



# Meeting Agenda

## Youth Council

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8244

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**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**

**3:30 PM**

**City Hall, Room 207**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**1.A ROLL CALL**

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3.A** [26-0288](#) Approval of March 18, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

**3.B** [26-0387](#) Approval of April 15, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**5.A** [26-0359](#) Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund Briefing

**5.B** [26-0388](#) Approval of Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible

Attachments: [Draft Recommendations](#)

**6. REPORTS**

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Accommodations**

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City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E.  
Olympia, WA 98501  
360-753-8244

## Youth Council

### Approval of March 18, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

**Agenda Date:** 4/15/2026  
**Agenda Item Number:** 3.A  
**File Number:**26-0288

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**Type:** minutes **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

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**Title**

Approval of March 18, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes



# Meeting Minutes - Draft

## Youth Council

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8244

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**Wednesday, March 18, 2026**

**3:30 PM**

**Room 207**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

**1.A ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 13 - Co-Chair Nolan O'Connell, Secretary Sophia Park, Councilmember Eman Haroon, Councilmember Gretchen Hillier, Vice Chair Varshana Horback, Councilmember Pamela Palmerson, Councilmember Gian Pama, Treasurer Addy Pitman, Vice Chair Kaelyn Velazquez, Councilmember Alania Wettstein, Councilmember Amelia Eslinger, Councilmember Amelia Leham and Councilmember Zian Zaho

**Excused:** 7 - Councilmember Eric Zhang, Councilmember Demorie Joseph, Vice Chair Shruthi Lingam-Nattamai, Councilmember Elizabeth Mendoza, Councilmember Toby Wilson, Councilmember Anika Prabakar and Co-Chair Donovan Jojola

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**3.A** [26-0225](#) Approval of February 18, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**

**CHECK IN ACTIVITY**

**6. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**6.A** [26-0223](#) Olympia Sanctuary City Status and Olympia Police Department Briefing

Police Chief Shelby Parker and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator Keli Drake briefed the Youth Council on Sanctuary City policies and how the Olympia Police Department supports those policies.

Youth Councilmembers asked clarifying questions.

**The information was received.**

- 6.B**     [26-0224](#)     Receive an Update and Discuss Concepts Regarding Intercity Transit Public Service Announcement Project

Digital Engagement Manager Josh Linn and Video Specialist Zhuolin Hong shared concepts related to a Public Service Announcement regarding riding the bus. Youth Councilmembers shared feedback and ideas related to the concepts.

**The discussion was completed.**

## **7.     REPORTS**

Staff Liaison Susan Grisham shared an update on Youth Summit Planning.

## **9.     ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.



City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E.  
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360-753-8244

## Youth Council

### Approval of April 15, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

**Agenda Date:** 5/20/2026  
**Agenda Item Number:** 3.B  
**File Number:**26-0387

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**Type:** minutes **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

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**Title**

Approval of April 15, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes



# Meeting Minutes - Draft

## Youth Council

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8244

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**Wednesday, April 15, 2026**

**3:30 PM**

**Room 207**

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

#### 1.A ROLL CALL

**Present:** 9 - Co-Chair Donovan Jojola, Treasurer Addy Pitman, Vice Chair Varshana Horback, Vice Chair Kaelyn Velazquez, Councilmember Gretchen Hillier, Councilmember Alania Wettstein, Councilmember Amelia Eslinger, Councilmember Amelia Leham and Councilmember Zian Zaho

**Excused:** 11 - Co-Chair Nolan O'Connell, Secretary Sophia Park, Vice Chair Shruthi Lingam-Nattamai, Councilmember Eric Zhang, Councilmember Eman Haroon, Councilmember Demorie Joseph, Councilmember Elizabeth Mendoza, Councilmember Pamela Palmerson, Councilmember Gian Pama, Councilmember Toby Wilson and Councilmember Anika Prabakar

### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The approval of the agenda was postpone due to lack of quorum.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.A [26-0288](#) Approval of March 18, 2026 Youth Council Meeting Minutes

The approval of the minutes was postponed.

