



Meeting Agenda

City Council

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Information: 360.753.8441

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, Online and
Via Phone

Study Session

Watch the meeting at www.olytv3.com or
<http://olympiawa.gov/council0721>

IMPORTANT If joining the meeting on a mobile device or tablet, you will be required to
download the Microsoft Teams app

1. ROLL CALL

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

2.A [26-0556](#) Sidewalk Repair Policy Discussion

Attachments: [Link to story map](#)
[Summary of survey results](#)
[Staff response to survey results](#)
[Survey demographics](#)
[Link to Engage Olympia sidewalk repair page](#)
[Map of street tree maintenance area](#)
[Maps of common pedestrian destinations.pdf](#)
[Planning Commission letter](#)

2.B [26-0555](#) Reimagining Public Safety Progress Report Implementation Update

Attachments: [Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations \(Full\)](#)
[Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations \(Summary\)](#)
[Reomaging Public Safety Summary Report](#)
[Reimagining Public Safety Progress Tracker](#)
[Social Justice and Equity Commission Comment Letter](#)

2.C [26-0566](#) City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies Recommendations Discussion

Attachments: [May 2025 Advisory Body Evaluation Presentation to Community](#)
[Livability & Public Safety Committee](#)
[Advisory Body Evaluation Process Briefing Paper](#)
[Advisory Body Survey Results Summary](#)
[Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Summary](#)
[CLPS Annual Meeting with Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Summary](#)

[Social Justice & Equity Commission Letter](#)

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

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City Council

Sidewalk Repair Policy Discussion

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026
Agenda Item Number: 2.A
File Number: 26-0556

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** Study Session

Title

Sidewalk Repair Policy Discussion

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee supported forwarding the staff recommendation to the City Council for discussion.

City Manager Recommendation:

Discuss a long-term policy for sidewalk repair.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss a long-term policy for sidewalk repair.

Staff Contact:

Michelle Swanson, AICP, Principal Planner, Public Works Transportations, 360.753.8575

Presenter(s):

Michelle Swanson, AICP, Principal Planner

Background and Analysis:

The issue

Current City code holds property owners responsible for repairing the sidewalks adjacent to their property, but the City has enforced that code minimally and unevenly.

Over time, the City developed an interim approach of addressing sidewalk repair by prioritizing streets where the City maintains street trees as resources allow (map attached).

Toward a long-term policy

In recent years, the City has been working toward creating a long-term policy for sidewalk repair. As part of that process, staff created a story map and survey to receive feedback from community members about some key points. A link to the story map is attached and includes the high-level results of the survey.

Recent City actions

In 2024, the City established a Sidewalk Repair Program in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), funded at \$500,000 annually through Transportation Benefit District sales tax revenue. The City also completed a comprehensive inventory of sidewalk conditions, identifying nearly 28,000 unique defects requiring repair and providing a better understanding of the overall scope of needed improvements.

As part of the 2026 budget, the City Council funded a new four-person sidewalk repair crew within Public Works Transportation, supported by Transportation Benefit District sales tax revenue. The crew has recently begun work to address sidewalk repair needs throughout the community.

The recommended policy

On May 28, 2026, City staff briefed the Land Use and Environment Committee on a proposed policy approach, which the Committee supported forwarding to the full City Council for discussion. Staff will present the policy and explain it further during the meeting. Its four components include:

- Continuing the CFP sidewalk repair program and prioritizing the repairs near common pedestrian destinations, shown on the attached maps.
- Continuing the City's sidewalk repair crew and focusing its work near common pedestrian destinations.
- Requiring owners of large parcels to fix their sidewalks.
- Developing a program that would require that sidewalks be repaired with the sale of a property.

Staff is recommending this policy approach primarily for two reasons:

- City resources alone will not make the progress on sidewalk repair that the public expects; some role for property owners is needed.
- This approach will ensure that repairs are made close to the places people are most likely to walk.

