



City of Olympia Boards and Commissions Committee Application

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Friday, December 15th at 5:00 PM PST

Advisory committees are a structured way for individual community members to share their opinions and perspectives, study issues, and develop recommendations in a focused small group. Their primary purpose is to provide judicious advice, from a community member's perspective, to the Olympia City Council. Committee activities may include study of critical issues, hearing public testimony, independent research, and reviewing staff reports and recommendations - all of which is intended so that the committee is prepared to discuss, formulate, and forward well-developed, thoughtful recommendations to the City Council in a timely manner. The City of Olympia values participation from all perspectives and life experiences and looks for equity and inclusion in advisory board appointments.

To reduce barriers to community member participation the City offers stipends of \$25 per meeting attended to Advisory Committee members. Those members who certify as low income are eligible to receive stipends of \$50 per meeting attended. Advisory Committee members may waive the stipend upon request.

The Olympia City Council's Community Livability and Public Safety Committee recommends appointments to the full Council. Recommendations are made following review of applications and interviews of qualified candidates.

All of this careful consideration takes time, please be aware that you will not be notified until February of 2024 of any next steps in the process.

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources. Questions? Contact Dawn Carvalho, Executive Services Assistant, 360.753.8065, dcarvalh@ci.olympia.wa.us

If you saved or submitted an application and did not receive a confirmation, please check your spam folder. When filed with the City, your application and attachment documents are public records and may be subject to public release.

Name Williamq Cotter

Email [REDACTED]

Primary Phone Number [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

Some appointments require that applicants reside within Olympia city limits. Even though your mailing address may be Olympia, you may reside in the County or another jurisdiction. Are you a resident of the City of Olympia?

Select your residential area (Olympia residency is not required; however, it is a primary consideration.)

Which Boards and Commissions would you like to apply for?

If you applied for Multiple Boards and/or Commissions, please rank them in order of interest below:

1. Use of Force Board
2. Design Review Board
3. Heritage Commission

Interests & Experiences

Please keep answers concise and informative. You are introducing yourself to the Olympia City Council and sharing with them why you are interested in being considered for appointment. You may attach a resume.

Attach a Resume



Cotter_CityOfOlympia.pdf

Briefly describe why you wish to serve on this/these Advisory Committee(s).

Fundamentally, I'm interested in serving my community in an effort to improve life in the city of Olympia. As a professional researcher, whose has conducted research and investigations as part of my professional life for over 12 years, I feel that I can be of particular service to the Use of Force Events Board given that its activities interface directly with research and investigative processes. Additionally, as specifically a User Experience Researcher in my current role at Meta, design is a central part of my job. Serving on the Design Review Board would allow me to apply my skills and passion for design in a way that would allow me to improve Olympia. Finally, as a trained anthropologist whose academic research focused in part on heritage districts in the Middle East, serving on the Heritage Commission would allow me to work to actively preserve Olympia's heritage while raising awareness of the importance of heritage preservation within the community.

Describe your experience, qualifications, and/or skills which would benefit the advisory committee(s) you are applying to.

I have over 12 years of professional experience as a researcher, who is an expert in conducting research and investigations into a range of different topical areas. I have used those skills as a researcher in a range of contexts, including academia, civil service, and industry. I am an expert in designing, executing, and evaluating research/investigative practices. This makes me particularly well-suited to serve on the Use of Force Events Board. Additionally, in my current role I am part of the design team for one of the largest technology companies in the world, leading design research for a range of different product areas. I have also conducted research on urban development & change in the Middle East. Both of these experiences would directly benefit then the Design Review Board. Also, my PhD training in Anthropology and prior research focus on heritage districts in the Middle East would benefit the Heritage Commission. Finally, my academic and professional background has provided me with important foundational training in critical thinking, analysis, and writing which I believe would be a benefit to all three boards to which I am applying.

Share the ways you've been involved or have volunteered in the community.

I am an active member of the Olympia arts/ceramics community, regularly participating in events and classes at Arbutus Folk School in Downtown Olympia. I also look forward to contributing to volunteer events with the Washington Trail Association in the coming year. Additionally, while previously living in Denton, Texas I was a regular volunteer with the City of Denton, leading large-scale community trash clean-up across the city, as well as building and maintaining the city's network of community mountain biking trails.

List your educational and/or professional background and area of study.

Professional:

Current - User Experience Researcher, Meta Inc.
Past - Senior Policy Analyst, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Educational:

Joint PhD in Anthropology & Linguistics - University of Arizona (2020)

Masters in Linguistics - University of Arizona (2018)

Masters in Arabic Linguistics - University of Essex (2013)

Bachelors of Middle Eastern Studies (2012)

Appointment to an advisory committee will require your attendance at evening meetings, and undertake other work (reading, meeting preparation etc.). How many hours per month are you willing to commit as a volunteer?

40 hours per month, or as many as needed to fulfill the duties of the committee

Question Applies to the Design Review Board: Describe your experience, training, or education in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, or development (residential, commercial, or other).

I have academic training in urban anthropology, and completed a PhD dissertation focusing on economic development initiatives, urban design, and large-scale urban change in the Middle East (specifically Amman, Jordan). This research focused in large-part on real estate development in Amman and its impact on broader social/community life in the city.

Question Applies to the Design Review Board: What do you consider influences on building and/or site design?

Primary influences on building/site design, to me, are the community in which a project is proposed to be built, the environment of the site, its geography, and the potential impacts of different design choices on those areas.

Question Applies to the Design Review Board: What does good design mean to you?

To me, good design means its accessible, intuitive, meets the needs of the people who use whatever is being designed, and does so in a way that doesn't implicitly/explicitly exclude anyone from its use.

