



Renter Protections Ordinance

Background on Challenges

53%
renters

54%
cost
burdened
renters

20%
cost
burdened
homeowners

\$49,357
Renter
Median
Income

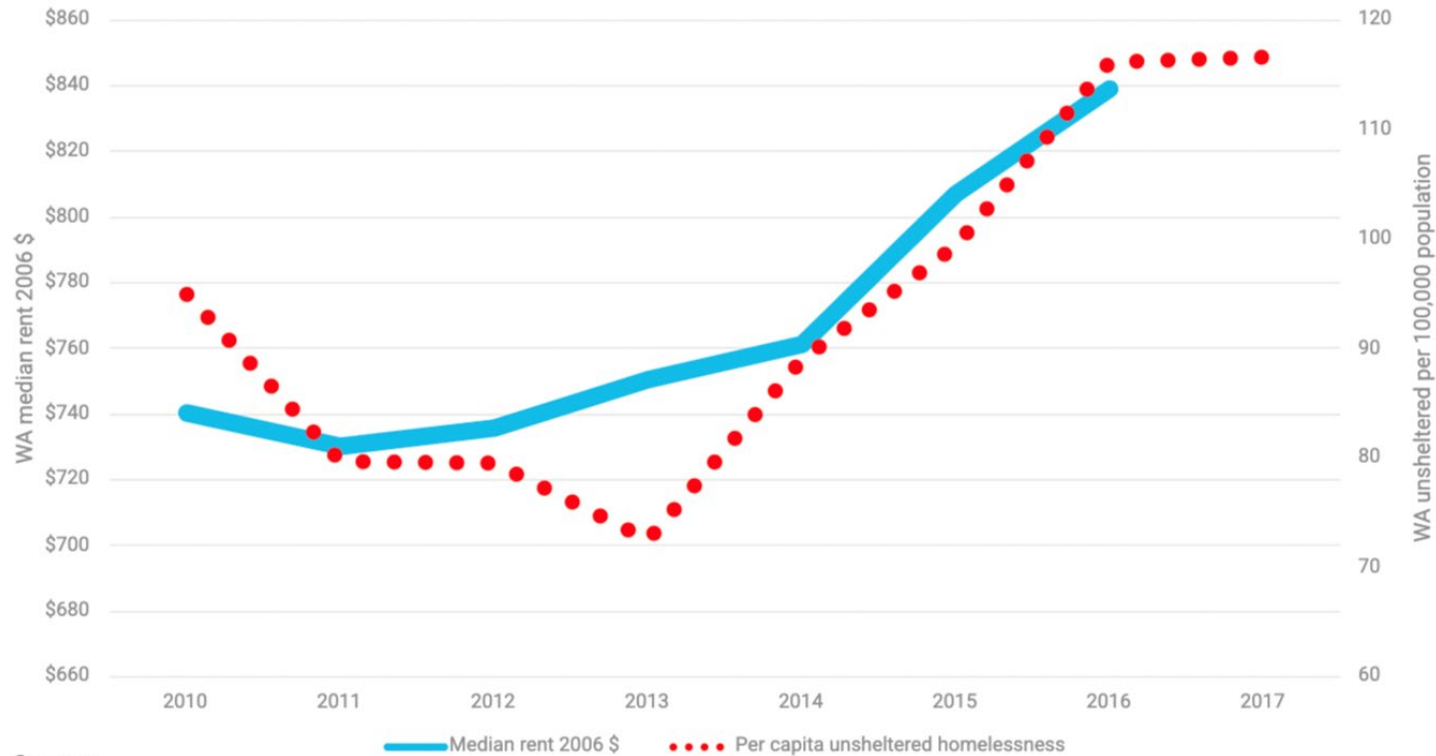
\$106,650
Homeowner
Median
Income

77
Hours per
week

\$1,437
Median
monthly rent

\$1,680
Median
monthly
mortgage

Background on challenges



Sources:
 Rent: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey one-year estimates for Washington State, B25058, inflation adjusted using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI-U
 Homelessness: WA point in time count, adjusted by : U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey one-year population estimate for Washington State
 1 - Journal of Urban Affairs, *New Perspectives on Community-Level Determinants of Homelessness*, 2012
 2 - Dynamics of homelessness in urban America, arXiv:1707.09380

Source: Washington State Department of Commerce

Every \$100 increase in median rent is associated with a 9% increase in the estimated homelessness rate

Source: U.S. GAO

Just over half of respondents said they are currently behind on rent.



