff further finds that the proposed projects may be entitled to a waiver from land use review but Staff recommends against any such waiver, noting that it is uncertain when the proposed improvements to the campus found in the updated Master Plan will be undertaken. As a result, City Staff recommends that the permit should be conditioned upon requiring the College to submit an application for a Presubmission Conference for: (1) the student housing project; (2) improvements to the sports fields; and (3) the Percival Creek pedestrian crossing. Staff finds that this will allow a more detailed review of each project at time of application. This review may lead to a determination that a land use waiver is appropriate. Staff has therefore conditioned permit approval on this requirement. The Hearing Examiner concurs with Staff's Findings and also concurs with the proposed condition.
- 59. As noted in the Analysis Section, the Hearing Examiner also finds that the College should be required to submit a draft set of policies for the operation of the student housing project as part of its application for a Presubmission Conference. The language for this additional condition is found in the Analysis Section.

#### Findings Relating to the Length of the Conditional Use Permit.

- 60. As noted earlier, the previous Conditional Use Permits for the main campus were effective for 10 years. Projects recognized within the approved Master Plans and constructed within the allowed 10 years were not required to obtain a separate Conditional Use Permit.
- 61. Staff recommends, and the College concurs, that the new Conditional Use Permit should no longer be limited to a 10-year period and should remain in effect until a new Master Plan is approved. The Hearing Examiner concurs.
- 62. New capital projects or substantial revisions to existing facilities not recognized in the updated Master Plan will continue to require their own Conditional Use Permit.

### Findings Relating to Design Review.

- 63. Projects having a building area greater than 5,000 square feet and requiring a Conditional Use Permit within a residential zone must also undergo Design Review by the Design Review Board. OMC 18.100.060.
- 64. It is not yet known whether the student housing project will involve a building greater than 5,000 square feet. It is therefore unknown whether that project will require Design Review by the Design Review Board.
- 65. Staff finds that the student housing project may fall under an exception to Design Review pursuant to OMC 18.100.060.B. Staff therefore recommends that the project be conditioned upon a later assessment of Design Review requirements for the student housing project at the time of its Presubmission Conference. The Hearing Examiner concurs. This requirement has been included in the conditions of project approval.

# Findings Relating to Engineering Requirements, Including Traffic.

- 66. The Staff Report, commencing at page 12, undertakes an analysis of how the updated Master Plan will provide for water, sewer, storm drainage, solid waste, and traffic. Staff finds that the project, as conditioned, makes adequate provision for water and sewer, storm drainage and solid waste.
- 67. The Applicant has provided the City with a Traffic Memorandum (page 84 of Attachment 2) providing an analysis of traffic impacts resulting from the proposed student housing project and sports field improvements.
- 68. The Traffic Memorandum finds, and City Staff concurs, that the student housing project will result in a net reduction of 7 trips per weekday PM period. At the same time, traffic generated by the student housing project is not likely to generate additional offsite traffic impacts.

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69. The Memorandum funds, and Staff concurs, that the improved sports fields are not expected to have any new net trip generation impacts over what currently occurs, noting that athletic events are likely to occur on weekday evenings and weekends when traffic volumes are much lower.

- 70. Staff finds that an athletic event could generate up to 150 trips but that these trips would be during lower volume off-peak times and, further, would be distributed among several points of ingress and egress throughout the campus, with no College entrance having greater than 50 trips. As a result, Staff finds that events at the improved sports fields are not likely to create any significant traffic impact and will not impair Levels of Service.
- 71. The City of Tumwater has some remaining concerns over traffic generated by the improved sports fields. Their concerns led to a meeting between the two Cities' staff wherein it was agreed that the College would be required to conduct a traffic scoping meeting with Olympia (with Tumwater staff included) before submitting an application for the development of the athletic field improvements. The required Traffic Memo will need to identify all of the requirements set out in the City's EDDS. The City will then decide if a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) is required. This requirement is included as a condition of Conditional Use Permit approval.

Finding Relating to Tree Preservation and Tree Density, Chapter 16.60 OMC.

- 72. Pursuant to OMC 16.60.080, any new development resulting in site disturbing activities must provide for a minimum of 30 tree units per acre.
- 73. The projects proposed in the updated Master Plan are expected to result in the removal of some trees. The new Conditional Use Permit has been conditioned on a requirement that any new building or addition, or any other site disturbance, will require a Level II Soil and Vegetation Plan undertaken pursuant to the City's Forestry Manual to ensure that the requirements of OMC 16.60.080 will be met.

- 74. City Staff recommends approval of the requested updated Conditional Use Permit subject to the seven conditions found in the Staff Report beginning at page 14. The Applicant has no objection to these proposed conditions.
  - 75. There is no public opposition to the requested Permit.

