

Special City Council Meeting – August 9, 2021

This meeting's item was a City Council discussion surrounding the draft Olympia [master development agreement](#) (MDA). Major items are noted, and a video of the open public meeting can be found at [this link](#).

The City Attorney presented an overview of each provision and component of the draft MDA and the Council then discussed individual points of the document.

Some Councilmembers expressed a general concern over the timeline of the annexation process. They wanted to ensure the project and its impacts are considered fully and the decision to accept or deny the annexation petition is not rushed. A basic timing outline will be drafted and published in coming days.

There was one question about how to ensure that any parcels sold by the developer remain consistent with the overall plan of the project and that the density not exceed what is expected for that land. The MDA draft redlines include a provision that would require the developer to submit a letter to the City noting how much land and how many units are included within that land sale. Those units are ultimately deducted from the total allowed within the MDA. It was noted that one element of the MDA is a land use map that locks a maximum number of units per acre (depending on the area), and cannot be exceeded, even if there are enough units left allowable in the MDA.

One discussion centered around a deduction of open space requirement with institutional uses like schools. For such land uses, the property is removed from the calculation for open space requirements (the developer is not required to provide proportional open space for that property, but none of the excluded property can be used to count toward open space).

Recital C in the MDA includes a statement that the City desires to receive certain public and community benefits in consideration of the density of the project. The Council requested a more specific outline of potential benefits and amenities the City would receive.

The Council again expressed its concern over the project's density compared to existing infrastructure. Councilmembers reiterated concerns that the region is the fastest growing area in the state, but state funding does not match the needs for infrastructure.

Regarding commercial development, the Council restated a concern about commercial and employment center pacing as the development is constructed. There currently isn't a requirement in the MDA for commercial pacing. That has previously been flagged as a discussion item and is still pending negotiation and drafting.

The Council discussed the idea of the independent review committee (IRC), which is a body created by the MDA to handle administrative approval of development applications. The IRC

would have representatives from the City and developer, as well as an independent third party. The intent of the IRC is to handle the large number of applications that would be submitted during the development's construction. In its discussion in a recent meeting, the Planning Commission had expressed a desire for public transparency for the applications. In this meeting, it was pointed out that many applications go to the Planning Commission for approval, but the Commission has no authority to deny or amend certain types of applications if they comply legally. The Council discussed having the Planning Commission review any applications that include anything subjective or that can be amended, while having the IRC handle purely administrative reviews and approvals.