

From: [Mike Reid](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: comments for Economy Chapter content
Date: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:51:11 PM

I received this comment from Karen Messmer. Am I supposed to be doing something with comments that are received?

-----Original Message-----

From: karen karenmessmer.com <karen@karenmessmer.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:47 PM
To: Mike Reid <mreid@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: comments for Economy Chapter content

Mike -

A few comments about the Economy Chapter.

There is a policy that states that the city should advocate for keeping the DASH bus service. That is a redundant service since there is no fare on the system now. It is costly for IT to provide overlapping and duplicate service.

I am curious that there is so little mention about walkability as a factor in livable communities. The City has major goals in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan that point to the benefits and desirability of safe and convenient walking. Car ownership can be a big drag on a household budget. Owning two cars makes it even worse. Having a community that is walkable, with good transit is very desirable for both existing and potential residents. Walking is also a very important factor for health.

Although there are some minor mentions of it, the availability of parks and trails are also an important factor for livability.

And I don't think I saw anything mentioned about keeping the community safe from crime and overall public safety such as fire and emergency response.

Parks, transportation and public safety are fundamental roles for city government. These should be acknowledged as foundational contributions that the City makes towards the economy.

If the city has lots of crime, poor fire response, crappy parks and unsafe walking conditions, local people will be unhappy and investors will not be interested.

From my perspective, the basic functions of the City need to be excellent and that should come before other programs and projects aimed at economic development.

Karen Messmer

From: [Mike Reid](#)
To: karen.karenmessmer.com
Cc: [Olympia2045](#)
Subject: RE: Economy Chapter draft questions about Resilience part
Date: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:42:02 PM

Greetings Karen –

Thanks for the catch. I'll review and address. Referencing Thurston County Emergency Management Planning and Climate Adaptation Plan would be good additions.

It should say:

A Resilient City

The impacts of climate change are already visible and forecast to become even more disruptive in the years ahead. Future risks include increased flooding along the shoreline areas of Puget Sound, more and faster moving wildfires, extreme fluctuations in weather and more violent wind and storm events. The City has already adopted climate adaptation strategies and is underway with various actions to mitigate risk. But a lot of work remains to be completed. In this sense, there is also opportunity in the form of new family wage jobs and investment in green infrastructure and carbon reduction strategies.

G.E12: Olympia is well prepared to withstand future economic disruptions and emergencies.

PE12.1: Ensure the local economy is resilient to climate disruptions and fosters business opportunities associated with climate mitigation and adaptation.

PE12.2: Facilitate a green jobs pipeline for frontline communities.

Mike Reid

Economic Development Director
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This email is subject to public disclosure

From: karen.karenmessmer.com <karen@karenmessmer.com>

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:31 PM

To: Mike Reid <mreid@ci.olympia.wa.us>

Subject: Economy Chapter draft questions about Resilience part

Mike -

At the bottom of page 34 of the draft Economy Chapter there is a title 'A Resilient City' then some text follows on page 35.

The goal is - *G.E12: Olympia is well prepared to withstand future economic disruptions and emergencies.*

There are no policies following that goal. Is this intentional? Should this goal reference the Climate Adaptation Plan? Should this also reference emergency plans in place for the city? How about flood plans?

Something is missing here.

Karen Messmer

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.

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.

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#)

Introduction

Olympia is fortunate to have a strong and stable economy with quality job, education and business opportunities available to residents.

Olympians value an inclusive economy where all people have access to resources and opportunities for upward mobility and financial stability. While most residents have incomes sufficient to meet basic needs and then invest in other life pursuits, a growing number of households are falling behind and vulnerable to economic or financial disruption. For this reason, an essential focus for Olympia’s economic development efforts is to create pathways that elevate more residents of all backgrounds and abilities into economic security.

The City of Olympia doesn’t do economic development on our own. This is work we do in collaboration with regional entities from a variety of sectors, including government, business, education, workforce, non-profits, the private sector and others.

