



Planning Commission

2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments - Recommendation

Agenda Date: 9/20/2021
Agenda Item Number:
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Type: public hearing **Version:** 2 **Status:** Passed

Title

2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments - Recommendation

Recommended Action

Move to approve the recommendation to adopt amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and forward to Council for consideration.

Report

Issue:

Whether to proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

Under the Growth Management Act, local governments are generally allowed to amend Comprehensive Plans once a year. Olympia has a process to allow for such amendments, as outlined in Chapter 18.59 of the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC).

Plan Amendments are considered in a two-step process and based on the review and evaluation criteria for each step. The first step is known as the preliminary or screening review. In the first step the City Council considers the proposals and determines which will advance to the final review stage, which includes a public hearing before the Planning Commission.

This year, there are three parts to a City of Olympia proposal to amend the Plan (the application materials are provided in full on the webpage, Attachment 1):

- Part A: Text amendments requested by the Public Works Department regarding transportation concurrency.
- Part B: Text and transportation map amendments requested by the Public Works Department

regarding future street connections in the southeast portion of Olympia, in and near the area known as “LBA Woods”.

- Part C: Text amendments requested by Council to improve language around equity and inclusion.

The Community Planning and Development Department staff have reviewed the city application and have prepared responses to the Final Review and Evaluation Criteria included in OMC Section 18.59.040(B). Staff responses are included in the Review Criteria Response document (Attachment 4).

In addition to reviewing the proposed amendments in regard to the Final Review and Evaluation Criteria included in the Olympia Municipal Code, staff also reviews proposed amendments in regard to compatibility with the text, goals, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and City development regulations meant to implement the Plan. For these proposals, that included looking throughout the Plan for how the term “character” is used.

It is important to note that the terms “character” and “neighborhood character” are not defined in the glossary. The term character is used to refer to both the natural and built environments in various places throughout the Plan. It is also a term that, when read, can mean different things to different people as it is somewhat subjective. In Part C of the application, more context is proposed to describe neighborhood character. It is intended to increase equity and inclusion for Olympia’s neighborhoods as our city continues to grow. Staff believes this aligns strongly with Olympia’s values of being a community that welcomes and accepts people of all races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

However, upon review of the Plan, staff has noted physical attributes that are used to describe neighborhoods and neighborhood character. These attributes also influence neighborhood character. While the proposal does not suggest removal of these attributes and descriptions in the Plan, staff believes they should be included in the proposed language that provides more context around what neighborhood character includes. Please see Attachment 3 for more detail. The Staff Proposed Amendments (Attachment 2) includes an additional bullet point that includes reference to these physical attributes that influence neighborhood character.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Several public comments have been received. Those that have been submitted at the time of writing this staff report on July 9, 2021, have been attached. Any additional written comments will also be provided to the Planning Commission.

The majority of public comments received to-date have been in support of removing the future extension of Log Cabin Road, and other street connections, through the area known as LBA Woods. Staff is aware that the Council of Neighborhoods Association (CNA) will also be discussing the language proposed in Part C regarding neighborhood character at its meeting on Monday, July 12, 2021. Staff anticipates that additional written comments will be received and that members of the community will testify during the public hearing on these proposals.

Options:

1. Recommend adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, as proposed in the

application materials.

2. Recommend adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, with the additional amendment proposed by City staff.
3. Recommend adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments, with modifications proposed by the Planning Commission.
4. Forward the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments to the City Council with a recommendation to deny the proposed amendments.

Financial Impact:

None. Processing applications for annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments is part of the Community Planning and Development Department's annual budget.

Attachments:

Webpage with full application materials
Staff Proposed Amendments
Character Discussion
Review Criteria Responses
Public Comments