

February 29, 2024

TO:

- Olympia School Superintendent Patrick Murphy
- Elected School Board Members: Hilary Seidel, Scott Clifthorne, Maria Flores, Jess Tourtellotte-Palumbo, Darcy Huffman
- Appointed Student Representatives: Meredith Morgan, Dani Farney, Aphrodite Torres, Christine Zhang

I was saddened to watch via Zoom the testimony on February 26 about potential closure of Madison Elementary School. It appears that the district superintendent and some school board members are hardened in their resolve to close the school without seriously pursuing other options ... and without considering detrimental ramifications to the district and the city.

My husband and I have lived in the Olympia School District most of our lives. He lived close enough to walk and bike to the old Washington elementary/junior high school (Esther Knox Building). I also attended the old Washington Junior High School. We both graduated from OHS, as did my husband's four children and four of our grandchildren.

I know what it feels like to have to move to another school. My family moved into the OSD when I was 13, and I felt like an "outsider" – students had already formed their friend groups based on their elementary schools and neighborhoods. This year I'm a weekly reading buddy with three Madison students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I fear for them and all Madison students if they are moved to other schools – it would be immense stress, added to the disruptions they experienced during the pandemic!

**What the OSD stands to lose by closing Madison Elementary School:**

- Our most urban school -- an important touchstone in its neighborhood and close to our downtown, Avanti High School, city hall, library, fire station, churches, the developing Armory Creative Campus, and other central community services.
- Community support for the district and for Madison students/families/staff:
  - ✓ I've volunteered at Madison Elementary since 1993, beginning at the "old Madison" on Central Street. Many others are also long-time volunteers.
  - ✓ The First United Methodist Church across the street "adopted" Madison and members donate time, talents and financial support to the school, its students and families.
  - ✓ Neighborhood residents support the school through food drives, holiday activities, watching out for students walking and biking in the neighborhood.
- Reputation of the school district and its decision-making
- Depressed property tax values ... less \$ for schools

How can you convince anyone that closing Madison is a sound decision?

Sincerely,

Vicki L. Zarrell [vzarrell@hotmail.com](mailto:vzarrell@hotmail.com)  
1804 Marigold St NW, Olympia WA 98502

**From:** Gerald Y <geyeazell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2024 11:02 AM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan  
**Subject:** Input for Comp Plan Updates

Increase housing density in the city to create walkable neighborhoods with transit access that supports minimal development in the unincorporated rural area of the county.

Gerald Yeazell  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Ronda Larson Kramer <rlarsonkramer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 24, 2024 6:57 PM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan  
**Subject:** Thurston 2045 input re. housing

To David Ginther, Senior Planner:

Regarding the housing element of the comprehensive plan update, please increase density in the city to create walkable neighborhoods with transit access that minimizes development in unincorporated rural areas of the county.

And please don't support attempts by the county to pretend they are minimizing development in unincorporated rural areas by merely rezoning those same areas to urban and building multifamily housing there. Currently, the county appears headed in that direction and is indicating a desire to build over 200 multifamily apartments in the rural area via a misapplication of the 2022 UGA swap law .

Thanks.

Ronda Larson Kramer  
Olympia

**From:** Judi Dedge <[kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com](mailto:kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2024 11:49 AM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan  
**Subject:** Re: PRESERVE RURAL LANDS

Please adopt the sustainable Thurston goal of building NO MORE THAN 5% of new housing in rural areas, and don't rezone rural areas to urban to claim you're accomplishing the goal. Most future housing growth should be in the denser urban areas.

Also, increase density in the city to create walkable neighborhoods with transit access that minimizes development in unincorporated rural areas of the county, and don't support attempts by the county to rezone rural areas to urban to pretend that's not development of unincorporated rural areas.

Thank you.

On Fri, Apr 26, 2024 at 11:44 AM Judi Dedge <[kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com](mailto:kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com)> wrote:

| Please adopt the sustainable Thurston goal of building NO MORE

**From:** [Shaun Dinubilo](#)  
**To:** [Olympia2045](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Olympia 2045 - May Update  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 9:43:51 AM

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Hello Joyce,

I would recommend that the City develop up a cultural resource management plan (CRMP) as part of this effort. The city has numerous known cultural resources and an incredibly high potential for encountering unrecorded cultural resources. It is expected that the city will keep growing, which in turn, will create more adverse effects to cultural resources. A good example of a city with a CRMP is Redmon, WA. I think the best way for the city to grow in relations to cultural resources is to hire an archaeologist and craft a CRMP.



Shaun Dinubilo  
Archaeologist  
FAA Certified (Section 107) sUAS Remote Pilot  
Cultural Resource Department  
Squaxin Island Tribe  
200 S.E. Billy Frank Jr. Way  
Shelton, WA 98584  
Phone: 360-432-3998  
Email: [sdinubilo@squaxin.us](mailto:sdinubilo@squaxin.us)  
Email is my preferred method of communication.

As per 43 CFR 7.18[a][1]) of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and RCW 42.56.300 of the Washington State Public Records Act- Archaeological Sites, all information concerning the location, character, and ownership of any cultural resource is exempt from public disclosure.

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**From:** Olympia2045 <[Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 1:51 PM  
**To:** Olympia2045 <[Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** Olympia 2045 - May Update

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us). [Learn why this is important](#)

You are receiving this email as a Party of Record for the City of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Update (Olympia 2045). If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this email and ask to be removed from the list.

# Olympia 2045: May 2024 Update

Our comprehensive plan update is underway. The City is updating the plan using a phased, chapter by chapter approach. Several chapters are currently in review, with the remaining chapters kicking off soon. Please use the links below to follow the process and get involved in the chapters you're interested in – each chapter has a webpage with more detail and timeline.

