

2026 Proposed Code Amendments

City of Olympia

The City of Olympia is proposing amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC). This document is a companion to the proposed amendments, intended to provide information about each of the 47 requested amendments and the outcome, if approved. Page numbers provided correspond to the first public draft of the proposal.

For more information, please contact Joyce Phillips at jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us or 360.570.3722.

#	Page #	Request by:	Purpose	Outcome
1	Page 1	CPED	Treat all residential zoning districts the same regarding parking. Acknowledge there are more than 3 residential zoning districts.	Treat all residential neighborhoods the same way for parking enforcement.
2	Page 2	OFD	Remove definition of bulk storage	Remove definition.
3	Pages 2-3	OFD	Remove an exception related to access roadways	Remove an exception that was causing “gray” areas and instead rely on access standards.
4	Page 3	OFD	Clarify that Section 16.32.053 – Chapter 9 refers to Commercial Type Hoods.	Section title renamed to Commercial Type Hoods. Helps make it easier for people to find code language related to commercial type hoods.
5	Page 3	OFD	Clarify which parts of the International Fire Code are not adopted by Olympia.	Clarify that Appendix A, Appendix C, and Appendix J are not applicable in Olympia.
6	Pages 3-5	OFD	Clarify when fire alarms are required.	Remove a specific requirement that states that manual fire alarm stations shall be located within 5 feet of all required exits on each floor level and from the structure; add language that applies when certain types of automatic fire sprinkler systems are present in some building types (Group R).
7	Pages 6-8	State Required (HB1096)	Add provisions to the subdivision code to allow “lot splitting”	Add provisions to the subdivision code to allow lot splitting as a type of subdivision.

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8	Page 8	CPED	Expand the purpose statement of Title 18 to include renewable energy systems and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.	Add provisions to the purpose statement of Title 18 regarding renewable energy systems and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
9	Page 9	CPED	Clarify that “shall” and “must” are requirements within the code; remove the year (1986) in regard to the official dictionary used when considering ordinarily accepted meanings	Clarify that “shall” and “must” are requirements within the code; remove the year (1986) in regard to the official dictionary used when considering ordinarily accepted meanings
10	Pages 9-10	CPED	Clean up language in the code about how to address properties that are divided into more than one zoning district.	The property will be reviewed based on a consolidated site plan that uses one of the two zones for development.
11	Pages 10-11	CPED	Add new definitions	Definitions for adjacent, floor area ratio, solar energy system, solar photovoltaic system, grid-connected solar energy system, roof-mounted solar energy system, Ground-mounted solar energy system as accessory and primary uses, and revisions to property line definitions are provided.
12a	Page 12	CPED	Address “large multifamily” as a permitted use, but one that is different than other housing types given the number of units allowed per lot.	Clarify that large multifamily developments are only allowed in higher density zones. This closes an unintended loophole that may have been construed to allow more than 6 units per lot on larger lots in lower density residential zoning districts.
12b	Page 13	State Required (SB 5509)	Address where child day care centers are allowed.	Allow child day care centers in all residential zoning districts.
13	Page 18	CPED	Remove limitation of the number of people cared for in a Hospice Care Center in two zoning districts.	Remove the limitation of the number of people cared for in a Hospice Care Center. Rely on state license.
14	Pages 18-19	State Required (See RCW 35A.21.440)	Address new state requirements for adding housing units in existing buildings.	Address new state requirements for adding housing units in existing buildings. Affects 18.04 – Residential Districts and 18.06 – Commercial Districts.

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15	Page 19	CPED	Address temporary surface parking lot language to add clarity.	Clarify that provisions for temporary surface parking areas are applicable to such lots only when they were previously approved/permitted.
16	Pages 23-24	CPED	Clarify that Hard Surface bonus is available to projects that meet applicability of 18.04.080.k.1.b, not all of 18.04.080.K.1; and that land areas that are submerged for all or part of the year do not count toward the developable land area of the lot.	Clarify that Hard Surface bonus is available to projects that meet applicability of 18.04.080.k.1.b, not all of 18.04.080.K.1; and that land areas that are submerged all or part of the year do not count toward the developable land area of the lot.
17	Pages 25-38	CPED	Clean up the table to increase readability, address new category of “large multifamily”, and make changes to match format of the related table in the residential districts chapter.	Clean up the table to increase readability, address new category of “large multifamily”, and make changes to match format of the related table in the residential districts chapter. One example: Building coverage is removed and impervious surface and hard surface limits will determine coverage allowed.
18	Page 39, 49-50	State Required (See RCW 36.70A.813 and RCW 36.70A.815)	Address when maximum building height can be exceeded to allow for roof-mounted solar energy panels and when upper story stepbacks and façade modulation cannot be required.	Address when maximum building height can be exceeded to allow for roof-mounted solar energy panels and when upper story stepbacks and façade modulation cannot be required.
19	Pages 50-51	CPED	Provide Hard Surface Coverage allowances currently provided for in residential areas in commercial areas when certain requirements are met.	Provide Hard Surface Coverage allowances currently provided for in residential areas in commercial areas when certain requirements are met.
20	Page 51	CPED	Require the 10 foot maximum front yard setback only along design review corridors or on streets designated as arterials.	Removes the 10 foot maximum setback from lower intensity streets that carry lower traffic volumes. The intention is to have buildings oriented to and close to sidewalks for high traffic streets, but currently the provision applies to all streets.
21	Pages 51-52	Historic Pres.	Update the purpose and intent language.	Update the purpose and intent language to better match the inclusive values of the City.

