



Land Use & Environment Committee

Low Barrier Shelters Zoning and Development Regulations

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Title

Low Barrier Shelters Zoning and Development Regulations

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee

City Manager Recommendation:

Briefing only. Provide guidance for next steps.

Body

Issue:

Should the City consider amending its code to require additional criteria be met to site specified types of homeless shelters such as low-barrier shelters, or homeless shelters that serve certain populations?

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Leonard Bauer, Deputy Director, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

Homeless Shelters are defined in the Olympia Municipal Code 18.02 as a type of group home that is “a facility offering lodging and/or emergency shelter to homeless individuals for an indefinite period of time and meeting the standards of Chapter 248-144 WAC” (recodified as 246-360 WAC, the state health regulations for transient housing).

The Olympia Municipal Code 18.04.K (attached) currently contains siting criteria and separation requirements for group homes, including homeless shelters and group homes for offenders and youth.

Recent discussions in the community regarding a proposed “low-barrier” shelter led some members of the City Council to suggest the Land Use and Environment Committee consider whether the city’s existing siting regulations should be reviewed.

Staff is currently researching siting regulations in other jurisdictions and will bring a report to the Land Use

and Environment Committee at its October 24 meeting.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

There was very strong neighborhood and community-wide interest in the recently proposed “low-barrier” shelter.

Options:

1. Receive briefing and direct staff to further pursue specific issues to be addressed in draft code amendments.
2. Receive briefing and direct staff not to further pursue code amendments on this issue.

Financial Impact:

No direct financial impacts at this time other than staff time to draft code amendments if that is the direction of the committee.