Advisory Committees

On May 4, 2026, City staff briefed the Planning Commission on the survey results and work completed to date on developing a long-term policy approach. Staff provided the same briefing to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on May 20, 2026. The Planning Commission subsequently submitted the attached comment letter.

Next steps

If the City Council is supportive of this policy approach, City staff plans to do the following:

- Shift the City-done sidewalk repairs, both those done by the crew and those done as part of the CFP program, to be near common pedestrian destinations.
- Define the steps needed to implement requiring large property owners to fix sidewalks. Staff will also define and the implications of this requirement. With this information, staff can return either to the full City Council or a Council Committee for further discussion.
- Research and outline what is needed to create a "fix upon sale" program. Once this is defined, we can also return to either the full Council or a Committee for further discussion.

Climate Analysis:

The City has a target of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. The transportation sector is the second-greatest source of emissions in our region. To achieve the emissions reduction goal, the City needs to reduce vehicle miles traveled to 25% lower than 2021 levels by 2040. Making it easier for people to walk is a key part of this strategy.

Equity Analysis:

For people who rely on walking aids, like scooters, wheelchairs, or walkers, sidewalks in poor repair can be a barrier.

Any long-term approach in which responsibility is shared between property owners and the City means that some property owners benefit from the public fixing their sidewalks while others do not. The “fix upon sale” element of the proposed policy helps balance this, because it means that every property owner could potentially be required to ensure their sidewalk is brought up to standard as part of the process of a property sale.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

City staff often hear concerns about Olympia’s sidewalk conditions. During the recent outreach in the story map, a majority of people said they believed the City should be responsible for sidewalk repair.

Some additional comments we heard included:

- Concerns about the process of hiring a contractor and the cost for a property owner to repair a sidewalk
- Support for requiring owners of large parcels to fix sidewalks adjacent to their property
- Support for requiring that sidewalks be fixed when property is sold

Survey results are attached.

Financial Impact:

All funding for sidewalk repair comes from the Transportation Benefit District sales tax.

The Capital Facilities Plan program for sidewalk repair is funded at \$500,000. In 2026, the City crew is funded at \$681,000, plus a one-time cost of \$149,000 for an excavator.

Options:

1. Discuss a long-term policy for sidewalk repair.
2. Not discuss a long-term policy for sidewalk repair.
3. Discuss a long-term policy for sidewalk repair at a later date.

Attachments:

Link to story map
Summary of survey results
Staff response to survey results
Survey demographics
Link to Engage Olympia sidewalk repair page
Map of street tree maintenance area

Maps of common pedestrian destinations
Planning Commission letter

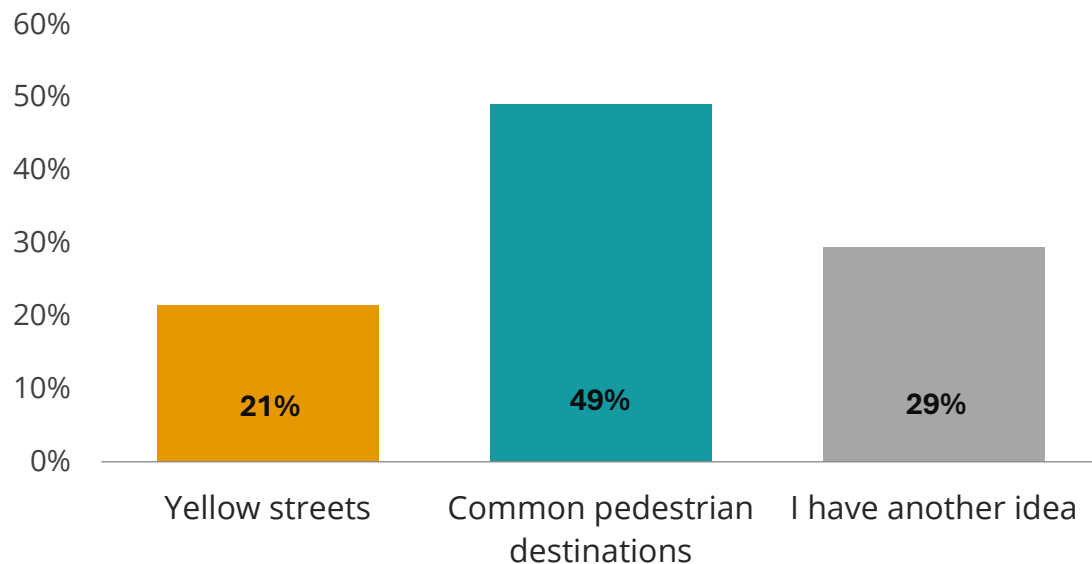
Sidewalk repair survey: summary of responses