Please see the attached for updates and upcoming meetings.

## Thank you!

Olympia 2045 is your opportunity to shape the City of Olympia's long-term vision and goals. Through this process we will update the City's Comprehensive Plan and address new or updated state requirements. The Olympia 2045 update will also consider population projections and resulting employment and housing needs, as our community is expected to grow by approximately 20,000 additional residents within 20 years. Comments will be accepted throughout the process and can be sent to [olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us).

Access the latest Olympia 2045 information at [engage.olympiawa.gov/olympia2045](https://engage.olympiawa.gov/olympia2045), or find background information and the existing City Comprehensive Plan at [olympiawa.gov/compplan](https://olympiawa.gov/compplan).

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Joyce Phillips, AICP, Principal Planner (she/her)  
City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development  
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967  
360.570.3722 | [olympiawa.gov](https://olympiawa.gov)

**Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.**

**From:** [Capital Mall Triangle Plan](#)  
**To:** [Joyce Phillips](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Leave rural areas Rural!  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 1:32:08 PM

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**From:** Lisa Bailey <squitahead@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2024 6:55 PM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan <triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Leave rural areas Rural!

Please please:

Increase density in the city to create walkable neighborhoods with transit access that minimizes development in unincorporated rural areas of the county, and don't support attempts by the county to rezone rural areas to urban to pretend that's not development of unincorporated rural areas.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

**From:** [Capital Mall Triangle Plan](#)  
**To:** [Joyce Phillips](#)  
**Subject:** FW: PRESERVE RURAL LANDS  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 1:31:18 PM

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**From:** Judi Dedge <[kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com](mailto:kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 26, 2024 11:49 AM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan <[triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: PRESERVE RURAL LANDS

Please adopt the sustainable Thurston goal of building NO MORE THAN 5% of new housing in rural areas, and don't rezone rural areas to urban to claim you're accomplishing the goal. Most future housing growth should be in the denser urban areas.

Also, increase density in the city to create walkable neighborhoods with transit access that minimizes development in unincorporated rural areas of the county, and don't support attempts by the county to rezone rural areas to urban to pretend that's not development of unincorporated rural areas.

Thank you.

On Fri, Apr 26, 2024 at 11:44 AM Judi Dedge <[kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com](mailto:kleinsmithjm7@gmail.com)> wrote:

| Please adopt the sustainable Thurston goal of building NO MORE

**From:** [Capital Mall Triangle Plan](#)  
**To:** [Joyce Phillips](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Keep rural lands rural  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 1:31:02 PM

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**From:** Eowyn Smith <e.s.nestlings@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 23, 2024 4:04 PM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan <triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Keep rural lands rural

Hello, I am hoping that you will put your energy into helping to keep our rural lands, farms, & forests rural. And that you can help ensure that increased density is focused in already urban areas of our city. This will help protect our farms, forests and rivers and all the beings who rely on them for their livelihood.

Thank you for your efforts!  
Best regards,  
Eowyn Smith

**From:** [Capital Mall Triangle Plan](#)  
**To:** [Joyce Phillips](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Housing Density Concerns  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 1:30:46 PM

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**From:** Elsie Sabel <elsie.luna.sabel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 24, 2024 8:04 PM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan <triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Housing Density Concerns

Hello, my name is Elsie, I'm an 18 year old who lives in the suburbs just outside of Olympia's city limits. I recently learned that the TRPC adopted urban planning projections that assumed around 14% housing growth in rural areas. I urge you to do everything you can to reduce that number.

I've been following local climate legislation since we passed the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan in 2020, when I was 14 years old. Since then, I've been more than disappointed with how much our county is dragging its feet. With 2023 being the hottest year on record and unprecedented marine heat waves, now is not the time to take it slow with our climate policy. We need drastic action and that needs to happen at every level of government, including at the city and county level.

As someone living in a relatively rural place, higher urban density has always seemed like a no-brainer to me. When I was younger, I couldn't go anywhere without my parents driving me, which left me with little self-determination. I used to dream of living next to my friends and being able to walk to the movie theater with them. Kids in urban areas will have that chance. I also loved running around in the woods as a kid. Unfortunately, with more low-density housing, the new generation might not get that opportunity, as trees will be replaced with cookie-cutter houses and lawns that contribute a fraction of the biodiversity and carbon sequestration that a stand of trees offers.

So please, for the health of our planet and the mental health of your youngest constituents, Follow the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, and the Sustainable Thurston plan and allow no more than 5% of new housing in rural areas of our beautiful city and county.

Thank you for hearing me out,  
-Elsie

**From:** [Capital Mall Triangle Plan](#)  
**To:** [Joyce Phillips](#)  
**Subject:** FW: in support of climate action and sustainable housing density  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 1:30:28 PM

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David Ginther (he/him), Senior Planner  
City of Olympia | Community Planning and Development  
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967  
360.753.8335 | olympiawa.gov

**Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.**

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**From:** Rebecca Canright <rebeccagroovypeace@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 25, 2024 7:38 AM  
**To:** Capital Mall Triangle Plan <triangle@ci.olympia.wa.us>  
**Subject:** in support of climate action and sustainable housing density

Greetings!

I am a young person who cares about taking meaningful climate action. Thanks for all that you do! I know that together, we can create a more ecologically responsible and healthy community.

