
MEMORANDUM

Date: July 31, 2025
To: Planning Commission
From: Dana Bowers, Associate Planner



Planning Commission July 22 Meeting Follow Up – Land Use Element

At the July 22 Planning Commission meeting, staff presented the *Housing Displacement Analysis and Comprehensive Plan Recommendations for the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm* (June 6, 2025).

Appendix C of the Analysis included the Comprehensive Plan Recommendation Matrix which assessed the adopted 2016 Comprehensive Plans goals and policies for impacts for racially disparate impacts, including displacement and exclusion, for each of the four jurisdictions. The Matrix evaluated the adopted Housing Element and Land Use Element policies and contained recommendations for policy language to consider as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.

The recommendations in the Analysis were based the consultant's October 2024 policy review of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and included an evaluation, potential impact and recommendation.

The adopted 2016 version of Policy LU-9.3 is as follows:

LU-9.3 – Integrate design features of existing natural systems into the layout and siting of new residential dwelling units. Preserve trees and significant ecological systems, whenever possible and practical.

The October 2024 policy review found that the potential impact of Policy LU-9.3 to be “approaching” which is defined as “The policy can support meeting the identified housing needs but may be insufficient or does not address racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing” and provided the following reason / recommendations:

This policy would bring health benefits from additional greenery and shade, but could ultimately hinder the development of affordable housing.

Before the consultant completed their October 2024 policy review, staff had prepared draft policy amendments in the form of a Policy Review Table in 2023 and 2024, which was based on initial comments after reviewing the 2016 version with the Planning Commission on August 8,

2023, and City Council September 12, 2023, and also included a draft re-organization of goals and policies.

The 2023-24 Policy Review Table shows that the language of 2016 Policy LU-9.3 was initially broadened to include all development not just residential development. Through the review process, more revisions led to the current draft Land Use Element policy.

LU-6.3 – Integrate design features of existing natural systems into the layout and siting of new development, including significant trees and noncritical ecological systems, where possible.

The current version of the Land Use Element also includes the following language for tree protection policies:

LU-6.1 – Ensure development conforms with environmental standards and requirements.

LU-10.2 – Preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive lands by developing compact urban areas.

Staff would like to hear the Commissioners' thoughts on recommended changes to the language in these policies.