Thanks to everyone who took the recent survey in the City's sidewalk repair story map, which was open from March 2, 2026 to March 20, 2026.

Here's a summary of the responses.

Question 1

Where should the City fix sidewalks?



"I have another idea" respondents had the maximum number of characters Survey Monkey would allow: 2000. All comments can be viewed on [Engage Olympia](#).

Summary of the "I have another idea" responses

Many comments suggested focusing on different material types besides concrete, suggesting asphalt or pervious materials could reduce conflicts with trees or be less expensive. Others suggested routing around mature trees with roots that buckle sidewalks. Several people noted the relationship between sidewalk damage and

street trees, some remarking that the trees were planted by the City and expressing frustration that the City hasn't fixed a problem it caused.

Many people had thoughts on the destinations we proposed, some suggesting we take a hybrid approach, fixing some sidewalks near the destinations and some sidewalks in other places, such as in neighborhoods. A few suggested splitting the funding along various percentages between the two, noting that many people walk in neighborhoods.

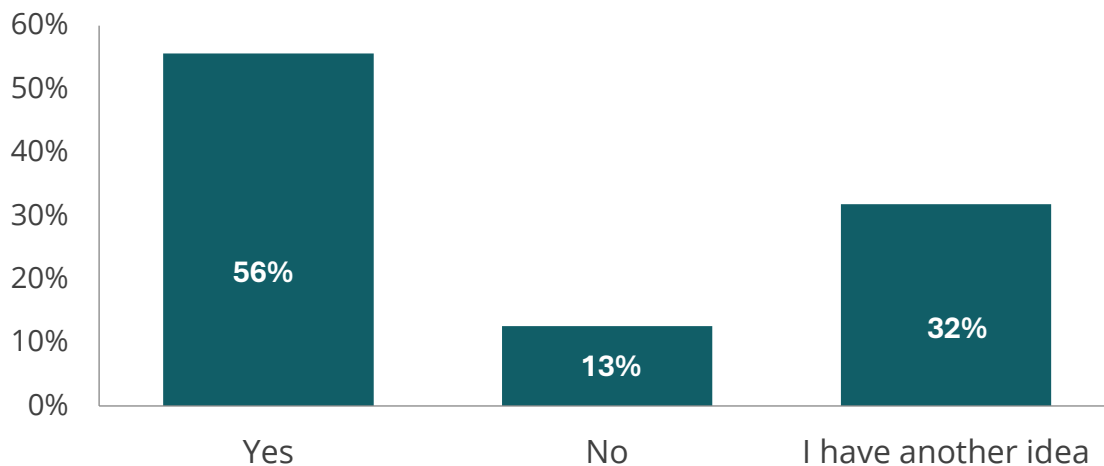
Others talked about trying to take a more equitable approach and fixing sidewalks near locations where people who use walking aids need them to be fixed. Several people expressed concern for disabled residents who rely on sidewalks to get around. One person commented that by focusing on infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users the City is "ableist" and "contemptuous" of people who depend on vehicles to get around.

Several people suggested taking a "worst first" approach with repairs rather than considering destinations, while others suggested prioritizing the most-used sidewalks for repair. Several people also talked about the importance of filling in gaps in the sidewalk network, which are mostly found in older neighborhoods. A few people talked about prioritizing places that offer the best connectivity improvements for pedestrians, and a few talked about prioritizing places based on which would improve safety the most for pedestrians.

