

Natalie Weiss

From: Olympia2045
Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 1:57 PM
Cc: Pamela Braff; Natalie Weiss
Subject: FW: Public comment for Public Hearing: Climate Action & Resilience Update

Good afternoon, Planning Commissioners –
Please see the additional comments below related to the Climate Chapter. Thank you.

Kind regards,
Casey Schaufler (he/him)
Associate Planner
City of Olympia | Community Planning & Economic Development
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Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: casey.aker@proton.me <casey.aker@proton.me>
Sent: Saturday, July 26, 2025 8:53 AM
To: Olympia2045 <Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Public comment for Public Hearing: Climate Action & Resilience Update

You don't often get email from casey.aker@proton.me. [Learn why this is important](#)

Honorable Mayor and Council members:

Thank you for your tireless work on Olympia's Climate Element. To ensure our city not only meets its climate goals but becomes a true national model of urban resilience and environmental justice, I urge you to adopt the following enforceable, equity-driven measures:

1. Elevate Tree Equity & Canopy Goals

- Map existing canopy coverage and set higher targets (e.g. 50% citywide by 2035) in neighborhoods that need shade most.
- Create a Tree Equity Fund: financed by a small surcharge on new construction, to plant and care for trees in underserved areas.

2. Protect Mature Trees as Critical Infrastructure

- Require a pre-construction arborist report for any project proposing tree removal.
- Institute developer performance bonds that can be forfeited if preserved trees die within five years, ensuring long-term care rather than one-time planting.

3. Embrace Species Diversity for Resilience

- Mandate a mix of native species: no single tree species to exceed 20% of plantings, to guard against pests, disease, and drought.
- Adopt Washington Native Plant Society recommendations for climate-adapted trees.

4. Strengthen Riparian Buffers & Natural Floodways

- Require 100-foot vegetated setbacks around all streams, wetlands, and floodplains to act as living flood attenuation zones.
- Incentivize developers to protect or donate buffer land in exchange for modest density bonuses.

5. Lock in Long-Term Stewardship

- Demand a 10-year maintenance plan and annual reporting for all new green infrastructure (bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs).
- Record maintenance easements holding developers, and all future owners, jointly liable for upkeep.

6. Anchor Tribal Knowledge & Co-Management

- Formalize partnership with the Squaxin Island Tribe to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge in urban forest and shoreline projects.
- Require Tribal consultation on all publicly funded green-infrastructure designs to honor treaty rights and cultural practice.

7. Embed Community Stewardship and Education

- Fund a Neighborhood Climate Stewards micro-grant program, enabling residents to co-design pocket parks, rain gardens, and pollinator strips.
- Host annual “Canopy Walks” and tree-planting festivals to build local ownership.

8. Tie Parking to Greening

- Require any new private lot over 10 stalls to convert 15% of its footprint into bioretention planters with shade trees.
- Offer parking reductions (one stall per 500 sq ft of green roof or public-access green space) to reward developers who integrate nature.

9. Mandate Urban Heat Island Monitoring

- Commission biennial thermal maps of our neighborhoods and publish results in the City’s climate progress report.
- Use data to target tree plantings and cooling grants where they deliver the highest public health benefits.

10. Strengthen Enforcement & Transparency

- Require quarterly online reporting of citywide canopy cover, park-acreage expansions, and green-infrastructure installations.
- Create escalating fines and project-holdbacks for developments that violate green requirements or remove trees illegally.

Implementing these bold, specific actions will transform our Climate Element from aspirational to actionable by protecting lives, improving air quality, reducing flood risk, and ensuring every Olympian, present and future, benefits equitably from our city’s natural heritage.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully,

Casey Akerhielm

Olympia Resident & Climate Advocate

Pamela Braff

From: Olympia2045
Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 2:08 PM
To: Gordon Wheat; Olympia2045
Cc: Pamela Braff; Casey Schaufler
Subject: RE: Public Health perspective on the Resilience sub-element

Thank you for submitting comments on the Climate Action & Resilience Chapter. Your comments will be shared with the Planning Commission.