I am writing to express support for keeping density plans consistent with the Sustainable Thurston and Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan density goals. I think that planners should plan for minimal new housing in the unincorporated rural area, using the Sustainable Thurston goal of no more than 5% of new housing in rural areas, and that most future housing growth should be in denser, walkable urban areas. To accommodate this, city planners should allow for more housing in the cities, including affordable housing, and creating walkable neighborhoods with transit access.

We can benefit both city residents and the environment, by limiting urban sprawl.

Other benefits of improving density in our communities include:

- Preserving water, trees, wildlife, and fish (biodiversity)
- Preserving agricultural lands
- Increasing building energy efficiency, with cost savings to residents
- Reducing transportation costs
- Bolstering carbon sequestration by providing more space available for diversely forested areas.

County staff are currently working on an alternative housing projection that is more in line with the Sustainable Thurston density goal.

This is excellent news. Together, we can practice smart, environmentally sustainable

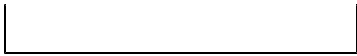
urban growth.

Thank you for your time!!

Take good care, Rebecca

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Frigate birds fly for months over the ocean and can engage in both regular sleep and use half their brain at a time to sleep during soaring or gliding flight.



Compassion for all creatures great and small.

## David Ginther

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**From:** Jessie Simmons <GA@omb.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2025 12:55 PM  
**To:** David Ginther  
**Cc:** Stuart Drebeck; Angela White  
**Subject:** Letter with Suggested Edits to Land Use Goals and Policies for Olympia's Comprehensive Plan  
**Attachments:** Letter on Changes to Land Use Chapter of Olympia Comp Plan.pdf

David,

Attached is a letter with some suggested edits to the Goals and Policies document for the City's Land Use Chapter in the Comprehensive Plan. Please reach out if you have any questions about any of it. Thank you, and we look forward to further engagement on the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Jessie W Simmons**

Government Affairs Director

P: 360.754.0912 ext. 102

C: 360.525.4142



**83%** of Thurston County residents cannot afford the median priced home.

**81%** of Mason County residents cannot afford the median priced home.

**85%** of Lewis County residents cannot afford the median priced home.

**80%** of Grays Harbor County residents cannot afford the median priced home.

**78%** of Pacific County residents cannot afford the median priced home.

Find more information at the [Washington Center for Housing Studies](#).

March 28, 2025

City of Olympia  
David Ginther – Senior Planner  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98507-1967

Re: Comments on Land Use Chapter Goals and Policies (Comprehensive Plan Update)

Olympia Master Builders (OMB) is a membership-driven organization representing five hundred members across five counties. Our membership includes general contractors, remodelers, and various other professionals closely tied to the building industry. As such, we have been actively engaged in stakeholder conversations surrounding the comprehensive plan.

The City of Olympia has recently announced that they are seeking comments on the draft goals and policies of the Land Use chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The following are some suggestions and input that Olympia Master Builders and our members have gathered:

- The values statement in the existing document should be updated to reflect ongoing planning practices to include acknowledgement that “downtown” is not the only focus of urban center development, but that there are three potential “community centers” planned for future density and development. Also, that there is a need for a “strategic mix” of urban green space and mixed-use development (i.e., “middle housing”).
- Points within the introduction should also be updated to acknowledge the need to encourage a variety of housing types close to services and facilities that can support such development.
- The “Future Land Use Map” should be updated to reflect current “missing middle” legislation as directed by the State Legislature.
- Under the “Housing” section, the city should conduct an analysis to determine whether the stated goals, such as “encouraging housing for all economic segments of the population” are being pursued in an adequate and proper manner.
- The City should also ensure that they stick to goals that are achievable and within their purview and eliminate potential conflicts with rules that may preempt city authority. For example, the sentence, “The primary residential use of energy is for space-heating. Thus, strengthening building code requirements for energy efficiency is an effective way to reduce energy consumption. When

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combined with appropriate insulation levels, solar energy can meet half the heating needs of a home in Olympia.” Suggests that the city may add to directives from the State Building Code Council. This is not within the jurisdictional authority of the City and could add to already burdensome state code requirements making housing less affordable and inclusive. If this is just an acknowledgement statement, that would be acceptable, and no change would be needed.

- All other sections should be updated to reflect changes directed by “missing middle” legislation.

There were several specific policy suggestions that our members had thoughts on as well (see redlined suggestions below):

- **PL2.1***Pursue partnerships to promote energy efficient construction and lighting, low-energy designs, and weatherization in both new and existing buildings. Encourage **universal, and built-in**, material subsidies **with special consideration for** low-income community members.*
- **PL12.2***Establish maximum building heights that are proportional to streets, retain scenic views and result in compatibility with adjoining development. **“Compatibility/compatible” should be defined.***
- **L14.3**Preserve and enhance the character of existing Low-density Neighborhoods. Disallow medium or high-density development in existing Low-density Neighborhood areas except for Neighborhood Centers. **Does this align with missing middle legislation?**
- **PL14.4**In low-density Neighborhoods, allow medium-density Neighborhood Centers that include civic and commercial uses that serve the neighborhood. Neighborhood centers emerge from a neighborhood public process. **This contradicts the previous statement in L14.3.**
- **PL16.13**Encourage adapting non-residential buildings for housing. **The city should consider limiting change of use requirements to increase housing inventory and meet goals set by the state legislature more efficiently.**

In conclusion, Olympia Master Builders would like to say thank you to the city for the opportunity to provide input on this important piece of the city’s planning tools for the future. We welcome any questions or feedback that you might provide in return.

For more information, please contact Jessie Simmons, Government Affairs Director, at [ga@omb.org](mailto:ga@omb.org) or (360) 754-0912 ext. 102.

