

# Community Values & Vision

During ~~2009-2014~~the Comprehensive Plan update process, the City and the public engaged in a broad ~~update to~~review of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan. The City held ~~over 30~~numerous public meetings and collected ~~over~~2,000hundreds of comments from community members about what they value in Olympia and their vision for Olympia's future. These community values and visions are distilled below and reflected in the goals and policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, the Squaxin Island Tribe and the City of Olympia have an Accord and have committed to long-term actions, through understanding and mutual respect, to work cooperatively and collaboratively. The Tribe has offered these words of welcome:

*"We welcome current and future generations of Olympians to our traditional lands. The land and waters of the Olympia area are special to the Squaxin people. As the first inhabitants, we call this area Bus-Chut-Wud (bəscətxwəd) meaning land of the black bears and we call the local river and bay waters, Steh-Chass (stəčas) after the original band of indigenous people who lived here before American settlement. As Squaxin people we have always held deep values of gratitude, friendship, community and stewardship. And today we are so thankful for the friendship and partnership with the City of Olympia, for they, the leadership and members of the greater Olympia community, share these same values."*

## Collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the Accord between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that Olympia resides within the traditional lands of the Steh-Chass band of indigenous people of the Squaxin Island Tribe, who were removed from their land for the settlement that became Olympia. The Tribe has offered these words for acknowledgement:

*"The Squaxin Island Tribe's habitation of what is now Olympia spans thousands of years. The ancestral families who lived and thrived here named it Steh-Chass, and occupied prosperous villages along the shores. Archeological findings of ancestral artifacts in the area suggest habitation by Squaxin ancestors since the retreat of the glaciers during the last Ice Age. Today, the Squaxin people continue stewardship of these ancestral lands, from the Deschutes watershed and what is now Budd Inlet. The Steh-Chass (Squaxin) continue to call themselves 'People of the Water' because of the bounty of the region's waterways and artesian waters, which have sustained the people for millennia."*

The City of Olympia will continue to strengthen our government-to-government relationship with the Squaxin Island Tribe to support our shared environmental, economic, and community goals.

We acknowledge past harms to the natural environment by earlier development patterns and practices. These include early settlement actions and developments that occurred prior to local, state, and federal environmental protection measures that have been improved and refined over time.

We acknowledge Olympia's history of racially restrictive covenants, redlining, and displacement of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). We acknowledge that our historic population of Chinese Olympians, who built much of Olympia's original infrastructure, were actively excluded through anti-Chinese sentiment and restrictive immigration laws, resulting in the loss of Olympia's once-thriving Chinatown and a dwindling Chinese population.

We acknowledge past harms to members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, with the plus sign representing other identities within the broader LGBTQIA2S+ community), that resulted in some people feeling they were not fully welcome, protected, or included equitably in our shared community.

These institutional and systemic barriers are still prevalent and have resulted in a lack of equitable access to resources and opportunities. We are dedicated to rebuilding trust through reconciliation and making ongoing efforts to remove these barriers.

## EQUITY

### What Olympia values:

*As evident through the City's Housing Needs Assessment, our community is becoming more diverse. This includes changes in racial demographics, an increase in the number of aging adults, and changes in average household size and income. Olympians value and respect the identities and lived experiences of our community members and military families, including but not limited to, race, color, religion, religious beliefs or spirituality, creed, national origin, immigration or refugee status, marital status, military or veteran status, financial stability, class, gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, age, ~~or~~ ability, or language. We believe that embracing equity enhances the livability and vibrancy of our beautiful city for all residents.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*We envision a future where Olympia has a diverse, ~~and~~ inclusive, and accessible community, a robust and resilient local economy, a healthy environment that sustains each of us, and a strong multicultural arts and heritage presence for all to enjoy.*

To build a truly livable and vibrant city, we understand that we must provide equitable access to the necessities of life, including housing, mobility, food, services, education, clean air and water, and meaningful work. We must consider the diverse needs of our residents in planning the long-term growth and development of Olympia, considering both quantitative and qualitative data from our community to drive decision-making. Giving everyone an opportunity to participate in the civic, economic, and cultural life of the city will lead to a greater quality of life and a sustainable local economy.