Joyce

From: Gordon Wheat <gwheat12@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 11:20 AM
To: Olympia2045 <Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Public Health perspective on the Resilience sub-element

Dear Members of the Olympia Planning Commission, City Council Members and Climate Staff,

In the Engage Olympia 2045: Climate Action and Resilience, the staff reported that one commenter had recommended that Extreme Heat be given a higher priority, among all of the climate resilience challenges we face. This is not entirely accurate. Natalie Weiss, the Olympia resilience lead, asked me to convene the Olympia Physician for Social Responsibility Climate and Health Task Force in December, and the group of 9 public health-oriented local physicians gave her one clear message: the evidence clearly shows that we have one climate-related public health emergency that supersedes all others - extreme heat events. This is also the message from the American Public Health Association and other national public health organizations: “Extreme heat kills more people each year than all other extreme weather events combined and disproportionately affects vulnerable communities. Fortunately, many, if not most, heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable.” We saw this risk just recently, when thousands were reported to have died in some of the major cities in the June 2025 heat event in Europe.

Unfortunately, this risk assessment is doubly true here in the Puget Sound, where we are projected to have among the greatest increases in frequency and severity of extreme heat events in the US. Additionally, we are among the most vulnerable to mass casualty events from heat domes because we are a northern city that is generally a heat refuge, meaning our population and our infrastructure are not prepared to handle such events. That our residents in the Northwest do not understand the danger of heat when it does occur as evidenced by the fact that 98% of the 619 coroner confirmed immediate heat stroke victims in the greater Vancouver BC area, during the 6/21 heat dome, died in their own homes, and 28% of these victims did not even call 911 for help before they died. The need for people to know how to protect themselves is evident from the fact that 83% of the victims who did call 911 were not able to be resuscitated by paramedics, largely because of the delay in emergency response. ("Extreme Heat and Human Mortality," 2022) Crisis management of emergency care is in no one's interest.

This June 2021 Extreme Heat Event, which led to thousands of deaths in the Pacific Northwest, will be seen as mild compared to the heat events we are likely to experience shortly. We are still experiencing an exponential increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (IPCC, n.d.), we have not experienced the full effect of GHG emissions already released (NOAA, n.d.), and we are experiencing more extreme heat events than predicted

from climate models for global warming (NASA, n.d.). The northern hemisphere jet stream is weakening significantly, increasing our likelihood for heat domes.

“Cooling Thurston” is using grant funding to demonstrate the most important preventive measures envisioned by the Thurston County Extreme Heat Emergency Response and Illness Prevention Plan. The preventive measures that can reduce heat-related illness and mortality are fairly simple and low-cost, so these measures should be the centerpiece of city, county, and state climate resilience plans. One of the main interventions is simply education of vulnerable populations regarding the danger of heat, how to stay safe, and when to call 911. The other most important measure is ensuring that all the most vulnerable community members have access to refuge cooling to survive heat events. This needs to mostly be in people’s own homes, as evidence shows that housed people do not go to cooling shelters, nor could we provide adequate shelter for this large population if they did. Portable heat pumps are dropping in price dramatically. They can effectively cool at least one large room to shelter in place during an extreme heat event. Olympia should seek funding to provide this low-cost solution to our most vulnerable residents. The city of Portland has committed to providing 25,000 portable heat pumps to its vulnerable renters. This is climate justice, good public health policy, and protection for our EMS and hospital resources for the benefit of the entire community. Communities seeking this funding will increase the likelihood that the state legislature will help.

Lumping all of our climate vulnerabilities together as equivalent risks is not consistent with the evidence. Identifying heat events as our greatest risk and committing to pursue the programmatic policies that can save many lives and reduce the often irreversible illness caused by heat events is good public health policy, and should be clearly reflected in Olympia’s Climate Action and Resilience Element.

