



## Utility Advisory Committee

### Low Impact Development Code Revisions

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#### **Title**

Low Impact Development Code Revisions

#### **Recommended Action**

**UAC Deliverable:** Provide recommendations for Olympia Planning Commission and City Council in December.

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#### **Previous LID Work Items Before the UAC:**

Low Impact Development Code Revisions Briefing, January 7, 2015.

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

The Utility Advisory Committee was introduced to the low impact development work item in January, 2015. The topic is scheduled for additional UAC consideration in October, November and December, culminating in technical and policy recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council. The Planning Commission will review specific regulatory language, host a public hearing, and forward additional recommendations to City Council in early spring, 2016.

As we discussed in January, the Washington State Department of Ecology defines low impact development (LID) as “a stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic natural hydrologic processes such as infiltration, filtration, and evaporation of precipitation”. The strategy emphasizes natural resource conservation, site planning, and small-scale stormwater management practices that are integrated into the project design. Low impact techniques include careful site design and innovative stormwater management approaches such as minimizing impervious pavement surfaces, bioretention, and compost-amended soils.

The City of Olympia is required by the State to evaluate our various codes and regulations in order to "make LID the preferred and commonly used approach to site development." Regardless of the State mandate, our community has strong interest and considerable experience with LID and other environmentally-sensitive development practices. However, unlike past work, Olympia's code and regulations have not been comprehensively evaluated from an LID perspective.

Olympia’s Public Works and Community Planning and Development Departments recently completed detailed evaluations of 22 potential LID techniques (See Attachment 1). The evaluations form the basis for our recommendations for further LID implementation. A summary of the recommendations is also available (Attachment 2).

The evaluations effectively led staff through the challenging process of how to “make LID the preferred and commonly used approach to site development.” The evaluations document the technical, regulatory, and on-the-ground aspects of using LID in Olympia.

For Olympia, implementing LID may be part of an evolving continuum of regulatory improvements rather than a fundamental shift to new development practices. LID may be a handful of incremental refinements to current land use practices rather than a comprehensive package of regulatory change with a definable environmental outcome. This potential dynamic reflects Olympia’s history as an early implementer of growth management, natural resource protection, and stormwater management practices. We have already picked some of the low-hanging fruit.

The draft recommendations are both ambitious and worthwhile. In some cases, they provide mandatory changes; in other cases, they support innovation. Draft recommendations are provided in detail in Attachment 1 and summarized in Attachment 2.

UAC meetings over the next four months can allow Committee members the opportunity to revisit the concepts of LID and broadly discuss draft recommendations (September 3), discuss specifics (October 1 and November 5), and prepare recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council (December 3). Staff is available to support additional UAC work on the topic as needed.

Reading the detailed LID evaluations (Attachment 1) is not expected for the September 3 meeting. However, we do ask that Committee members familiarize themselves with LID Element #14: Permeable Pavement in Attachment 1. Element #14 will serve as an example of the analytical approach used by staff.

**Financial Impact:**

Public Works and the Community Planning and Development Departments are providing the in-house planning and technical resources for the project. Additionally, the Storm and Surface Water Utility is funding outside consultant support.