



City Council

Joint Study Session with the Olympia Planning Commission - Handoff of Comprehensive Plan

Agenda Date: 6/11/2013
Agenda Item Number: 2.A
File Number: 13-0464

Type: study session **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Agenda Item:

Joint Study Session with the Olympia Planning Commission - Handoff of Comprehensive Plan

Issue:

The Olympia Planning Commission's Recommended Draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update was released online for Council and public review on May 20, 2013. The primary purpose of this joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission is to hear from Commissioners about the topics and highlights of their recommendation, and their observations about the review process.

Committee Recommendation:

None. However, the Mayor and Planning Commission officers discussed and agreed upon the following format for this meeting:

- 1) Receive a short presentation from staff describing the Planning Commission's review and public hearing process;
- 2) Hear from the nine Planning Commissioners who were involved in deliberation and recommendation on the Comprehensive Plan Update. Chair Parker will kick off this round table discussion.
- 3) Invite new Planning Commissioners to join the table for a dialogue about what lies ahead, facilitated by Kendra Dahlen from FLT Consulting, Inc.

Council is not being asked to deliberate, make decisions or provide guidance on the Comprehensive Plan Update this evening.

City Manager's Recommendation:

As agreed upon by the Mayor and Commission Chairs, hold a roundtable discussion in three parts.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Mayor Stephen Buxbaum
Chair Jerome Parker
Amy Buckler
Kendra Dahlen, FLT Consulting, Inc.

Background and Analysis:

Washington's Growth Management Act requires a 'periodic' review and update of local Comprehensive Plans such as Olympia's to ensure that they conform to the requirements of the Act. Olympia began such an update in 2009 with a goal of completing the update by 2012. This update process was called *Imagine Olympia*. When the Act was amended to postpone the statutory deadline to 2016, the City Council decided to continue the update process with a new completion target of late 2013. The update process to-date is described at www.imagineOlympia.com.

In July of 2010, the City Council adopted a Scope of the Update (Attachment 9), including a directive to make the Plan more readable and accessible to the public. To achieve this, staff shortened the background text, removed details more appropriately included in regulations, reduced redundancy and attended Plain Talk training through the State of Washington. The document was also reorganized and converted to a web-based format to improve accessibility and search-ability. Due to these extensive edits, it is not possible to show track changes between the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and the Draft Plan Update. Instead, "Change flags" within the draft and a list of changes provided online describe the "substantive changes" proposed - these are changes that would affect how our community develops or the way the City of Olympia does business.

In July of 2012, following extensive public involvement and consistent with the scope directed by Council, the staff issued a proposed update of the Plan ("The July Draft".) The July Draft was the subject of the Planning Commission's public hearings and deliberation.

The Planning Commission and City Council developed a Charter (Attachment 8) to guide the Commission's review of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The Charter was subsequently amended to extend the Commission's time for deliberation through March 2013. In accordance with the Charter, the Commission completed a robust public process and made recommendations on the vision and value statements, goals and policies in the Plan. Their review process is described further below:

2012 Commission Public Hearings/Initial Deliberations on the July Draft:

Following initial public hearings in July, the Commission decided to hold additional public hearings focused on specific topics that seemed to be of high public interest. The Commission engaged in back and forth dialogue with the public during testimony at these hearings.

1. **July 23** - general
2. **July 25** - general
3. **September 24** - focus on environmental topics
4. **October 1** - focus on neighborhood and sub-area planning
5. **October 8** - focus on Downtown planning, views and open space
6. **October 15** - focus on urban corridors and street connectivity
7. **October 29** - general

Final Deliberations:

The Commission reviewed the 62 substantive changes proposed by staff in the July Draft, and approved 36 of these recommendation by "Consent Calendar" on December 17. At their meetings in January, February and March, the Commission deliberated further on the remaining 26 staff proposed changes, as well as about 30 other topics identified by the Commission (Attachment 6). They completed their final votes on March 18, 2013 (Attachment 7.)

Refinement of Urban Neighborhood's Proposal:

One aspect of the Planning Commission's recommendation is referred to as the "Urban Neighborhood's" proposal. In general, this relates to land use & density in downtown, along the urban corridor and abutting single-family neighborhoods.

The Commission has issued two versions of the "Urban Neighborhoods" proposal for the City Council and public to review:

- 1) The online draft of the Plan reflects the "Urban Neighborhood" map, goal and policies as of March 18.
- 2) The Addendum to the Chair's Cover letter (Attachment 1) describes a refinement of the "Urban Neighborhood" proposal, which was completed on May 6, 2013.

The reason for the refined version is that the Commission felt they did not have enough time to fully address how the "Urban Neighborhood" map, goal and policies they were recommending should relate to other aspects of the Plan. On March 18, the Commission, including the four to-be-retired Commissioners (Tousley, Leveen, Reddick, and Richards) agreed the remaining members should consider issuing a refinement to "Urban Neighborhoods."

During April and May, the five remaining Commissioners (Parker, Horn, Bardin, Ingman, and Kiswa) deliberated on a refinement. By the time they completed a vote on the refined version on May 6, there were four brand new Commissioners (Brown, Watts, Hoppe and Andresen) who also voted to approve the refined proposal.

As Council moves forward, they will need to determine how to proceed with these two versions of the Urban Neighborhoods proposal.

Next Steps:

On May 23, Council's Land Use & Environment Committee (LUEC) discussed the timeline for City Council review of the Planning Commission Recommended Draft of the Comp Plan Update. On May 28, following a report-out of the LUEC meeting, the City Council agreed the Mayor should work with staff to schedule specific dates. Later this year, the Council will probably request a second meeting with the Planning Commission to further discuss the Commission's recommendation.

Following some initial public outreach, the Council will decide in October how to proceed with their review, and whether they will take action on the vision, goal and policy document this year as expected. Following such action, the City will need to complete further steps to fulfill all the State requirements for the Plan Update. Attachment 10 is a draft list of expected further steps, although it is subject to change.

In addition, the new Planning Commission has issued a recommendation on their 2013 Work Plan, which will be discussed by the Council's General Government Committee on June 18.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Over one thousand interested parties have participated in the *Imagine Olympia* process thus far. The Chair's Cover letter, as well as individual Commissioner letters, describe some of the highlights addressed by the Commission in response to public comment (Attachments 1-5). The *Imagine Olympia* record, including written comments and meeting summaries, will be forwarded to the Council on about July 1.

Options:

1. Confirm and follow the format outlined by the Mayor and Planning Commission Chairs:
 - 1) Receive a short presentation from staff describing the Planning Commission's review and public hearing process,
 - 2) Hear from the nine Planning Commissioners involved in deliberation and recommendation on the Comprehensive Plan Update;
 - 3) Invite new Planning Commissioners to join the table for a dialogue about what lies ahead, facilitated by Kendra Dahlen. Council is not being asked to deliberate, make decisions or provide guidance on the Comprehensive Plan Update this evening.

2. Select alternative format for the meeting.

Financial Impact:

None. Council review and deliberation regarding the proposed Plan update is part of Community Planning and Development Department's 2013 work program.