I am sorry that I am not able to attend the August 4th meeting. I would like to get back with you after the planning meeting with the director of CPED, the director of the Health Department, the county managers and the chair of the county commissioners, to see how Olympia, my home city, can join with the county to plan for a programmatic response to our greatest climate public health challenge.

Gordon Wheat MD

For the Thurston Climate Action Team, Climate and Health Team, and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility Climate Task Force Extreme Heat Working Group (and our Olympia physician sub-group).

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hAaywtYFNhLo13RplqcRQJ2xmB_NRQaXRTsX9kQOCIE/edit?tab=t.0

Pamela Braff

From: Tom Crawford <tom@thurstonclimateaction.org>
Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 2:58 PM
To: Pamela Braff
Subject: Fwd: Written comments for tonight's public hearing
Attachments: T Crawford Comments on City of Olympia Comp Plan Climate Element 08-04-25.docx

Woops! Forgot to attach the document. Here it is.

Tom

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tom Crawford <tom@thurstonclimateaction.org>
Date: Mon, Aug 4, 2025 at 2:54 PM
Subject: Written comments for tonight's public hearing
To: Pamela Braff <pbraff@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Hi, Pamela,

Here are some written comments for tonight's public hearing with the Planning Commission for the city's Comprehensive Plan Climate Element. I plan to be there to summarize them verbally.

I would prefer to do that in person, and I notice that when I registered I received a Zoom link. Would you suggest using the Zoom link rather than in person, or will it be ok for me to show up in person?

Thanks!

Tom

Tom Crawford, Board Vice President
Thurston Climate Action Team
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Olympia, WA 98508
(360) 280-0242
tom@thurstonclimateaction.org
<https://thurstonclimateaction.org>

We need to remember our own heroic nature, our capacity for courage, compassion, and action, to remember those who came before us who took action against the odds and sometimes won.... Often, they changed what is possible, in part by refusing to accept what were supposed to be the limits.

-Rebecca Solnit

Comments on City of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan Update, Climate Element

By Tom Crawford, Vice President, Thurston Climate Action Team

August 4, 2025

First, I want to thank city staff and the Planning Commission for the excellent work you've done completing the Climate Element for this year's update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Thank you also for reviewing my previous suggestions and incorporating several of them. This document provides an ambitious but necessary set of goals and policies for achieving net zero emissions community wide by 2040.

Next, I want to offer a few suggestions for further improving this document.

1. In the section titled, "Reducing GHG Emissions," (pp. 3-4), there is no mention of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP) effort. This might be a useful addition to that section, to provide additional context for the Climate Element, especially since many of the policies in that element are drawn from the TCMP.
2. I previously recommended adding a goal to more fully engage and educate the public on climate change and needed actions. Staff response to this recommendation is as follows: "It is outside the City's scope to provide broad public education about the causes and impacts of climate change." I'm sure the City recognizes that public engagement and education is essential to building broad community commitment needed to achieve the goals stated in the City's proposed climate element. The question here may be "Within the scope of which existing public body does this important work fall?" Since it is a public health concern, it might be assigned to the County Board of Health. Whatever agency takes the lead on this in our region, I'm sure the City of Olympia will want to be involved and coordinating with this work. Here's some possible language:
 - a. GCx. Work with regional agencies (for example, the Thurston Board of Health, non-profits, schools and other cities) to ensure Olympia residents understand the causes, risks and harms associated with human-caused climate change (including the community and personal actions necessary to address this existential threat), and are willing to commit the required time and resources (including financial resources) to address this challenge.
 - i. Coordinate with and support regional agencies (for example, the Board of Health, schools, non profits and other jurisdictions) in creating and delivering educational and community engagement curricula and materials that reach all population groups within Olympia using in person and virtual events.
 - ii. Support and coordinate with regional agencies (for example, the Thurston Board of Health, schools and other cities) to develop and implement a media campaign (including social media) to educate Olympia residents about climate change and the city's efforts to address it.