August 2023 Thurston County Public Health & Social Services survey

Development of Proposed Changes

Public engagement

- Renter protections engagement (2021-2022)
- Assessment of Fair Housing (2022-2023)

Committee work

- Land Use & Environment Committee meetings
 - Council work session (August 2023)
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Alignment with workplans

Olympia Housing Action Plan

- Provide displaced tenants with relocation assistance
- Make it easier for households to access housing and stay housed
- Identify and implement appropriate tenant protections that improve household stability
- Fund Housing Navigators to assist households, renters, homeowners, and landlords with housing issues
- Enhance enforcement of property maintenance codes to keep housing in good repair

Thurston County Homeless Crisis Response Plan

- Ensure that when tenants are asked to relocate that they are supported in that transition in order to prevent households falling into homelessness
- Enact and implement tenant protection laws and fund enforcement
- Keep currently housed individuals and families in their housing by addressing housing quality issues as they rise

Thurston County Assessment of Fair Housing

- Improve environmental health in housing units
- Reduce barriers to accessing housing
- Explore options for tenant relocation assistance

Relocation Assistance

RCW 59.18.085

Relocation assistance may be required to be paid by the landlord if the unit is condemned or deemed unlawful to occupy by government entity.

RCW 59.18.440

Cities may require payment of relocation assistance to a low-income tenant (below 50% AMI) if their unit is demolished, substantially rehabilitated, or the use changes. The funds may be paid by City and can be cost shared with landlord (up to 50%).

Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance

- Landlords must provide notice to tenants of their right to relocation assistance when increasing the rent by more than 5%
 - Tenant requests relocation assistance within 45 days of notice
 - Landlord pays relocation assistance within 31 days of receiving tenant request
 - Tenant must repay relocation assistance and new rental amount if they decide not to move out
 - Amount:
 - Two times the monthly rent if the increase is more than 5%, but less than 10%
 - Three times the monthly rent if the increase is 10% or more
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Limits to fees

Permissible fees may include:

- Late fee (\$10 per month)
- Fees for damages or actual costs incurred by landlord (including damage to a unit, dishonored checks, improvements requested by the tenant)
- Application/screening fee (only actual costs, as outlined in state law)
- Allowable deposits and pet deposits

04/14/2021	Tenant Charge - Due to 2nd inspection because of rule/lease violation	50.00
04/20/2021	Maintenance/Repair - labor to install new smoke alarm	23.22
04/20/2021	Supplies-Building - New smoke alarm	34.55
05/13/2021	Maintenance/Repair - repairs to items damaged by tenants	2,262.00
06/07/2021	Tenant Charge Due to 2nd inspection because of rule/lease violation	50.00
07/09/2021	Legal Service Fee 10 Day Notice	75.00
08/19/2021	Legal Service Fee - 10 day notice due to rule/lease violation	75.00
09/10/2021	Tenant Charge - Due to 3rd inspection scheduled- not home and lock changed.	50.00
10/20/2021	Legal Service Fee - 10 day notice fee	75.00
11/05/2021	Legal Service Fee 10 Day Notice for rule/lease violations	75.00
12/01/2021	Rent December 2021	970.00
01/01/2022	Rent - January 2022	970.00
01/07/2022	██████ Late Fees - Late Fee for Jan 2022	75.00
02/01/2022	Rent - February 2022	970.00
02/07/2022	██████ Late Fees Late Fee for Feb 2022	75.00
03/01/2022	Rent - March 2022	970.00
03/07/2022	██████ Late Fees - Late Fee for Mar 2022	75.00

Right to install cooling devices

Oregon State sample policy

Landlords may require some parameters, such as removal of units during winter months and using the landlord's agent to properly install the units

Olympia's extreme hot weather days (above 90°F) are projected to increase up to 24 additional days per year by 2030-2059

Ability to break lease after notice of rent increase of 5% or more

Amends existing Olympia Municipal Code that requires 120 days' notice for rent increases over 5% and 180 days' notice for rent increases of 10% or more

Exemptions for families

Exemption from the rental registry, licensing, and inspection requirements for property owners who are renting to immediate family members

Public hearing & comments

General Themes:

- Increased regulations could decrease supply of locally owned properties
- Small, local landlords have more flexible screening criteria and increase rents to cover increasing property costs
- Property owners view problem as a housing supply issue and need for more subsidies for lowest income residents
- Wages are not keeping pace with rising housing costs
- Olympia renters are being displaced by rising costs, with many moving out of the area, staying in their cars, or doubling up
- Stable housing is a public health issue which has ripple effects in our community

Specific concerns from landlords about proposed amendments: late fee is too low, breaking lease early impacts stability and planning, do not feel that relocation assistance for rent increases should be landlord's responsibility

Support from tenants and tenant advocacy groups: Olympia For All coalition of 12+ organizations, letter of support from Thurston County Board of County Commissioners



Questions?

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