



City Council

Approval of Ordinance Amending OMC Chapter 18 Related to Large Commercial Buildings in Residential Neighborhoods

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Issue:

Whether to amend zoning code to allow for the Hearing Examiner to approve alternative neighborhood-compatible building placement and parking lot location for "Conditional Uses" when the building, landscaping and bicycle/pedestrian facilities provide extraordinary design elements and safety.

Committee Recommendation:

The Planning Commission recommends the attached Ordinance amendment (with one Commissioner voting against the proposed amendment).

City Manager's Recommendation:

Move to approve on second reading the attached Ordinance amending OMC Chapter 18.

Staff Contact:

Steve Friddle, Principal Planner, 360.753.8591

Presenter(s):

None. Consent Calendar.

Background - copied from First Reading Staff Report, June 25, 2013 Council meeting:

The Olympia School District submitted for a Conditional Use Permit (including Design Review application) to construct a new 66,000 sq. ft. Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) that includes associated parking, play fields, landscape, stormwater facilities and frontage improvements. During preliminary site plan review, staff identified that the project did not comply with codes that require buildings to front the street and parking to be placed at the rear or side of the building (Attachment #2). The School District discussed this matter with the Council and the Council agreed to forward code amendments to the Planning Commission for an expedited Public Hearing and recommendation. The Commission received a briefing on April 15, 2013; conducted a May 20, 2013 Public Hearing; and, deliberated and forwarded their recommendation to approve the proposed amendment on June 3, 2013.

Analysis:

The Commission recommends amendments to the Parking Code (OMC 18.38.200) and two sections of the Design Review Code (Basic Commercial 18.110 and Commercial Design Residential Scale District 18.135). The intent is to retain existing provisions to front buildings on the street with parking to the rear and provide the Hearing Examiner with additional new authority to approve an alternative site design (allowing surface parking lots in the front and/or side of buildings) when the:

- Building is located in a residential R4, R4-8 and R6-12 district;
- Building is over 5,000 square feet;
- Project requires a Conditional Use Permit; and
- Site fronts on two or more streets.

As proposed, the alternative would require that:

- a. The building be oriented to have the least impact on the neighborhood;
- b. The parking lot landscape and screening exceed the provisions set out in OMC 18.36.180 to effectively screen it from the street, consistent with "Alternative Landscape Plans," OMC 18.36.100 (A & B);
- c. The bicycle/pedestrian facilities provide safety, convenience, security and clear connections for pedestrians and bicycles between all rights-of-way adjoining the parking area and the front door;
- d. The outdoor lighting will be designed with regard to placement, intensity, shielding, timing and color to avoid offsite spillover; and
- e. The site design provide landscape or other features to screen vehicular headlights from residences.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

As directed by the City Council, extensive outreach was provided to the neighborhood and the surrounding community. The School District, Neighborhood Association and City have participated in several neighborhood meetings. The most recent was April 29, 2013. At the Commissions' public hearing eight citizens testified in support of the amendment.

Options:

1. Approve on on second reading.
2. Deny the amendment and provide direction to staff.