



Land Use & Environment Committee

2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

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Title

2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Move to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission and forward the proposed amendments to the City Council for consideration.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission and forward the proposed amendments to the City Council for consideration.

Report

Issue:

Whether to accept the Planning Commission recommendation and forward the proposed amendments to Council for consideration.

Staff Contact:

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3722

Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

Background

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 multimodal 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, including adding a definition of Neighborhood Character.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was held on August 2, 2021. Public comments were solicited, and several members of the public provided written comments and/or testimony at the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission deliberated on the proposed amendments over several meetings. The Commission’s recommendation letter is attached, including comments of dissension from one Commissioner. In summary, the Commission is recommending approval of Part A as proposed; Part B with minor text amendments requested by the Washington State Department of Transportation; and to Part C, with modifications to the definition of Neighborhood Character proposed in the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter and modifications to the land acknowledgement language proposed in the Community Values and Vision Chapter.

While the proposed amendments impact every chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, primarily because of changing the word “citizen” to “resident” or “community member”, the most substantive changes proposed are to the Community Values and Vision, Land Use and Urban Design, and Transportation chapters. These three chapters are provided, in part, for consideration (see Attachments 3, 4, and 5). The excerpts of the chapters provide focus on the portions of the chapter where the most substantive changes are proposed. To see the full text of each chapter, as recommended by the Planning Commission, see the webpage (Attachment 2).

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

There was a significant amount of public comment on portions of the proposed amendments, primarily about supporting Part B (street connections through the area known as LBA Woods) and expressing concern about the Neighborhood Character definition proposed in Part C. Most, if not all, of those commenting on neighborhood character agreed that the qualities proposed (accessible, sustainable, and culturally inclusive) were agreeable, many felt these were community values rather than characteristics of neighborhoods. The Council of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) suggested language that would put some language in the Community Values and Vision chapter and expand the description of neighborhood character in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter to include other aspects, such as social and economic attributes.

A summary of the proposed neighborhood character text, staff’s recommendation, and the proposal of the CNA is included in Attachment 6. In addition, all public comments received through October 4, 2021, are provided in Attachment 8.

Options:

1. Accept the Planning Commission recommendation and forward to Council for consideration.

2. Accept the Planning Commission recommendation and forward to Council for consideration with specific revisions.
3. Do not accept the Planning Commission recommendation and remand the proposed amendments back the Planning Commission with specific direction on issues to be reconsidered.

Financial Impact:

Comprehensive Plan Amendments are processed as part of the Department's base budget and do not require additional financial resources.

Attachments:

Planning Commission Recommendation
Webpage, with link to applications
Community Values and Vision Chapter
Land Use and Urban Design Chapter Excerpt
Transportation Chapter Excerpt
Neighborhood Character Proposals
Acknowledgement Language Proposals
Public Comments