The City of Olympia is committed to fostering a community where all individuals are treated with dignity, equity, and respect. We desire to be a city of peace and are committed to remaining a sanctuary city. We believe all community members should be free from political persecution; be served and protected by the City regardless of immigration status; have reproductive health care and services while recognizing a woman's right to reproductive choice; and by reaffirming the City's dedication to protecting LGBTQIA2S+ rights.

We recognize that equity is essential to all areas of the Comprehensive Plan and are committed to working to eliminate inequity in our community.

## Public Participation and Partners

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value their right to participate in City government, and to engage in meaningful, open and respectful community dialogue regarding decisions that affect our community.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Through collaborative and open discussions, Olympians embrace a shared responsibility to make our community a better place.*

The City of Olympia places a high priority on engaging community members ~~early and often~~ and regularly demonstrates how the voices of the community are heard. When issues come up, the City's healthy public participation process helps each segment of the community to understand the larger picture and the need to act in the best interest of the City as a whole. Olympia engages the public in major decisions through a variety of methods, including community conversations, public forums, and interest-based negotiation, and makes sure these community members know how their input was used. Olympia strives to make engagement equitable and accessible to all members of the community and is committed to providing opportunities for those members who have historically been marginalized. Because of this, the City has built trust with the community.

## Climate Action and Resilience

### What Olympia Values:

Olympians value innovative, community-driven, and justice-centered climate solutions that (1) achieve net-zero emissions, (2) prepare for and adapt to a changing climate, and (3) promote thriving communities for current and future generations.

### Our Vision for the Future:

A net-zero city that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Net-Zero: We are working toward a net-zero future where all Olympians have access to clean, affordable energy and abundant options to walk, bicycle, and ride transit. Thoughtful land use will create compact, connected and mixed-use neighborhoods, making it easier for people to live near the places where they work, shop and play. Living lighter will be the easiest and best option for everyone.

Justice-Centered: Olympia prioritizes the health and well-being of communities that are disproportionately burdened by environmental impacts and actively works to address past harms.

Resilient: Olympia will continue developing built, natural, and social infrastructure that promotes human and environmental wellbeing. A resilient Olympia will withstand more frequent and intense extreme weather events due to climate change through effective, coordinated emergency management. Enhancing natural areas, strengthening community bonds, and preparing our built environment will ensure all Olympians benefit from climate adaptation actions.

## ~~Our~~ Natural Environment

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value our role as stewards of the water, air, land, vegetation, and animals around us, and believe it is our responsibility to future generations~~our children and grandchildren~~ to restore, protect, and enhance the exceptional natural environment that sustain~~surrounds~~ us.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, beautiful, and resilient natural environment that enables both human and wild communities to thrive~~setting that is preserved and enhanced~~.*

Olympia's unique natural setting will continue to make Washington State's capital city great. By working closely with surrounding governments, we can successfully preserve, protect and restore the natural heritage we share.

As a result of this cooperative effort, Olympia will enjoy community free from invasive species with a dense tree canopy that will beautify our downtown and neighborhoods, and improve the health, environmental quality and economy of our city. Though our population will increase, our air and water will be cleaner and wildlife habitat will be preserved to maintain a biologically healthy diversity of species. Salmon will return and spawn in the streams where they were born. Seals, sea lions, orcas, and otters will roam the waters of southern Puget Sound.