Of the remaining comments that didn't fit in these categories, comments ranged from remarks about wanting the City to build new sidewalks, artistic sidewalks, do no repairs but remake the streets to be woonerfs or extremely traffic calmed, fixing all the locations, complaints about recent safety projects downtown, suggestions that neighborhood groups could do sidewalk repair if the City would teach them how, focusing on repairing streets first, and specific project requests.

Question 2

If the City continues to require property owners to fix their sidewalks, should this be limited to large property owners, such as schools, parks, shopping centers, and apartment complexes?



Summary of the “I have another idea” responses

The full responses to “I have another idea” can be viewed on [Engage Olympia](#).

Many of those who responded said that the City should be responsible for all sidewalk repair. Some people objected to schools and parks fixing sidewalks, saying they’d rather those funding sources not be spent on sidewalk repair.

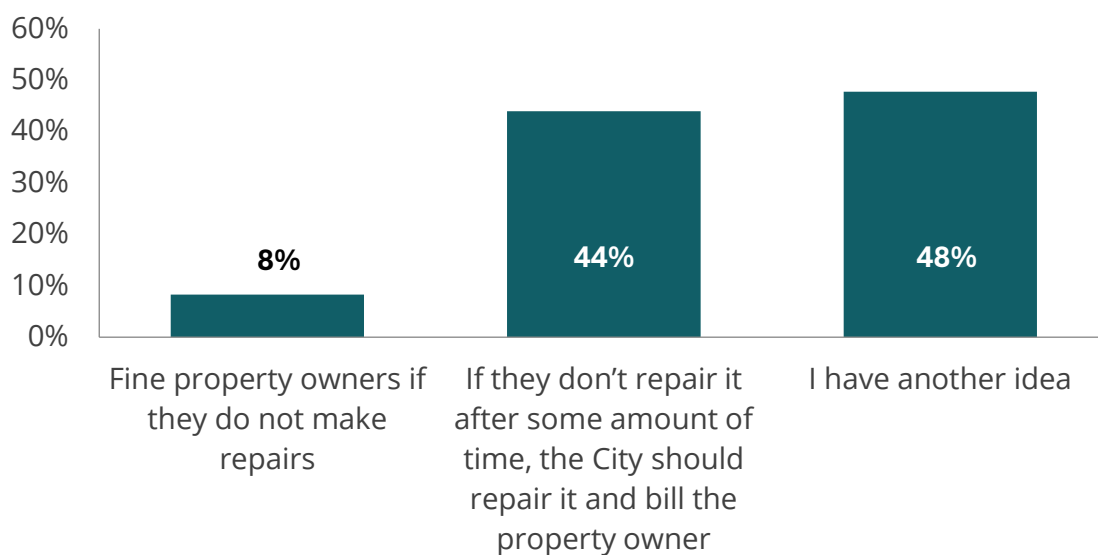
Several people said they wanted a program to offer technical or financial assistance for sidewalk repair. They said finding or hiring contractors was burdensome and sidewalk repair was expensive. They wanted the City to help find contractors or offset costs.

Many people expressed concern that some homeowners, such as seniors or people with limited incomes, could be disproportionately impacted by requirements that residents fix sidewalks and proposed several ideas to offset that.

There were continued comments noting conflict between street trees and sidewalks, and a few people remarked about the value of street trees.

Question 3

If it is the property owner's responsibility to fix the sidewalk, there would be a municipal code that the City enforces. What is the best way to get property owners to repair sidewalks?



Full responses to “I have another idea” can be viewed on [Engage Olympia](#).

The majority of the comments on this question stated they believed the City should be responsible for repairing sidewalks. Many people suggested a cost-sharing approach or technical assistance to individual property owners or neighborhood groups. There were continued comments about the difficulty of hiring contractors and concerns about the quality of the repairs.

