

Attachment I

Proposed Amendments to the Variance and Reasonable Use Exception Chapter:

18.66.010 Authority

The Director and Hearing Examiner shall have the authority to grant a variance and /or a reasonable use exception as set forth in this chapter following the procedural noticing requirements of ~~from the requirements of Chapter 18.32,~~ after considering the matter at a public hearing duly called and giving notice to adjoining property owners as provided in Chapter 18.78, Public Notification.

18.66.020 Variance

A. A Variance is a mechanism that allows the provisions of OMC Title 18 to be varied on a case by case basis. Approval of a variance may only be granted when it is for relief from a dimensional standard when the requirement of such would result in an unusual or unreasonable hardship. Before any variance is granted, the Director for single family development proposals, and the Hearing Examiner for all other applicable development types shall find that the following circumstances exist:

1. That the proposed variance will not amount to a rezone or constitute a change in the district boundaries shown on the Official Zoning Map;
2. That because of special circumstances relating to the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings of the subject property the variance is necessary to provide it with use rights and privileges permitted to other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is located;
3. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;
4. That granting of the variance will not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation upon uses of other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the property is located;
5. That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone in which subject property is situated; and
6. That the variance is the minimum variance necessary to provide the rights and privileges described above.

18.66.040 Reasonable Use Exception

A. Applicability and Intent. A Reasonable Use Exception is a unique type of variance that pertains to the regulations within the Critical Area Ordinance (OMC 18.32). An applicant may apply for a reasonable use exception if it can be demonstrated that application of the Critical Area Regulations would deny all reasonable use of property. A reasonable use exception is intended as a "last resort" when no plan and/or mitigation can meet applicable requirements in a way that would allow the applicant a reasonable use of their property. Before any reasonable use exception may be granted, the Director for single family residential development proposals with buffer reductions of less than 75% and Hearing Examiner for all other requests shall find that the proposal meets all of the following criteria: circumstances exist:

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~~A. The property has been in a single ownership (i.e., not held in conjunction with any adjacent lot, tract or parcel) since January 10, 1985 or, if the property was held in conjunction with any other adjacent lot, tract or parcel since January 10, 1985, the then applicable provisions of this Chapter denied all reasonable economic use of the properties as combined;~~

A. The application of ~~this OMC 18.32, the Critical Area Ordinance, Chapter~~ would deny all reasonable economic use of the property;

B. No other reasonable economic use of the property would have less impact on any critical area;

C. The use proposed is the minimum necessary to allow for reasonable economic use of the property. Project plans must demonstrate:

1. Other development alternatives did not result in less impact to the critical area. An alternatives analysis must address: a change in use, reduction in project size, and variances for setback and other development standards.

2. Impervious surface coverage shall not exceed 2,500 square feet or 6% of the parcel. Exceptions outlined in OMC 18.04.080.k.3. Note: hard surface limits of the underlying zone apply;

E. The inability of the applicant to derive reasonable economic use of the property is not the result of actions by the applicant or their predecessor(s), after the effective date of ~~this Chapter~~ the Critical Area Ordinance (June 5, 2005). ;

F. The proposal does not pose an unreasonable threat to the public health, safety, or welfare on or off the development proposal site;

G. The design maximizes protection and mitigates impacts to any critical area functions and values consistent with the best available science; and

H. The proposal is consistent with all other applicable regulations and standards.

I. The following criteria are in addition to the criteria above, and apply only to exception requests to reduce buffers by more than 75% and for request to construct within a critical area itself. When applicable, either of the following must be met in order to be eligible for the exception and such exception request requires Hearing Examiner review:

1. The property must have been in a single ownership (i.e., not held in conjunction with any adjacent / abutting lot(s), tract(s) or parcel(s)) since the adoption of the Critical Area Regulations (June 5, 2005); or

2. If the property was held in conjunction with any other adjacent / abutting lot(s), tract(s) or parcel(s) since the adoption of the Critical Area Regulations (June 5, 2005) the condition causing the request cannot have been caused by the sale or separation of the parcel(s) from the larger consolidated group of parcels.

