

Olympia Planning Commission

May 7, 2025

Olympia City Council
PO Box 1967 Olympia
WA 98507-1967

SUBJECT: Development Code Updates to Support Urban Agriculture

Dear Councilmembers:

The Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) voted unanimously to **recommend with revisions** the adoption of the proposed Development Code Updates to Support Urban Agriculture text amendment ordinance as proposed by staff.

During the OPC public hearing on May 5th, the commission received no public comments. The conversation amongst commissioners included determining appropriate setback distances, safety concerns, and finding other best practices. Planning Commissioners found that mirroring language from Thurston County Olympia Urban Growth Area zoning code and the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) would be the easiest way to ensure consistency and enforceability.

As a result of these discussions, the OPC offers the suggestions below for City Council's consideration:

- Hives shall not be located within twenty-five feet of any lot line, provided this distance may be reduced to ten feet if strategies are employed to require bees to gain elevation before crossing the property line. This may include elevation changes of eight feet or more above the grade immediately adjacent to the grade of the lot on which the hives are located or behind a solid fence or hedge six feet high parallel to any lot line within twenty-five feet of a hive and extending at least twenty feet beyond the hive in both directions.
- Specify bees as "Bees" means adult insects, eggs, larvae, pupae, or other immature stages of the species *Apis mellifera*.
- Provide nuisance abatement language
- Research and provide additional best practices for agricultural uses in an urban setting

We commend Olympia community members for their work on this complicated topic, and City staff for their efforts at ensuring consistency with enforceability.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" being more prominent than the last name "Garcia".

**Daniel Garcia, Vice Chair
Olympia Planning Commission**

Enclosure: OPC Comment Letter re: Development Code Updates to Support Urban Agriculture