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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

*Creating Solutions for Our Future*

June 3, 2021

Thurston County Board of Commissioners  
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW  
Olympia, WA 98502

**Subject: Planning Commission Recommendation on Capital Improvement Program  
2021-2026 Minor Amendment**

The Thurston County Planning Commission has conducted a review and held a public hearing on this amendment proposal. The Planning Commission held a work session on May 5, 2021 and a public hearing on June 2, 2021. The Planning Commission produced a recommendation of six to one (6-1) against moving forward with this amendment at this time.

**The Thurston County Planning Commission recommends:**

- **To not to move forward with adding the Atrium project (3000 Pacific Ave) to the 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program;**
- **To delay a decision on the Mottman Complex project until a follow-up work session can be held.**

The Planning Commission produces this recommendation with the following findings:

**Findings:**

1. The recommendation reflects public and Planning Commissioner concerns about the cost of the purchases, lease and improvements for these buildings and questions about the need for additional space for County administrative offices.
2. The Thurston County Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on June 2, 2021, as required by Thurston County Code Chapter 2.05 Growth Management Public Participation

Thurston County Planning Commission  
2021-2026 CIP Minor Amendment, Appendix G of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jim Simmons, Chair

cc: Thurston County Planning Commission  
Ramiro Chavez, County Manager  
Robin Campbell, Assistant County Manager  
Joshua Cummings, CPED Director  
Travis Burns, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

## ADDENDUM

The recommendation reflects public and Planning Commissioner questions, concerns and deliberations over four general areas. These concerns were specifically directed towards the addition of the Atrium to the CIP.

- A. Financing/Legal- Is it legal to use REET funds, and do we have enough? Chapter 6 defines Capital Facilities with no mention of leased or rented facilities. The Planning Commission also has concerns of \$7M worth of Tennent Improvements that might not depreciate out before the end of the lease, effectively converting REET funds to a public gift. Staff assured the Planning Commission that an Attorney General's Office opinion was that REET Funds could be used for the Atrium project.
- B. Cost- Is this a cost effective way to meet any needs? Chapter 6, Objective 1-D, Policy 7, states "Provide capital facilities at the lowest possible cost, but take into account both construction and operation/maintenance costs." Also, Goal 3, Objective 3-B states that public facilities "designed for efficient and frugal use of public monies." The Planning Commission has concerns that the Atrium is near the most expensive general office space for lease in the area. Further, with Work-From-Home policies being effected by other leasers in the area, there is a reasonable expectation that prices will be falling as supply increases. Level of Service impacts are also of concern as this financing plan is stretched.
- C. Need- The Planning Commission has concerns about the need for this space. The Needs Analysis was completed prior to the recent CoVid Pandemic, at a time where general office space was utilized in different ways than it is today. The Atrium facility's primary function is to add space for County employees mainly from the non-judicial portions of the Courthouse Campus. This would roughly include Buildings 1, 4, 5, & 6. Those buildings total approximately 94K square feet. The Atrium would nearly double that space with an additional 90K square feet. Chapter 6: F: County Government Facilities states that space needs are 219 gross square feet per full time employee.
- D. Alternatives- Chapter 6, Goal 3, Policy 4 states "Alternatives to construction of new space should include such considerations as innovative use of alternative hours, telecommuting, night court, kiosks, distributed service locations, and pursue technologically feasible alternative." In the post-CoVid work environment, alternatives should be reconsidered.