



## Planning Commission

### “Low Impact Development” Briefing - An Overview of Work in Progress and the Planning Commission’s Role

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#### **Title**

“Low Impact Development” Briefing - An Overview of Work in Progress and the Planning Commission’s Role

#### **Recommended Action**

Informational briefing -no action required.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

The City of Olympia has begun an update of its stormwater management standards and regulations. This effort was initiated in 2014 and will probably be part of the Planning Commission’s 2015 work program.

#### **Staff Contacts:**

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#### **Presenter:**

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#### **Background and Analysis:**

As part of implementation of the Federal Clean Water Act, the City of Olympia receives and must periodically renew a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Department of Ecology. Among other things, this permit sets standards for the release of stormwater by the City into streams, lakes and marine waters. This renewal requires that the City update its stormwater standards and regulations in accordance with guidance provided by Ecology. In the past, this periodic update has focused on the City’s Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual.

However, the new ‘Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit’ requires that ‘Low Impact Development’ (LID) be the “preferred and commonly-used approach to site development” in Olympia. (In this context the term “low-impact development” and the abbreviation ‘LID’ relate to stormwater and run-off impacts. In other contexts ‘LID’ may refer to development designs which minimize impacts in general; or to “Local Improvement Districts,” a special taxation area.) This

approach will result in a re-evaluation of nearly every regulation and standard related to stormwater management.

In January of 2014, City staff began a comprehensive review of currently adopted regulations and standards to determine which might be updated or revised to meet the new requirements. This is to be a comprehensive review of development regulations such as zoning standards, and construction standards such as the Engineering Design and Development Standards and Olympia's Drainage Manual. To ensure a coordinated approach, staff from both the Public Works and Community Planning and Development Departments, and technical consultants selected by the City staff, are all to be involved. In addition, the Council's Land Use and Environment Committee is routinely consulted.

### Schedule

The update must be completed by December of 2016. However, Olympia is pursuing early adoption with Council action scheduled for late in 2015. That schedule envisions initial drafts and related information being available to the public early in 2015 with a "Recommended Draft" to be issued in May. This will lead to the Planning Commission's formal review - including one or more public hearings - beginning in July with a recommendation to be issued by the Commission in September.

### Scope

City staff is in the midst of evaluating the extensive guidance provided by Ecology and available from other sources. As a result the specific scope of the code and standards revisions has not yet been determined. However, because all related regulations are being considered, i.e., "everything is on the table," it is likely that a broad range of proposals will be submitted for public review. For example, these revisions could touch upon topics such as:

- Landscaping
- Stormwater facilities
- Site clearing and grading
- Impervious surfaces
- Vehicle parking standards
- Roof run-off
- Building foundations
- Street construction standards
- Development inspection and maintenance
- Variances and other exceptions

To ensure the best possible outcome from a stormwater management standpoint, this project includes re-examining many regulatory approaches that have already been the subject of local interest, such as maximum building heights, street standards, and paving and surfacing materials. Thus staff recommends that the Commission anticipate that the 'LID update' will be a substantial topic of significant interest to the public.

### Next Steps

This is an overview briefing to help the Commission prepare its 2015 work plan proposal to Council. Another more in-depth briefing is anticipated early in 2015 when initial drafts are available and public involvement increases. More briefings can be scheduled at the Commission's discretion as part of

the formal review stage.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Although some information has been made available, there has been no substantial public involvement to date. Substantial public interest and involvement is anticipated in 2015.

**Options:**

Informational briefing only - no action required at this time

**Financial Impact:**

Part of Public Works and Community Planning and Development Departments' annual budgets