3. Natural Environment, policy 6.2, reads: "POLICY: Preserve land and acquire new parcels when there are opportunities to reduce expand and connect habitat and protect the most environmentally sensitive or socially important landscapes." Delete the word "reduce".
4. Within the Land Use and Urban Design chapter, policy 18.8 reads: "POLICY: Provide technical guidance and other incentives to encourage electrification and energy efficiency retrofits in existing buildings. Prioritize retrofits in overburdened communities and include protections to avoid displacement and financial burden on renters and small businesses." After the word "Provide" add "standards, ". Standards are necessary in order to achieve the goals of the TCMP and the electrification goal for this section (goal 18a). I understand there has been some legal controversy around this. With courts invalidating I-2066, standards for phasing out fossil gas are still legal. The Comprehensive Plan should allow for this kind of standard. The exact mechanism can be determined based on what will be most effective.
5. Thank you for including, in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter, a recognition of the importance of protecting people from extreme weather, in Policy 18.4: " POLICY: Incentivize and support weatherization upgrades, passive survivability, cooling and air filtration systems, and energy redundancy for homes and facilities serving vulnerable populations." We also believe public education on how to protect from extreme heat is very important to protect public safety, especially among our vulnerable populations. You might add language on public education to this policy, such as, "Provide public education to vulnerable populations on protecting from extreme heat."
6. Within the Transportation Chapter, policy 37.2, after the word "by" add "providing city incentives and". We should not depend solely on external resources to help residents transition to zero emission forms of transportation by 2040.

Finally, as a TCAT board member, I relay our organization's commitment to support the achievement of the city's climate goals. We recognize this will require a great deal of work in multiple sectors of the community. We are convinced that it will result in a better economy, better jobs, a more vibrant culture, and better health for everyone.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important work, and your dedication to the Olympia community through your public service.

Natalie Weiss

From: Gordon Wheat <gwheat12@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 6, 2025 3:30 PM
To: Pamela Braff
Cc: Paris McClusky; Natalie Weiss
Subject: Re: Meeting Options

Pamela and Natalie,

Thank you for the meeting on August 13th. The changes I am seeking, as a representative of the public health community, are fairly simple, and the policy asks are low-hanging fruit, costing little compared to the lives that could be saved.

I know you don't view the city as a primary provider of education and outreach regarding climate hazards, but the city actually conducts numerous outreach and education initiatives, which could have an impact in conjunction with the efforts of the health department and the county. There is outreach through the utility bills "5 things". The city could host educational events for city residents or those in particularly vulnerable Olympia communities regarding heat events.

Why not add to section 2.5: Policy: "Coordinate with the county and the health department outreach and education programs regarding the greatest climate public health risks for Olympia residents. This outreach should prioritize episodic extreme heat events and, secondarily, wildfire smoke events, as our greatest public health hazards." These are the priorities identified by the Emergency Management Council and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In section 2.3, acknowledge that climate resilience is first and foremost the public health of our residents. Add: "Monitor climate public health science and recommendations to assess how climate change is affecting the public health of our community."

In section 2.4 again, resilience is public health, not just infrastructure: POLICY: Update Olympia's Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment alongside 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates to reflect the latest understanding of climate trends and their impact on community assets. (add: "and public health").

Acknowledge the public health consensus. It is well expressed by the American Public Health Association: "Extreme heat kills more people each year than all other extreme weather events combined and disproportionately affects vulnerable communities. Fortunately, many, if not most, heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable." This is particularly true here in the South Puget Sound region, and therefore, extreme heat events should be recognized as a climate public health priority in the Resilience Element.

In Section 18.4: POLICY: Incentivize and support weatherization upgrades, passive survivability, cooling and air filtration systems, and energy redundancy for homes and facilities serving vulnerable populations. This is a fine general statement, but does not recognize the public health priority of actually protecting our vulnerable residents from the one climate hazard that is highly likely to kill and injure scores, if not hundreds of our residents just in Olympia, and before very long: heat events.

