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Planning Commission

Urban Waterfront Code Amendments Recommendation

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Title

Urban Waterfront Code Amendments Recommendation

Recommended Action

Conduct deliberations and provide a recommendation on the Urban Waterfront public hearing to receive comments on proposed text amendments to OMC 18.06 relating to recreational vehicle parks in the Urban Waterfront zoning district.

Report

Issue:

Conduct deliberations and provide a recommendation on proposed code amendments to allow recreational vehicle parks as an allowed use in the Urban Waterfront zoning district and establish related development standards.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Cari Hornbein, Senior Planner

Background and Analysis:

Timeline

The City of Olympia received an application from the Port of Olympia to amend Chapter 18.06 of the Municipal Code in December 2020. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on July 19, 2021 and conducted deliberations on August 4, 2021. The Commission recommended denial of the proposed amendments and forwarded a recommendation letter with findings to the City Council (Attachment 1).

On September 16, 2021, staff briefed the Land Use and Environment Committee. The amendments were referred back to the Planning Commission to allow the Port additional opportunities for input. An informational briefing was held on November 1 where Port staff provided an overview of recent planning efforts and responded to Commissioner's questions.

Proposal

The proposed amendments would allow recreational vehicle (RV) parks as a principal use in the Urban Waterfront zone district (Attachment 2) and establish related development standards. Currently, RV parks are permitted in the General Commercial and High-Density Corridor 4 zone districts as a principal use. RV sites are allowed as an accessory use to marinas in the Urban Waterfront district, but are available only to marina users, not the general public.

The proposed amendments involve the following actions:

1. Amend OMC 18.06.060, Table 6.01, Permitted and Conditional Uses, to add RV parks as a permitted lodging use in the Urban Waterfront zoning district, and add a reference to a new code section, 18.06.060.JJ under 'Applicable Regulations' in the table.
2. Add new section, 18.06.060.JJ, establishing development standards for RV parks pertaining to site area, proximity to a public marina, density, setbacks, open space, landscaping, access and circulation, services and utilities, and length of stay. Establishment of an operational plan and park rules were also proposed.

The full text of the proposed amendments and applicant narrative can be found in Attachment 3.

Policy/Regulatory Framework

1. **OMC 18.06.020.B.4, Urban Waterfront Purpose Statement:** The Urban Waterfront district is intended to support a variety of uses that enhance Olympia's identity and appeal as a capitol city and promote public access and use of the shoreline. Some of these uses include recreational and tourist-oriented uses. See Attachment 4 for the full text of the purpose statement.
2. **Olympia Comprehensive Plan:** The Urban Waterfront zoning district reflects the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The Urban Waterfront future land use designation is described as providing "for a compatible mix of commercial, light industrial, limited heavy industrial, and multifamily residential uses along the waterfront". See Attachment 5 for link to Comprehensive Plan.
3. **Shoreline Master Program:** In addition to meeting the requirements of the Urban Waterfront district, development within 200 feet of the shoreline must comply with the Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The city completed a periodic review of the SMP last spring, and changes went into effect in June. All development along the shoreline must be consistent with shoreline policies and standards, including but not limited to shoreline ecological functions, shoreline setbacks, vegetation conservation, building height, and public access. See Attachment 6 for link to the SMP.

One of the changes to the SMP clarified that camping is a water-oriented recreational use. A definition of 'camping facilities' was added, establishing a 15-day length of stay and including recreational vehicles as a type of camping facility. Water-oriented recreation is allowed in both the Marine Recreation and Urban Intensity shoreline environments. Whether a use is water-oriented must be demonstrated at the time of a shoreline permit application.

Recreational uses are regulated under OMC 18.20.680. When establishing a recreational use, project proponents must demonstrate that the use will not have negative impacts to shoreline ecological functions or have significant adverse impacts on other shoreline uses. Measures to reduce light and noise impacts, such as limited hours of operation and use of shielded lights, must also be addressed. See Attachment 7 for the full text of OMC 18.20.680.

4. **Downtown Strategy:** The Downtown Strategy (DTS), adopted in 2017, prioritizes actions to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision and goals for Downtown Olympia. Although not part of the primary focus areas, Port-owned properties north of Marine Drive (excluding the marine terminal) are considered part of the Waterfront Character Area. One of the goals of this area is to increase waterfront recreational opportunities as well as creating connections to downtown, marinas, and other attractions. See Attachment 8 for link to the DTS.

Issues to Consider

Staff believes that the proposed amendments are consistent with the intent of the Urban Waterfront zone district and guiding documents referenced above, but recommends that modifications be made to address the following:

1. Whether to expand the scope of the proposed amendments to allow RV parks in other locations in the Urban Waterfront district. As written, the amendments would limit RV parks from being established anywhere besides a public marina. If the Planning Commission recommends the inclusion of private marinas, the most likely location would be at West Bay Marina. Property south of the marina is under separate ownership but has sufficient land area. The Olympia Yacht Club, Martin Marina, and Fiddlehead Marina are in locations where vacant properties are not available.
2. Whether language pertaining to open space should be clarified. As proposed, the language could be interpreted as allowing open space to be distributed throughout the park instead of in a single location.

Commissioners have asked about requiring a conditional use permit. OMC 18.48 establishes the review process and other provisions relating to conditional uses (Attachment 9). Because there are other provisions that must be met (zoning, shoreline, engineering), and because conditions can be established in the shoreline permit, staff believes that a conditional use permit is not necessary.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Members of the community provided written comments which can be found in attachments 10 and 11. public hearing.

Options:

1. Recommend approval of the amendments to City Council as proposed.
2. Recommend approval of the proposed amendments with modifications.
3. Do not recommend approval of the proposed amendments.

Financial Impact:

None. The process of reviewing the code amendments is covered in part by the application fee and the Community Planning and Development Department's base budget.

Attachments:

1. Recommendation Letter
2. Zoning Map
3. Narrative and Draft Amendments
4. UW Purpose Statement
5. Comprehensive Plan ([link](#))
6. Shoreline Regulations ([link](#))
7. OMC 18.20.680 - Recreational Uses
8. Downtown Strategy ([link](#))
9. OMC 18.48 - Conditional Uses
10. Public Comments