

DECEMBER 3, 2024 COUNCIL COMMENTS AND UTILITIES' RESPONSE

June 1, 2025

December 3, 2024 City Council Briefing General Comment 1

Verbal Comment: The City conducted a process to develop pavement preservation requirements for inclusion in its Engineering Development and Design Standards. Including a reference to these requirements should be considered.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The following text has been added into the Council Acceptance June 1, 2025 Draft under consideration for acceptance on June 17, 2025:

Section Coordination with Private Utilities: Most private utilities are regulated at the state level by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), which ensures that customers receive safe and reliable service at reasonable rates. The Commission regulates the rates and charges, services, facilities, and practices of most of Washington's investor-owned gas, electric, and telecommunication utilities. Additionally, Olympia's Engineering Design and Development Standards apply to utility work conducted within city limits. Depending upon the level of disturbance of city roads happening as a result of utility work and the age of pavement that will be disturbed, utilities may be required to replace up to a full lane as a result of a project.

December 3, 2024 City Council Briefing General Comment 2

Verbal Comment: Because our urban environment could make siting renewal energy facilities difficult, including a broad goal to address siting of energy facilities should be considered. Additionally, we should partner with Puget Sound Energy to meet our carbon reduction goals.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. Utilities staff suggests that the discussion of the goal/policies to address this comment should occur as the Climate Chapter is reviewed and discussed. Additional language to address this comment would be appropriate for addition in the following Climate-related goal: Goal 16. Increase the production of local renewable energy. Coordination with the Climate Chapter authors has occurred

December 3, 2024 City Council Briefing General Comment 3

Verbal Comment: The removal of policy PU2.12 (Changes to the municipal utility tax will consider impacts to the City's utilities' ability to deliver service. This includes being evaluated against City-owned utilities' ability to deliver service, including long-range infrastructure renewal and replacement, the City's operating budget needs, and social and equity goals.) should be considered.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. Policy PU2.12 has been deleted from the Council Acceptance Draft June 1, 2025 under consideration for acceptance on June 17, 2025.

December 3, 2024 City Council Briefing General Comment 4

Verbal Comment: Adding back language that addresses zero waste goals from the introduction should be considered.

Utility Response: Staff rewrote the introduction for clarity with a goal to retain the zero-waste vision. The title was changed from "Towards Zero Waste" to *Managing Waste ReSources – Garbage, Recycle, Organics*, to be consistent with other sections in the chapter – and be more descriptive to all the services provided by the utility, and to be consistent with the utility master plan. The introductory text retained emphasis on moving toward zero waste and the depletion of natural resources, while acknowledging the city's municipal hauling

operation and the value it provides. The text that was removed was the more repetitive description of zero waste.

December 3, 2024 City Council Briefing General Comment 5

Verbal Comment: Is it time to mandate commercial and residential recycling thereby stopping voluntary measures? Additionally, if we can ban plastic bags and straws, why not other materials?

Utility Response:

Thank you for the comment. While existing policies could support a move to compulsory recycling and composting, and material bans, the following two new policies have been added into the Council Acceptance Draft June 1, 2025 under consideration for acceptance on June 17, 2025. Additionally, state law will require residential customers to subscribe to and use organics services. Additionally, Waste ReSources is working on a financial study which will include options for ensuring all residential customers have organics service in the future, which could be bundled with garbage/recycle or retained as a separate fee.

PU12.7 Work toward evaluating and implementing mandatory recycling and composting for residential and commercial customers or banning these materials from garbage/landfill.

PU12.8 Consider the use of material bans to address problem materials when education and voluntary measures are not successful.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 1

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Our Vision for the future

- “...voluntary conservation”
 - **Recommend** expanding to include policies, ordinances, and funding grants. I would be careful in basing future needs on voluntary actions alone. Some of the future work will require standards through ordinances, policies, and the changing climate. Voluntarism, moreover, may not be equitable for working class folks who live paycheck to paycheck.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The vision for the chapter is meant to be aspirational, therefore the term “voluntary” has been used. The policies in the Utilities Chapter do not preclude the use of non-voluntary measures in the future. We have used the term, initiatives, to give a broader brush toward non-voluntary measures. New policies PU12.7 and PU12.8 further this vision as well.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 2

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Introduction – Utilities Shape the Future

- “The long-term view will emphasize reducing waste, preventing pollution, engaging the community, and managing our fiscal and environmental resources conservatively.”
 - **Recommend** using GIS to map land-use patterns that create affordability mapping along utility lines, density, and taxes. Ideally this would map out which parcels pay for utility usage and which parcels subsidized other parcels. IE. Urban3 or Gridics mapping.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The Utilities will consider this comment during implementation of the chapter goals and policies.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 3

