



Planning Commission

Land Use and Urban Design Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and planned Periodic Update

Agenda Date: 7/15/2024
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number:24-0572

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

Title

Land Use and Urban Design Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and planned Periodic Update

Recommended Action

Information only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Discussion on the existing Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and topics that will be addressed as part of the update.

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Presenter(s):

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Background and Analysis:

For the last Periodic Update, the City's Comprehensive Plan underwent a major rewrite through a planning process that took place from 2009 through 2014. The Plan was adopted in December of 2014. There have been a few amendments to the Land Use and Urban Design chapter over the years through the "annual amendments" process. At least once every 10 years, cities and counties that are fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA), must update its plan through a process known as the Periodic Update. The Periodic Update requires that jurisdictions update the planning horizon to a minimum of 20 years, update the population projection it is planning for, and address all new planning requirements that have been adopted since the previous update.

GMA Checklist

The Washington State Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services unit prepares a checklist that includes all Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulation requirements. The City uses the checklist to identify the minimum scope of work needed for each chapter. See Attachment 2.

Community Values and Vision Survey Results for Land Use

In May of 2023, the City kicked off the Comprehensive Plan Update with a community survey on the Community Values and Vision Chapter. That chapter includes the land acknowledgement, an equity statement, and then highlights the shared community values for the chapter topics for the rest of the plan, as well as our vision for the future based on those values.

For the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter, these statements are:

What Olympia Values:

Olympians value neighborhoods with distinct identities; historic buildings and places; a walkable and comfortable downtown; increased urban green space; locally produced food; and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines.

Our Vision for the Future:

A walkable, accessible, vibrant city.

The summary of survey results includes the following comments related to land use:

- Affordable housing. People want housing options for all income levels across the city.
- Homelessness. More should be done to help people find housing solutions.
- Transportation. People want to be able to get around easily with or without a car. All modes, all abilities.
- Accessible to all (ages, abilities, etc.). Olympia is the Capital City. It should be open and accessible to all - regardless of any physical or mental disabilities.
- Crime & safety. We want our community to feel and be safe and comfortable for everyone.
- Balancing seemingly contradictory issues as we become a more urban city.
- The City is more than just the downtown.
- Value density as a manner to honor our other statements and climate commitments.

Consideration of these comments will also shape the update of this chapter.

Future Land Use Map

One of the cornerstones of the Comprehensive Plan is the Future Land Use Map. This map identifies where different land use types and intensities will occur. These designations are implemented through the zoning districts and other development regulations. Master plans for the provision of urban governmental services such as drinking water, sanitary sewer, storm and surface water, parks, and transportation are completed based on these designations.

While the majority of the City and its urban growth area (68%) are designated for “Low Density Neighborhoods”, there are three areas designated as “High Density Neighborhoods Overlay” areas. The overlay areas are where the majority of new growth is expected to occur and are meant to include a mix of urban, commercial and residential development.

Orientation to Chapter Video

A video discussing the contents of the existing chapter was posted online on March 25, 2024. Announcements of this video being available were included in the April and May monthly update Enewsletter for the Olympia 2045 process. The intention of the video was to orient new residents and business owners to the content of the chapter, or to provide a refresher to those who may not

have reviewed it recently, so that there would be a general understanding of its contents as the process to update this chapter gets under way. In an effort to keep the video relatively brief, it touches on the content of each section of the chapter and highlights the goals included. The video can be accessed from the Olympia 2045 Land Use and Urban Design webpage (see Attachment 1).

Planned Changes to the Chapter

The goals and policies for housing will move to the new Housing Chapter, so they will be removed. In addition, the goals and policies for schools will move from the Public Services Chapter to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter because the Public Services Chapter will change to a Public Safety Chapter. Related planning efforts, such as the Urban Agriculture recommendations, the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development amendments, the Neighborhood Centers report, and the Martin Way Corridor Study recommendations will also be incorporated into the update of the chapter. Other plans, such as the Housing Action Plan, will be considered as some recommendations in the plan may be appropriate for this Chapter as well.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Comments

When the scoping notice for the EIS was issued in February, it was noted that the Alternatives that would be considered in the analysis would be based on variations of elements such as the mix of residential, commercial, and industrial zoning and land uses, employment growth scenarios, and housing types, density, and location. The notice also clarified that the City does not intend to propose an expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary as part of this Plan update under any Alternative.

One request received was for the City to consider redesignating parcels of land near Deschutes Parkway and 5th Ave SW to higher intensity uses. This will be considered as part of the update process.

Early City Council Input

Council identified areas of interest that could be addressed. These include:

- The area along Plum Street, between the I-5 Interchange and State Ave or Olympic Ave has several designations for land uses. They suggested that perhaps this could be reduced or the subject of a future subarea/corridor planning process.
- Neighborhood Centers and the possibility of allowing more small scale commercial uses in neighborhoods could be considered.
- Language to support converting Capital Lake back to an Estuary could be included, with policy direction for future city actions being identified.
- Support for adding language directing staff to review and update Title 18, the Unified Development Code, in the future. The intent of this suggestion was to make the code easier to understand and implement. The discussion included the possibility of amending the code to reduce the overall number of zoning districts, simplifying the language used in the code, and looking for opportunities to improve it.

Climate Analysis:

The Climate Analysis Framework will be completed and summarized with draft amendments.

Equity Analysis:

The Equity Analysis Framework will be completed and summarized with draft amendments.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Staff anticipates that in addition to the comments received from the Community Values and Vision survey, additional public comments will be sought to help develop the initial draft amendment and as drafts are released for review.

In addition, public input and comments related to other planning processes that have occurred since the 2014 update will be considered through the review of reports and recommendations, such as the Urban Agriculture recommendations, the Martin Way Corridor Study, and others.

Options:

None. No action requested.

Financial Impact:

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update is being funded, in part, by a \$175,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Attachments:

Olympia 2045 Land Use and Urban Design Webpage
Olympia 2045 Community Values and Vision Webpage
GMA Checklist