



Planning Commission

Commercial Design Review Expansion - Continued Deliberation and Possible Recommendation

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Title

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Recommended Action

Move to recommend approval of code amendment as proposed by City staff.

Report

Issue:

In December of 2014 the City of Olympia adopted a major update of its Comprehensive Plan. Among the many changes was a revision of the policy describing the scope of 'design review' -- the City's process that regulates the architecture and complementary landscaping of developments. In response, City staff proposed that the development code be amended to require that all commercial buildings and substantial commercial remodels adjacent to most public streets meet the City's "Basic Commercial Design Criteria." The staff's proposal also includes amendments to clarify design review procedures. The Commission is to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding this proposal.

Staff Contact:

Todd Stamm, Principal Planner, Community Planning and Development Department, (360.753.8957)

Presenter:

None; discussion to be led by Commission Chair.

Background and Analysis:

The Commission received a pre-hearing briefing on this proposed development code amendment on May 4, 2015, hosted a public hearing on this proposal on May 18 and accepted written comments until May 22. The Commission opened discussion of this proposal on June 1, 2015. Detailed information regarding this proposal and comments received are included in staff reports of the May 18 and June 1 meetings. Deliberation continued on July 6 and the Commission scheduled further discussion for July 20.

The Design Review Board also discussed this issue in general terms on March 12 and March 26.

The Board recommended that:

- All commercial projects adjacent to public streets should be subject to the Basic Commercial Design Criteria
- All mixed use projects should be subject to either the commercial or multi-family design criteria; when inconsistent the commercial criteria should apply
- Such projects adding 5,000 or more square feet of floor area should be subject to review by the Design Review Board
- Generally Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development (PUD) should not be exempt from design review, and at minimum that part of the Evergreen Park PUD adjacent to Cooper Point Road - Automall Drive should NOT be exempt

The staff's proposal differs from the Board's recommendation in two respects: The staff proposes that project subject to design review under the new 'all streets' provision would be 'staff level' reviews and not subject to a Board-level public meeting; and the Evergreen Park PUD would continue to be exempt from design review. Note, there are no formal minutes of the Board's discussions; the summary above is based on staff notes.

To date Commission discussion has focused on responding to public comments by better understanding existing design review regulations of the City and the possibility of narrowing the scope of the proposed amendment. An illustrative map of some of the areas that might be affected by this regulatory change is attached for convenience. The Commission may use this meeting to recommend approval as proposed by staff, request more information or provide direction to staff to draft such an alternative for consideration by the Commission.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

See public comments provided during public hearing phase.

Options:

1. Recommend that City Council adopt the code amendment as proposed.
2. Recommend that City Council adopt a specific alternative amendment.
3. Recommend that the development code not be amended with regard to this issue.

Financial Impact:

Proposed amendment would add to City's cost of providing design review services - most of cost would be recovered from development application fees. Proposed regulatory change may increase the cost of some developments and have other secondary impacts as described by commenting parties.