



Land Use & Environment Committee

Sign Code Update

Agenda Date: 12/20/2018
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
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Type: recommendation **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Sign Code Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Planning Commission recommends adoption of the proposed Olympia Sign Code update and forwarding the code language to Council for consideration.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the Planning Commission recommendation to adopt the proposed Olympia Sign Code update, and forward to Council for consideration.

Report

Issue:

Whether to accept the Planning Commission recommendation to adopt the attached the Olympia Sign Code update and forward to Council for consideration.

Staff Contact:

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development, 360.570.3722

Presenter(s):

Joyce Phillips, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

Since the last Sign Code Update was provided to the Committee in April of this year, work continued to progress on the sign code. The first public draft was released in July. A Planning Commission briefing focused on the legal issues of free speech and recent court cases was conducted on August 20, 2018. A public Open House was held on August 28, 2018. In response to questions raised and comments provided, a second public draft was issued on September 21, 2018.

In October, staff met with the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, provided another briefing to the Planning Commission on other issues related to the Sign Code, and provided an overview to the Olympia Downtown Alliance's Design Committee. In response to comments provided, a third public draft was released on October 25. Staff met with the Downtown Neighborhood Association on November 2 and a public hearing was held by the Planning Commission on November 5, 2018.

Four people spoke at the public hearing. In addition, copies of written comments received throughout the process were provided to the Planning Commission. Testimony at the hearing primarily focused on the “hold time” for signs that include an electronic message. Electronic message sign information was reviewed by the Commission and is included in the attachments, which are also included on the project webpage. The attached Summary of Studies includes a memorandum from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) providing guidance on the topic.

The Planning Commission completed its deliberations on November 19, 2018, and recommended approval of the Sign Code Update, as proposed.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The most significant comments received have been about electronic messages on signs and the frequency with which the messages should be allowed to change. The City of Olympia restricts the use of signs with an electronic message. There are a few commercial signs of this type that are grandfathered in, which would not be allowed today. Other signs are generally at schools and provide public service messages. There are some time and temperature signs in this category as well, primarily at banks.

Options:

1. Advance the Sign Code Update to the City Council with a recommendation for approval from both the Planning Commission and the Land Use and Environment Committee.
2. Choose not to recommend approval of the Sign Code Update to the City Council.
3. Recommend specific revisions before advancing the Sign Code Update to the City Council.

Financial Impact:

None. Adoption and implementation of a new sign code, if approved, is in the Department’s base budget.

Attachments:

Link to Project Web Page
Electronic Message Signs Information
Summary of Studies
Summary of Other Cities