The overall purpose of economic development is to improve the quality of life for people. Through partnerships, programs and investments the City aims to help residents, businesses and our community thrive. Our efforts fall into four main themes:

- 1) **Education and Workforce Pathways:** Fostering a variety of education and career training opportunities to ensure individuals have the skills necessary to access in demand and well-paying jobs.
- 2) **Housing and Sense of Security:** Facilitating affordable housing initiatives to alleviate the burden on low- and moderate- income families and provide them with stable living conditions. (See the Housing Chapter for more on this)

Summary of Comments on Economy Chapter ggcomments.pdf

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- 3) **Business Enterprise Resources and Support:** Fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses to create new avenues for wealth creation, reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community, and bolster the tax base we rely on to fund community goals and needs.
- 4) **Community Lovability, Pride and Resiliency:** Investing in programs and projects that make Olympia a desirable destination to work, live and play, and bolster our ability to respond effectively to physical and financial challenges.

Long-term trends bring challenges and opportunities

As we plan for the future, we need to keep these long term trends in mind.

Employment Growth:

Olympia is an employment center for Thurston County. During the work week, our population doubles in size as people enter Olympia for work. Between 2025 and 2045 we can expect a nearly 35% increase  in the number of jobs located in Olympia (20,370 new jobs projected).

Top employment industries include public administration (state and local government), health care, professional services, retail trade, and accommodation and food service. Olympia’s status as the State capital means we can expect a large, stable base of government employment. At the same time, trends point to faster employment growth in the private industry, specifically the health care industry which is our fastest growing sector. This brings important benefit. It produces a more diversified portfolio of local jobs which helps balance market “ups and downs.” In addition, a healthy tax base is key to providing the consistent services that we desire and expect in this community. An essential strategy, and one that Olympians generally support, is attracting and growing “headquarters” for businesses that provide environmentally friendly products while also paying family wages.

Looking ahead there are ample opportunities to grow more high paying jobs that could lift more Olympians into economic security. And not all these jobs will require a college degree. In Washington, about two-thirds of all jobs will require a certificate, associate degree, or higher.

However, Olympia possesses very little industrial zoning to accommodate advanced manufacturing or other large employers. High wage employment within City limits will likely be focused within info-tech, healthcare and professional services sectors in addition to government.

Housing Instability



Number: 1 Author: GUEST

Date: 11/11/2023 5:22:11 PM

I find this increase hard to believe and wonder what the data is based on. More workers can and do telecommute from anywhere outside the county, not to mention jobs being replaced by technology and AI.

Renters and homeowners experience economic challenges in vastly different ways. Homeowners, even if they are still paying a mortgage, have seen incredible growth in home value over time. In a pinch, they can tap the equity they’ve built up. Conversely, renters are challenged by rapidly increasing costs, fewer available units and home purchase market competition from non-local buyers and corporations. To many, home ownership feels completely out of reach.

Challenges to Upward Mobility

Social service and education partners stress the importance of reaching children earlier to ensure they know what career options are available to them. Many are unable to imagine what’s possible, let alone understand that there are systems in place to support them. On a second front, many workers have limited options for moving up or increasing income. Notably, many of these work in occupations that were temporarily displaced or had hours reduced during the pandemic, including childcare, food service and personal services. There is also some risk that advances in automation and artificial intelligence in general will lead to the displacement of even more traditional jobs. All of this in addition to the systemic barriers that make it most difficult to prosper for those facing generational poverty, racism or discrimination.

City Expenses Growing Faster Than City Revenues

Although the City’s tax base remained relatively strong through the pandemic, forecasts indicate expenditures might exceed revenue within a few years without policy or administrative adjustments. Stable revenue is critical to ensuring essential services. New revenue sources will need to be identified, or levels of service reduced .

Industry Change, Supply Chain and Labor Challenges

On the business front, resiliency is being tested not only by the increasing cost of goods, but also labor and disruptions to the supply chain which has been slow to correct following pandemic shutdowns. Some are also facing transformative shake-ups: more households are ordering food delivery; more consumers are purchasing electric vehicles and many workers are migrating to employers who offer work from home options, to name a few examples. It is imperative that the private and public sectors engage one another to ensure support systems and proactive policies and investments facilitate a successful transition into the future.

Advancing equity and helping people overcome hardship

Olympia is committed to advancing a community that is just and equitable for all. Our economic policies aim to reduce economic barriers and expand opportunities for all community members, with emphasis on Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, disabled and low-income communities.

 Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 5:27:34 PM
Growth does not pay for growth.