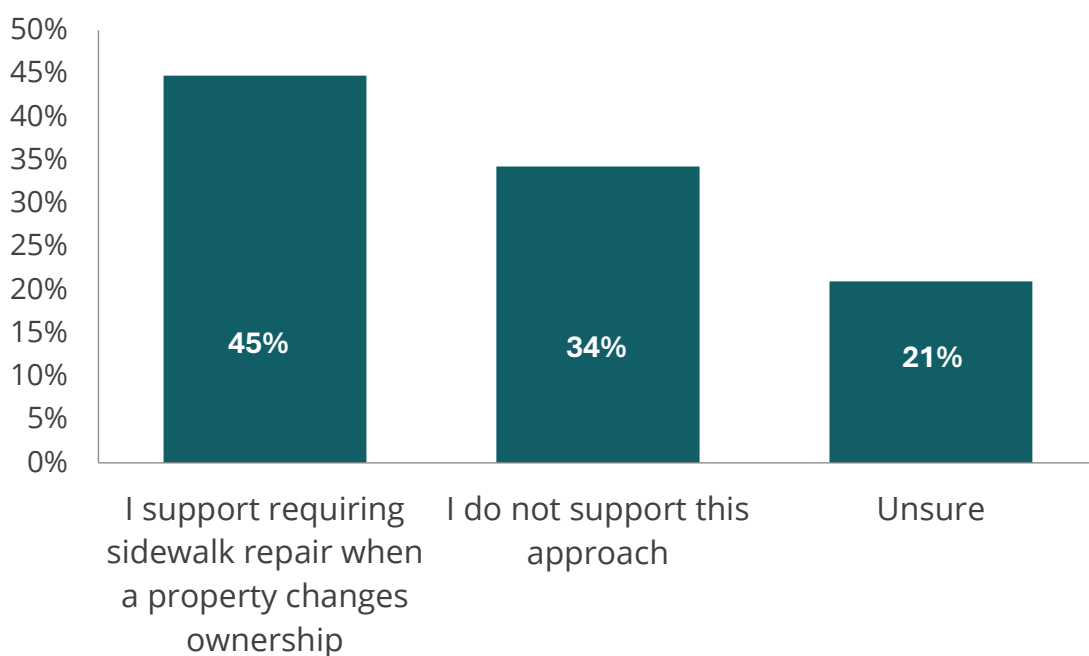
Some people commented on the punitive nature of fines and enforcement and requested that the City take a more positive approach to encourage rather than require compliance.

As with the previous question, people expressed concern about the disproportionate impact that requiring homeowners to fix sidewalks could have on people with low or fixed incomes.

People continued to note the relationship between sidewalk damage and tree roots, many commenting on how the City either required or encouraged that the trees be planted in previous decades.

Question 4

We'd like your thoughts on one more idea: when a property changes ownership the City could require that the sidewalk be repaired at that time.



Staff's response to the comments

Thanks to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts. A few common themes came up in the questions, so we'd like to share some information that might help address them.

Material types

The City has experimented with different material types. Olympia was an early adopter of pervious concrete, which helped advance its science, and we routinely use it when the City builds new sidewalks. We have also used asphalt and rubberized asphalt in some instances to preserve mature or historic trees, and we have occasionally re-routed sidewalks when able.



Rubberized asphalt installed in Washington DC about 10 years post-installation

None of these alternative materials work very well long-term. Tree roots continue to grow and interfere with the sidewalk. At best, they can buy some time, and in cases of mature and otherwise healthy trees, that may be appropriate.

These approaches are very labor-intensive and costly, because they require several City staff members to review each individual case. Given the scale of tree/sidewalk conflicts in Olympia, it isn't realistic to try to deploy this method for every tree and sidewalk conflict citywide. We need a solution that will work at a citywide scale.

ADA compliance and “worst first” approaches

A sidewalk with a lift that is higher than a quarter inch is not compliant with current ADA standards and can be a barrier to some people using walking aids. A “worst first” approach, which targets the highest sidewalk lifts for repairs first, might not reduce the greatest number of barriers to people with disabilities. Instead, prioritizing sidewalk repairs based on the key locations pedestrians are most likely to go might reduce barriers to the greatest number of people soonest, regardless of the severity of sidewalk condition. There is a lot for the City Council to consider with this.

