

Olympia Planning Commission

August 18, 2025

Olympia City Council
PO Box 1967 Olympia
WA 98507-1967

SUBJECT: Olympia 2045 Housing Chapter

Dear Mayor Payne and Councilmembers:

The Planning Commission is pleased to recommend approval with revision of the Housing Chapter of the Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission appreciates the effort and time that City of Olympia Staff have invested in engaging with the Planning Commission. The Commission had briefings on the Chapter on July 15, 2024, and May 9, 2025. The Youth Council reviewed draft chapter at their meeting on May 21, 2025. The Social Justice and Equity Commission also received a briefing on June 23, 2025. A public hearing was conducted on August 4, 2025. Commission deliberations were conducted beginning on August 18, 2025 and completed September 15, 2025.

We support the goals and policies of the Olympia 2045 Housing Chapter and urge continued urgency in developing and executing actions to create more affordable housing in Olympia. Permits issued to build new housing in Olympia continue to lag the projected need for housing units based on Thurston County population predictions, with only an annual average of 330 permits issued compared to projected annual need of 715 housing units (see Table 1 below). A lack of housing threatens to displace people from Olympia with a whole generation of young people struggling to see their future here. This displacement pressure prevents individuals, families, and whole communities from participating and contributing to Olympia. The Planning Commission supports further execution of the Housing Action Plan, along with updating the Housing Action Plan with new ideas and strategies generated during this comprehensive plan update. In particular,

- Reducing barriers and cost of new housing by exploring alternatives for required frontage improvements. These upfront costs can limit and delay new housing. The Olympia Planning commission discussed in brief: latecomer agreements and local improvement districts. Changes in policy should take care not to undermine public safety.

Suggested revision:

- REVISE PH2.2 - Partner with ~~BIPOC-led~~ organizations, especially those organizations led by members of the BIPOC community, to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate affordable homes in areas vulnerable to gentrification.

We understand this update work is being completed in a phased manner, with each chapter being considered individually. We also understand that final adoption will not occur until the entire draft is reviewed for internal consistency as well.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the proposed chapter and provide a recommendation for moving this portion of the periodic update forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Quetin
Chair

Dwelling Units by Type and Issued Date

(as of 8/1/25)

Permit Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Grand Total
ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)			10	6	7	24	17	9	8	81
COMMERCIAL MIXED USE	4	284	119	109	60	61		48		685
DUPLEX		2	2	2	18			6	4	34
MULTI-FAMILY 3-4	15	33	12			4				64
MULTI-FAMILY 5+	27	203	158	122	119	228	134	375		1,366
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	74	33	26	39	111	24	21	29	35	392
TOWNHOUSE	18		3	2	1	3	19	15		61
Grand Total	138	555	330	280	316	344	191	482	47	2,683

Table 1: Building permits issued, annual average of 330 (2017 – 2024). The 2024 housing needs analysis projects that Olympia and its urban growth area will approximately require 14,295 new housing units by 2045 to accommodate population growth (annual average of 715).