We recognize there are fundamental inequities in our economy. Low-income and renter households - disproportionately Black, Hispanic, immigrant and those including at least one person with a disability –face persistent economic challenges, which for some is compounded by systemic racism and discrimination. Data also shows us that single-parent households, immigrants, and people with disabilities especially have a harder time accessing the labor force.

Our economic development actions seek to advance equity in our economy and help a wider range of people achieve financial stability. Our policies and actions will help achieve this by leveraging community partner resources; directly engaging youth and dislocated workers to broaden career pathway options; continuing to facilitate greater housing security; and investing in diverse small business startups and local enterprise growth.

Advancing climate solutions

Climate change will affect our national and local economy in several ways, creating both risk and opportunity.

Climate studies indicate we can expect to see more frequent heat waves, storms and flooding which will heighten the potential for property damage, personal and business financial stress and global resource scarcity. These factors may cause greater stress on the City’s budget for sea level rise adaptation and other climate related investments, increased costs for scarce goods and a decline in tax revenues during major local events. Vulnerable communities such as those who are in poverty, have low incomes or lack a financial safety net, are likely to suffer the most. The City will develop a climate preparedness and adaptation plan that considers equitable approaches.

Public response to climate change also presents opportunities for Olympia. The shift to a low carbon economy is underway, spurring advancement in technologies and growth of the green job sector. Fueled by federal investment, along with strong State and local climate goals, we anticipate the need for hundreds of skilled workers, such as solar installers and electric vehicle technicians, to help us transition to net zero carbon. Additionally, Olympia’s climate adaptation values are likely to make us more successful at attracting and retaining younger workers. By working with partners, the City can influence the accessibility of such job training programs for Olympia residents.

Creating unique and welcoming places and spaces in Olympia with ongoing focus in high density neighborhoods will benefit climate mitigation by increasing urban density and reducing urban sprawl, supporting use of public transit, and increasing walking and biking. 

Advancing a healthy community



Number: 1 Author: GUEST

Date: 11/11/2023 5:31:35 PM

yes, I agree.

Economic development and community health have a symbiotic relationship. Our efforts to increase equitable access to education, workforce and business opportunities aim to improve household financial stability and reduce poverty rates. These factors directly impact public health by enabling community members to access better healthcare services, nutritious food and adequate affordable housing, thereby reducing stress and improving overall mental health and well-being. In turn, a healthy community fosters a productive and engaged workforce, attracts businesses and investment, and contributes to overall economic prosperity.

Social cohesion and community engagement are also important for the health of a community. The global pandemic disrupted many traditional community gatherings and social conventions. It separated people from their work places, fraternal organizations and schools. Opportunity youth rates (people of school age who have dropped out of school and are not engaged in employment or training) have increased in many areas, as has the percentage of high school seniors pursuing continuing education. The City and community partners must proactively engage all youth, invest in mental health resources and broaden access to career and training resources.

Goals and Policies

G.E1 Olympia has a thriving and diversified economy with pathways to prosperity available to everyone.

PE1.1: Develop and support partner programs and strategies that stimulate living-wage job creation.

PE1.2: Invest in programs that reduce barriers so that people can more easily access education and career training opportunities.

PE1.3: Invest in programs that provide youth with mentorship, opportunities to grow soft skills and leadership abilities and introduce them to college and career pathways.

PE1.4: Engage with workforce development partners to ensure an adequate supply of workers for in-demand occupations.

PE1.5: Support initiatives that help diversify the local economy to supplement our stable public sector base and reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community.

PE1.6: Explore partnership opportunities with the Squaxin Island Tribe that expand their economic and cultural opportunities in Olympia.

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G.E2 Businesses and entrepreneurs thrive in Olympia and contribute to Olympia’s economic diversity.

PE2.1 Foster a desirable setting for business investment and activity.

PE2.2 Diversify the local economy in a way that builds on our stable public sector base, and by supporting businesses that can reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community.

PE2.3: Whenever possible buy from local businesses as a way to strengthen the local economy.

PE2.4: Support business training and other programs and resources that create avenues for a broad cross section of community members to access business ownership opportunities.

PE2.5: Partner and collaborate with WOBA, ODA and other small business districts and champions to create and maintain viable small business centers throughout Olympia.