We are working the state level to get funding for cooling vulnerable residents, but the legislature needs to see that there is demand from the cities and counties to be seeking such funding to save lives in their communities and to prevent crisis management of care for their EMS and hospitals.

How about adding to 18.4: "Olympia will also seek funding for refuge cooling of our vulnerable residents to be able to survive severe extreme heat events."

Thanks,
Gordon

September 23, 2025

Honorable Council and Commission Members of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston Planning Commissions associated with all 4 jurisdictions.

Subject: General Comments on updates to Comprehensive Plans

I am a retiree that has been residing in the community for over 37 years. Thank you to each of you for addressing climate change as required under the Growth Management Act (GMA). As a volunteer in the community I try to focus on issues of climate, forestry, and multimodal transportation.

In my previous work life my focus has been similar, in that I was focused on regulatory and conservation approaches to protecting and restoring water quality and habitat, while supporting the timber industry. In my private life I have always tried to bike to work and supported multi-modal transportation approaches and been supportive of the public health benefits of walking, biking, carpooling and mass transit etc.

I have not read in detail the draft updated comprehensive plans of the 4 jurisdictions. Therefore, I have decided that with my limited time I would provide some general comments that hopefully will be addressed specifically in each of the jurisdictional plans.

General Comments

- Do not allow expansion of Urban Growth Boundaries. In order to support police, mass transit and other local government services, densifying population provides for the tax base needed to support these services (Build up, not out!). An example of degrading services since we moved to this community, is that police were visible and helpful. Now, it is hard to get attention to property crimes, traffic enforcement, etc.
- Within the rural land use, minimize the conversion of property from agriculture or forestry to non-renewable land uses. This is the anti-thesis of what GMA is about and results in many hundreds of acres of timberland being converted, which results in needing additional drinking water and waste and storm water treatment, police services becoming spread too thin, and less recharge of water into the ground, etc. These areas should remain a buffer between the densely developed areas and commercial areas of forestry and agriculture. Small forest and agricultural landowners should not feel pushed out of rural areas because of incremental development slowly surrounding them (Keep working forests and ag lands working!).
- Promote mass transit, bicycling, walking and rolling in the community. To do this planning organisms must get out of the mode of planning around single occupancy

vehicles (SOV) and think about how someone may be to get to school on a bike, bus or walk, get to a grocery store without an internal combustion vehicle, recreate without driving. All the communities have or will have adopted multimodal transportation plans but there is mixed implementation of those plans. Each of you should try to navigate a day or more without your SOV. You know that the Rails-to-Trails such as the Woodland Creek trail or Chehelis Western trail are great community assets, but what you find is that the safe linkage from these trails to schools, shopping centers, recreation centers and work centers is lacking. In addition, there is little or no bus service from some areas of low-income housing centers to work centers. Intercity transit and the local jurisdictions need to develop a master plan for connecting all communities, jobs, shopping and recreation sites so that we reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) across all jurisdictions. VMT is the greatest contributor to greenhouse gases in the state.

- Promote incentives for densifying populations (build up not out). Using transfer of development rights (TDRs) in combination with tax increment financing helps control urban sprawl and assists with financing the capital improvements needed for densifying population centers.
- Promote the use of Mass Timber (wood is good!) Increasing the use of mass timber in commercial, municipal and school buildings means that less GHG's will be produced in the construction of buildings (less steel and concrete (high emitters of GHGs)).
- Promote trees and forested greenways in developed areas. Increasing canopy within each of the jurisdictions will serve to treat stormwater (requiring smaller ponds), will assist with reducing heat islands around buildings, will promote cool places to recreate.
- Promote efficient housing that meets environmental justice goals and reduces the need for power. As low-income housing is promoted, please make sure that it is in a place where people can get to work using something other than an SOV, make sure the housing is efficient.
- Support meeting the goals of greenhouse gas reductions in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. This collaborative working across jurisdictions can help build a community that is carbon-free.