## Land Use and Urban Design

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a resilient community that supports active living and the forging of social bonds; a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels are welcomed and can afford to live; neighborhoods with distinct identities; historic buildings and places; a ~~walkable and~~ comfortable downtown and city that*

*is welcoming to pedestrians of all abilities; increased urban green space; locally produced food; and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines.*

#### Our Vision for the Future:

*A ~~walkable~~welcoming and inclusive, accessible, resilient and vibrant city rich in opportunities to participate in daily life. A community where people can meet their needs within a short distance of their homes, and where urban growth and urban green spaces coexist and support each other.*

We envision a capital city of pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, livable and affordable neighborhoods, safe and meaningful street life, and high-quality civic architecture. Through collaboration with other agencies and partners, our urban waterfront will be a priceless asset, eventually running along the Deschutes River from Tumwater's historic buildings, down past Marathon and Heritage parks to Percival Landing and the Port Peninsula.

Capitol Way will be a busy and historic boulevard linking the waterfront and downtown to the Capitol Campus. By creating plazas, expanded sidewalks, and public art in public places, we will stimulate private investment in residential and commercial development, increasing downtown Olympia's retail and commercial vitality.

Olympia will work to create "urban nodes" of higher density and mixed-use development in specific locations along our urban corridor. We will encourage infill projects and remodeling of older structures; in turn, we will begin to create a more walkable community, where historic buildings and neighborhoods are valued, preserved, and adapted to new uses.

Well-implemented neighborhood sub-area planning will help us determine unique neighborhood assets to protect and enhance; where and how to increase density and retain green space; and develop safe and convenient access to everything from grocery stores, to schools, neighborhood parks, community gardens and neighborhood gathering places.

## Transportation

#### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians want an inclusive transportation system that supports the economy, everyone's well-being, and limits impacts to the environment. ~~can move people and goods through the community safely while conserving energy and with minimal environmental impacts.~~ We want ~~it~~ to use the system to connect to our homes, businesses and gathering spaces, and promote a healthy*

cityneighborhoods.

#### Our Vision for the Future:

A sustainable, equitable, accessible and resilient transportation system that prioritizes public transit, walking, rolling, and biking over single occupancy vehicles. We aim to create vibrant, connected neighborhoods where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can move safely and efficiently, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions and building a stronger, more inclusive community. Complete streets that move people, not just cars.

Inclusive: The transportation system will be inviting to all people, whether they are walking with or without a walking aid, using a wheelchair to roll, riding a bike, taking transit, or driving. People will feel and be safe when using the transportation system.

Biking & Walking: All Olympians, both young and old, will be able to walk, roll, or bike or take transit to work, school, shopping, and recreation. Bike lanes and sidewalks will be safely integrated and often buffered from traffic along arterials and collectors throughout the city. People walking, rolling, and biking will have contact with nature along their way, whether it's on trails, pathways, or streets. Pedestrians and bicyclists will use trails and pathways built through open areas, between neighborhoods, and along shorelines. Sidewalks, both in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods and downtown, will encourage people walking or rollingwalkers to stop and enjoy public spaces or visit shops in commercial areas and squares in lively centers near their homes. Trees and storefront awnings will line the streets. Pedestrian and bicycle routes will interface seamlessly with transit so people can ride the bus to go farther than they are comfortable walking, rolling, or biking.

As the community grows, both public and private investments will be needed to provide the transportation infrastructure investments envisioned for our community.

Commuting: We envision a future in which nearly all residents will live within walking distance of a bus stop, and most people will commute by foot, bicycle, transit or carpool. Drivers will use small vehicles fueled by renewable resources. Electric buses will arrive every ten minutes at bus stops along all major arterials.

Parking: Parking lots for car commuters will be located on the edges of downtown, hidden from view by offices and storefronts. Variable pricing of street meters and off-street lots will ensure that parking is available for workers, shoppers and visitors. Short and long-term bike parking will be conveniently located. Throughout town, streets will provide room for both bike lanes and parking, and will be designed to slow traffic.