Thank you,



Jessie Simmons  
Government Affairs Director  
Olympia Master Builders  
(360)525-4142

*Serving Thurston, Lewis, Grays Harbor, Pacific and Mason Counties*

**From:** SCNA <info@southcapitolneighborhood.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 8, 2025 4:10 PM  
**To:** Dani Madrone; Robert Vanderpool; Jim Cooper  
**Cc:** Susan McLaughlin; Tim Smith; David Ginther; jphillips@ci.olympia.wa.us; south-capitol-neighborhood-board@googlegroups.com  
**Subject:** South Capitol Neighborhood Comments for Land Use Committee  
**Attachments:** [SCNA Letter to Land Use and Environment Committee.05.08.2025.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from [info@southcapitolneighborhood.org](mailto:info@southcapitolneighborhood.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

Please find attached a letter to the Olympia Land Use and Environment Committee from the South Capitol Neighborhood Association containing comments regarding proposed changes to the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

best regards,

John Saunders  
President, South Capitol Neighborhood Association  
m: 360 259-.0288



May 8, 2025

Dani Madrone, City Councilmember  
Jim Cooper, City Councilmember  
Robert Vanderpool, City Councilmember  
Land Use & Environment Committee  
City of Olympia

RE: Proposal to allow "small scale neighborhood business" and eliminating residential zoning

Dear Members of the City of Olympia Land Use & Environment Committee:

The South Capitol Neighborhood Association Board is sending this letter in regard to the Land Use & Environment Committee's proposed "small scale neighborhood business" discussed at your April 24, 2025 meeting.

The intent - allowing small scale commercial businesses in any location in any neighborhood - is, in many ways, laudable. As we read the proposal and listened to the committee's deliberations, it attempts to enable renters and homeowners to start up businesses with much lower overhead and to enable pedestrian/cycling residents greater access to commercial uses without having to work their way through the main transportation corridors. Think neighborhood acupuncture, salons, bread bakers, therapeutic massage. We agree that's a good thing.

Enabling such uses connects to the City of Olympia's equity and walkability goals. We appreciate the committee's enthusiasm for *the goal* of the policy change. However, we do have some very real concerns about how such a shift will play out *in reality*.

The South Capitol Neighborhood Association has direct experience with how the city of Olympia has failed to manage the takeover of homes for corporate offices. Before the city takes on one more option to convert housing into businesses, it must overhaul the city's system for enforcing basic code violations and address key gaps in the current comp plan update process.

Key concerns:

1. Implementation will have many problems as we have seen with "home-based businesses" (lobbying firms) in our neighborhood. These include inappropriate designs to vacant homes that become dedicated to businesses generating traffic, undermining walkability goals and residents' access to parking. Home businesses also leave properties vacant for many months of the year. In our neighborhood, there appear to be over one dozen residential properties in a two-block area that are no longer used as residences. Not a single lobbyist in the South Capitol Neighborhood has a home occupation permit for conducting business out of these homes. This shows how ineffectual the city is in enforcing the current zoning standards.
2. If the small neighborhood business option takes effect, many parts of Olympia would be as compromised as our neighborhood. It will convert housing units for people to business space.
3. The proposed policy may well help support development of low overhead start-up businesses for renters and customers in walking/riding distance. What will prevent high-end investors from locating boutique businesses near high-end homes or anchor locations like the state capitol is for lobbying firms?
4. Even if the policy and zoning code has words to prevent these problems, the city land use compliance process is underfunded and too permissive to prevent these problems.
5. Allowing small scale businesses in every neighborhood and eliminating the residential zoning designations is a major change. This is a far reaching change in the city residential zoning policy and code, *one that was not anticipated in the city's original scope of the Comp Plan update*. That is a major process foul, especially for many of the residents who have spent hours following the update process, attending meetings and participating on sounding boards.
6. This shift to eliminating residential zoning also means it is not mentioned in the scope of the draft environmental impact statement (EIS). Due to the substantial change the policy can have, it needs thorough review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to evaluate things like:
  - Will the policy change really create more opportunity for starter businesses to locate in lower overhead locations? Where has that been demonstrated?
  - Will clients/customers for these new businesses only be pedestrians/cyclists?

What percent?

- How will the new businesses accommodate traffic/parking and impacts to pedestrians/cyclists?
- Will small-scale commercial uses increase costs for renters and hence be one more reason people are priced out of the local rental market?
- Will drive-throughs be allowed so cupcakes, coffee and bread can be picked-up?
- The downtown commercial district and neighborhood centers have several successful small scale businesses. How will this proposal impact the vitality of those businesses?

These and other potential impacts need to be evaluated.

Since *this change was not anticipated in the scope of work on the Comp Plan or the EIS*, the city will need to re-scope the EIS, which will delay the overall Comp Plan update. During the LU&E meeting, staff suggested they may be able to find a way to accommodate it somehow in the nearly ready to release draft EIS. We recommend you not attempt to do that as it opens up the entire Comp Plan for legal challenge. A recent Washington State Supreme Court decision affirmed that an EIS on new land use policies must examine impacts at the buildout stage of the policy. The city is already struggling to do that with the current level of policy changes. We insist that the city re-scope the EIS and start over so this policy change is fully evaluated.

In closing, we urge the City of Olympia to take more time to consider the impacts of these proposed changes, to properly complete the EIS, and to develop ways to prevent the loss of residential units to small-scale business use in a concentrated area.