Sidewalks in neighborhoods

Many of the proposed common pedestrian destinations, like schools, parks, and some transit stops, are in neighborhoods.

Existing gaps in the sidewalk network

The City has a program to build new sidewalks on major streets, which is described in the [Transportation Master Plan](#). Some people remarked about the need to fill in gaps in the sidewalk network in older residential neighborhoods, which the new sidewalk program does not address. Developing an approach to fill in these gaps at a future date is something the community would clearly welcome.

Working with community groups to fix sidewalks

The City does not currently have the capacity to train community groups to do this work.

Thanks for your time. If you have any questions, please reach out to either of us in Olympia Public Works Transportation:

Michelle Swanson, AICP
Principal Planner
mwsanson@ci.olympia.wa.us
360.753.8575

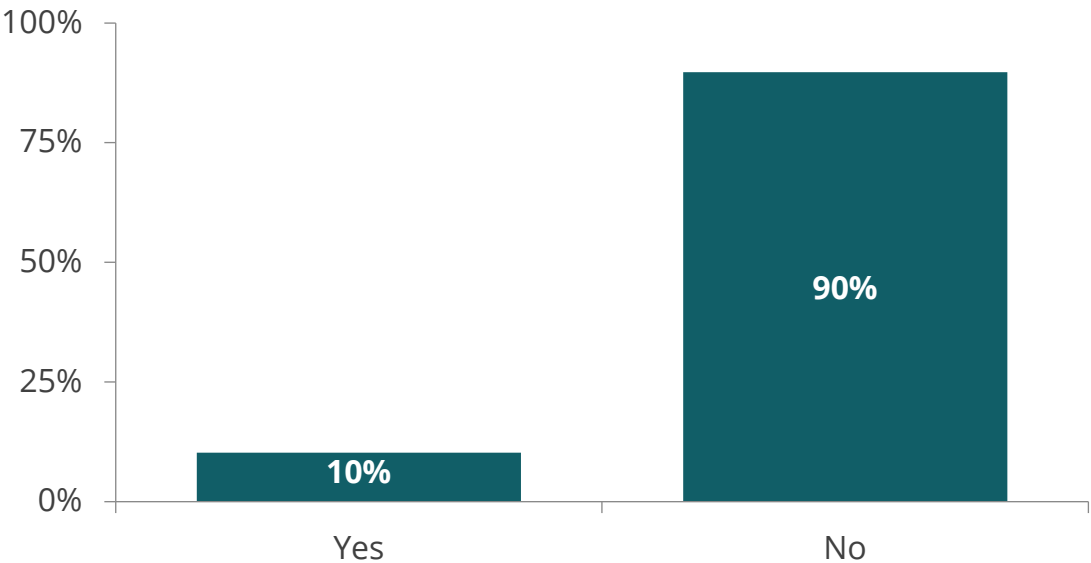
Max DeJarnatt
Associate Planner
mdejarna@ci.olympia.wa.us
360.570.3723

Sidewalk repair survey: demographics

Nearly 1,900 people viewed the story map between March 2 and March 20, 2026 when the survey was open. At least 363 people responded to one question in the survey. About 185 people took the voluntary demographic survey. Those results are below.

