



## Planning Commission

### Briefing on OPC's Neighborhood Center Outreach - Phase 2

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#### **Title**

Briefing on OPC's Neighborhood Center Outreach - Phase 2

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Review of the Planning Commission's previous work on neighborhood centers and discussion about Phase 2. In this phase, the Commission will create a presentation and hold 2-3 neighborhood meetings about Olympia's neighborhood centers.

##### **Staff Contact:**

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##### **Presenter(s):**

Amy Buckler

Bob Bengford, MAKERS Architecture

Chris van Daalen, Education Coordinator, NW EcoBuilders Guild

Brian Hovis, citizen sharing some data analysis about Olympia's neighborhood centers

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

Neighborhood Centers are small walk and transit-friendly business clusters within residential neighborhoods that serve the day-to-day retail and service needs of local residents and foster community interaction. These are important to community-wide goals to increase walkability, reduce our carbon footprint, improve human health, and foster neighborhood connections and resiliency.

The City has had a policy of encouraging neighborhood centers for over 20 years, but with some exception these have not developed as described in the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan identifies 17 sites for neighborhood scale retail and mixed uses. A recent policy update would also allow for medium density residential uses in or around centers. Most of the 17 sites are located where the primary surrounding land use is single-family residential. The conditions of these sites vary from thriving mixed use center to vacant.

To implement the Plan, the Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) and staff are working to inform public dialogue and identify appropriate revisions of Olympia's 'neighborhood center' and

'neighborhood retail' development codes. This is Phase 2 of the Planning Commission's work.

- **In Phase 1 (2014 Info Gathering)**, the Commission gathered input about the public's desires as well as barriers to neighborhood center development. With help from staff, they launched an online questionnaire on OlySpeaks.org and received 668 responses. Staff also interviewed 13 business owners and 8 property owner/developers who have operated a business, designed or developed a neighborhood center in Olympia.
- **In Phase 2 - (2015 Outreach)**, with help from MAKERS architecture consultant Bob Bengford and staff, select members of the Planning Commission will guide the creation of a visual presentation that describes what was learned in 2014, including challenges, opportunities, and illustrations of what different types of centers might look like, etc.

At their June 1 meeting, the Planning Commission selected the following four Commissioners to work more closely on this project: Missy Watts, Carole Richmond, Jerry Parker, and Max Brown. These Commissioners work with Mr. Bengford and staff to build the presentation over the summer. In September, assisted by Mr. Bengford, these Commissioners will provide an overview of the final presentation to the full Commission. That task will complete the City's consulting contract with MAKERS.

In fall of 2015, the Planning Commissioners will lead and facilitate 2-3 meetings with neighborhoods. The goal is to inform public dialogue and gain a better understanding of the public will and neighborhood preferences before specific code changes are presented. The expectation is that the Commission is leading and facilitating this conversation, with logistical support from staff.

- **Phase 3 - (2016 Consideration of Code Changes)** - *Dependent on OPC and Council selecting this item for the OPC Work Plan*

**NOT** included in the scope of this work:

- Comprehensive Plan policy
- Visioning or master planning for specific neighborhood centers
- Regulations that apply to neighborhood centers areas that are located within master planned Urban Villages (Briggs) or Neighborhood Villages (Mill Pond, Woodbury Crossing, Bentridge.) These villages all have approved master plans.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

- Mr. Bengford may be available by phone to greet the Commission and hear the discussion and guidance.
- Mr. Daalen has been invited to speak briefly about the role of voluntary placemaking initiatives in the development of neighborhood centers.
- Mr. Hovis has been invited to speak briefly about some data analysis he conducted about

Olympia's neighborhood centers.

## BACKGROUND - ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission's (preliminary) recommendation for future code changes - made on December 1, 2014, based on November 17, 2014 public hearing
2. Minutes from November 17, 2014 public hearing on neighborhood centers and future consideration of code changes
3. Summary Findings from 2014 interviews with property and business owners in neighborhood center areas and community survey - includes map of neighborhood center areas on last page
4. Additional Findings from 2014 Olyspeaks community survey
5. Olympia policy basis RE: neighborhood centers
6. Neighborhood Center Fun Facts - brief description of each area identified in the Comprehensive Plan for neighborhood center development
7. Self-Guided Tour of Olympia's Neighborhood Center areas - Driving Directions
8. Summary of the role of voluntary placemaking in neighborhood centers from Chris van Daalen
9. Article: Creating Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts, by John Owen and Gregory Easton - good background

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

See Attachments 2, 3 and 4 above

### **Options:**

Hear the briefing from staff and guest speakers, and provide input to guide Phase 2, including concepts to include in the neighborhood presentation.

### **Financial Impact:**

Up to \$15,000 has been allocated for consultant and graphic work.