



City Council

Discussion and Potential Guidance on the Comprehensive Plan Update including Background Information, Process and Next Steps, and Three Specific Topics: Sea Level Rise, Carbon Footprint and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Minimizing Outdoor Nighttime Lighting (Dark Skies)

Agenda Date: 3/11/2014
Agenda Item Number: 2.A
File Number: 14-0234

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

Title

Discussion and Potential Guidance on the Comprehensive Plan Update including Background Information, Process and Next Steps, and Three Specific Topics: Sea Level Rise, Carbon Footprint and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Minimizing Outdoor Nighttime Lighting (Dark Skies)

Recommended Action

City Manager Recommendation:

- Receive and discuss information about the Comprehensive Plan update process and background information, and provide guidance;
- Receive and discuss goals and policies recommended by the Olympia Planning Commission and staff regarding Sea Level Rise, Carbon Footprint and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Dark Skies. Provide initial guidance on next steps.

Report

Issue:

The Planning Commission and City Manager have presented Council with recommendations on the Comprehensive Plan Update. City Council will hold a public hearing on a draft Comprehensive Plan Update at a date to be determine - most likely in 2014. Guidance is needed on issues and language to be included in that draft document.

Staff Contact:

Leonard Bauer, Deputy Director, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8206

Presenter(s):

Leonard Bauer, Deputy Director, Community Planning and Development
Rich Hoey, Director, Public Works
Stacey Ray, Associate Planner, Community Planning and Development

The Olympia Planning Commission has been notified of the meeting.

Note: The meeting will be set up “study session discussion” style around tables on the main floor of the Council Chambers.

Background and Analysis:

At its February 25 work session on the Olympia Planning Commission-recommended Final Draft Comprehensive Plan on Tuesday, City Council referred several policy issues to future Council work sessions. The March 11 work session is considering three of those topics, in addition to an overview of the update process and where to locate documents:

- 1) Sea level rise
- 2) Carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions
- 3) Minimizing outdoor nighttime lighting (dark skies).

Attached are the goals and policies included in the Final Draft Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Olympia Planning Commission. Also attached are copies of the documented rationale from the Commission. Please also refer to the Planning Commission Chairs’ Cover Letter and Addendum (Attachment #6) and Individual Commissioner Letters (Attachment #7) for additional explanation of the Commission’s rationale.

The City Council received detailed briefings on sea level rise (at its March 4 work session) and climate change and greenhouse gas emissions (at its March 4 regular meeting). Additional background on minimizing outdoor nighttime lighting impacts is below.

Dark Skies (Minimizing Outdoor Nighttime Lighting Impacts)

Efforts to reduce nighttime light are commonly referred to as “dark skies” initiatives because the reduction of light supports greater visibility of the night sky. It also lessens the negative impacts nighttime light can have on human, animal, and plant biological and physiological processes.

Minimizing nighttime light often focuses on reducing or eliminating instances of excessive and unsafe glare, light trespass, and light pollution. An additional benefit may be a reduction in light energy usage.

In 2007, City Council asked staff to research options for improving regulations to preserve the night sky. Council directed staff specifically to research options for regulations for private development. In 2008, staff forwarded a proposed Olympia Municipal Code amendment to the Planning Commission (Commission). The Commission held a hearing, but during their deliberations decided to defer taking any action.

In 2010, the City of Tumwater responded to citizen concerns on this issue by adopting new regulations governing outdoor artificial lighting. An amendment to the Tumwater Municipal Code added Chapter 18.40.035 Exterior illumination (Attachment A). The adopted regulations apply to outdoor artificial light sources, including lights on the exterior of buildings or other structures, installed underneath canopies, pole mounted, freestanding and ground lights, as well as nonresidential interior lights.

In response to Council's interest, public comments received by the Planning Commission during their hearing in 2008, and additional public comments received during *Imagine Olympia*, staff proposed new goal and policy language to address dark skies in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Staff used Tumwater's work as resource in drafting the new Comprehensive Plan language, which was subsequently recommended by the Planning Commission.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The comprehensive plan policies impact neighborhoods and community members citywide.

Options:

- A) Receive and discuss information. Provide initial guidance on next steps.

Financial Impact:

None; this work item is an element of the Comprehensive Plan Update.