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## City Council

### Approval of an Ordinance Amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapters 16 and 18 Related to 2016 Low Impact Development Updates

**Agenda Date:** 9/15/2020  
**Agenda Item Number:** 4.F  
**File Number:** 20-0605

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**Type:** ordinance **Version:** 2 **Status:** Passed

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**Title**

Approval of an Ordinance Amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapters 16 and 18 Related to 2016 Low Impact Development Updates

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Planning Commission and Land Use and Environment Committee recommends the City Council adopt the attached ordinance amending the Low Impact Development (LID) Code to clarify or adjust language adopted in 2016 related to making Low Impact Development the common and preferred approach.

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Move to approve the ordinance amending the LID Code to clarify or adjust language adopted in 2016 related to making Low Impact Development the common and preferred approach on second reading.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to approve the proposed amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) proposed to clarify or adjust language adopted in 2016 related to making LID the common and preferred approach.

**Staff Contact:**

Nicole Floyd, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3768

**Presenters:**

None - Consent Calendar Item.

**Background and Analysis:**

Background and analysis haven't changed from first to second reading.

The original Low Impact Development (LID) code revision project began as a State mandate in February 2014 and was completed December 2016 as a community supported effort to change the standards of development and stormwater management to a more environmentally sensitive

approach. The update included revisions to City codes, standards, and manuals to make LID the preferred and commonly used approach to site development. The strategy emphasizes careful site planning and small-scale stormwater management practices that integrate into project designs.

Now, several years after the LID update, staff have identified areas in need of modification to better achieve the intent of the 2016 update. These proposed amendments, based on daily practical application, are not substantive. The amendments intend to refine and clarify code language that have been challenging to implement in order to better achieve the principles of LID.

Of the amendments proposed, those relating to hard surface limits have been of particular interest to the Planning Commission and community. Hard surfaces (porous pavement etc.) are a preferred alternative to standard pavement, and the amendments in 2016 intended to incentivize their use. Unfortunately, the code language adopted in 2016 was far more restrictive than intended. This has resulted in unforeseen impacts on the installation of new decks, patios, and pathways in both residential and non-residential (such as schools and place of worship) projects within the residential zones.

Amendments proposed to address these issues include:

**Relax Hard Surface Limits:** Hard surface limits were included in the 2016 LID update to help incentivize and regulate the use new technologies such as porous concrete, pervious pavement etc. While establishing limits was appropriate, the limits were not evenly applied across the City. Pervious hard surfaces are a preferred approach because they allow water to penetrate through the surface, rather than causing runoff as traditional impervious pavements do. The Residential Low Intensity (RLI) zone has been impacted the most by the hard surface limits because they are identical to the impervious surface limits which in effect prohibits the more environmentally sensitive technology. The proposed revision would set hard surface limits at approximately 20% higher than impervious surface limits in most zones, which will better help incentivize their use and better implement the intent of the 2016 LID Update.

**Schools, Parks, and Places of Worship:** Impervious and hard surface limits have been challenging for schools, churches, and parks within the residential zones because these uses often include larger buildings and higher parking demands than standard housing. These non-residential projects are often able to use other methods to meet LID stormwater requirements because of the larger site area and through engineered solutions. Amendments would allow for a 10 percent increase in impervious surface and 20 percent increase in hard surface limits for larger non-residential uses on large lots, similar to limits in non-residential zones. The proposed criteria ensures the increase is the minimum necessary and that projects adequately addresses stormwater requirements found in other sections of the City's regulations.

The proposed revisions intend to provide better incentives to using pervious materials while maintaining the fundamental purpose of the Low Impact Development codes. The amendments are unanimously recommended by the Planning Commission and the Land Use and Environment Committee.

#### **Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Surface coverage limits are of interest to all residential property owners. Neighborhoods within the RLI Zoning District have been most impacted by current limits and have shown interest in these

amendments.

**Options:**

1. Adopt the ordinance approving the Municipal Code amendments as proposed.
2. Direct staff to modify the proposed Municipal code amendments and return with a revised ordinance.
3. Do not approve the proposed Municipal Code amendments.

**Financial Impact:**

None

**Attachments:**

Ordinance