

## Drinking Water on Tap

Olympians recognize that the water they use comes from groundwater supplies that need to remain plentiful and unpolluted by our “above-ground” activities. The City’s Drinking Water Utility aims not only to preserve the supply of this resource, but to keep it clean – both for us and for the plants, fish and wildlife that also depend on it.



A young Olympian drinks from a water fountain at Percival Landing.

Every day, the City of Olympia delivers high-quality drinking water to nearly 67,000 people through about 21,000 connections. This water consistently meets 100% of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for safe drinking water, and it is pumped to our homes at a fraction of the cost some will pay for bottled water.

The City also provides transmission and distribution of Class A Reclaimed water to customers in a limited area of downtown Olympia and provides the community with a free untreated source of water in downtown Olympia known as Olympia’s Artesian Well.

Olympia’s Drinking Water Utility operates under a permit granted by the Washington State Department of Health’s Office of Drinking Water. Information about the City’s Drinking Water Utility can be found in [Olympia’s Water System Plan](#).

In the next 20 years, the Utility will face these challenges and issues:

- **Changing water quality regulations.** The Utility must be ready to respond to any changes in water quality regulations and treatment requirements imposed by state and federal agencies.
- **Keeping pace with development.** The rate of growth will determine how new water sources are developed and when they come on line.
- **Protecting groundwater from contamination.** Risks to groundwater will increase as the population increases, and will require the City to regularly evaluate, monitor, and take action to control sources of pollution. The City’s Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual – a requirement of the Clean Water Act – and Critical Areas Ordinance help to protect groundwater from contamination.

## Goals and Policies

### **GU5 Adequate supplies of clean drinking water are available for current and future generations and instream flows and aquifer capacity are protected.**

**PU5.1** Reserve water supply rights for at least 50 years in advance of need, so that supplies can be protected from contamination

**PU5.2** Develop and maintain multiple, geographically-dispersed sources of water supply to increase the reliability of the system.

**PU5.3** Monitor water levels in aquifers and maintain numerical groundwater models.

**PU5.4** Coordinate with Lacey, Tumwater, Thurston County, Public Utility District #1 and tribal interests to assure adequate water supplies throughout the City’s Water Service Area, following the provisions of the [Growth Management Act](#), Public Water System Coordination Act, and the Municipal Water Law.

**PU5.5** When practical, develop regionally consistent Critical Areas Ordinance regulations, Drainage Manual requirements, and other policies to ensure we are protecting groundwater quantity and quality across jurisdictional boundaries.

### **GU6 Groundwater in the City’s Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Areas is protected from contamination so that it does not require additional treatment.**

**PU6.1** Monitor groundwater quality to detect contamination, evaluate pollution reduction efforts, and to understand risks to groundwater.

**PU6.2** Implement programs to change behaviors that threaten groundwater quality, and that raise awareness about aquifers and the need for groundwater protection. Such programs should be designed to be inclusive, accessible and representative of the entire community and to provide opportunities for cross-utility messaging.

**PU6.3** Prevent groundwater contamination in Drinking Water Protection Areas by developing and implementing spill prevention and response plans.

**PU6.4** Maintain the City's Critical Areas Ordinance, policies, development review process and program management, to ensure we protect groundwater quality and quantity.

**PU6.5** Maintain a contaminant-source inventory that identifies priority pollutants for each water source within Drinking Water (wellhead) Protection Areas, and update them regularly.

**GU7 The drinking water system is reliable and is operated and maintained so that high quality drinking water is delivered to customers.**

**PU7.1** Maintain and update the [Water System Plan](#), [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#) and [Olympia Municipal Code](#) to ensure drinking water utility facilities meet the requirements of the [Growth Management Act](#), North Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan, Washington Department of Health and Olympia Fire Code.

**PU7.2** Maintain 100 percent compliance with all state and federal requirements, and continually improve our water quality management program.

**PU7.3** Design Olympia's water supply system to achieve the most favorable and practical fire insurance rating, consistent with adopted service levels.

**PU7.4** Continue and improve maintenance management, including preventive maintenance, repairs and replacements consistent with American Water Works Association best management practices.

**PU7.5** Prepare for and respond to emergencies and maintain secure facilities in a manner commensurate to the critical nature of the infrastructure

**PU7.6** Continue to improve operations and maintenance program management, including safety, asset management and meter replacement and in a manner that is consistent with the City's social equity goals.

**PU7.7** Develop and maintain adequate storage, transmission and distribution facilities.

**PU7.8** Require private water purveyors that build new systems within Olympia's water service area to build to Olympia's standards so the systems can be integrated in the future.

**PU7.9** Allow telecommunications companies to locate on Drinking Water Utility owned property, including on storage tanks, only when the security of the facility as critical infrastructure is assured.