PE2.6: Celebrate Olympia businesses for their support of community goals such as sustainability, climate action and equity.

G.E3 Collaboration with partners maximizes economic opportunity.

PE3.1: Collaborate with regional economic development partners and neighboring jurisdictions to develop and implement a regional strategy for creating a sustainable and inclusive economy.

PE3.2: Work closely with state and county governments to ensure their offices and facilities are in the City of Olympia, which is both the state’s capitol and the county seat.

PE3.3: Collaborate with The Evergreen State College, St. Martin’s University, and South Puget Sound Community College¹ in their efforts to educate students in skills that will be needed in the future, to contribute to our community’s cultural life, and attract new residents.

PE3.4: Encourage The Evergreen State College and South Puget Sound Community College to establish a physical presence downtown.²

PE3.5: Collaborate with hospitals, other health care providers and regional economic development partners to identify actions the City could take to support the health care sector in ensuring public health and their vitality as a major local employment base.

PE3.6: Support appropriate economic development efforts of our neighboring jurisdictions, recognizing the entire region benefits from new jobs regardless of where

 Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 5:39:18 PM
also local high schools

 Number: 2 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 5:39:55 PM
Yes!

located and their role in fostering activities, such as manufacturing, freight transportation, and air transportation.

PE3.7: Collaborate with the Port in its role of facilitating economic development  while continuing to exercise regulatory control over Port development and operations.

PE3.8: Balance the Port’s need for truck and rail transportation corridors, while minimizing conflicts with other traffic needs and land use goals.

PE3.9: Coordinate funding opportunities with other public stakeholders (the County, Intercity Transit agency, Port of Olympia, State of Washington, Olympia School District, others) with the City’s CFP for major infrastructure investments to maximize the impact of those investments.

PE3.10: Coordinate with the State of Washington on economic investments, policies and other activities within Olympia.

PE3.11: Collaborate with regional economic development partners to prepare for future economic disruptions and emergencies and implement effective disaster recovery.

G.E4 Olympia has a strong revenue base.

PE4.1: Support established industry clusters such as automotive, retail, healthcare, construction, food system and professional services for their value in providing a graduated range of employment opportunities and essential tax revenues.

PE4.2: Periodically review major revenue-generating sectors and identify actions the City can take to help maintain their economic health.

PE4.3: Ensure the total amount of land planned for commercial  and industrial uses is sufficient and appropriately zoned to meet expected demand.

PE4.4 Encourage businesses to export goods and services to regional, national or international markets, but keep jobs and dollars in Olympia.

PE4.5 Regularly review the development market to identify changing circumstances that create barriers or opportunities for investment in our community.

Enriching our Sense of Place and Creative Economy

Olympia has long been a uniquely creative and culture-rich community with strong support from the people and organizations who call it home. This benefits our economy in several ways: 1) enriches our sense of place leading to greater pride and individual investment in the community, 2) increases tourism, bringing new dollars into the community, and 3) provides opportunity to grow jobs in the creative sector.

 Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 5:43:43 PM

No, the Port gives away money to corporations that don't need it. Do not support this practice.

 Number: 2 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 5:49:26 PM

We have too much commercial land already all over town empty strip malls and these empty or underutilized buildings are eyesores and are a drag to revitalization, drive away other businesses and customers...Pacific Avenue and Martin Way are examples.

Olympians desire a community that offers a variety of entertainment, cultures, arts, heritage and recreation opportunities. We also know that employers and entrepreneurs often choose to locate in cities with a rich mix of activities and culture because talented workers want to live in such places. Thus, we see enhancing Olympia’s creative vibe and sense of place as both a benefit to those who already live here, and a way to attract quality employment opportunities and expand on Olympia’s reputation as the unique place in South Puget Sound.¹

Data shows that a sense of place – a sense of authenticity, continuity and uniqueness – is critical to a community’s future economic opportunity. One study found that cities in which residents reported high levels of attachment and passion for their communities had the highest rates of economic growth over time. Qualities such as a welcome and open feeling, attractiveness, walkability, and a variety of social events and venues all contributed to this emotional bond. Parks and trees, community and historic landmarks, and public art also contributed to that hard-to-define sense of place.

