

## **ADVISORY BOARDS COMMENTS AND UTILITIES' RESPONSES**

**June 1, 2025**

### **Utility Advisory Committee**

A subcommittee of the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) served as the stakeholder group for the update of the Utilities Chapter. The subcommittee met with Drinking Water, Storm and Surface Water and Wastewater utility staff five times in 2023 to review and provide feedback on staff recommended updates to the Utilities Chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Recommended updates to the Utilities Chapter's goals and policies discussed by the subcommittee, and approved by the full UAC, include:

- Ensuring master plans consider up-to-date growth and development projections during the update process, including growth projections due to climate migration as well as ensuring master plans consider environmental constraints, including risks from climate change, during update cycles.
- Acknowledging the utilities' new Helping Neighbor's Charitable Fund Program and suggesting it should be considered for expansion to help meet the City's social equity goals.
- Ensuring master plans and utility rates consider the City's climate and social equity goals.
- Adding that new developments should be required to provide space for solid waste collection, in addition to constructing drinking water, wastewater and stormwater utilities, in ways that meet community development goals of the Plan.
- Adding a new policy acknowledging grant funding opportunities should be pursued to enhance utility services.
- Clarifying that a portion of utility revenue each year should be provided for outreach and engagement programs that are inclusive, accessible and representative of the entire community.
- Supporting securing Drinking Water Utility facilities in a manner commensurate to the critical nature of the infrastructure.
- Allowing telecommunications providers to access Drinking Water Utility sites only when the security of the site can be assured.
- Supporting state legislation that addresses waste reduction and recycling.
- Incorporating material quality and compost into existing Waste ReSources policies.
- Addressing the Waste ReSources Utility's carbon footprint.
- Taking equity into account in the design and operation of the wastewater system.
- Adding policy language to address new Budd Inlet Total Maximum Daily Load (TDML) requirements.
- Adding new introductory language to explain how Olympia's utilities fund expenses.
- Adding a new general financial policy to address the UAC's concerns that increases to the municipal utility tax impacts the utilities' ability to meet operating and capital funding needs and creates a burden on rate payers.
- Adding a new general financial policy to address the importance of long-range financial planning to guide rate, capital projects and operational decisions.

- Revising the Utilities Chapter's vision and values statements to address public comment.
- Adding a goal and policies to address all three components of the Storm and Surface Water Utility's mission (flooding, water quality and habitat).
- Removing language supporting the development of the completed Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan.
- Adding a goal and policies that recognize that meeting the requirements of the Municipal Stormwater Permit is a shared City-wide responsibility.
- Adding a policy to emphasize the use of green stormwater infrastructure to facilitate the City's climate goals (as recommended by the Planning Commission in their letter of recommendation and supported by the UAC in their letter of recommendation).

### **Social Justice and Equity Commission (SJEC), June 24, 2024**

The SJEC made the following general comments during its review of the Utilities Chapter as incorporated into the SJEC's letter of recommendation:

- Waste ReSources should offer a free large item pick-up day, including pick-up and disposal at no cost.
- The City's rate assistance programs should increase equity in several way including by using the United Way's ALICE Index to determine discount eligibility.
- The City should consider reducing the general facility charge (GFC) discount further from 50% to 0%.

Staff Response: The comments provided by the SJEC are related to utility program and outreach efforts rather than Comprehensive Plan goal or policy language. No revisions to the Utilities Chapter were incorporated into the Council Acceptance Draft June 1, 2025 to address the above listed recommendations, instead, the input received from the SJEC will be considered when implementing utility programs and outreach efforts in the future.

### **Planning Commission Comments and Recommendation, June 17, 2024, August 19, 2024 and October 7, 2024**

Several changes to the Utilities Chapter draft dated February 1, 2024 were made to address Planning Commission review prior to the Utilities Chapter Public Hearing, including:

- Minor changes to Waste ReSources text.
- Updated policy PU1.4 to prioritize capital projects that also prioritize infill development.
- Updated policy PU9.1 and PU10.4 to strengthen language addressing stormwater retrofits

Two revisions to the Utilities Chapter Public Hearing Draft were made to address the two changes requested by the Planning Commission (and supported by the Utility Advisory Committee) in its letter of recommendation. The two changes incorporated into the Council Acceptance Draft June 1, 2025, include:

- New policy PU10.3 to emphasize the use of green stormwater infrastructure to facilitate the City's climate goals.

- Elimination of policy PU13.2.

Additional information can be found in the document “Planning Commission Comments and Utilities’ Responses, August 9, 2024”.