~~ADA Compliance: Our transportation system will be accessible to people of all abilities and aligned with the Americans with Disabilities Act.~~

~~Safety: Because slower speeds will be encouraged, and crosswalks and intersections will be safer, deaths and injuries from collisions will be nearly eliminated.~~

## Housing

### What Olympia Values:

*Our city is committed to fostering well-planned neighborhoods that reflect our heritage while embracing innovation, ensuring that housing options are available for all income levels and life stages.*

*Affordability & Accessibility: We strive to provide housing options that meet the needs of all residents, from low-income families to seniors and students, ensuring that no one is left behind.*

*Sustainability & Smart Growth: We embrace responsible development practices that preserve our environment, promote efficient land use, and encourage diverse housing types within vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.*

*Equity & Inclusion: We work to eliminate barriers to housing, prevent displacement, and create a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels can thrive.*

*Collaboration & Innovation: We partner with regional stakeholders, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to develop creative solutions that expand housing opportunities.*

*Community & Livability: We prioritize the character and quality of our neighborhoods by promoting well-designed housing that supports diverse communities, public transportation access, and local economic growth.*

*Through these commitments, we will ensure that our community remains a welcoming and thriving place for generations to come.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*A diverse, inclusive, and sustainable community where everyone has access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing*

By adopting affordable housing program criteria, the City will help ensure all



residents can meet their basic housing needs. We believe this will contribute to a regional goal to end homelessness and displacement in our community. In turn, this would contribute to reducing the costs of emergency and social services.

## Utilities

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the community decision making and control, and cost-effective, locally provided service delivery that is provided through its city-owned utilities; Olympians value a high-quality drinking water supply which exceeds all drinking water regulatory standards; that is owned and controlled by the City. We want protecting Puget Sound and local waterways by preventing pollution and wastewater and stormwater treated effectively treating stormwater and wastewater before it is discharged into Puget Sound- and local waterways; and a clean, sanitary city where waste products are disposed of properly and a reduction in use occurs to conserve energy and resources. We understand and value the role that 'reuse, reduction and recycling' plays in our effort to conserve energy and materials.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Clean, plentiful water and significant reduction of pollution and waste.*

Through careful planning, improved efficiency of our drinking water use, and voluntary rates that encourage conservation, Olympia will be able to meet the water needs of its future population. ~~Our improved~~ wastewater and stormwater treatment and management reduced wastewater and storm water discharge will support a healthy community of native abundant aquatic life in Budd Inlet and our local waterways streams.

We will place less pressure on ~~our local~~ landfills, through our recycling and composting programs and efforts to support state packaging and product lifecycle initiatives thanks to state and national packaging standards, local solid waste incentives, and the voluntary actions of our community members. Olympia households no longer use harmful products that could A majority of Olympia households will be using urban organic compost on their landscapes. Artificial fertilizers no longer contaminate local water bodies.

To use community resources wisely, city-owned utility assets are maintained or replaced at the ideal time so that future ratepayers inherit reliable water, wastewater, stormwater and garbage services. Additionally, Olympians benefit from the early and ongoing collaboration with private utilities by City staff.

## Economy

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a diverse and inclusive economy that offers a variety of education, employment and business opportunities accessible to all. We take pride in our status as Washington State's Capital, our local businesses, unique places and spaces, and the creative spirit of our community.*

~~*Olympians recognize the importance of our quality of life to a healthy economy. We value our status as Washington State's capital, as well as our community businesses as a source of family wage jobs, goods and services, and various other contributions that help us meet community goals.*~~

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Every Olympian is afforded quality lifelong opportunities that build pathways to upward mobility and financial stability. Olympia is a safe, resilient and welcoming city with abundant community character, making our city a choice place to live and a destination for visitors.*

~~*Olympia's economy is healthy due to a diverse mix of new and existing employment sectors, in addition to being the center of state government.*~~

Because of our careful planning, the Olympia economy will remain stable, especially when compared to similar cities throughout the state and region. The City's investment in the downtown will encourage market-rate-mixed-income housing, many new specialty stores and boutiques, and attract visitors to places such as Percival Landing, the Hands on Children's Museum, and our many theatre and art venues. Its work to strengthen regional shopping nodes, such as the area around Capital Mall, will provide high-density housing, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, making our state capital a popular destination to live, work, play and study.

