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City Council

Approval of Ordinance Amending OMC 18.06.808 Related to High Density Corridor Zoning

Agenda Date: 2/25/2014
Agenda Item Number: 4.I
File Number: 14-0096

Type: ordinance **Version:** 2 **Status:** Passed

Title

Approval of Ordinance Amending OMC 18.06.808 Related to High Density Corridor Zoning

Recommended Action

The Olympia Planning Commission recommends adoption of the ordinance.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve on second reading the ordinance revising High Density Corridor Zoning.

Report

Issue:

Whether to amend the City's Development Code to provide that in High Density Corridor zones buildings within 100 feet of lower density residential zones (14 units per acre or less) shall be limited to a height of 35 feet; and where within 50 feet of other zones to the maximum height of such adjacent zone.

Staff Contact:

Todd Stamm, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development Department, 360.753.8597

Presenter(s):

None. Consent agenda item.

Background and Analysis:

This ordinance was approved on first reading by Council on February 4, 2014. Following is the Background and Analysis from that meeting:

On December 11, 2012, the Olympia City Council responded to public concerns about development near certain single-family housing by adopting an emergency ordinance changing building height regulations in the High Density Corridor zones (HDC-1; HDC-2; HDC-3; HDC-4). Ordinance 6820 temporarily requires that within any of the four High Density Corridor zones:

- any new buildings within 100 feet of a single-family lot shall not exceed a height of 35 feet, and

- any buildings on property adjacent to 1) a single-family home, 2) a residential zone, or 3) a public street, shall have 8-foot step-backs at every third floor (aka 'wedding cake' design).

This emergency ordinance has been extended through June of 2014.

In the meantime, as directed by the Council, the Olympia Planning Commission has considered this and other approaches to addressing the issue of new tall buildings in these zones adjacent to housing. In particular, the Commission was briefed on this matter on August 19, 2013; and held a public hearing on October 21, 2013. That hearing was continued to the Commission's next meeting on November 4, 2013. The Commission's hearing was preceded by notice mailed to most of the property owners in and near these zoning districts. The Commission received written and oral comments from about a dozen parties. These written comments and minutes of the Commission's meetings on this topic are attached.

Following deliberation on November 4 and November 18, the Commission approved a 'hybrid' recommendation with one member opposing. The primary features of the Commission's 'hybrid' recommendation are that:

- the third-floor 'step-back' requirement of Ordinance 6820 not be adopted, and
- instead of limiting the heights of buildings based on adjacency to a single-family home, the building height limitations at the fringes of the High Density Corridor zones should depend upon the residential density and heights allowed in the adjacent zoning districts.

Specifically, the Commission recommended:

- a 35-foot height limit for any part of a new building that is within 100 feet of a residential zone with a maximum density of 14 housing units per acre (see attachment labeled "Sketch Olympia HDC), and
- any new building within 50 feet of other zones should be limited to either 60' or the height allowed in the adjacent zone, whichever is less (see attachment labeled "Olympia sketch HDC 2").

For example, the single-family homes in the vicinity of Bing Street NW (the area where a controversial tall building was recently proposed) are in a multi-family zone that allows up to 18 units per acre (RM-18) and limits building heights to 35 feet. The first bullet above would not apply because the adjacent zoning is greater than 14 housing units per acre. Thus, under the second bullet above, the Commission's recommendation would result in a 35-foot height limit within 50 feet of the adjacent single-family properties.

Notice of the Council's consideration of this proposal on February 4 was provided to all parties that have commented or expressed interest during consideration of this issue. As noted below, the Council may either adopt the Commission's recommendation - which is supported by the City Manager - or elect to hold its own public hearing. If the Council chooses to schedule a hearing, for efficiency it could be held in conjunction with a hearing on the issue of whether to extend the interim ordinance for another six months.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Interested parties have expressed a variety of views regarding the proposal, including support, opposition, and suggested alternatives. Written comments received to date are attached.

Options:

1. Approve the proposed ordinance on second reading.
2. Do not approve the ordinance; instead direct that a Council public hearing be scheduled regarding this proposal.

Financial Impact:

No direct impact to City budget; indirect impacts through effects on property values and development opportunities.