Based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Hearing Examiner makes the following:

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. The Hearing Examiner has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter.
- 2. Any Conclusions of Law contained in the foregoing Background Section, Public Hearing Section, Analysis Section or contained in the foregoing Findings of Fact are hereby incorporated by reference and adopted by the Hearing Examiner as his Conclusions of Law.
  - 3. All notice requirements have been met.
  - 4. The requirements of SEPA have been met.
  - 5. The existing College campus is an Essential Public Facility.
- 6. A Conditional Use Permit is required for Essential Public Facilities in the R4-8 zoning district in which the campus is located. OMC 18.04.040.
- 7. The Hearing Examiner must grant deference to City Staff in their interpretation of City ordinances.
- 8. The Hearing Examiner concurs with the Staff's interpretation on the prohibition on student dormitories in the R4-8 zoning district, and that this prohibition does not apply within the College campus, as the College campus is an approved Essential Public Facility and the proposed student housing is a customary and usual use within the approved use, and is permissible as an accessory use to the approved use as a campus.

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- 4. **Building Height.** A maximum 60' building height is allowed for buildings that are located at least 100' setback from adjacent residentially zoned property line per OMC 18.04.080.I.4.
- 5. **Civil Engineering Plans.** The applicant shall submit a final Civil Engineering application for any water and sewer, storm drainage report, solid waste, any pedestrian pathway projects, a Level 2 Soils and Vegetation Plan (if applicable) shown in the Master Plan that require permitting for such. General facility charges will be accessed at time of review. An Inadvertent Discovery Plan will be required for all projects that involve excavation of soil. Drainage Design Report shall be subject to the adopted code in place at time of application. All construction plans shall provide impervious and hard surface coverage totals when applicable. Also see condition 7.
- 6. **Landscaping Buffer/fencing.** The existing 30-foot vegetation landscaping buffer surrounding the college per the screening requirements for residential adjacent properties shall be maintained as well as the north and south property line fencing that abuts the residential subdivision on the west side of Percival Creek (Per 2008 Hearing conditions).
- 7. **Project Specific Conditions.** The following are conditions that shall be met based on the specific projects within the Master Plan:

### A. <u>Sport Field Improvements</u>

- 1. A Presubmission Conference should be requested by the applicant to obtain land use review process details of what plans and reports are needed. A determination as to if the project could receive a land use waiver could be decided at that time.
- 2. For permitting submittal, the applicant shall also provide the following for planning staff to review: Detailed site plan, detailed construction drawings of the turf field, final landscaping plans, mitigation planting plans, all construction plans to provide building, impervious and hard surface coverage totals and details showing all wetland protection measures and permanent fencing and signage being provided.
- 3. The College shall provide proposed policies and procedures measures they propose to adopt that address noise generated activities at the field and how they plan to limit those events and meet WAC Chapter 173-60 to have on file with the City.

### B. Student Housing

A Presubmission Conference should be requested by the applicant to obtain land use review process details of what plans and reports are needed and if a land use waiver could be given. The applicant shall present a proposed set of rules for the operation of the student housing facility at the Presubmission Conference. The proposed rules shall address, among other things, the regulation of noise, lighting, traffic, visitors, social gatherings and other potential impacts to the campus and to the surrounding neighborhood, especially the project's evening and nighttime impacts. Design Review applicability would also be reviewed by staff to determine if exceptions under OMC 18.100.070.B applies.

For permitting the applicant shall also provide the following for planning staff to review: Detailed site plan, detailed construction drawings with building elevations, final landscaping plans, mitigation planting plans, all construction plans to provide building, impervious and hard surface coverage totals and details showing all wetland protection measures and permanent fencing and signage being provided. Provide on the construction plans of the proposed locations and bicycle rack types for the long- and short-term bicycle parking facilities showing compliance to OMC 18.38, 220.C.

# C. Pedestrian Bridge Crossing

A Presubmission Conference should be requested by the applicant along with providing detailed pedestrian bridge construction plans well in advance of the proposed project for determination of critical area review and process.

D. <u>Miscellaneous Interior Renovations, including pathway and sidewalk</u>
Apply for the appropriate construction permitting and provide an applicable asbestos report with ORCAA as needed for any demolition projects. For projects that change any impervious or hard surface coverage, provide existing and proposed totals with the percentage of coverages shall be placed on all plans sets. If any tree removal is proposed with any exterior site improvements, then a Level 2 Soil and Vegetation Plan would be required. Any soil excavation will require an Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

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# RECONSIDERATION/APPEAL

This is a final decision of the City. Any party may file a Motion for Reconsideration within 10 days of service of this decision in accordance with OMC 18.75.060. Appeals shall be made to Superior Court pursuant to provisions of Chapter 36.70C RCW. The filing of a Motion for Reconsideration is not a prerequisite for seeking judicial review. If a Motion for Reconsideration is filed, the time for filing an appeal shall not commence until disposition of the Motion.
Motion.

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