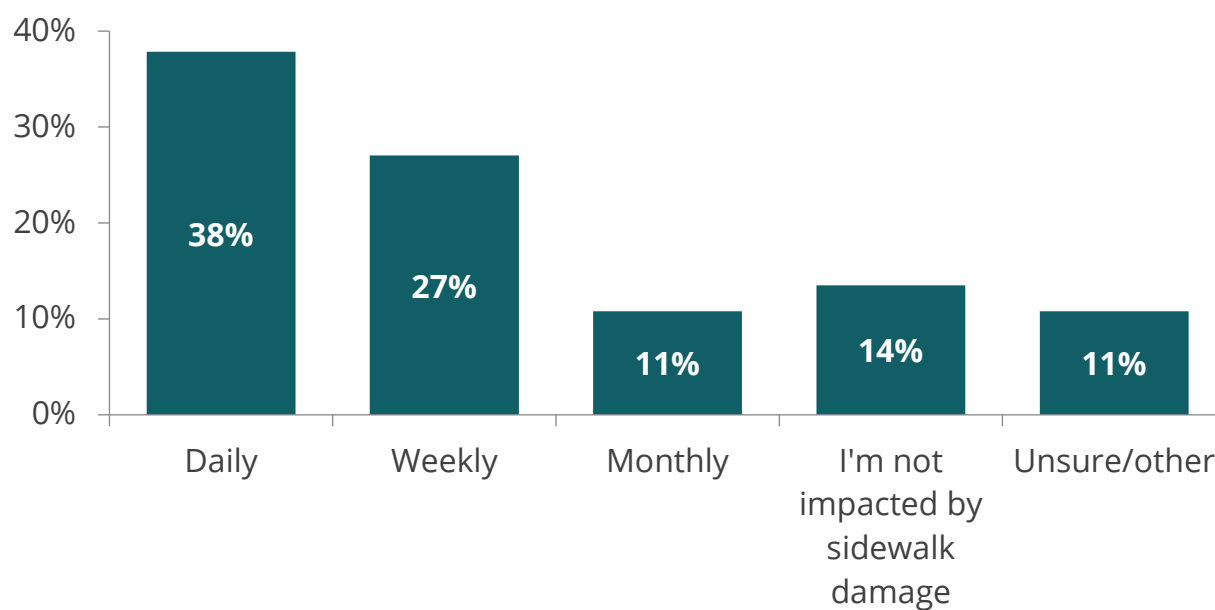
Question 1

Do you use a mobility device?



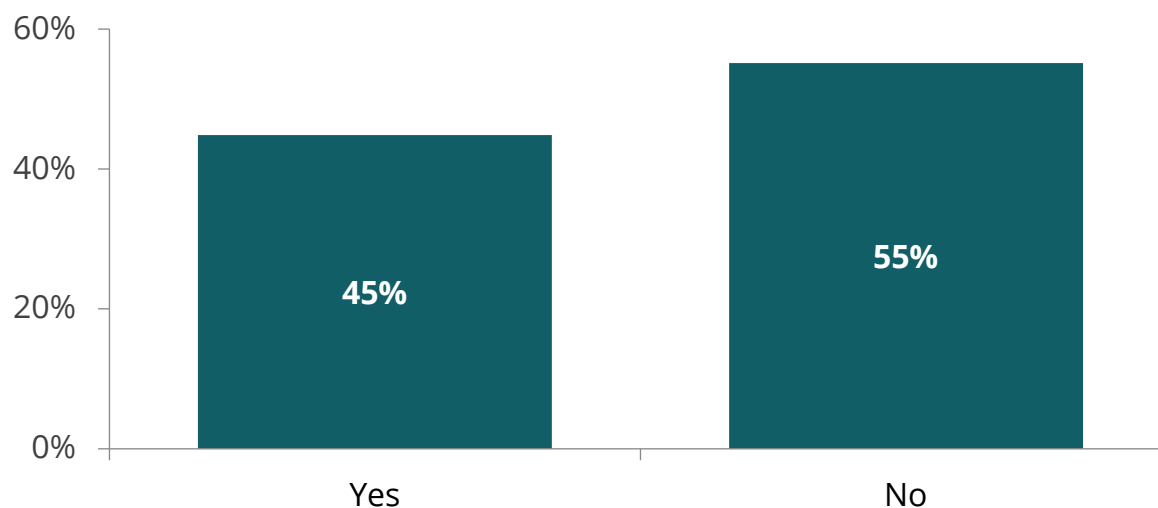
Question 2

How often do you feel affected by sidewalk damage?