Sincerely,

 *John Samuels, President*  
South Capitol Neighborhood Association Board of Directors

cc: Susan McLaughlin, Community Planning & Economic Development Director  
Tim Smith, Community Planning & Economic Development Deputy Director  
Joyce Phillips, Planning Manager  
David Ginther, Senior Planner

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Steven Hollinshead <sjhxxx@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 2, 2025 1:11 PM  
**To:** Olympia2045  
**Subject:** Zoning changes for Lots Within Olympia

You don't often get email from sjhxxx@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I simply want to indicate my support for the Urban Zoning to multiple units within an acre as being considered by the City of Olympia. We need more housing options with denser urban housing options.

Regards,

Dolores Hollinshead

**From:** Sears, Tricia (DNR) <Tricia.Sears@dnr.wa.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 3:33 PM  
**To:** David Ginther  
**Cc:** Sears, Tricia (DNR); Vanegas, Ted (COM)  
**Subject:** Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Amendments (2025-S-8443): WGS comments

You don't often get email from [tricia.sears@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:tricia.sears@dnr.wa.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello David,

In keeping with the interagency correspondence principles, I am providing you with comments on Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Amendments (2025-S-8443).

For this proposal submitted via Planview, I looked at the proposal and focused on areas related to WGS work. Of note, but not limited to, I look for language around the geologically hazardous areas, mineral resource lands, mining, climate change, and natural hazards mitigation plans.

Specifically in this proposal, I reviewed the LandUseUrbanDesign052925 document.

In reference to the first note in the document, "Goals and policies to address climate change..." I recently reviewed and commented on the Olympia Planview submittal, 2025-S-8426, described as Draft Climate Action and Resilience Chapter of the Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan. My comments on the LandUseUrbanDesign052929235 document follow.

On page 7, there is Future Land Use Map of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, which is nice and is readable in that size. Consider having the map turned and sized up to fill the page for increased readability.

On page 10, "The Land Use and Urban Design goals and policies we establish will be crucial in achieving net-zero emissions by 2040 and preparing for the increasingly severe impacts of climate change" Suggest adding a sentence to refer the reader to the Climate Action and Resilience chapter for details about climate change in Olympia and the interrelationship of climate, land use, and natural hazards.

Page 11 mentions critical areas and that is the only place critical areas are mentioned. There is no mention of which of the critical areas are in Olympia. Suggest including more information about critical areas, natural hazards, and natural hazard mitigation planning, and if detailed information (narrative, maps, etc) is located elsewhere in the comp plan, like the Natural Environment Element, then mention that.

Page 69, For More Information, suggest including sources of information, like a critical areas report with best available science, regarding the critical areas Olympia has.

Below, I include our usual language for this and future endeavors.

Recognizing the limitations of the current proposals, I want to mention that it would be great for you to consider these in current or future work, be it in your comprehensive plan, development code, and SMP updates, and in your work in general:

- Consider adding a reference to the definition of geologically hazardous areas, WAC 365-190-120, in other areas besides the CAO. In addition, consider adding a reference to WAC 365-196-480 for natural resource lands.
- Consider adding a reference to the WGS Geologic Information Portal in other areas besides the CAO. If you have not checked our interactive database, the WGS Geologic Information Portal, lately, you may wish to do so. [Geologic Information Portal | WA - DNR](#)
- If you have not checked out our Geologic Planning page, you may wish to do so. [Geologic Planning | WA - DNR](#)

Thank you for considering our comments. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me. For your convenience, if there are no concerns or follow-up discussion, you may consider these comments to be final as of the 60-day comment deadline of 7/28/25.

Have a great day!

Cheerio,  
Tricia

Tricia R. Sears (she/her/hers)  
**Geologic Planning Liaison**  
Washington Geological Survey (WGS)  
Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)  
Cell: 360-628-2867 | Email: [tricia.sears@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:tricia.sears@dnr.wa.gov)

**From:** Peter Guttchen <pguttchen@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 29, 2025 8:14 AM  
**To:** Olympia2045  
**Cc:** Susan McLaughlin; Tim Smith; Dontae Payne; Yến Huỳnh; Dani Madrone; Clark Gilman; Kelly Green; Robert Vanderpool; Jim Cooper; Jay Burney; David Ginther; Joyce Phillips; Oly CNA  
**Subject:** Revisions to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

To the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update team and City Councilmembers,

I will not be able to attend the July 2 meeting to provide input on the latest revisions to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter, so I am submitting my comments to you in writing.

As someone who has worked for many years on many neighborhood projects and issues, I have heard the City tell neighbors who have concerns about development projects in their neighborhoods, that they should work to change the policies in the Comprehensive Plan when the Plan is being updated. However, it is difficult for community members to help shape those policies if they are not given meaningful and well publicized, well planned, and well executed opportunities to participate in the Plan update process, especially around substantive changes like the ones being proposed related to changes in land use designations and commercial development in neighborhoods included in latest draft of the Land Use and Urban Design chapter.

Despite my best efforts, it's been challenging to track the proposed changes to the Land Use and Urban Design chapter, especially given how little notice and time the community was given to review the latest draft. For that reason, these comments do not address the specific policy changes that are being proposed but instead focus on the process the City used to develop them and is using to solicit input on them from the community.

- We were told that this year's update to the Comp Plan was in fact, just an update. In the May 2023 [Olympia 2045 Kickoff meeting](#), Joyce Phillips who led the meeting, said that "our plan did go through a major extensive rewrite between the years of 2009 and 2014, so we believe we have a good solid plan to serve as our basis for this work, and that most of what we'll be doing now is extending that planning horizon, adjusting our population projections, addressing the new state requirements, and also helping to integrate past work we've done such as things around addressing sea level rise, housing and transportation, and of course we'll be making refinements based off of our current circumstances and community input."