### 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 6. BUSINESS ITEMS

6.A [26-0289](#) Public Policy and Youth Engagement Discussion

The Youth Council discussed how public policy information is shared with youth and identified ways to make it more accessible, engaging, and relevant. Members shared barriers to understanding public policy, preferred communication methods, and recommendations to improve youth engagement and outreach.

**The discussion was completed.**

**7. REPORTS**

Youth Council Liaison Susan Grisham reported on the upcoming Youth Council Summit and the PSA related to Intercity Transit.

**8. OTHER TOPICS**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

**Accommodations**



## Youth Council

### Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund Briefing

**Agenda Date:** 5/20/2026  
**Agenda Item Number:** 5.A  
**File Number:**26-0359

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**Type:** discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

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#### **Title**

Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund Briefing

#### **Recommended Action**

Receive a briefing on the Youth Climate Action Fund grant.

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to receive a briefing on Youth Climate Action Fund grant.

#### **Staff Contact:**

Natalie Weiss, Climate Resilience Coordinator, (360) 570-5828

#### **Presenter(s):**

Natalie Weiss, Climate Resilience Coordinator

#### **Background and Analysis:**

The Climate Programs team met with the Youth Council last year to inform the Comprehensive Plan's Climate Chapter. During the meeting, the Youth Council members noted their top priorities for climate action were making climate solutions more accessible, encouraging people to use public transportation, and working in jobs that align with their values. The members expressed that it is difficult to contribute to climate solutions with limited financial resources.

Based on this, we applied and received a Bloomberg Youth Climate Action Fund grant, a \$50,000 grant to support youth-led climate action projects. We will provide 8-10 microgrants, each worth \$5,000, to develop and complete a local climate-related project. We will open the call for applications this summer. The projects will take place during the 2026-27 school year.

Some examples of projects that would be eligible for the grant could be:

- Hosting bike maintenance workshops at school
- Creating a new product from recycled or reused material
- Putting together and distributing emergency cooling kits
- Painting a climate-themed mural or hosting a climate-themed art show

There are many ways that the Youth Council can be involved. Members can help with the application process, promote the application call, or apply for a project themselves. During the briefing, we will discuss the grant structure, different ways Youth Council members can contribute, and brainstorm ways to get the word out about the grant.

**Climate Analysis:**

The proposed projects presented in the briefing support the City’s climate goals and policies by implementing Comprehensive Plan Climate Policy PC3.1, focused on engaging youth and supporting youth-led climate solutions. Olympia’s youth have been a motivating force for climate action in our community and will be the city’s next leaders. Their leadership, voice, and ideas for solving the climate crisis are critical for success.

**Equity Analysis:**

Climate change affects everyone. However, some people and communities in Olympia (sometimes referred to as frontline communities) will experience greater impacts due to their age, race, gender, health, where they live, or what they do for work. Youth will experience disproportionate impacts from climate change throughout their lives and children are more at risk during extreme weather events.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Olympia’s youth have shown continued investment in climate action within the community. Dating back to the Youth Climate Inheritance Resolution in 2019, Olympia’s youth have been actively engaged and participated in progressing climate action.

**Options:**

1. Receive a briefing on Youth Climate Action Fund grant.
2. Do not receive a briefing on Youth Climate Action Fund grant.
3. Take other action.

**Attachments:**

None



## Youth Council

### Approval of Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible

**Agenda Date:** 5/20/2026  
**Agenda Item Number:** 5.B  
**File Number:**26-0388

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**Type:** decision **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

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#### **Title**

Approval of Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible

#### **Recommended Action**

Move to approve Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible

#### **Report**

##### **Issue:**

Whether to approve Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible.

#### **Staff Contact:**

Susan Grisham, Youth Council Liaison, 360.753.8441

#### **Presenter(s):**

Susan Grisham, Youth Council Liaison

#### **Background and Analysis:**

At the April 15, 2025 Youth Council meeting, Youth Councilmembers discussed what would make it easier for youth to understand and engage with public policy. This conversation was requested by the Youth Council because youth care about local issues but feel disconnected from how information is communicated.

