



Proposed Policy Research Topic

Date of Referral 9/10/2019 Requester Councilmember Cooper, Finance Committee Chair

Description/Problem Statement

The Finance Committee has been exploring a variety of policy issues over the last 18 months related to Olympia's economy, specifically changes to our B & O tax program and minimum wage. The Committee agreed that a first step, before any policy initiatives are developed, is to increase the our understanding of Olympia's economic ecosystem so that any policy initiatives can be better assessed to avoid unintended impacts. The City has some information about employers, wages, gross revenues and more through various sources such as B&O tax collection, business licensing information, and census data. However some of the information is not fully complete due to being aggregated with County level information or may contain other various data gaps.

What is the specific scope of work you would like the contract team to address?

The policy analyst will collect specific data and analyze it to assess Olympia's economic ecosystem. Data will be collected and presented for at least the most recent five year period for which data is available. The policy analyst will present both a current profile of the City and identify recent trends. Data on our residents, businesses, and other employers will be collected. Examples of specific data include: population by gender, ethnicity, and age, education levels, household income, unemployment, number of businesses, non-profits, and other major employers, wages paid by occupation and/or industry, cost-of-living in the City relative to wages, and more.

How is the work connected to a current or upcoming decision before the City Council?

Finance Committee postponed the decision to implement the B & O tax incentives approved last year pending this study as well as a recommendation to implement a mandated minimum wage.

Connection to Comprehensive Plan

Choose all that apply.

- Community, Safety and Health**
Inclusive, respectful, civic participation; a safe & prepared community; health and wellness; adequate food and shelter; a quality education
- Downtown**
Vibrant, attractive urban destination; a safe and welcoming downtown for all; a mix of urban housing options; a variety of businesses; connections to our cultural & historic fabric; engaging arts & entertainment experience
- Economy**
Abundant local products and services; a thriving arts and entertainment industry; sustainable quality infrastructure; a stable thriving economy
- Environment**
Clean water & air; a daily connection to nature; preserved quality natural areas; a toxin-free community; a waste free culture
- Neighborhoods**
Distinctive places & gathering spaces; nearby goods & services; neighborhoods that are engaged in community decision making; safe and welcoming places to live

How will the research support or influence work being done by the State Legislature, other public agency or private entity?

The results of the study will be available to public agencies, non-profits and others. The information will be instrumental in influencing and guiding their work to ensure Olympia residents are economically secure.

How will the research change a policy, practice or priority for the City?

The information from the study will serve as a foundation for a future Economic Development Strategy for the City. It will also inform specific strategies and/or policies the City can pursue to build a resilient economy for all Olympians.

Is this topic or area within the legal, political or financial ability of the City to determine influence?

Yes

Attachments

Discussed and recommended 8/21/19 Finance Committee Meeting,

Councilmember Signatures

Two Councilmembers must support the request. (Cannot be a committee quorum)


Sponsoring Councilmember

1. 
Councilmember

2. 
Councilmember