

## **#2. SCOPE OF DESIGN REVIEW**

### **Topic**

Comprehensive Plan policies regarding which areas and projects in Olympia should be subject to special “design” requirements.

### **Summary of Comments**

Various parties, including the Port of Olympia, have suggested that Land Use and Urban Design policies describing the City’s design review process – quoted below -- should either be clarified or deleted.

### **Council Direction of August 12, 2014**

Council directed that a work session be scheduled to include a staff briefing and Council discussion of this topic. Note that a related topic of ‘urban green-space and tree canopy’ has been addressed separately in Council discussions.

### **Staff Analysis**

In 1988, Olympia first adopted general regulations governing the design of private development. Unlike traditional land use zoning which limits the size and placement of buildings, design regulations prescribe the form and appearance of structures and related landscaping. Although initially only applicable to downtown and ‘entry corridors,’ over the years the scope and details of these regulations have been revised, with the result that today nearly half of the city is subject to such regulations.

The two policies listed below form the primary basis for the City’s regulation of building design, while other parts of the proposed Plan address more specific details, such as street orientation and neighborhood compatibility. Except for two revisions, these are rewrites for readability of policies that have been part of the City’s Plan since at least 1994.

Proposed policy 6.1 sets forth the areas to be subject to design review regulations. Like other provisions of the Plan, it is less specific than the development regulation in the code, and instead provides general guidance regarding which areas should be considered for regulations. For example, although the policy indicates that master planned developments should be subject to a design review process, when the design code was adopted the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development was exempted and instead is governed by private design covenants. Similarly, the meaning of terms such as “highly visible” can ultimately be determined by the City when adopting the development code itself.

As described in the ‘change note,’ this proposal includes two substantive (non-editorial) changes. It would add all commercial buildings adjacent to public streets (first bullet) and remove properties adjacent to properties listed on the Historic Register from the

sites subject to the design review process. The former was initially proposed by City staff, is addressed in the supplemental environmental impact statement, and was specifically discussed during a Council work session earlier this year. The latter reflects a code amendment approved by Council a few years ago.

### **Text of Public Hearing Draft**

Land Use and Urban Design Policy 6.1: Establish a design review process for:

- Commercial and mixed use development adjacent to freeways and public streets
- Other highly-visible, non-residential development, such as the Port of Olympia, campus developments, and master planned developments
- Multifamily residential development and manufactured housing parks
- Detached homes on smaller lots (less than 5,000 square feet) and in older neighborhoods (pre-1940)
- Properties listed on a Historic Register or located within a designated historic district

Land Use and Urban Design Policy 6.2: The design review process should recognize differences in the city with the objective of maintaining or improving the character and livability of each area or neighborhood

### **Alternatives**

Other than deleting these policies, no specific alternative language has been proposed by the public, nor is any proposed by city staff. Council may wish to direct consideration of specific alternatives or revisions.