



**Agenda for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Open Public Hearing
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, February 15, 2024 5:30 P.M.**

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/95353411299> or by calling (253) 215- 8782 and entering Meeting ID 953 5341 1299. Please see the Public Comment & Decorum section at the end of this agenda for information on options to make public comment.

This meeting may also be viewed live in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center.

Call to Order/Roll Call:

Approval of Minutes: February 1, 2024

Public Comment Non-Agenda Items:

Agenda Items for Formal Review:

1. Community Survey Results – Presentation Principal Planner, Robin Bolster-Grant
2. Public Hearing Text Amendments to GHMC 17.96.025 & 17.96.030 Minor Site
 - a. Plan Amendments
 - b. Announcement of Application
 - c. Open Public Meeting Announcement
 - d. Staff Report - Principal Planner, Robin Bolster-Grant
 - e. Public Comment (See Assistance Memo)
 - f. Discussion

Other Business Next meeting Thursday, March 7, 2024 Planning Commission is hosting a Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Adjournment

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

The city desires to allow a maximum opportunity for public comment. However, the

business of the Planning Commission must proceed in an orderly, timely manner. The purpose of a Planning Commission meeting is to advise on subjects prescribed by the City Council; it is not a public forum.

Public comment may be made in-person from the microphone, remotely via Zoom or by phone during designated portions of the meeting. To speak during the meeting via Zoom, press the Raise Hand button near the bottom of your Zoom window or press *9 on your phone. Please refrain from raising your hand until the Chair has announced that the Commission has opened the public comment portion of the meeting. Your name or the last three digits of your phone number will be called out when it is your turn to speak. When using your phone to call in, you may need to press *6 to unmute yourself. Speakers will be allotted 3 minutes per individual, unless revised by the chair. Comments shall be made, first giving the speaker's name and address. Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.

Instead of making oral comments, written comments may be submitted to the Planning Commission at MThomas@gjgharborwa.gov.

All remarks shall be addressed to the commission as a body and not to any specific commissioner. All speakers shall be courteous in their language and deportment and shall not engage in or discuss or comment on personalities or indulge in derogatory remarks or insinuations with regard to any commissioner, or any member of the staff or the public.

There will be no demonstrations during or at the conclusion of any public comment. These guidelines are intended to promote an orderly system of holding public meetings, to give every person an opportunity to be heard and to ensure that no individuals are embarrassed by voicing their opinions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gjgharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



**Minutes for Gig Harbor Planning Commission
Gig Harbor Civic Center
Thursday, February 1, 2024 5:30 P.M.**

Call to Order/Roll Call: Chair Krawczyk called the meeting to order at 5:32. Commissioner Tessicini, Snodgrass, Burcar, Jordan and Bradbury were present. Staff: Principal Planner, Robin Bolster-Grant; Senior Planner and Planning Technician, Michelle Thomas

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Move to approve minutes for January 18, 2024 (Burcar/Bradbury)

VOTE: Unanimously approved

Agenda Items:

- 1) Recognition of Commissioner Soltess & Commissioner Brown
- 2) Election of Chair & Vice Chair

MOTION: Move to nominate Commissioner Krawczyk for Chair (Bradbury)

VOTE: Unanimously approved

MOTION: Move to nominate Commissioner Burcar for Vice Chair (Bradbury)

VOTE: Unanimously approved

- 3) Amendments to Site Plan Exemptions GHMC 17.96.025 E. & Minor Site Plan Review GHMC 17.96.030 A. 1. a. – Presentation Principal Planner, Robin Bolster-Grant and Commission discussion.

Public Comment: No public comment

Other Business: Next meeting Thursday, February 15, 2024, survey results and public hearing for amendments to GHMC 17.96.025 E. & GHMC 17.96.030 A.1. a. Commissioner Krawczyk will not be in attendance. The Planning Commission will host another Comprehensive Plan Amendment Workshop date to be determined. March 7, 2024 will be discussing Housing Element on the Comprehensive Plan.

Adjournment: 6:16 P.M.