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22	Page 52	Historic Pres.	To update Heritage Commission requirements in code to reflect how the commission operates in order to be uniform with the City's Advisory Body requirements.	Reduce the number of members on the Heritage Commission from 11 to 9 members. This is similar to other advisory committees and may help make it easier to keep the positions filled.
23	Page 52	Historic Pres.	Modify the language about the composition of Commission members in order to reduce the commission's potential for being out of compliance in the case that recruitment is not able to bring in specific subject matter experts.	Reduce the requirement for 4 of the members (down to 2 members) to have specific professional requirements. This may help make it easier to keep the commission positions filled.
24	Page 53	Historic Pres.	Route the reader to the general rules that the heritage commission follows as one of the many advisory bodies of the City to provide more information on terms of appointment.	Add citation to advisory committee code language.
25	Pages 53-54	Historic Pres.	Clarify that the Olympia Heritage Commission must maintain the local Olympia Heritage Register, but does not maintain the State or National register. Alter language to add clarity on process. Remove mentions of references that are no longer applicable..	Add clarifying language about the Heritage Commission powers and duties.
26	Page 54-55	Historic Pres.	Correct code to reflect the City's advisory body procedures that are in practice to be in compliance with City's standards at a larger level.	Add citation to policy on Community-Member Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees (See OMC 2.100.040).
27	Page 55	Historic Pres.	Amend section name	Amend section name to clarify applicability to the Olympia Heritage Register.
28	Page 55-57	Historic Pres.	Amend section title and add clarification to code language to clarify that the City only maintains our local register, but does not have jurisdiction to maintain or regulate the state or national registers.	Amend language to apply to the Olympia Heritage Register and local historic districts.

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29	Page 57	Historic Pres.	Update language to remove reference to obsolete policy.	Remove reference to SEPA Mitigation Policy for Olympia Historic Resources.
30	Pages 57-58	Historic Pres.	Update language	Update language to better align with OMC 18.70, which identifies administration of various permit types, and current terminology.
31	Page 58	Historic Pres.	Update language	Update language to better align with OMC 18.70, current terminology, and current processes.
32	Pages 59-60	CPED	Require that landscaping plans include the location of underground utility lines and equipment; and irrigation plans, if applicable for the project.	Require that landscaping plans include the location of underground utility lines and equipment; and irrigation plans, if applicable for the project.
33	Page 60	CPED	Address parking exemptions in OMC 18.38.	Address parking exemptions in OMC 18.38.
34	Pages 61-62	State Required (See RCW 36.70A.622)	Address certain parking provisions.	Add residential parking provisions as required by Washington State.
35	Page 62	CPED	Address commercial parking provisions in the Downtown Parking Exemption Area.	All structures and uses shall be exempt from the vehicle parking standards but new buildings over 3,000 sq. ft. of gross leasable area shall provide bicycle parking.
36	Page 62	CPED	Clarify that if bicycle or vehicle parking is provided, even if it is not required, that it shall meet standards.	Clarify that if bicycle or vehicle parking is provided, even if it is not required, that it shall meet standards.
37	Pages 63-68	CPED	Address fence and hedge standards to point out additional provisions that apply to some properties.	Add that for properties located in the Downtown Design Review District to see OMC 18.120.370. For other properties that may have a Master Plan approval, such as Briggs Village, to see adopted regulations.
38a	Page 69	CPED	Clarify that some mechanical equipment is allowed in side yard setbacks.	Clarify that mechanical equipment is allowed in side yard areas and may exceed 30 inches in height.

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38b	Page 70	State Required (See RCW 35A.21.440 , RCW 35.21.990 , HB 1042, & HB 1757)	Add provisions for the retrofit of existing buildings when changing to add new housing units.	Clarify when certain energy efficiency measures are allowed to extend into setback areas when existing buildings are being converted into residential units.
39	Pages 70-71	CPED	Add clarifying language to noise standards regarding construction activity.	Add clarifying language to noise standards regarding construction activity.
40	Pages 71-72	CPED	Identify the City's preference for each lot to have at least some street frontage, such as by creating a "flag lot".	Identify the City's preference for each lot to have at least some street frontage.
41	Pages 72-73	CPED	Clarify that signs painted on the side of a building do not require a building permit.	Clarify that signs painted on the side of a building do not require a building permit.
42	Pages 73-74	CPED	Allow multifamily complexes to have two signs.	Allow up to 2 signs when there is frontage on 2 public rights of way.
43	Page 75	CPED	Clarify that design review applies to "large multifamily" projects and to all residential projects in the Infill Design Review District. Clarify that design review is not required for projects that are not visible from a street.	Clarify that design review applies to "large multifamily" projects and to all residential projects in the Infill Design Review District. Clarify that design review is not required for projects that are not visible from a street.
44	Pages 76-77	CPED	Provide language clarifying when design review standards apply to development proposals.	Provide language clarifying when design review standards apply to development proposals.
45	Page 77	CPED	Clarify that when land use review is not required or is waived, all design review will be conducted by staff unless it is subject to review of the Joint Review Committee.	Clarify that when land use review is not required or is waived, all design review will be conducted by staff, unless it is subject to review of the Joint Review Committee.
46	Page 77	CPED	Clarify that when Board Level design review is required, the administration of the project will be processed in accordance with the timelines associated with the land use permit per OMC 18.70 (Administration).	Clarify that when Board Level design review is required, the administration of the project will be processed in accordance with the timelines associated with the land use permit per OMC 18.70 (Administration).

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47	Pages 77-91	State Required (See RCW 35A.21.440)	Allow child day care centers in all zoning districts except industrial zones.	Allow child day care centers in all zoning districts except industrial zones.