

# THURSTON COUNTY COMMUNITY PLANNING

PLANNING COMMISSION – AUGUST 4, 2021



**Places of Worship Development Code Amendment**

# BACKGROUND

- Citizen-requested amendment to development code
- **Request:** change how associated uses to a place of worship are reviewed and permitted (TCC 23.04.060(21)); specifically, the applicant wishes to be able to house students interested in faith onsite the property while training them.
- 2020-2021 Official Development Code Docket (Item CR-5)
- Applies only to the Olympia Urban Growth Area (Title 23)

## CURRENT CODE LANGUAGE

- Places of Worship currently permitted by a special use permit in all residential districts (TCC 23.04)

**TCC 23.04.040**  
**Table 4.01 (abbreviated)**

District	R 1/5	RLI 2-4	R-4	R 4-8	R 6-12	MR 7-13	MR 10-18	RM 18	Applicable Regulations
Places of Worship	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	23.04.060(21)

# CURRENT CODE LANGUAGE

- 23.04.060 - Residential districts' use standards.

21. Places of Worship. The following requirements apply to all places of worship subject to special use approval:

- a. Location. Before a place of worship may be located in an R-4, R 4—8, R 6—12, MR 7—13 or MR 10—18 district, at least one of the following locational criteria shall be met:
  - i. The proposed place of worship shall be located within three hundred feet of an arterial street, major collector street, or an access point on a highway; or
  - ii. The site is within three hundred feet of a school and/or park.
- b. Plan Review. Plans showing the site layout and design of proposed buildings shall be submitted for approval as part of site plan review by the department, in accordance with Chapter 23.72.
- c. Size. The minimum lot size shall be twenty thousand square feet.
- d. **Dwelling Units. Any dwelling in conjunction with a place of worship shall comply with the provisions governing residential uses in the district where it is located.**
- e. Conversion. No existing building or structure shall be converted to a place of worship unless such building or structure complies or is brought into compliance with the provisions of this code and any other applicable county regulations.
- f. Screening. There shall be sight-obscuring screening along the perimeter of parking lots adjunct to a place of worship which are located across the street from or abutting a residential use. (See Chapter 23.36, Landscaping and Screening.)
- g. **Associated Uses. Uses sponsored by a place of worship such as day-schools, auditoriums used for social and sports activities, health centers, convents, preschool facilities, convalescent homes and others of similar nature shall be considered separate uses subject to the provisions of the district in which they are located. (See Section 23.04.060(4) which provides for child care centers as accessory uses.)**

## CURRENT CODE LANGUAGE

- Dwelling units, such as dormitories, and other associated uses (e.g., day-schools, auditoriums, health centers, preschools) may be permitted in conjunction with a place of worship but are considered separate uses and must comply with the provisions governing the district where it is located.

**TCC 23.04.040**  
**Table 4.01 (abbreviated)**

District	R 1/5	RLI 2-4	R-4	R 4-8	R 6-12	MR 7-13	MR 10-18	RM 18	Applicable Regulations
Dormitories	P	P					P	P	

## REQUESTED CHANGE

- Applicant's Request:
  - Change dwelling units to be reviewed as an associated use and not subject to the underlying zone
  - Make associated uses under Item G to be considered as determined by the Approval Authority/Director rather than subject to underlying provisions
  - Add a definition for “boarding school” to Title 23

# PROPOSED AMENDMENT

- Proposed Amendments to TCC 23.04, included in **Attachment A** of packet

Underline = proposed change

**TCC 23.04.040**  
**Table 4.01 (abbreviated)**

District	R 1/5	RLI 2-4	R-4	R 4-8	R 6-12	MR 7-13	MR 10-18	RM 18
Dormitories	P	P	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>			P	P

Note S\*: Permitted through a special use permit and only when in conjunction with a Place of Worship under 23.04.060(21).

## TCC 23.04.060(21)

g. Associated Uses. Uses sponsored by a place of worship such as day-schools, auditoriums used for social and sports activities, health centers, convents, preschool facilities, convalescent homes, dormitories and others of similar nature shall be considered separate uses subject to the provisions of the district in which they are located. (See Section 23.04.060(4) which provides for child care centers as accessory uses.)

## CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS AND REGULATIONS

- The proposed amendment would make regulations for dormitories in the Olympia Urban Growth Area inconsistent with the current code language for the City of Olympia.
- In other parts of the Thurston County Code, associated uses to churches are permitted as separate uses subject to the provisions governing the district in which they are located. Proposed amendment would be consistent with how other sections of the code permit associated uses to places of worship.
- Proposed amendments maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or Joint Plan.
  - (Chapter 8, Goal 1, Objective B, Policy 3, p. 8-29) – “The county should provide for certainty, consistency, and timely processing of land use permits.”
  - (Chapter 8, Goal 1, Objective B, Policy 13, p. 8-30) – “The county should review all new development regulations to determine their impact on existing businesses.”
  - (City of Olympia Joint Plan, PP 6.2) – “Work with Thurston County on its land-use designations for unincorporated county areas within the city’s Urban Growth Boundary so they will be compatible with the City’s policies and development standards when they are annexed.”



# CITY OF OLYMPIA COMMENTS

- Staff solicited comments from the City of Olympia on the proposed amendment prior to Planning Commission review. The City's full comment is in **Attachment B**.
  - The proposed amendments go further than the OMC allows for. If the intention is to align the City and County codes for the urban growth area, it may be necessary to make changes to the proposal, either by the county or city, or both.
- ★ Under the proposal, dormitories would be allowed in more zones than the City's code currently allows for. The proposed draft would allow them as a permitted use, but would a conditional use permit be needed?
  - Is there a reason that dormitories are permitted with a place of worship but not a school?
- ★ Is boarding school defined? The City of Olympia does not have a definition for boarding school.
  - There is no cap on size for dormitories and boarding schools, so there could be a large-scale situation. Is the code prepared to address potential scale/size impacts?
  - An alternative route for the County to consider could be to add under associated uses a different type of use that is already listed as allowed - for example, guest houses or single-room occupancies.

## NEXT STEPS

- Planning Commission can direct staff to investigate anything further (i.e., dorm size cap, smaller alternative associated use in lieu of dormitories). Staff would bring this item back at a following meeting.
- If no further questions, the Planning Commission may schedule a public hearing:
  - Move to set a public hearing on the Places of Worship development code amendment for September 1, 2021 at 7 PM or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

# QUESTIONS?

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