Youth Council members identified several barriers that make it difficult for youth to participate in local government processes, including the use of technical language, limited awareness of opportunities for engagement, and communication methods that do not effectively reach younger audiences. Members also discussed the importance of creating more accessible, transparent, and youth-friendly ways to share information related to City decisions, policies, and community issues.

Based on this discussion, staff used their feedback to develop recommendations focused on improving accessibility, increasing outreach to youth, and strengthening opportunities for civic engagement. Approval of these recommendations would allow them to be forwarded to City leadership for consideration.

#### **Climate Analysis:**

The proposed recommendations are not anticipated to have a direct impact on the City's climate goals. Increased public engagement and improved communication strategies may support broader community participation in future climate-related initiatives and decision-making processes.

**Equity Analysis:**

The recommendations support the City's equity goals by seeking to improve access to public information and civic participation opportunities for youth and other community members who may face barriers to engagement. Enhancing accessibility and communication methods may help ensure a broader range of perspectives are included in local decision-making processes.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

Youth Council members expressed interest in improving transparency and making local government processes easier for youth and community members to understand. Members noted that youth are interested in community issues but often do not know how to access information or participate in discussions and decision-making opportunities.

**Financial Impact:**

There is no immediate financial impact associated with approval of the recommendations. Future implementation of specific communication or outreach strategies may require staff time and/or additional resources.

**Options:**

1. Approve the Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible.
2. Approve the recommendations with modifications.
3. Do not approve the recommendations.

**Attachments:**

Draft Recommendations



**DRAFT**

**TO:** Olympia City Council  
**FROM:** Olympia Youth Council  
**SUBJECT:** Youth Recommendations for Making Public Policy More Accessible

At the April 15 Youth Council meeting, Youth Council members discussed how the City shares information about public policy and what would make it easier for youth to understand and engage with. This conversation was requested by the Youth Council because youth care about local issues but feel disconnected from how information is communicated.

Youth want to be involved in public policy, but a lot of City communication feels too complicated, too long, or disconnected from everyday life. When information is easier to understand, relevant, and shared in places youth already use, engagement becomes much more likely.

This memo highlights the main ideas and recommendations that came out of that discussion.

## Recommendations

### 1. Start with the Main Point

- Lead with a simple explanation of what the policy means and why it matters
- Include short summaries before detailed information
- Avoid overly formal language, jargon, and legal terms when possible

### 2. Make Information Easier to Read

- Use shorter sentences, bullet points, and clear headings
- Break up large blocks of text
- Create simplified or annotated versions of policies
- Offer printable versions for schools, events, or group discussions

### 3. Share Information Where Youth Already Are

- Use platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and short-form video
- Create a “Policy Simplified” series with quick explanations
- Use visuals, graphics, and short summaries instead of long documents alone
- Maintain one easy-to-find online hub with clear policy updates

### 4. Make Communication More Relatable

- Use language that feels conversational and approachable
- Clearly identify trusted sources and factual information
- Focus not only on problems, but also on solutions and outcomes
- Increase opportunities for in-person conversations and community engagement

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### **5. Connect Policies to Real Life**

- Communication should clearly answer:
  - Why does this matter?
  - How does this affect me or my community?
- Using real examples and local context makes policies feel more relevant and understandable.

### **6. Include Clear Ways to Get Involved**

- Add a “What You Can Do” section to communications
- Offer simple next steps for participation
- Provide multiple ways to engage, such as learning more, attending events, sharing information, or giving feedback

### **7. Reduce Barriers to Engagement**

- Keep information short, clear, and easy to navigate
- Use layered communication: quick summaries with optional detailed information
- Improve accessibility through:
  - Multiple languages
  - Different formats like video, text, and print

### **8. Center Youth Voice**

- Involve youth in creating and reviewing communication materials
- Use youth perspectives and youth-led messaging
- Regularly ask for feedback from young people about what is working and what is not

Youth engagement improves when communication is clear, relevant, and accessible. Young people want to understand what is happening in their community and how decisions affect them, but information needs to meet them where they are. Making public policy communication more youth-friendly will help strengthen trust, participation, and community involvement.

The Olympia Youth Council looks forward to continuing to work with the City Council and staff to make public policy communication more accessible, relevant, and engaging for youth in our community.