*The proposed revisions to the latest draft could be considered a "major rewrite" to existing land use policies and goals. These are substantive, complex and confusing*

changes that could dramatically impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods. It is irresponsible to adopt these kinds of changes without a robust community dialogue with diverse interests across the City. Facilitating this kind of process takes time, resources, and a commitment to ensuring the public has the opportunity to weigh in on these kinds of weighty issues. Instead, this process feels rushed and condensed.

- These changes are being proposed very late in the process. The City already received an extension from June to December 2025 to complete its update. These changes are coming forward during a period when the City should be finalizing its draft, not opening up the draft for major revisions.
- These changes are being proposed with very little public notice during the summer when even those folks that try to track these kinds of issues are not paying as much attention. And, scheduling a public meeting on July 2 during peak vacation season will make it even more difficult for folks to participate. I just visited the [Olympia 2045: Comprehensive Plan Update webpage](#) and I didn't find any mention of the meeting or that there is a newly revised version of the Land Use and Urban Design chapter to review.

The City sent out notice of the July 2 meeting through their general newsfeed and it was also picked up by the JOLT. However, neither of these short articles included any information about the major changes that are being proposed. I also did not receive an email about the meeting from the Olympia2045 team, even though I'm a party of record. The last email I could find in my inbox from them was their June update sent on May 28.

- Lastly, I was a member of the Council of Neighborhood Association's (CNA) "sounding board," that, at the City's request, spent months preparing comments on an earlier draft of the Land Use and Urban Design chapter that did not include these revisions. I participated in this review with the understanding that the chapter was not undergoing an extensive rewrite and under the assumption that major new policies would not be introduced later in the update process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues.

In community,

Peter Guttchen  
1310 Central Street NE  
Olympia, WA 98506  
360-970-0009

**From:** Peter Guttchen <[pguttchen@hotmail.com](mailto:pguttchen@hotmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 29, 2025 10:55 AM  
**To:** Olympia2045  
**Cc:** Susan McLaughlin; Tim Smith; Dontae Payne; Yến Huỳnh; Dani Madrone; Clark Gilman; Kelly Green; Robert Vanderpool; Jim Cooper; Jay Burney; David Ginther; Joyce Phillips; Oly CNA  
**Subject:** Follow up to my comments - Revisions to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [pguttchen@hotmail.com](mailto:pguttchen@hotmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello again,

I realized after rereading my comments on the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter revisions, that I did not offer an alternative approach to considering the proposed policy changes. My suggestion is that the City table these provisions for now and reintroduce them next year through a Comp Plan amendment process. This would allow time for a more robust community dialogue and a more thorough analysis of the potential impacts of implementing these new policies, including researching how effective similar policies in other cities might be in helping Olympia achieve its goals. Taking this approach will reduce the risk of creating unintended consequences when the policies are implemented. It will also help ensure community members are not surprised and confused when new development is proposed in their neighborhoods under the new policies.

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Peter Guttchen  
1310 Central Street NE  
Olympia, WA 98506  
36-970-0009

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:13 AM, Peter Guttchen <[pguttchen@hotmail.com](mailto:pguttchen@hotmail.com)> wrote:

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Peter Guttchen

1310 Central Street NE  
Olympia, WA 98506  
360-970-0009

**From:** Jim Sweeney <jsweendog@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 29, 2025 6:43 PM  
**To:** Peter Guttchen  
**Cc:** David Ginther; Oly CNA  
**Subject:** Re: Follow up to my comments - Revisions to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

Peter - Your alternative approach makes sense to me for all the reasons you stated. Here is what Seattle is doing according to The Seattle Times Sunday:

***Seattle's new zoning law is an interim move to comply with HB 1110, while the City Council continues to debate a broader 20-year growth plan and permanent zoning changes.*** <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/seattle-dropped-key-nimby-rules-why-arent-developers-swarming/>

Enjoy your vacation!  
- Jim

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In community,

Peter Guttchen  
1310 Central Street NE  
Olympia, WA 98506  
360-970-0009

**From:** John Saunders <johnosaunders@me.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 10:39 AM  
**To:** David Ginther  
**Cc:** Oly CNA; Tim Smith; Joyce Phillips; Karen Sweeney; Larry Dzieza; Gerald Apple; Melissa Allen  
**Subject:** Re: Community Meeting Concerns Expressed by RNAs

David, I thought I'd let you know that residents of the South Capitol neighborhood going to attend the meeting this evening and we want to express our dismay that the draft still does not reflect our repeated written and verbal comments asking that the draft strength prohibitions on residences being converted to businesses or non-residential use. We feel strongly that the draft should at least reflect our input so that the council can consider the harm that these ongoing and illegal conversions cause to residents.

Thank you,

John O. Saunders  
m: 360 259-0288  
Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 2, 2025, at 9:19 AM, David Ginther <[dginther@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dginther@ci.olympia.wa.us)> wrote:

Greetings,

Thank you for sending this to me ahead of time. This is very helpful. I'm currently amending the presentation to address these concerns and provide additional information at the meeting tonight.

Best regards,  
David

David Ginther (he/him), Senior Planner  
City of Olympia | Community Planning and Economic Development  
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967  
360.753.8335 | [olympiawa.gov](http://olympiawa.gov)

**Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.**

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**From:** Oly CNA <[cna.olympia@gmail.com](mailto:cna.olympia@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 1, 2025 9:05 PM  
**To:** David Ginther <[dginther@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dginther@ci.olympia.wa.us)>; Tim Smith <[tsmith@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:tsmith@ci.olympia.wa.us)>; Joyce Phillips <[jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us)>  
**Cc:** Karen Sweeney <[klangsweeney@gmail.com](mailto:klangsweeney@gmail.com)>; Larry Dzieza <[larryofNottingham@gmail.com](mailto:larryofNottingham@gmail.com)>; John Saunders <[johnosaunders@me.com](mailto:johnosaunders@me.com)>; Gerald

Apple <[geraldappl@yahoo.com](mailto:geraldappl@yahoo.com)>; Melissa Allen <[melissa.allen1@icloud.com](mailto:melissa.allen1@icloud.com)>

**Subject:** Community Meeting Concerns Expressed by RNAs

Attached is an aggregation of the comments and observations by the RNA members who attended today's meeting to discuss the upcoming Community Meeting.