18.66.050 Additional conditions of approval

Before granting a variance or reasonable use exception, the Hearing Examiner or Director as appropriate, may prescribe appropriate conditions and safeguards that will ensure that the purpose and intent of this Title shall not be violated.

Violation of such conditions and safeguards when made part of the terms under which the variance or reasonable use

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exception is granted, shall be deemed a violation of this Title and punishable under Chapter [18.73](#), Civil and Criminal Penalty.

18.66.060 Limitation of use

With respect to uses of land, buildings and other structures, this Title is declared to be a definition of the public interest by City Council, and the spirit of this Title will not be observed by any variance which permits a use not generally or by conditional use, permitted in the district involved, or any use expressly or by implication prohibited, by the terms of this Title in the district. Therefore, under no circumstances shall the Hearing Examiner or Director, grant a variance to permit a use not generally or by conditional use permitted in the district involved, or any use expressly or by implication prohibited, by the terms of this Title in the district.

Proposed Amendments to the Permit Processing Chapter:

These changes would be necessary to accompany the variance / reasonable use exception changes proposed related to Director Approval Authority.

18.72.100 Review and appeal authority

The following table describes development permits and the final decision and appeal authorities. When separate applications are consolidated at the applicant’s request, the final decision shall be rendered by the highest authority designated for any part of the consolidated application.

KEY:

- Director = Community Planning and Development Director or designee
- SPRC = Site Plan Review Committee
- DRB = Design Review Board
- PC = Planning Commission
- HC = Heritage Commission
- HE = Hearing Examiner
- Council = City Council
- R = Recommendation to Higher Review Authority
- D = Decision
- O = Open Record Appeal Hearing
- C = Closed Record Appeal Hearing

[NOTE: City Council decisions may be appealed to Superior Court except comprehensive plan decisions which may be appealed to the State Growth Management Hearings Board.]

	Director	SPRC	DRB	PC	HC	HE	Council
ZONING							
Conditional Use Permit	D	R				D	
Interpretations	D					O	

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	Director	SPRC	DRB	PC	HC	HE	Council
Land Use Review	D ¹	R				O	
Small Lot Review	D					O	
Townhouse (2 – 4 Units)	D					O	
Townhouse (10 or more units)		R	R			D	
Townhouse Final (2-9)	D					O	
Townhouse Final (10 or more)		R					D
Zoning Variance	R					D	
Administrative Zoning Variance	D	R				O	
Zone Map Change, without Plan Amendment	R					R	D
Zone Change, with Plan Amendment or Ordinance Text Amendment	R			R			D
Home Occupation	D					O	
Temporary Use Permit	D					O	
SEPA exempt Building Permit	D					O	
Parking or Fence Modification Variance	D	R				O	
Accessory Dwelling Unit	D					O	
Short-Term Rental – Vacation Rental	D					O	
Accessory Building	D					O	
Occupancy Permit	D					O	
Sign Permit	D					O	
Landscape Plan	D					O	
Tree Plan	D					O	
Historic Properties	D	R			R	O	
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN							
Amendments (map, text)	R			R			D
DESIGN REVIEW							
Detailed Review	D		R				
major			O				
Concept Review	D	R	R			O	
Signs (general)	D					O	
Scenic Vistas	D	R	R			O	
ENVIRONMENTAL							

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	Director	SPRC	DRB	PC	HC	HE	Council
Threshold Determination	D					O	
Impact Statement Adequacy	D					O	
Reasonable Use Exception	R					D	
Administrative Reasonable Use Exception	D	R				O	
SEPA Mitigating Conditions	D					O	
Shoreline Substantial Development Permit	D	R				O	
Shoreline Conditional Use Permit		R				D	
Shoreline Variance		R				D	
Shoreline Permit Revision or Exemption	D					O	
SUBDIVISION							
Boundary Line Adjustment (including lot consolidation)	D					O	
Preliminary Plat, Long	R					D	
Preliminary Short, (2-9 lots)	D ¹					O	
Final Short Plat	D					O	
Final Long Plat	D					O	
Master Plan Approval	R		R			R	D
MPD Project Approval		R	R			D	
Preliminary PRD		R				R	D
Final PRD		R					D
Time Extensions	D					O	

¹ Except when the Director refers the project for a public hearing before the Hearing Examiner pursuant to OMC [18.60.080](#) or [17.32.130\(A\)\(4\)](#).

