

Olympia Planning Commission

April 16, 2024

Olympia City Council
PO Box 1967 Olympia
WA 98507-1967

SUBJECT: Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan Recommendation

Dear Councilmembers:

The Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) held a public hearing on April 1, 2024, regarding the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan (Subarea Plan). Subsequent deliberations were held on April 15, 2024. The public hearing and deliberations follow briefings provided directly to the Planning Commission, individual Planning Commissioner participation in various Subarea Plan events, and the OPC regularly receiving written updates through the life of the Subarea Plan project.

The OPC voted 7-0, with one absence and one vacancy, to recommend adoption of the draft Subarea Plan as presented. The OPC recommendation includes the following suggestions for consideration by the City Council when reviewing the Subarea Plan:

1. Prioritize requirements for mixed-income housing and a mixed-income neighborhood in the final Subarea Plan and resulting future Comprehensive Plan and Olympia Municipal Code updates. In the course of the OPC deliberations, several Planning Commissioners expressed concern that low-income and affordable housing developments may result in a “red-lining effect” if such developments are proposed in isolation and separate from mixed-income housing. This concern was also expressed by the Olympia Social Justice and Equity Commission.
2. Members of the OPC expressed interest in working toward a goal of reducing commercial parking minimums to zero where development includes a shared parking benefit district, or some similar mechanism of ensuring parking access. The intent is that

new development would not require a minimum of new additional parking spaces when a shared parking benefit district or similar alternative is available. However, new development should still be required to ensure that a minimum of accessible parking spaces is available as required by law even if other parking is not otherwise provided.

3. The OPC supports, in agreement with community input, an emphasis in the Subarea Plan for finding opportunities to increase access to new and existing parks, and other open spaces. Parks and open spaces should be easily accessible by people traveling outside of an automobile through walking, rolling, and biking means of human mobility. Sidewalks, trails, and bike path improvements should be made to existing spaces.

In deliberations, the OPC was broadly in support of the stated goal of encouraging multifamily and mixed-use development. The OPC also looks forward to opportunities for improving connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods, improving community mass transit connectivity, reducing parking overall, improving human-centered modes of transportation, and increasing tree canopy and park space throughout the Subarea Plan's geographic area.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory R. Quetin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Greg Quetin, Vice Chair
Olympia Planning Commission**