I'm sharing this with you in advance to help you have time to prepare a response to the issues and concerns that were raised.

Best wishes.

--

Larry Dzieza, Chair

CNA

[cna.olympia@gmail.com](mailto:cna.olympia@gmail.com)

**From:** John Saunders <johnosaunders@me.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 3, 2025 3:43 PM  
**To:** David Ginther; Tim Smith  
**Cc:** Susan McLaughlin  
**Subject:** Comments on the Land Use Chapter

Thanks again for hosting the session yesterday on the Land Use Chapter updates. We felt this was a good discussion and time well spent.

I wanted to offer a suggestion on how the Land Use Chapter can be improved to provide stronger protections against widespread conversion of homes to commercial uses. These conversion have an insidious cumulative effect that hollows out neighborhoods and reduces what the chapter calls "social interaction". The result is the opposite of what the chapter describes as the intent. As a result, our goal is to have the city adopt stricter code allowing better enforcement of the home occupation regulations, not to stop all commercial activity in residential neighborhoods.

I think the best place to address this problem is Goal 20: "Development maintains and or improves neighborhood character and livability". I think this goal statement is very good as is.

However Policy statement 19.2 has been edited as follows:

~~"Unless necessary for historic preservation, prohibit conversion of housing in residential areas to commercial use; instead, support redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods to bolster stability and a~~Allow home occupations (except convalescent care) that do not degrade neighborhood appearance or livability, nor create significant traffic, noise or pollution problems."

I think the first part of the sentence that has been struck out should be retained except that the initial carve-out clause could say "Unless limited small-scale commercial use is approved with a conditional use permit....".

I think Policy 19.6 which explicitly allows limited commercial use is fine to keep in the draft as a proposed change. I'm sure it will be debated. But at the same time, we think it is important have a policy prohibiting conversion of homes to commercial use through the back door of illegal home occupation by commercial enterprises.

In addition, a bullet point should be added to the list on page 3 calling out the erosion of residential character by conversion of homes to commercial use. Perhaps this bullet point could state:

- Protect against and, where possible, reverse the erosion of social interaction and historic character due to the conversion of residential properties to exclusive commercial use.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this problem has several factors as root causes, not just lobbyists converting homes. The conversion of homes to short-term rentals is another root cause and one that is probably more widely felt across the city.

I hope this is helpful and that these comments can be included in the next version of the Land Use Chapter to be released for discussion. Please do not hesitate to call me with any questions.

best regards,

John Saunders  
President, South Capitol Neighborhood Association  
m: 360 259-0288

**From:** Oly CNA <cna.olympia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 1, 2025 9:05 PM  
**To:** David Ginther; Tim Smith; Joyce Phillips  
**Cc:** Karen Sweeney; Larry Dzieza; John Saunders; Gerald Apple; Melissa Allen  
**Subject:** Community Meeting Concerns Expressed by RNAs  
**Attachments:** [RNA Review of Land Use Meeting Issues.docx](#)

Attached is an aggregation of the comments and observations by the RNA members who attended today's meeting to discuss the upcoming Community Meeting.

I'm sharing this with you in advance to help you have time to prepare a response to the issues and concerns that were raised.

Best wishes.

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Larry Dzieza, Chair  
CNA  
[cna.olympia@gmail.com](mailto:cna.olympia@gmail.com)

## Land Use Meeting Issues

An expanded group of the CNA's Land Use and Environment Chapter Sounding Board met today to discuss and prepare for tomorrow's "Community Meeting". The meeting is on July 2, 2025, from 5:30pm to 7pm [by Zoom \(click here to register\)](#). Comments may also be emailed to [olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us).

The following is an aggregation of the comments and observations by the RNA members who attended today's meeting to discuss the upcoming Community Meeting.

The meeting focused on concerns about proposed changes to city land use regulations and their potential impact on neighborhoods, particularly regarding doubling the allowable housing density, commercial development, and enforcement issues.

Participants discussed how best to address these concerns with city officials, including:

- Getting a more complete understanding of the proposed changes,
- Dissatisfaction with the process resulting in a last-minute major rewrite of existing policies and goals,
- Emphasizing the need for proper environmental assessments,
- Overcoming lack of trust in the City's commitment to neighborhoods and its failure to enforce existing laws such as the prohibition in turning housing for people into commercial use by lobbyists in the historic Capitol neighborhood, and
- Weakening language maintaining neighborhood identity, character and scale including protection of historic trees.

## Process Points

1. Little notice and time the community was given to review the latest draft.
2. The city said it will be an update to reflect changed state laws, population projections, sea level rise and not a major rewrite.
3. These late breaking additions came in the middle of summer during peak vacation season and the posting of the changes and meetings were not timely nor well publicized even on the city's own website.
4. The CNA Sounding Board worked long on what they thought was a credible version of the proposed changes only to have major issues introduced after their work was done.
5. Is there a plan to disclose in the EIS the impacts from these changes?