18.72.120 Permit review time periods

A. Notice of Completeness. The Department shall provide a written notice within twenty-eight (28) days of the date of receipt of any application stating whether the application is complete, and identifying any other governmental agencies known to have jurisdiction over the proposal; or if not complete setting forth any deficiency of the application, and specifying a date upon which the application will be null and void if any deficiencies have not been corrected. Upon receipt of any required additional information, the Department shall notify the applicant within fourteen (14) days whether the application is now complete or what additional information is necessary.

B. Weekends and Holidays. Regardless of whether any period is a minimum or maximum, when any permit review, notice or decision time limit of this Title terminates upon a weekend or City holiday, such time limit shall automatically be extended to the first following non-holiday weekday.

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C. Review Period. The review and processing of project permit applications shall result in a decision being rendered within time limits set forth below.

D. Notice of Delayed Decision. If the City is unable to issue its final decision within the time limits listed below, the City will provide written notice of this fact to the applicant. The notice shall include a statement of reasons why the time limits have not been met and an estimated date for issuance of a final decision.

E. Request for Timeline. Where no time limit is specified, upon written request the City will provide an estimated time of review. (Also see Council Resolution regarding exceptions.)

F. Application Time Limits.

PLANNING APPLICATION TYPE	TIME LIMIT
Site-Specific Rezones (also see OMC 18.58.040)	180-days
Environmental Review (SEPA Checklist and Assessment)	90-days
Environmental Impact Statement (draft)	365-days
Short Plats	90-days
Land Use Approval	120-days
Preliminary Plat (10 or more lots)	90-days
Preliminary Planned Residential Development	90-days
Final Planned Residential Development	30-days
Final Plat	30-days
Conditional Use Permit	120-days
Conditional Use Permit – Residential	120-days
Variance / Reasonable Use Exception	90-days
Shoreline Substantial Development Permit	120-days
Shoreline Exemption	90-days
Time Extension or Modification	90-days
Boundary Line Adjustment	90-days
Appeal to Hearing Examiner	90-days
ENGINEERING PERMIT APPLICATION TYPE	TIME LIMIT
Short Plat	120 days
Long Plat	120 days
Utility Extension (in-city)	120 days
Commercial	120 days
Multifamily	120 days
BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION TYPE	TIME LIMIT
New Single-family Residential	30-days

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Residential Addition/Remodel	30-days
New Multifamily	120-days
New Commercial	120-days
Commercial Addition/Remodel	120-days

G. Time Limit Exceptions. The time limits set forth above do not include:

1. Up to the first twenty-eight (28) days after receipt of an application during which the City determines whether the application is complete.
2. Any period during which the applicant has been requested by the City to correct plans, perform studies or provide additional information requested by the City.
3. If the City determines that the additional information submitted to the City by the applicant under Subsection (2) above is insufficient, the City shall notify the applicant of the deficiencies and the procedures of Subsection (2) shall apply as if a new request for information has been made.
4. Any appeal period. Decisions regarding appeals shall be issued by the Examiner within 90 days of receipt of an appeal.
5. Any extension of time mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the City.
6. The time required to prepare and issue a final EIS in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act.

18.72.140 Expiration of approvals

Knowledge of the expiration date of any approval is the responsibility of the applicant. The City shall not be held accountable for notification of expirations.

A. Variance/[Reasonable Use Exception](#). Unless exercised, a variance [or reasonable use exception](#) shall expire one year from the date a final decision is issued. If timely exercised, a variance [or reasonable use exception](#) shall be valid indefinitely.

B. Conditional Use Permit. Unless exercised or otherwise specified, a conditional use permit shall be void one (1) year from the date a notice of final decision was issued. If exercised, a conditional use permit shall be valid for the amount of time specified by the approval authority. If the use allowed by the permit is inactive, discontinued or abandoned for twelve (12) consecutive months, the permit is void and a new permit shall be obtained in accordance with the provisions of this title prior to resuming operations.

