



Land Use & Environment Committee

Discussion of Neighborhood Centers with Planning Commission Leadership

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Discuss the Neighborhood Centers provisions in the Comprehensive Plan. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss the Neighborhood Centers provisions in the Comprehensive Plan and potential measures to encourage or support their development.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development

Mike Auderer, Vice Chair, Olympia Planning Commission

Carole Richmond, Member, Olympia Planning Commission

Background and Analysis:

There are seventeen (17) Neighborhood Centers designated on the Future Land Use Map. Some of these centers are within Neighborhood or Urban Villages but most are not.

Goal 21 of the Comprehensive Plan states "Neighborhood centers are the focal point of neighborhoods and villages." This goal has five policies associated with it, as follows:

- Establish a neighborhood center at each village site, encourage development of the neighborhood centers shown on Future Land Use Map and add additional centers when compatible with existing land uses and where they are more than one-half mile from other commercial areas.

- Locate neighborhood centers along collector or arterial streets and within about 600 feet of a transit stop.
- Support housing, a food store, a café or bakery, and a neighborhood park or civic green at all neighborhood centers. Allow churches, schools, and convenience businesses and services that cater primarily to neighborhood residents. Prohibit auto-oriented uses. Vary the specific size and composition of such centers for balance with surrounding uses. Where practical, focus commercial uses on civic greens or parks. Limit the size of commercial uses. (Note: A larger urban center is permitted in the Briggs Urban Village.)
- Allow neighborhood center designs that are innovative and provide variety, but that ensure compatibility with adjoining uses. Consider appropriate phasing, scale, design and exterior materials, as well as glare, noise and traffic impacts when evaluating compatibility. Require that buildings include primary access directly from street sidewalks and be oriented toward the neighborhood and any adjacent park or green. Require that signage be consistent with neighborhood character.
- Locate streets and trails for non-arterial access to the neighborhood center.

Interest in the development of Neighborhood Centers is rising. The Planning Commission is interested in identifying potential barriers to their development and opportunities to improve the likelihood for success of these centers.

In August 2013, the Planning Commission Retreat featured a tour of the then proposed Neighborhood Centers. The tour was followed by a discussion about fostering neighborhood businesses and the differences between zoning standards for development of Neighborhood Centers within designated villages and those outside of villages (Neighborhood Retail zoning).

In August 2016, the Olympia Northeast Neighborhoods Alliance (ONNA) completed a subarea plan that was accepted by the City Council. One of the three primary goals of the Subarea Plan is to promote further development of the neighborhood center at Bethel Street NE and San Francisco Avenue NE. A team of ONNA volunteers has been working with the property owners, City staff and prospective property purchasers to further that goal.

Neighborhood/Community Interests:

Neighborhoods are generally supportive of appropriately scaled retail options that can be accessed conveniently, especially by bicyclists and pedestrians. The Wildwood center at South Capitol Way and O'Farrell Avenue is often mentioned as a good example of a walkable small-scale center that supports the neighborhood. Interest and the potential for concerns or support will vary by neighborhood and the scope of the project(s) proposed.

Options:

N/A

Financial Impact:

N/A

Attachments:

Future Land Use Map
Fostering Neighborhood Business Districts
2013 Neighborhood Centers Memo
2013 Neighborhood Centers Fun Facts