



Land Use & Environment Committee

Neighborhood Centers Update

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Title

Neighborhood Centers Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Briefing Only. No action requested.

City Manager Recommendation:

Briefing Only. No action requested.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a briefing on the Neighborhood Centers project.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Cari Hornbein, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

Olympia's Comprehensive Plan identifies 17 areas for future neighborhood center development. Neighborhood centers are small walk- and transit-friendly areas within neighborhoods that serve the day-to-day retail and service needs of local residents and foster community interaction. These destinations are essential to achieving community goals to reduce environmental impacts, improve human health, provide greater housing options, and foster healthy and resilient neighborhoods. Descriptions of each designated neighborhood center can be found in Attachment 2. (Please note the information in this document is dated August 2, 2013.)

Despite long-held goals to encourage them, neighborhood centers have not been developed as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan. In 2014, the Planning Commission set out to found out why and to help create solutions. Originally, the Neighborhood Centers project included three phases:

- **Phase I - Information Gathering (2014)**

The Planning Commission gathered input about the public's desires as well as barriers to

neighborhood centers development. An online questionnaire was conducted, as were interviews with business owners and operators. Results were compiled in the 'Summary of 2014 Findings about Olympia's Neighborhood Centers' (see Attachment 3 for link to this document).

- **Phase 2 - Outreach (2015-2016)**

During this phase, Commissioners were going to share what they learned about challenges, opportunities, and success factors with neighborhoods and other stakeholders. The Neighborhood Centers project was put on hold before outreach occurred due to lack of capacity and other priority work program projects.

- **Phase 3 - Regulatory Changes (2016)**

This phase would have involved amendments to the Municipal Code to make neighborhood center goals easier to achieve.

The Neighborhood Centers project has remained on the Planning Commission's work plan since it was put on hold in 2015. The Community Planning and Development Department will be hiring a consultant to assist in moving the project forward. Staff is currently developing a scope of work for the recruitment process; preliminary tasks include updating demographic information, analyzing current market conditions, identifying barriers in current codes and policies, public engagement, and developing strategies and actions for making neighborhood center goals easier to achieve.

Additional information and resource materials can be found on the City website; a link is provided in Attachment 3.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Development of neighborhood centers was a primary theme during the last Comprehensive Plan update. They were also addressed in the *Sustainable Thurston Plan* and the *Housing Action Plan*; both plans involved extensive public outreach.

The Eastside Neighborhood Association has expressed interest in having a neighborhood center in their neighborhood.

Options:

None at this time. Briefing only.

Financial Impact:

The project is being funded by the Community Planning and Development Department's budget in 2021 and 2022.

Attachments:

Map of Designated Neighborhood Centers
Description of Designated Neighborhood Centers
Neighborhood Centers Webpage