I hope this is helpful to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Bernath

360-359-0422

Pamela Braff

From: Ronda Larson Kramer <rlarsonkramer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 3, 2025 4:43 PM
To: Pamela Braff
Cc: Harry Branch; Jane Hutchinson
Subject: Olympia 2045--Daylighting Moxlie Creek

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Hi Dr. Braff,

I would like to suggest that the comprehensive plan's climate chapter include language about Moxlie Creek daylighting. This is a long-term effort that is picking up steam because the county is moving its headquarters and courthouse to the offices on Plum Street, which sit atop the pipe underground that carries the salmon-bearing Moxlie Creek to Budd Inlet (The 110-year-old concrete pipe runs beneath Chestnut Street all the way to its outfall pipe on Budd Inlet next to the Hands On Children's Museum).

The daylighting of this creek would, among other things, save money. Old pipes often fail in multiple spots over time. Each emergency repair is a separate, costly event. The cumulative cost over 5–10 years can exceed the cost of a planned replacement or daylighting project. Also, after more than 110 years, the concrete pipe is highly susceptible to cracking, joint failure, and corrosion, which can lead to sinkholes and major infrastructure costs. This is one of the major reasons cities consider daylighting or partial daylighting projects: rather than continually repairing or replacing aging buried infrastructure, restoring the stream above ground can reduce maintenance costs, improve flood management, and create ecological and recreational benefits.

Why the comprehensive plan's climate chapter should address Moxlie Creek daylighting: It would create more climate resiliency. It would allow more room for floodwaters when sea level rise occurs. In other words, it would increase flood water storage capacity.

I have received favorable responses from the Chamber of Commerce and the Hands On Children's Museum, and one of the owners of T-Brothers (which is the liquor store that backs up to Chestnut Street).

Daylighting an urban waterway often results in 5-star restaurants being built along it. If you've been to Bricktown in Oklahoma City, you'll know what I mean. It's a terrific generator of economic revitalization, which the Squaxin Tribe would likely support given their future convention center at the old city hall that will be across the street from where the creek would be daylighted.

The City of Lake Forest Park has experience with long-term daylighting projects. In fact, its 2015 comprehensive plan states, "Policy EQ–3 10 Enhance existing culverts and encourage daylighting of creeks wherever possible." It daylighted Lyons Creek to stop annual flooding of homes and businesses. "While solving serious flooding problems in the Lake Forest Park Town Center area, the Lyon Creek project also created a new neighborhood park, Whispering Willow Park, adjacent to Town Center." [full_town_center_plan_deis_january_2nd.pdf](#)

Here is another example from Yonkers, New Jersey:



[Daylighting the Saw Mill River - Curbed NY.](#)

There are many examples.

Thanks for any assistance you could provide.

Ronda Larson Kramer

Cell: 360-259-3076

rlarsonkramer@gmail.com

Pamela Braff

From: Ronda Larson Kramer <rlarsonkramer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 11:48 AM
To: Pamela Braff
Cc: Harry Branch; Jane Hutchinson
Subject: Re: Olympia 2045--Daylighting Moxlie Creek

You don't often get email from rlarsonkramer@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Thank you. After I sent this, I received information about the Thornton Creek daylighting. It is probably the better example for Olympia to emulate. "The City of Seattle found that the \$14.8 million channel has already catalyzed \$200 million in nearby residential and commercial development." [Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel | ASLA Climate Change Exhibition](#)



Ronda Larson Kramer
Cell: 360-259-3076
rlarsonkramer@gmail.com

On Mon, Oct 6, 2025 at 8:40 AM Pamela Braff <pbraff@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Hi Ronda,

We appreciate you taking the time to review and provide comments on the Climate Element. Your comments will be reviewed by staff and shared with the Olympia City Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan decision-making process.