Staff Memorandum

To: Gig Harbor Planning Commission

From: Robin Bolster-Grant, Principal Planner
Planning Division

Subject: Proposed text amendment to Gig Harbor Municipal Code (GHMC) sections 17.96.025.E and 17.96.030.A.1.a. pertaining to change of use applications

Date: February 8, 2024

Overview

At the upcoming Planning Commission meeting on February 15, 2024, a Public Hearing will be held to hear testimony regarding the proposed text amendments to portions of GHMC Chapter 17.96 that remove language requiring all change of use proposals to apply for site plan review.

At the February 1, 2024, Planning Commission meeting staff presented the proposed text amendments to the commission for review and discussion. Commissioners voiced support for the proposed changes to the code, citing the need for improving permitting efficiency and removing unnecessary barriers for small businesses to operate in the city.

Background

In October 2023 the Community Development and Public Works Departments engaged in a process improvement workshop to determine where a level of permit streamlining might be employed in order to help small businesses with their permitting needs. The workshop focused primarily on proposals that seek a change of use or a tenant improvement to an existing business.

One of the potential improvements identified during the workshop was a text change to Chapter 17.96, which would reduce staff time in the processing of minor change of use applications, as well as reducing the associated costs to permit applicants.

Chapter 17.96 provides the procedures for processing site plan applications, which apply to all development projects that have the potential to impact public utilities, traffic, facilities, and services. Site plan reviews also address site design, access, landscaping, screening and layout of buildings and parking lots.

The code differentiates between major and minor site plan reviews based on the degree of impact posed by a proposal. For instance, a major site plan review includes such projects as the new construction of a building on a vacant parcel or establishing a new use or change of use not located in an existing building.

In contrast, a minor site plan review would be required for projects such as modification of a parking lot layout on an existing site.

Section 17.96.025 provides exemptions for certain types of projects that do not create impacts to infrastructure (e.g. transportation network, sewer, and water systems, et.) or are reviewed under a different set of standards, such as subdivisions.

One of the listed exemptions, under GHMC subsection 17.96.025.E. provides the following:

“Change in use of an existing structure, provided the change in use does not increase the number of required parking spaces and *does not require a change of use capacity evaluation as provided for in GHMC 19.10.004.*” (emphasis added).

A second provision of the site plan chapter, 17.96.030.A.1.a. includes the following category of minor site plan review:

“Change in use of an existing structure which increases the number of required off-street parking spaces and/or requires a *change of use capacity evaluation as provided for in GHMC 19.10.004*” (emphasis added).

The two provisions cited above reference GHMC 19.10.004, which requires a capacity analysis for all changes of use. The capacity analysis looks to how changes of use may increase demand on our transportation, water, or sewer infrastructure. All proposed changes of use are required to undergo the analysis, which may or may not indicate increases in demand on city services.

Therefore, as currently written, GHMC 17.96.025.E. and 17.96.030.A.1.a. require businesses seeking a change of use to apply for site plan review regardless of whether the capacity analysis indicates increased demand. For minor changes of use that do not negatively impact surrounding properties, infrastructure or community design standards, this extra layer of review creates an unnecessary burden to small businesses seeking to operate in the city.

The proposed text amendment would remove the language referencing GHMC 19.10.004 and the capacity analysis and the automatic requirement for site plan review for all change of use applications. If a proposed change of use meets any of the other requirements of Chapter 17.96, the site plan review requirement would still apply.

Staff seeks a recommendation from the Planning Commission to the City Council to approve removing the wording from the two code provisions, GHMC 17.96.025.E. and 17.96.030.A.1.a. that reference capacity evaluation and GHMC 19.10.004.

17.96.025 Exemptions.

The following are exempt from the site plan review provisions of this chapter:

- A. Single-family and duplex dwellings on lots of record and any appurtenance thereto;
- B. Subdivisions and short plats;
- C. Planned unit developments and planned residential developments;
- D. Modifications to the interior of an existing structure that does not change the use;
- E. Change in use of an existing structure, provided the change in use does not increase the number of required off-street parking spaces ~~and does not require a change of use capacity evaluation as provided for in GHMC [19.10.004](#);~~
- F. Normal maintenance and repair of existing improvements, facilities and structures;
- G. Installation and replacement of underground utilities located in public rights-of-way and approved utility easements or corridors;
- H. Utility pump stations, utility boxes and utility vaults;
- I. Removal of underground tanks when the site is restored to the condition prior to removal;
- J. Removal of all buildings and structures on a site together with the discontinuance of use of the land and buildings;
- K. Special uses as provided for in Chapter [17.65](#) GHMC;
- L. Uses allowed in approved common areas as provided for in GHMC [17.99.280](#);
- M. Land clearing as provided for in Chapter [17.94](#) GHMC;
- N. Temporary trailers as provided for in GHMC [17.01.090](#);
- O. Sign permits as provided for in Chapter [17.80](#) GHMC;
- P. Installation and modification of Level 1 and Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations as defined in GHMC [17.73.030\(D\)](#). (Ord. 1220 § 4, 2011; Ord. 1197 § 62, 2010).

The Gig Harbor Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 1515, passed July 10, 2023.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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17.96.030 Site plan review.

Any use or development that is subject to the requirements for site plan review, unless exempt as provided for in GHMC [17.96.025](#), shall be classified and processed as provided for in this section.

A. Minor Site Plan Review.

1. Applications for minor site plan review shall be processed in accordance with the procedures established under GHMC Title [19](#) for a Type I project permit application. A decision on a minor site plan review application shall be rendered prior to or concurrent with the issuance of any other applicable permit. The following are classified as minor site plan reviews:

- a. Change in use of an existing structure which increases the number of required off-street parking spaces; ~~and/or requires a change of use capacity evaluation as provided for in GHMC [19.10.004](#);~~
- b. Modifications to the number of off-street parking stalls, amount of hard/impermeable surfaces and height of structures on an existing site or approved site plan, provided such modifications do not exceed a 10 percent increase over the original;
- c. Modifications to the parking lot layout or parking lot landscaping on an existing site or approved site plan;
- d. Modifications to the landscaping, common area, or vegetation retention areas, provided the modifications do not adversely affect the basic character and quality of such;
- e. Modifications to the total amount of gross floor area on an existing site or approved site plan which do not exceed a 10 percent increase over the original or 1,000 square feet increase, whichever is less;
- f. Removal of some but not all buildings on a site;
- g. Modification or expansion of existing stormwater facilities;

- h. Modifications to the conditions of approval of a minor site plan review decision;
- i. Installation and modification of rapid charging stations as defined in GHMC [17.73.030\(P\)](#).

2. If a minor site plan review includes any use or development classified as a major site plan review in subsection [B](#) of this section, the entire project shall be processed under the provisions for major site plan review.

B. Major Site Plan Review.

1. Applications for major site plan review shall be processed in accordance with the procedures established under GHMC Title [19](#) for a Type II project permit application, except as provided for in subsection [\(B\)\(3\)](#) of this section. The following are classified as major site plan reviews:

- a. Construction of a building or installation of hard/impermeable surfaces on a vacant parcel;
- b. Modifications to an existing site or approved site plan which are not classified as a minor site plan review in subsection [A](#) of this section or are exempt from site plan review under GHMC [17.96.025](#);
- c. Any development subject to a SEPA threshold determination pursuant to Chapter [18.04](#) GHMC;
- d. Creation of new regional stormwater ponds;
- e. Establishment of a new use or change of use which is not located in an existing building;
- f. Modifications to the conditions of approval of a major site plan review decision;
- g. Installation and modification of battery exchange stations as defined in GHMC [17.73.030\(C\)](#).

2. If a SEPA threshold determination for a development requiring major site plan review is appealed, the major site plan review application shall be processed in accordance with the procedures established under GHMC Title [19](#) for a Type III project permit and the SEPA

open record appeal hearing shall be consolidated with the Type III project permit open record hearing.

3. A major site plan review application for a project which has an associated administrative interpretation, as provided for in GHMC [17.66.050](#), shall be processed as a Type III application as defined in GHMC Title [19](#).

C. A minor or major site plan review application that is part of a project that requires additional applications with other procedure types may be processed collectively under the highest numbered procedure for any application unless the applicant chooses to have each application processed individually following the permit processing procedures in GHMC [19.01.002\(B\)](#). (Ord. 1347 §§ 61, 62, 2016; Ord. 1220 § 5, 2011; Ord. 1197 § 63, 2010; Ord. 573 § 2, 1990).

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