C. Home Occupation Permit. A home occupation permit shall be valid indefinitely unless a time limitation is specified by staff or the Hearing Examiner or it is revoked for lack of compliance to conditions. A home occupation permit shall be void unless exercised within one (1) year from the date such permit was issued. If the use allowed by the permit is inactive, discontinued or abandoned for twelve (12) consecutive months, the permit is void and a new permit shall be applied for and obtained in accordance with the provisions of this title prior to resuming operations. A Home Occupation permit shall not be transferable to a new site or entity.

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D. Land Use Approval. Unless exercised by complete application for necessary construction permits, any land use approval shall expire and be null and void two years from the date the final approval was issued. Land use approval shall be extended two additional years if a complete building or other construction permit application for the project is submitted prior to expiration of the land use approval. Even absent such application, upon finding that there has been no substantial change in relevant circumstances and standards, land use approval may be extended up to two (2) additional years by the Director pursuant to a written request submitted prior to expiration of land use approval. Upon receiving such request, notice shall be provided pursuant to the comparable notice of application procedures of Table 78-1. Following a comment period of at least 14 days, the Director may grant, limit or deny the extension and may impose such conditions of extension to ensure compliance with any subsequently revised standards. If such written request for extension is not received by the Department prior to expiration, such extension shall be denied.

E. Detailed Design Review approval shall expire simultaneously with expiration of any associated building or other construction permit.

18.78.020 Procedures

To inform the public of proposed project actions, the Department and applicants shall provide notice as identified in Table 78-1. A vicinity map and basic site plan shall be included with any mailed notices. If a project is SEPA-exempt and no public hearing is required, notice of application as required by RCW [36.70B.110\(5\)](#) will be limited to the type of notice described below.

TABLE 78-1

CITY OF OLYMPIA - PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

PROCESS	APPLICATION TYPE	NOTICE TYPES	WHEN	WHO
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN REVIEW	Multifamily/Commercial in DR districts/Master Planned Development	Mail	Public Meeting 10 Days	PO RNA PR
SEPA	Environmental Checklist	Mail	Notice of Application	PO RNA PR Agencies
		Post site Mail Notify Paper	SEPA Threshold Determination	PO RNA PR Agencies
SEPA, when using the Optional DNS Process	Environmental Checklist	Mail Post Site Notify Paper	Notice of Application/ notice of anticipated SEPA Threshold Determination	PO RNA PR Agencies
		Mail	Final Threshold Determination	PR Agencies
SUBDIVISIONS	Short Plats	Post Site	Application	

TABLE 78-1

CITY OF OLYMPIA - PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

PROCESS	APPLICATION TYPE	NOTICE TYPES	WHEN	WHO
HEARING EXAMINER	Subdivision Variance / RUE Rezone Conditional Use Master Planned Development	Post Site	Public Hearing - 10 days	PO RNA
		Mail		PR
		Publish in Paper		
SHORE LANDS	Substantial Development Permit	Post Site	Public Hearing - 15 days	PO RNA
		Mail		PR
		Publish in Paper		
LAND USE REVIEW	Multifamily Commercial Industrial Master Planned Development, Administrative Variance / RUE	Mail	Meeting - 5 days	RNA PR
			Decision	RNA PR
DETAILED DESIGN REVIEW	Multifamily/Commercial Master Planned Development	Mail	Public Meeting 10 days	RNA PR
		Mail	Decision	RNA PR
APPEALS	Administrative to Hearing Examiner	Post Site Mail	Open Hearing - 10 Days	RNA PR
	Hearing Examiner to City Council OCC	Mail	Closed Hearing 10 Days	PR RNA
ANNEXATION	10 Percent Notice of Intent	Mail	Public Meeting 10 days	PO RNA PR
	50/60 Percent Petition	Mail Post Publish in Paper	Public Hearing - 10 days	PO RNA PR
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT/ZONING MAP AMENDMENT	Proposal	Mail Publish in Paper	Proposal Availability	RNA

TABLE 78-1

CITY OF OLYMPIA - PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

PROCESS	APPLICATION TYPE	NOTICE TYPES	WHEN	WHO
	Application	Mail Publish in Paper	Public Hearing - 10 days	PO RNA PR

LEGEND

PO = Property Owner within 300 feet of site

RNA = Recognized Neighborhood Associations

PR = Parties of Records on File with the Case