



MEMORANDUM

TO: Social Justice and Equity Commission
FROM: David Ginther, Senior Planner
DATE: January 27, 2025
SUBJECT: Relevant considerations for the update to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

1. Values and Vision statements

The first page of the chapter contains the values and vision statements. Should the term “walkable” be replaced with “accessible”?

What Olympia Values:

Even as neighborhoods continue to infill and welcome new neighbors, Olympians value neighborhoods with distinct identities; historic buildings and places; a walkable, accessible, and comfortable downtown; increased urban green space; locally produced food; and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines.

Our Vision for the Future:

A ~~walkable~~ welcoming and inclusive, accessible, vibrant city. A community where people can live with or without a car to meet their needs, and where urban growth is balanced with urban green spaces.

2. Infill and equity

Does the language used in the possible changes support infill in an equitable manner (see changes shown below the existing text)?

There are existing sections throughout the chapter that mention locating infill in an equitable manner, such as the following:

Housing types and densities will be dispersed throughout the city to minimize social problems sometimes associated with isolating people of similar means and lifestyles.

Each neighborhood should have:

- *Diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles*

Our community considers it essential that all neighborhoods become accessible, sustainable, and culturally inclusive.

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- *Culturally inclusive: Recognizes, supports and promotes diverse housing types, strong arts and historic preservation, and the various contributions of diverse Olympians, past and present.*

There are some sections in the chapter that could be strengthened to support the idea that infill will occur and should be culturally inclusive with a variety of housing types for varying backgrounds, incomes, and lifestyles.

Example of a change to address infill in an equitable manner.

PL14.3 *Preserve and enhance the character of existing Low-density Neighborhoods while allowing for residential infill with diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles. Disallow ~~medium or~~ high-density development in existing Low-density Neighborhood areas except for Neighborhood Centers.*

Note: Changes to the City’s development regulations are currently being drafted that will allow a broader variety of housing and increased density throughout the City, including the low-density residential zones. These changes are contained within the “Middle Housing” ordinance. A preliminary draft of the ordinance will be available to the public in the next few weeks for comment and review. It is expected that a revised ordinance for a public hearing will be available in June of 2025.

3. Access to green space for all community members.

Do you have a preference between the two potential changes shown below?

Note: The equity issue is also addressed in the Parks, Art, and Recreation chapter, but it does not have this exact same language.

PL7.4 Increase the area of urban green space and tree canopy within ~~each neighborhood proportionate to increased population in that neighborhood~~ neighborhoods, especially in areas with higher concentrations of low income and/or BIPOC residents and businesses where there is a lack of urban green space and tree canopy.

PL7.4 Increase the area of urban green space and tree canopy within ~~each neighborhood proportionate to increased population in that neighborhood~~ neighborhoods, especially in areas of the City where community members do not have easily accessible urban green space and tree canopy.

4. Accessibility.

Consider if accessibility is adequately addressed in the existing chapter language and the potential changes shown below.

Existing chapter language:

Our community considers it essential that all neighborhoods become accessible, sustainable, and culturally inclusive.

- *Accessible: Includes ADA compliancy, multimodal mobility, and housing affordability.*

PL6.4 Require multi-family housing to incorporate architectural forms and features common to nearby housing; to include porches, balconies, bay windows and similar details; to have entries oriented to streets or a courtyard, and include accessible open space; and to be reduced in size near lower density residential districts.

Potential updated language:

GL7 Urban green space is available to the public and located throughout the community and incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, which are nearby, easily accessible, and viewable so that people can experience nature daily and nearby the positive physical and mental health benefits associated with green space.

PL1.6 Provide for a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in commercial districts and village sites that enables people to walk or roll to work and shopping, supports transit, and includes convenience businesses for residents. Integrate adjacent uses with walkways and bike paths leading from residential areas to commercial districts and neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Such a community is one in which pattern and mix of land uses supports healthy lifestyles, such as walking or rolling to nearby services instead of driving.

We envision:

- *Spaces that are safe and pedestrian friendly-accessible for those traveling by any mode of transport*

5. Given the existing policies and language in the chapter as well as examples of some of the potential changes, consider if the chapter update appears to be headed in the right direction regarding community values such as equity and inclusiveness.
6. Are there any other issues that the Social Justice and Equity Commission feels need to be addressed in the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter that are not addressed elsewhere in the other Comprehensive Plan chapters?