



City Council

Approval of Ordinance Revising the City of Olympia Zoning Map Amendment Criteria

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Title

Approval of Ordinance Revising the City of Olympia Zoning Map Amendment Criteria

Recommended Action

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Approve development code amendment as set forth in attached ordinance.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve attached ordinance on first reading and forward to second reading; and direct that to the extent allowed by law this ordinance is to be applicable to any pending or in-progress requests for zoning map amendments.

Report

Issue:

The Comprehensive Plan approved by the City Council in December consolidated over 30 land use categories into about 15. As a result, more requests to change the implementing land use zoning map (known as "rezones") are possible. The Plan also indicates that the City will revise the criteria used to evaluate rezone proposals. In anticipation of this change in the Plan, during 2014 the Planning Commission held a public hearing and recommended the City adopt specific revisions of the rezone criteria as set forth in the attached ordinance.

Staff Contact:

Todd Stamm, Community Planning & Development, Principal Planner, 360.753.8597

Presenter:

Consent agenda item - no presentation.

Background and Analysis:

Until 1994, Olympia's Comprehensive Plans included future land use maps that were general in nature. For example, the 1988 Plan's Future Land Use Map included 14 land use categories. In contrast, the City's zoning code included 19 zones plus various 'limited' and 'planned development' designations.

When Olympia updated the Comprehensive Plan and zoning in response to the Growth Management

Act of the early 90s, the City decided to include a more detailed Future Land Use Map in the Plan with over thirty land use categories with specific boundaries. The subsequent new zoning map 'mirrored' this detailed Plan map. The result of this approach was a reduction in regulatory flexibility. Instead of the City or property owners being able to propose zoning map changes in response to changing circumstances, nearly any change in the zoning map was accompanied by an amendment of the Comprehensive Plan. State law requires that such Plan amendments be considered only once each year.

In December the City Council approved a Comprehensive Plan update that included a recommendation from the Commission that the City revert to a more traditional general land use map. That new Plan also included a directive that the development code's criteria for evaluating rezone proposals be amended to address:

- Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan;
- Consistency with the City's development regulations that implement the Comprehensive Plan;
- Compatibility with adjoining zoning districts and transitioning where appropriate to ensure compatibility; and
- Adequacy of infrastructure in light of development potential of the proposed zoning.

The City's rezone criteria are currently set forth in Olympia Municipal Code Section 18.59.050. On May 19, 2014, the Planning Commission was briefed by staff and held a public hearing regarding options for addressing this issue. On July 21, 2014, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended the code revisions set forth in the attached ordinance.

Ordinance Summary

To implement the Plan provision above, this ordinance would:

- Require that all rezones be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
- Require that all rezones be consistent with other development regulations;
- Require that any rezone maintain the public health, safety and welfare;
- Provide for consideration of compatibility with adjoining land use zoning;
- Provide for consideration of adequacy of existing and planned public facilities and services that are to serve potential development;
- Prescribe what is meant by consistency with the boundaries on the Future Land Use map;
- Provide a list indicating which zones are consistent with which Comprehensive Plan land use designations; and
- Provide that existing zoning may remain 'as is,' even if arguably inconsistent with the Plan; i.e., rezones are optional and not required by the new Plan.

For more details, please see the attached ordinance.

In the City staff's opinion, the rezone criteria carefully crafted by and recommended by the Commission well address the directive in the Comprehensive Plan; and will provide a sound basis for evaluating rezone applications under the Plan. Unlike building permit applications, rezone applications submitted prior to the effective date of new standards or criteria - but not yet decided -- can be required to comply with such new criteria. To avoid any doubt on this aspect, the staff

recommends that the Council indicate that this code amendment should apply to any such pending rezone applications.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Parties commented at the public hearing suggested that the proposed new criteria were, variously, too specific or not specific enough. Commenting parties have been notified this item is on this Council agenda.

Options:

1. Approve first reading of attached ordinance as proposed and forward to second reading.
2. Request additional information and/or direct specific revisions by staff.
3. Schedule a public hearing regarding this proposal.

Financial Impact:

None.