



City Council

Approval of Ordinance Amending OMC 16.05.050 Regarding Building Heights

Agenda Date: 1/27/2015
Agenda Item Number: 3.D
File Number: 15-0026

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

Title

Approval of Ordinance Amending OMC 16.05.050 Regarding Building Heights

Recommended Action:

Approve the proposed building height amendment for certain buildings types in downtown Olympia.

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve on second reading the proposed building height amendment for certain buildings types in downtown Olympia.

Body

Issue:

Whether to amend the Municipal Code provisions related to mixed-use building height limitations to correct inconsistencies with other provisions of the Municipal Code and International Building Code.

Staff Contacts:

Todd Cunningham, Building Official, Community Planning & Development 360.753.8486

Robert Bradley, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Department 360.753.8458

Steven Friddle, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development 360.753.8591

Presenters: None. Consent Calendar item.

Background and Analysis:

There were no changes to the background and analysis from first reading to second reading.

During a recent project review for a mixed-use construction building, inconsistencies were identified between our adopted Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) provisions related to building heights for mixed-use apartment buildings and the International Building Code (IBC) related to building height for mixed-use construction buildings of Type V-A Wood-frame over Type I-A Concrete.

The IBC limits buildings heights depending upon different building means and methods. Generally

speaking, the more protective the safety requirements, the higher the building can go. Both the IBC and the OMC also allow for alternate means and methods to construct buildings provide that safety is equal or surpassed.

The alternate means and method chapter of the OMC includes a specific height limit of 70 feet for mixed-use structures which is inconsistent with other provisions for allowable heights in OMC 18.06.080, table 6.02 which provides for buildings up to 75 feet. Additionally, the IBC limits heights for this type of construction (Type V-A Wood-frame over Type I-A Concrete) to a maximum of 70 feet.

Staff recommends that these inconsistencies be clarified by amending the provisions of OMC 16.05.050 to more closely fit other adopted OMC provisions. The revised wording will allow the Fire Marshal and Building Official to have authority to allow mixed construction buildings up to 75 feet in height in this building category (alternate means and methods for mixed use buildings) to the highest occupied floor based on their assessment of fire access to the building and fire protection in the building coupled with other previously adopted provisions required within the IBC, Titles 16 and 18 of the OMC. Taller buildings over 75 feet to the highest occupied floor are still allowed as a different building category under other provisions of the International Building Code.

Buildings over 75 feet to the highest occupied floor will continue to be governed by other sections of the International Building Code (OMC Chapter 16 is not applicable to buildings over 75-feet to the highest occupied floor as related to mix-use occupancies under 16.05) and applicable zoning regulations.

This text amendment does not allow for increased building height in any zone. Maximum building height will continue to be governed by Chapter 18 Development Regulations. This amendment will, however, allow for taller mixed construction buildings through greater administrative flexibility in the application of this section of the code for finished floor heights verses actual building heights. The Fire Marshall and Building Official have both reviewed this amendment and support it. Given the special construction provisions required by OMC Chapter 16.05 related to fire access and fire construction, buildings constructed in accordance with this section will continue to be safe and will not present an unacceptable hazard while encouraging mixed use construction in downtown.

Neighborhood/Community Interests:

Unknown, however, there is general support for code amendments that promote internal consistency within the existing codes and with the approach implemented by many municipalities within the Puget Sound region.

Options:

1. Move to approve the proposed building height amendment with the adoption of the consent calendar.
2. Remove this item from the Consent Calendar and provide further direction to staff.

Financial Impact: None.