Those same qualities that contribute to the strong emotional bonds many residents form with Olympia also appeal to visitors. Visitors contribute to our economy by shopping, dining, taking in a performance in one of our theaters, and spending the night in a hotel.

Downtown Olympia is the cultural heart of the community. It has a destination waterfront that attracts recreational boaters from throughout Puget Sound and beyond. It is home to a thriving arts scene including the Washington Center for Performing Arts, Capitol Theater, State Theater, Olympia Family Theater, a burgeoning creative district and numerous events like the twice-annual Arts Walk.

Downtown is also home to the state’s largest farmer-operated farmers’ market. Olympia Farmers’ Market serves as a link to a substantial network of small family-owned farms and businesses. The market serves as a tourist attraction destination and a place for local residents to purchase local. Adjacent to the Farmers’ Market, which draws upward of 350,000 visitors annually.

In addition to the brick and mortar establishments, Olympia is host to a wide variety of events and festivals including the Pet Parade, Olympia Brewfest, Arts Walk, Olympia Harbor Days, Port Plaza concerts and movie nights and Lakefair, to name just a few. Most of these events take place within Olympia’s state-recognized Creative District.

The City’s most recent investment converted the historic Armory facility into an Art Hub Creative Campus, and Inspire Olympia Cultural Access Program tax revenue, approved by Olympia voters, will ensure broad access to a variety of arts, sciences, heritage and cultural programs and experiences.



Number: 1 Author: GUEST

Date: 11/11/2023 5:50:41 PM

Yes!

But Olympia’s creative economy is not limited to traditional arts and culture activities. It includes a growing volume of technology-based occupations, from graphic designers to software developers, engineers and innovators, who contribute significantly to the local gross domestic profit and generate multiplier effects that spread economic benefits to other sectors.

The City will continue to invest in creating lively places and spaces downtown, as well as other locations throughout the City, fostering a local sense of pride and broader reputation for Olympia as a place of un-matched vitality ¹

Goals and Policies

G.E5: Olympia has a thriving creative economy.

PE5.1: Continue to provide programs and services that support visual and performing arts activities in Olympia.

PE5.2: Establish a creative campus with and for the community that serves as a hub for community members, organizations and artists to collaborate, and provides physical space for creative activities and expression.

PE5.3: Work with partners to grow the creative sector workforce and provide artists and creative industry entrepreneurs with training, technical support and other resources to help them succeed.

PE5.4: Provide grant funding to increase public access to local arts, cultures, heritage and science programs and experiences, especially for youth and traditionally underserved populations.

PE5.5: Create entry points for artists, creatives, innovators and culture-bearers to showcase their work.

PE5.6: Invest in initiatives that showcase Olympia’s innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and enhance Olympia’s status as a magnet creative economy-related tourism and employment.

PE5.7: Help artists and creatives develop networks to grow the creative sector locally and regionally.

PE5.8: Support initiatives that make it affordable for artists and creatives to continue to live and work in Olympia.

PE5.9: Support and foster the creative economy by reducing barriers to adaptive reuse of existing buildings to help initiative innovative ideas and spaces ²



Number: 1 Author: GUEST

Date: 11/11/2023 5:52:47 PM

Yes!



Number: 2 Author: GUEST

Date: 11/11/2023 5:56:45 PM

How about saying: "...encourage and incentivize adaptive reuse of existing and historic buildings to help...."

G.E6: Downtown is a popular destination that contributes to Olympia’s economic vibrancy.

PE6.1: Support a safe and vibrant downtown with many small businesses, great public places, events, art and activities from morning through evening.

PE6.2: Support lively and active downtown parks and waterfront attractions.

PE6.3: Promote high-density housing downtown for a range of incomes.

PE6.4: Support street beautification efforts, like regular cleaning, planting and protecting trees and installing decorative features as a way to help encourages private economic development and redevelopment activities.

PE6.5: Support continuation of the Dash Shuttle as a means of linking the Capital Campus and downtown, and zero-fare transit as a means to connect people to jobs and services.

PE6.6: Use planning processes and tools to improve the economic and social health of downtown. 

G.E7 Tourism is a community revenue source.