Question Applies to the Design Review Board: Describe your experience reading site plans and design drawings.

While a Senior Policy Analyst at the Federal Emergency Management Agency I was regularly responsible for reviewing site reports, designs, and drawings when assessing applications for federal disaster relief funding. This involved assessing damages to structures, roadways, and drainage areas based on information available in building plans, reports, and photographs.

Question Applies to the Heritage Commission: Why do you think Olympia's historic places are important?

I feel that Olympia's historic places are important because they're a window into how this city came to be the wonderful place that it is. They provide a foundation for the city that we know today, and the preservation and endurance of those historic places gives Olympia its character, while also contributing to the overall narrative and life of the city. Preserving those spaces is critical to creating/maintaining the city's identity as it continues to evolve in the future.

Question Applies to the Heritage Commission: What is your experience working with the history or preservation of build or cultural heritage?

I have a PhD in Anthropology, and part of my academic research focused on urban development and change in a heritage district in the Middle East. Specifically Amman, the capital of Jordan. As part of that research, I worked with architects and city officials to understand the city's heritage preservation plans, and how those plans were impacted by real estate development initiatives taking place throughout the city.

If you are not appointed to a Board or Commission at this time:

Do you wish to be considered for appointment to another Board or Commission?

Yes

Do you wish to be considered for future appointment to your preferred Board or Commission?

Yes

If you wish to be considered for another Board or Commission, please identify others you would be interested on being considered for in order of interest:

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Thank you for your interest in serving on a City of Olympia Advisory Committee!

Please hit the "submit" button below when you have completed your application .

William M. Cotter

Skills, Hard

- Research Analysis & Design
- Behavioral Data Analysis
- Anthropological Methods
- Interviewing
- Technical Writing
- Universal Design

Skills, Soft

- Expert at designing and executing in-depth research across a range of domains
- Skilled at synthesizing research findings into actionable recommendations and reports
- Ensuring transparent research design and practice that facilitates replicability in findings
- Understanding and applying the right research methods and best practices for a given project
- Collaborating with diverse stakeholder audiences
- Works well in ambiguous, high-priority areas with changing priorities and under tight deadlines
- Excellent interpersonal, oral, written, and organizational skills

Areas of Expertise

- Research Ethics
- Data Privacy/Confidentiality
- Urban & Economic Change
- Responsible Artificial Intelligence
- Artificial Intelligence Transparency
- Artificial Intelligence Ethics

Employment History

User Experience Researcher, Meta Inc., November 2021 – Present

- Design and execute qualitative and quantitative research focused on consumer/advertiser trust & value in Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI ethics, and responsible AI development
- Work as part of a cross-functional team focused on the company's proactive AI efforts around the upcoming United States presidential election
- Lead strategic and tactical research that cuts across multiple product areas simultaneously
- Design research initiatives to address product needs
- Identify strategic opportunities to use research to address key company priorities
- Develop expertise in responsible AI, AI ethics, and transparency
- Apply varied research methods, including interviews, contextual inquiry, ethnography, usability testing, diary studies, and statistical analysis
- Synthesize findings into actionable recommendations to guide product decision-making
- Create clear, compelling deliverables that are accessible to varied audiences
- Designed and led research for six separate product launches, working with product teams from initial conception to go-to-market launch; developed the research approach for the company's AI for Political Ads policy around the upcoming US elections

Senior Policy Analyst, Federal Emergency Management Agency, August 2020 – November 2021

- Conducted qualitative research related to US Federal disaster recovery, analyzing field team investigative reports and assessments
- Reviewed site drawings, schematics, and plans to identify areas of disaster damage
- Served as a research lead, developed broader agency research processes which strengthened overall agency research quality

- Synthesized research into actionable recommendations for leadership & policy stakeholders
- Conducted over 250 analyses, which led to the allocation of over \$25 millions dollars in federal funding to cities, municipalities, and tribes across the United States
- Collaborated extensively with other researchers and cross-functional agency staff

Doctoral Candidate, University of Arizona, August 2018 – November 2020

- Conducted 12 months of mixed-methods research in Amman, Jordan, on economic development and its impact on urban design and change
- Developed and led an end-to-end, long-term project for over 12 months
- Secured over \$100,000 in competitive research funding for the project
- Recruited participants while providing training and mentorship to research assistants
- Weighed the strengths of, and chose the best research method to address project goals
- Used varied methods, such as statistical analysis, ethnography, and interviews
- Developed data-driven analyses and deliverables based on iterative phases of research
- Maintained excellent relationships with researchers, communities, and institutional officials
- Successfully advocated research findings to diverse stakeholder audiences, through two international conference presentations, popular publications, and with research partners

Doctoral Candidate, University of Arizona, January 2015 – August 2018

- Conducted 12 months of qualitative research on coffee marketing, branding, and design through the lens of language
- Leveraged iterative phases of pilot research to develop a long-term research plan
- Assessed different research methods, selecting the right one to address different project phases
- Employed varied methods to deliver against goals, including interviews and focus groups
- Worked on a collaborative team to develop data-driven analyses of research insights
- Socialized research with diverse stakeholder audiences through two academic publications and three international conference presentations
- Consulted with coffee industry professionals to address user product needs

Education

Joint Ph.D. Anthropology & Linguistics, University of Arizona, 2020

M.A. Linguistics, University of Arizona, 2018

M.A. Sociolinguistics of the Arab World, University of Essex, 2013

B.I.S. Middle Eastern Studies, Georgia State University, 2012

Major Awards

U.S. Student Fulbright Research Grant, *U.S. Department of State*, 2018 – 2019

Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, *National Science Foundation*, 2018 – 2019

Publications, Funding, and Teaching

*Full list of scholarly publications and competitive funding available upon request