

## **Timeline of Council action and Notable Events related to Renter Protections work**

### **2018**

**June:** General Government Committee received a report on options to protect vulnerable renters along with recommendations from the 2017 Assessment of Fair Housing Report, including longer notice for rent increases over certain amounts, longer notice to vacate, required language in vacate notices, rental licensing and inspection, creation of a fair housing information hub and partnership to increase education about fair housing laws.

### **2019**

**May:** Council approved a relocation assistance fund for tenants of the Angelus Apartments.

**July:** Land Use & Environment Committee discussed nearly 20 actions that Tumwater and other cities had been considering in order to add renter protections to Olympia Municipal Code.

**September:** General Government Committee considered relocation assistance program models.

**October:** Tenant rally at City Council

Washington Community Action Network and local tenants rallied outside City Hall and spoke to Council about renter protections. They also proposed renter protections for Olympia that include:

- Limits to security deposits and other fees
- Requiring that deposits and last month's rent can be paid over specific installments
- Limits pet deposits to 25 percent of rent, allows them to be paid in three installments
- Creates penalties for landlords that do not comply with the new code
- Prohibits specific retaliation against tenants

**October:** Land Use & Environment Committee discussed actions that Tumwater, Lacey, Thurston County and Olympia identified to address tenant protections and prioritized a set of actions to explore further.

**November:** Council study session on renter protections recently considered at Olympia City Council committees, renter protections adopted in other cities, and protections that tenant advocates brought to Council.

### **2020**

**March:** Community meeting with renters and landlords (approximately 50 attendees) to learn more about community members' experiences with rental housing, challenges, and input about what the City could do to address those challenges.

**April:** Land Use & Environment Committee meeting reviewed changes to state landlord-tenant laws enacted during the legislative session, reviewed COVID-19 protections at the state and federal level.

**May:** Land Use & Environment Committee meeting considered draft Just Cause eviction code amendment to prohibit evictions without good cause (this was enacted by State Legislature in 2021).

**July:** update to Land Use & Environment Committee on joint discussions with Tumwater, Lacey, Thurston County and Olympia regarding potential tenant protections, in consideration with changes at the state level.

**September:** Land Use & Environment Committee discussed an emergency ordinance related to nonpayment of rent due to hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**October:** Council enacted an ordinance that established temporary protections for tenants who had fallen behind in rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to the statewide eviction moratorium signed by Governor Inslee, but extending the timeframe of protections.

## **2021**

**May:** Land Use & Environment Committee reviewed changes to state landlord-tenant law recently enacted, list of renter protections recently adopted in peer cities, and reviewed plan for consultant contract to conduct public engagement.

**July:** City signed contract with consultant Jason Robertson to create and implement public engagement plan.

**December:** Land Use & Environment Committee received briefing from staff and consultant on public engagement plan for focus groups and surveys, and received briefing on themes from initial set of 1-on-1 stakeholder interviews with tenant advocates, nonprofit organizations, property management companies, small landlords, and peer cities.

## **2022**

**April:** Land Use & Environment Committee reviewed survey and focus group feedback gathered in February and March. Three community surveys were posted on the Engage Olympia webpage: one for renters, one for renter advocates/interested third parties, and one for landlords. Four focus groups were held to engage renters, renter advocates, and landlords (one landlord focus group was specifically focused on “mom and pop” landlords). LUEC considered input provided and directed staff to bring back peer city policies that address issues they prioritized: longer rent increase notice requirements and limiting move-in costs. LUEC also directed staff to pursue a rental housing registry program and provide options at a future meeting. LUEC directed staff to do additional research regarding tenant screening policies, loopholes or unintended consequences in statewide Just Cause eviction protections, and tenant relocation assistance.

**May:** Land Use & Environment Committee reviewed peer city policies addressing limits to move-in costs and longer rent increase notice requirements and directed staff to bring an ordinance to Council.

**August:** Council passed an ordinance that limits move-in fees and extends notice requirements for rent increases over 5% and 10% or more.

**November:** Land Use & Environment Committee received briefing on staff research regarding a rental registry program with findings from peer city policy analysis and peer city interviews, as well as information from internal stakeholders at the City.

## **2023**

**June:** Land Use & Environment Committee received staff briefing on proposed rental registry program scope.

**August:** Council study session on proposed rental registry program scope and budget, review of potential policies to consider relocation assistance policies, and limits to fees.

**August:** Council passes amended ordinance to align Rental Housing Code with updates to state landlord-tenant law.

**November:** Council passed ordinance to create rental registry, business licensing and inspection requirements for rental properties. Additional tenant protections included: authorization of City to investigate and enforce the Rental Housing Code with penalties for violations, prohibition on retaliation against a tenant for asserting their rights, and prohibition on rent increases if a unit needs repairs to make it habitable, if the unit does not pass inspection, or the unit does not complete an inspection, as required.

## **2024**

**January:** Land Use & Environment Committee received briefing on tenant relocation assistance policies, limits to fees, required language in rent increase notices, tenant ability to break lease early upon a qualifying rent increase, and tenant right to install cooling devices in their unit.

**March:** Rental registry goes into effect; City begins enforcing Rental Housing Code.

**March:** Council holds public hearing on proposed tenant relocation assistance, limits to fees, right to install cooling devices, required language in rent increase notices, tenant ability to break lease early upon a qualifying rent increase, as well as gathering information about tenant screening policies. Local tenant advocacy group Olympia for All brings supporters who testify in support of proposed Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance measures.

**April:** Council passes ordinance to require a landlord offers tenant relocation assistance when rent is increased by 7% or more over a 12-month period (Economic Displacement Relocation Assistance), when a unit is condemned (City may provide funds and seek repayment from landlord if they fail to pay within 7 days), or when a unit will be demolished, substantially rehabilitated, or the use changes (tenant must earn below 50% AMI and cost is equally shared between City and landlord). Ordinance also limits fees that may be charged by a landlord, creates required language in rent increase notices, allows a tenant to break their lease early upon a qualifying rent increase, and provides tenants the right to install cooling devices in their units. Ordinance also provides exemption from the rental registry, business license, and

inspection requirements to property owners renting to immediate family members. Council directs staff to explore similar exemption for property owners with a valid rent to own agreement with their tenant.

**April:** Council and staff were contacted by local manufactured homeowners who rent lot space in manufactured home communities for clarification on whether the most recently adopted Olympia tenant protections applied to their situation.

**September:** LUEC members and staff hold community meeting with manufactured home community residents to learn more about their challenges and share information.

**November:** Land Use & Environment Committee receives briefing on income to rent ratios in tenant screening, manufactured home policies, and rent to own exemption considerations.

## **2025**

**January:** Inspection requirements begin for downtown Olympia rental properties.

**February:** Second community meeting for manufactured homeowners hosted by City to gauge support for proposed set of policies.