PE7.1: Support continued investments in signature places and spaces, beautification efforts and events as a way to continually improve upon Olympia’s unique character, natural beauty and attractiveness to tourists. 

PE7.2: Implement strategies to enhance heritage and other tourism opportunities, in partnership with Experience Olympia and Beyond 

G.E8 Historic resources are used to promote economic stability in the City.

PE8.1: Strengthen economic vitality by helping to stabilize and improve property values in historic areas through the continued support of the Heritage Commission and planning to protect and promote our historic resources.

PE8.2: Encourage new development to harmonize with existing historic buildings and areas.

PE8.3: Protect and enhance the City’s ability to attract tourists and visitors through preservation of historic resources.

PE8.4: Renovation, reuse and repair of existing buildings is often preferable to new construction and should be done in a manner that protects and enhances the resource when historic properties are involved.

PE8.5: Help low- and moderate-income individuals rehabilitate their historic properties. 

 Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:04:29 PM

Add PE6.7: Return Fourth and State Avenues to two-way traffic (one-way couplets are for moving cars as fast as possible, but are anathema to pedestrian friendliness, safety, place-making. Give Olympia (at least downtown) back to humans and not to cars

 Number: 2 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:26:51 PM

Be proactive in enhancing the links between the Capitol Campus and downtown. Capitol Way between 11th Avenue and Sylvester Park is dowdy and unappealing from any perspective.

 Number: 3 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:07:42 PM

Yes, daylight Moxlie Creek as it flows through downtown to create a pedestrian friendly/green corridor like was done in San Antonio and is being done in other enlightened cities.

 Number: 4 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:09:44 PM

Yes, and insist on high design quality and compatibility with historic buildings for infill development and additions.

Public and Private Investment

Olympia enjoys a relatively healthy economy and stable revenue base, making it possible for it to invest in public improvements and services. These include the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, The Olympia Center, Percival Landing, the Farmers Market, new sewer capacity, new roads, and other needed infrastructure. All of this makes Olympia increasingly attractive to private investors, which will further increase our revenue base, and make more community improvements possible.

Adequate and dependable infrastructure is critical to our ability to serve residents and businesses. Our investments have improved our public spaces and quality of life and have provided the impetus for more private investment to follow.

Private investment can expand our community’s economy and strengthen its material prosperity. But basic infrastructure needs to be in place, or underway, in order to interest quality private businesses in locating or expanding in Olympia. For this reason, it’s critical for our community to invest resources in capital facilities that will support a healthy local economy and its values and vision for the future.

Goals and Policies

GE9: The City achieves maximum economic, environmental and social benefit from public infrastructure.

PE9.1: Plan our investments in infrastructure with the goal of balancing economic, environmental and social needs, supporting a variety of potential economic sectors, and creating a pattern of development we can sustain into the future. 

PE9.2: Use strategic public infrastructure investments to stimulate private investment in economic development and redevelopment activities.

PE9.3: Make decisions to invest in public infrastructure projects after analysis projecting their total costs over their estimated useful lives, and their benefit to environmental, economic and social systems.

PE9.4: Consider whether the public cost of new or improved infrastructure can be recovered through increased revenues the City can expect from the private investment the improvement will attract.

PE9.5: Identify and take advantage of infrastructure grants, loans, and other incentives to achieve the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

PE9.6: Identify potential tools, partnerships and resources that can be used to create more economic certainty for developments by better characterizing contamination where doing so fulfills a public purpose.



Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:20:59 PM

Yes, see previous comment about daylighting Moxlie Creek to become an economic generating amenity instead of a sewer.

PE9.7: Identify where new and upgraded utilities will be needed to serve areas zoned for commercial and industrial use, and encourage the development of utilities to service these areas.

PE9.8: Investigate the feasibility of the City providing telecommunications infrastructure, high speed internet connectivity or other new forms of infrastructure.

PE9.9: Collaborate with public and private partners to finance infrastructure needed to develop targeted commercial, residential, industrial, and mixed-use areas (such as the three High Density Neighborhoods and along Urban Corridors) with water, sewer, electricity, street, street frontage, public parking, telecommunications, or rail improvements, as needed and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

PE9.10: Encourage new development in areas the City has designated for infill before considering proposals to expand land-use areas, or adding new ones. 