## Policy Concerns

### Increased Density in Neighborhoods

What is the intent behind combining three land use designations into one "urban residential" designation?

Does collapsing three land use designations into one enable future zoning changes that could double the allowable density of most existing low-density neighborhoods?

**Table: Future Land Use Designations**

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY USE <sup>1</sup>	RESIDENTIAL DENSITY <sup>2</sup>	BUILDING HEIGHTS <sup>3</sup>	ESTIMATED ACREAGE <sup>4</sup>	PERCENTAGE OF UGA <sup>5</sup>
Low-Urban Density Neighborhoods (LDN/UDN)	Single-family & Multi-family Residential	Up to 12-24 units per acre	2 to 3 stories	11,000-11,750 ac.	7-17%
Medium-Density Neighborhoods (MDN)	Multi-family Residential	13 to 24 units per acre	Up to 3 stories	600 ac.	4%
Mixed-Residential	Single- & Multi-family	7 to 18 units per acre	Up to 4 stories	150 ac.	1%
Neighborhood Centers	Commercial	Variable	2 to 3 stories	Variable	N/A

How can we understand the proposed changes when the definition of “Urban Residential” is so vague?  
Examples:

Specific zoning and densities are to be based on the unique characteristics of each area

Specific density ranges and mandatory mixes should be based on land use compatibility and proximity to bus routes and major streets

Where environmental constraints are significant, to achieve minimum densities extraordinary clustering may be allowed.

Supportive land uses, including small-scale neighborhood commercial uses and other types of housing, including small apartment buildings, may be permitted.

Some zoning districts will require a mixture of single and multifamily housing at densities ranging from seven to eighteen units per acre

How do we know that the underlying zoning designations won’t change, when there are a number of policy changes that actively promote higher density and commercial enterprises throughout neighborhoods? These include:

PL14.3 Preserve and enhance the character of existing urban 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-urban density Neighborhood areas except for Neighborhood Centers.

Page 41 - Neighborhoods and commercial areas will gradually be woven together into a cohesive urban fabric. These compact neighborhoods will provide ready access from homes to supporting businesses, and to parks, schools and other gathering places.

Page 49 - Lower density housing will exist throughout much of Olympia, and it is envisioned that higher-density housing will be available near major streets and commercial areas to take advantage of transit, other services, and employment opportunities. Small scale commercial uses in neighborhoods will provide goods and services to nearby residents but will only be allowed when designed to limit impacts to surrounding properties. Housing types and densities will be dispersed throughout the city to minimize social problems sometimes associated with isolating people of similar means and lifestyles.

PL19.6 Allow small scale commercial uses within neighborhoods through conditional use permits.

PL20.3 (Addition) - Allow, where appropriate, increased residential density for properties within and adjacent to neighborhood centers to sustain neighborhood businesses and to support transit.

How much of the city is allowed higher densities from expanding areas for transit and neighborhood centers and how much higher are those densities?

### **Protecting Existing Housing**

How does striking the prohibition of converting housing to commercial property promote housing?

*~~“PL19.2 Unless necessary for historic preservation, prohibit conversion of housing in residential areas to commercial use;”~~*

The City would allow commercial activity throughout the city but how can we trust that the designs to “limit the impact on surrounding properties” given the lack of neighborhood engagement and failure to enforce the current rules? Proposed changes: “Allow small scale commercial uses within neighborhoods through conditional use permits.”

How can the community trust that conditional use permits will be capable of allowing only “Small scale commercial uses that provide goods and services to nearby residents” when the existing laws are not being enforced and lobbyists are not a good or service needed by nearby residents?

### **Weakening Protections**

How can residents trust the city to protect their neighborhood’s scale and identity when they have failed to enforce existing laws in the South Capitol Neighborhood?

Why are they proposing to change the issue of “community character and heritage” from “retaining community character and heritage” to an aspirational “strive to retain our community character and heritage”?

Why are they weakening historic preservation policies by this change: *~~“PL3.6 Plan for land uses that are compatible with and conducive to continued preservation of historic neighborhoods and properties; and promote and provide~~ Strive for the early identification and resolution of conflicts between the preservation of historic resources and competing land uses.”?*

Why are they weakening historic tree and landscaping policies by this change: *~~“PL3.7 Identify, protect and maintain~~ Encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of historic trees and landscapes that have significance to the community or a neighborhood, including species or placement of trees and other plants.”?*

View protections. It is unclear from the addition of this new policy if only the enumerated views will be protected. “L8.6 Protect views identified through community planning processes, such as the Downtown Strategy (see Appendix B) as well as views from West Bay Park to Mt. Rainier, East Bay Overlook to the Capitol Dome, and Deschutes Parkway to Mt. Rainier.”

Can the city suspend zoning rules under the language of “Adopt a moratorium or interim zoning control only in cases of an emergency as defined by State statute” as the city has declared a “Housing Emergency”?

Does the Design Review process conformance to “scale” and “character” reflect the neighborhood’s existing condition or the envisioned condition of “middle housing”? “Infill of multi-unit residences in Urban Density neighborhoods that are in scale with the general character (middle housing)”.

Will we have decreased setbacks and less compatible building designs now in neighborhoods?

Language that was in the Land Use chapter but has been taken out in the new Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter:

~~PH1.7 Allow single family housing on small lots, but prohibit reduced setbacks abutting conventional lots.~~

~~PH1.10 Require effective, but not unreasonably expensive, building designs and landscaping to blend multi family housing into neighborhoods.~~

### **Recommendation**

The City should table these newly introduced changes and reintroduce them next year through a Comp Plan amendment process. This would allow time for community dialogue and analysis worthy of the scale of the proposed changes.