Entrepreneurs, attracted to an urban environment with an open and accepting culture, will create new start-ups in Olympia that diversify our job market and economy, making it less vulnerable to downturns in state government.

Meanwhile, on the city's outskirts, small farms will continue to expand. Local food producers will further diversify local employment opportunities and help local residents and businesses be less vulnerable to the rising cost of imported food.

## Public Health, Parks, Arts and Recreation

#### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the role parks, open space, recreation and art play in our lives. ~~as~~ These contribute to our sense of community, and to our physical, ~~spiritual~~ and emotional, ~~environmental~~, and economic well-being.*

#### Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, fun, ~~welcoming~~, ~~safe~~ and enriching place to live ~~for all Olympians~~.*

Places where we can move: The many parks and open spaces throughout our community will be key to maintaining the health of our children, and all Olympians. The Olympia School District will work with the City to allow maximum feasible public use of ~~s~~School ~~d~~District gyms and playgrounds.

Programs that support health: The City's work with school districts and local and state health agencies will foster programs that encourage good nutrition and exercise. These programs will complement other City regulations that are encouraging both urban agriculture and markets for sale of local and regional produce.

A biking city: Olympia will be continually expanding and upgrading its bicycle facility network and will see major increases in bike use, for both commuting and recreation. In selected areas where cyclists tend to concentrate, the City will provide separated bike facilities.

Olympians walk – everywhere: We envision a city in which all neighborhoods have sidewalks on at least one side of major collector streets. This, along with more pedestrian crossing improvements and neighborhood pathways, traffic calming devices, and enforcement of traffic laws, will contribute to a dramatic increase of walking in Olympia.

An arts magnet: The City will continue to sponsor and support music and art events and festivals, which attract residents and visitors from throughout the area. The City will take advantage of provisions in state law to fund art throughout Olympia.

## Public Services Public Safety

#### What Olympia Values:

*Olympia~~ns~~ residents value the protection our police, fire, and ~~crisis response and~~ emergency medical services provide, ~~as well as the proactive steps public safety~~ ~~partners take to prepare for and manage impacts from natural disasters and~~ ~~other emergencies~~. They also ~~support~~ ~~value~~ codes ~~enforcement services~~ that*

~~enforce the City's efforts to help maintain the safety and appeal of our diverse neighborhoods and districts quality, adequate and affordable housing for all residents, community gathering places, and recreational centers.~~

Our Vision for the Future:

~~A secure and resilient community where public safety services are delivered with professionalism and compassion for all Responsive services and affordable housing for all.~~

~~By adopting "affordable" housing program criteria, the City will help assure all residents can meet their basic housing needs. We believe this will contribute to a regional goal to end homelessness in our community. In turn, this would contribute to reducing the cost of City police and social services and make the downtown more attractive for businesses and visitors.~~

The strong code enforcement programs that will emerge from community involvement in every neighborhood will help protect the safety and distinct identity of all Olympia neighborhoods.

*Note: The For More Information section below was added to address comments from the Land Use and Environment Committee and Social Justice and Equity Commission. It was not included in earlier drafts.*

## For More Information

- [Accord](#) between the Squaxin Island Tribe and City of Olympia
- Olympia Sanctuary City [webpage](#)
- 1985 Resolution ([M-1192](#)) – City of Peace
- 2016 Resolution ([M-1857](#)) – Sanctuary City
- 2022 Resolution ([M-2348](#)) – Reproductive Rights
- 2025 Resolution ([M-2591](#)) – LGBTQIA2S+ Community
- A Progress Report on Olympia's Equity Journey [webpage](#)
- Social Justice and Equity Commission [webpage](#)
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [webpage](#)