PE9.11: In coordination with development, serve sites designated for industrial or commercial development with required utilities and other services on a cost-effective basis and at a level appropriate to the uses planned for the area.

PE9.12: Avoid building lengthy and expensive service extensions that would cost more than could ever be recovered from revenues.

G.E10: The City has responsive and efficient services and permitting process.

PE10.1: Maintain the City’s high quality customer service and continuously seek to improve it.

PE10.2: Use regulatory and fee-based incentives to encourage sustainable practices.

PE10.3: Improve the predictability, and cost-effectiveness of the City’s development review process by having clear rules and procedures, eliminating redundancy and other process inefficiencies.

PE10.4: Create a review process that is easy for all parties to understand at every stage and that invites input from affected parties as early as possible in the development process.

PE10.5: Use tools such as Form Based Codes, Subarea Plans, Focus Area Plans, Community Renewal Area planning and other proactive planning processes and tools to define and develop a shared redevelopment vision for specific areas within the community. 

PE10.6: Develop and maintain redevelopment standards that are flexible and cost-effective to enable existing properties to be adapted into new economic uses.

GE.11: Public and private investors are aware of Olympia’s advantages.



Number: 1 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:16:25 PM

Not clear about what this last phrase means..."expand land use areas, or adding new ones"? Expanding zones? No more commercial zoning. Turn to "form based codes" instead.



Number: 2 Author: GUEST Date: 11/11/2023 6:18:39 PM

Say "yes" to form based codes and end outdated zoning.

PE11.1: Actively promote economic activities that are consistent with the values expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

PE11.2: Market Olympia’s advantages to local and out-of-town businesses that may be considering expansions or new facilities in the area.

PE11.3: Define a more active City role in stimulating development, and influencing the design and type of development.

PE11.4: Continue to coordinate and partner with the Thurston County Economic Development Council and Thurston Chamber to promote Olympia’s economic redevelopment opportunities.

A Resilient City

The impacts of climate change are already visible and forecast to become even more disruptive in the years ahead. Future risks include increased flooding along the shoreline areas of Puget Sound, more and faster moving wildfires, extreme fluctuations in weather and more violent wind and storm events. The City has already adopted climate adaptation strategies and is underway with various actions to mitigate risk. But a lot of work remains to be completed. In this sense, there is also opportunity in the form of new family wage jobs and investment in green infrastructure and carbon reduction strategies.

G.E12: Olympia is well prepared to withstand future economic disruptions and emergencies.

PE12.1: Ensure the local economy is resilient to climate disruptions and fosters business opportunities associated with climate mitigation and adaptation.

PE12.2: Facilitate a green jobs pipeline for frontline communities.

For More Information

- Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is the City’s primary partner for enterprise development and training and a key liaison for private sector partnerships
- Thurston Chamber of Commerce partners with the City on business engagement and workforce training initiatives
- Enterprise for Equity provides microenterprise training and support
- PacMtn Workforce Development Council is the workforce training lead for a five-county region including Olympia and Thurston County
- United Way of Thurston County supports career pathway opportunities and poverty

This page contains no comments

reduction strategies

- Olympia Downtown Alliance coordinates a variety of initiatives and advocacy for businesses located in greater downtown Olympia
- [The Profile](#)  is the Thurston County Regional Planning Council’s flagship document that provides demographic, statistical and mapping information
- [Thurston Economic Vitality Index](#)  provides both a trend analysis and snapshot of Thurston County’s economy based upon a series of key indicators

This page contains no comments

From: [Mike Reid](#)
To: [Joyce Phillips](#); [Daisha Versaw](#)
Subject: Fwd: comprehensive plan comment
Date: Monday, February 19, 2024 12:55:57 PM

Good comment just came in on Economy Chapter. Can I share this with Planning Commission at public hearing?

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From: Christen Greene <cg@team-tomorrow.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2024 10:00:29 AM
To: Jill Barnes <jbarnes@washingtoncenter.org>
Cc: Mike Reid <mreid@ci.olympia.wa.us>; tcutts@downtownolympia.org <tcutts@downtownolympia.org>
Subject: Re: comprehensive plan comment

Thanks, Jill - you beat me to it!