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

City-Owned Utilities Working Together

- “Over the next 20 years, there will be a growing need for us to manage our utility resources efficiently. Our challenges will include:”
 - **Recommend** adding a section on shifting waste services away from petroleum plastics, expanding services to include e-waste pickup, and providing compost services city-wide, including apartments and businesses.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. These issues are not addressed in the specific section of “City-owned Utilities Working Together” but are considered in a broader context under the Waste ReSources section of the chapter. They are not as detailed and specific but do call out responding to an ever-evolving waste stream, reducing sources of waste, optimizing diversion, as well as adapting to greater population density. New policies PU12.7 and PU12.8 address this issue as well.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 4

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Managing Wastewater Effectively

- “Olympia provides wastewater collection services for 17.5 square miles... eight square miles of urban growth area.... However, many... area still using septic systems.”
 - See recommendation above – using GIS to map land-use patterns...

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The Utilities will consider this comment during implementation of the chapter goals and policies.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 5

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Goals and Policies

- PU8.2 Prohibit new community and individual septic systems within City limits, except when specifically allowed by the Olympia Municipal Code
 - Needs an example of what exceptions would be. Olympia is often seen by the development community as a city that is hard to develop in. If we cannot have an easy-to-understand exception list, development will be harder to develop. **Recommend** a list of exceptions be included here in simple terms.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The policy references the Olympia Municipal Code to allow for flexibility to revise exemptions overtime. Simplistically, Olympia Municipal Code 13.08.090 allows new septic systems on lots that are located further than 200 feet from an existing public sewer line

and that are greater than one acre in size. The one-acre requirement may be reduced to one-third of an acre through an exception process provided the lot is located outside of a high-risk area such as a shellfish protection area. Changes to the exceptions could occur through an amendment of Olympia Municipal Code with no changes to the policy necessary.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 6

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Rainfall, Runoff, and Surface Water

- **Recommended** parking lot reductions should be part of this section. Our overbuilt parking lots often create elevated levels of stress on our drainage systems.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. Utility staff suggests that discussion of whether or not to include policy language to reduce parking lots in the City of Olympia is more appropriate for inclusion in the Land Use Chapter than the Utilities Chapter.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 7

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

- Missing aspects within chapter:
 - Recycling and compost systems to all of Olympia – apartments, businesses, and etc.
 - Improving recycling systems to include products no longer accepted.
 - Bring back glass recycling pick up services.
 - Create city-wide ban on single-use plastics and plastics Olympia does not recycle.
 - Overall moving towards a compost only city, moving away from plastics and landfill waste.
 - Strategy for e-waste, large items, and other items that are gaps in our system.

Utility Response: Thank you for the comment. The broader goals and policies contained in the Utilities chapter could support the above list of items. They could also be supported through the Waste ReSources Management Plan goals and strategies. Some items listed come with significant challenges and barriers, some of which are being addressed through statewide efforts, primarily through legislation. Examples include the Recycling Reform Act which establishes a producer responsibility program for paper and plastic packaging. As this new law moves to implementation over the next few years, it is expected to increase the number of accepted items. It could result in a companion deposit return system that would address beverage containers including glass. The city is also working to implement the organics management law.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 8

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Planning Commission

- **Recommend** adding new policy: “PU10.13 Use green stormwater infrastructure to facilitate the city’s climate goals.”
- “Eliminate PU13.2 Manage waste as locally as possible.”
 - Was there a reason given for the removal?

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. The Planning Commission was concerned the local option may not always be the most cost effective or might lead to materials not being recycled to the best and highest use, e.g., a local option might down-cycle a material, whereas another option would result in a more circular recycling approach. Managing waste locally is generally considered the best practice but is not always possible due to the evolution of large regional landfills, recycle sorting facilities and composting facilities. Please note that both of the above listed Planning Commission recommendations have been included in the Council Acceptance Draft June 1, 2025 under consideration for acceptance on June 17, 2025.

Councilmember Robert Vanderpool Written Comment 9

Councilmember Vanderpool Comment:

Social Justice & Equity Commission

- **Recommend** moving forward with most of the letter recommendations. *However*, I am concerned that the rate discount needs to be specific to affordable housing projects and not just used by any property owner.

Utility Response: Thank you for your comment. No changes to the Utilities Chapter have been made to address the comments made by the Social Justice and Equity Commission, instead the Utilities will consider the comments as implementation occurs. This additional comment will be considered at that time as well.