On Feb 19, 2024, at 9:56 AM, Jill Barnes <jbarnes@washingtoncenter.org> wrote:

Hi Mike,

Great work on your part in updating the comprehensive plan. I know the City uses this as a guide in their funding decisions and priorities. It's an exciting time to be a part of the arts and entertainment sector in Olympia.

I do think that it would be great to get the word "LIVE" into the comprehensive plan. It looks like the "arts" are named about 10 times in the economy section. If you don't want to update in every instance, could you define "arts" more specifically in the opening?

Page 8 first paragraph:

Olympians desire a community that offers a variety of entertainment, cultures, arts, heritage and recreation opportunities.

"Arts" encompasses a wide range of expressions, including but not limited to live music, theater, and diverse live performances and festivals across various genres.

We also know that employers and entrepreneurs often choose to locate in cities with a rich mix of activities and culture because talented workers want to live in such places.

Thus, we see enhancing Olympia's creative vibe and sense of place as both a benefit to those who already live here, and a way to attract quality employment

opportunities and expand on Olympia's reputation as the unique place in South Puget Sound.

Thank you for considering this addition.

-Jill

Jill Barnes, Executive Director

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<image001.png>

February 26, 2024

City of Olympia Planning Commission
Attn: Mike Reid, Economic Development Director; Joyce Phillips, Staff Liaison
601 4th Ave E
Olympia, WA 98507

Re: Olympia Master Builders comments and suggested edits to “Economy” section of Comprehensive Plan.

Dear Commissioners:

Olympia Master Builders (OMB) represents over five hundred members who seek to provide affordable housing for all economic segments of society. It is the intent of this letter to provide some simple suggestions and comments for the “Economy” chapter of the Comprehensive Plan that you will be holding a public hearing for on February 26, 2024. This chapter has peaked our interests because we believe that the economy and housing go together. More specifically, housing affordability can drive economic success. Please accept the following comments and suggested edits.

Overall, the economy chapter appears to meet the character and desired vision of the community. However:

- Language throughout the economy chapter, housing action plan, and overall policy should express a vision that meets the total needs of the current housing crisis.
 - For example, remove language in Introduction section under the point that covers housing and sense of security that mentions economic status and simply say: “Facilitating affordable housing initiatives to alleviate the burden on families and provide them with stable living conditions.” (Also aligned with the definition of “affordable housing” as clarified by the legislature in 2023).
- Change language in section on “Housing Instability” to better mesh with reality.
 - For example, while it is true that homeowners can gain access to equity in their homes, such a step would increase monthly expenses for homeowners as well. If a homeowner were to access said equity to pay off debt (for instance), the burden of that debt does not go away, it is simply shifted to another category. At the same

time, increasing monthly housing expenses and making them a greater percentage of overall debt. This is not sound economic policy, and the city should not indicate that it would be.

- Rising rents are directly impacted by rising costs on homeowners, and language in this section should indicate this connection and not that they are disconnected.
- The language around high-density housing in the Downtown corridor is good language and should likely indicate the same principles and goals for other planned community hubs like the Capitol Mall Triangle.
- The language around improving predictability in the development review process is good language as well, and policy formulated on these principles will help address housing affordability moving forward.

Overall, this chapter recognizes the challenges to employment growth, upward mobility, and the cost of generally doing business in our community. It identifies pitfalls in revenue and increases in expenses and proposes addressing these issues. However, we at OMB and our members are concerned that the language around housing and the challenges that both renters and homeowners share, as well as the ideas around “affordable” housing are detached from the stated goals of the state legislature and the direction issued by the Department of Commerce. In 2023, the State legislature defined “affordable” housing as not exceeding 35% of monthly household income. They did not relegate the term to solely addressing “low-income” issues, as all types of housing are needed to address the current crisis. To add, the Department of Commerce has created a directive for local housing need and a useful tool to calculate that need at every income level, known as the “Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT)”. We only ask that you review our recommendations and include language in and around at least the housing issues that is more generally inclusive and equitable to all our community members, and that recognizes the breadth and scope of the housing crisis at every economic level of society.

For further information or questions please contact our Government Affairs Director, Jessie Simmons, at ga@omb.org or (360)754-0912 ext. 102.

Sincerely,



Jessie Simmons
Government Affairs Director
Olympia Master Builders