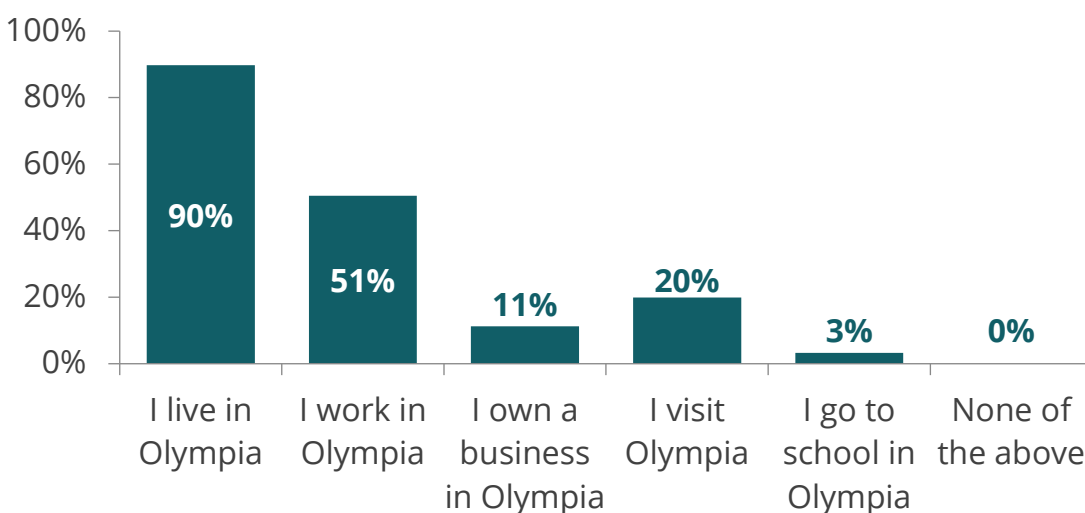
Question 3

Do you own property adjacent to a sidewalk in Olympia?



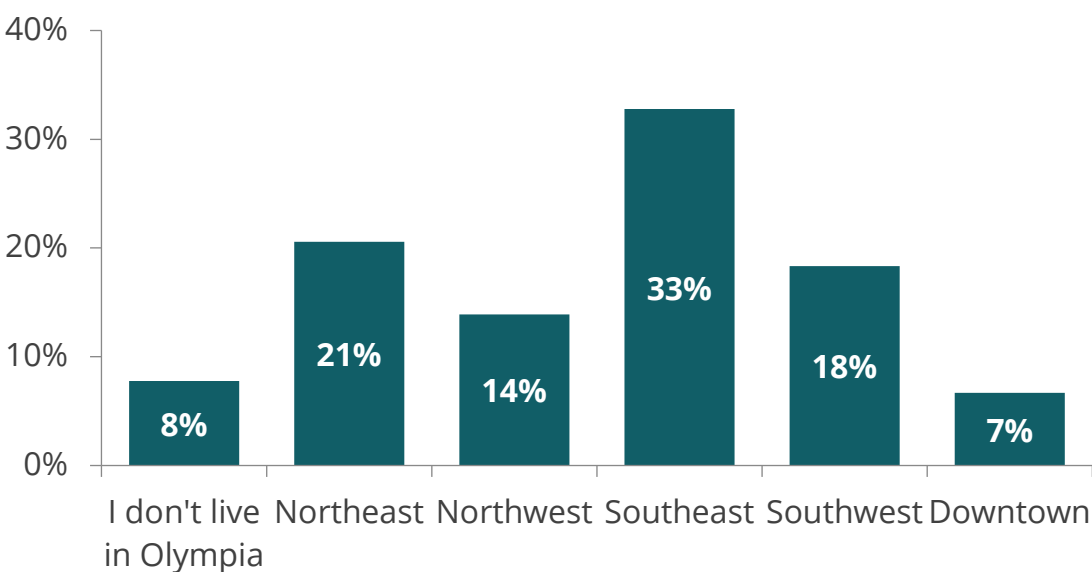
Question 4

How are you connected to Olympia?
(Check all that apply)



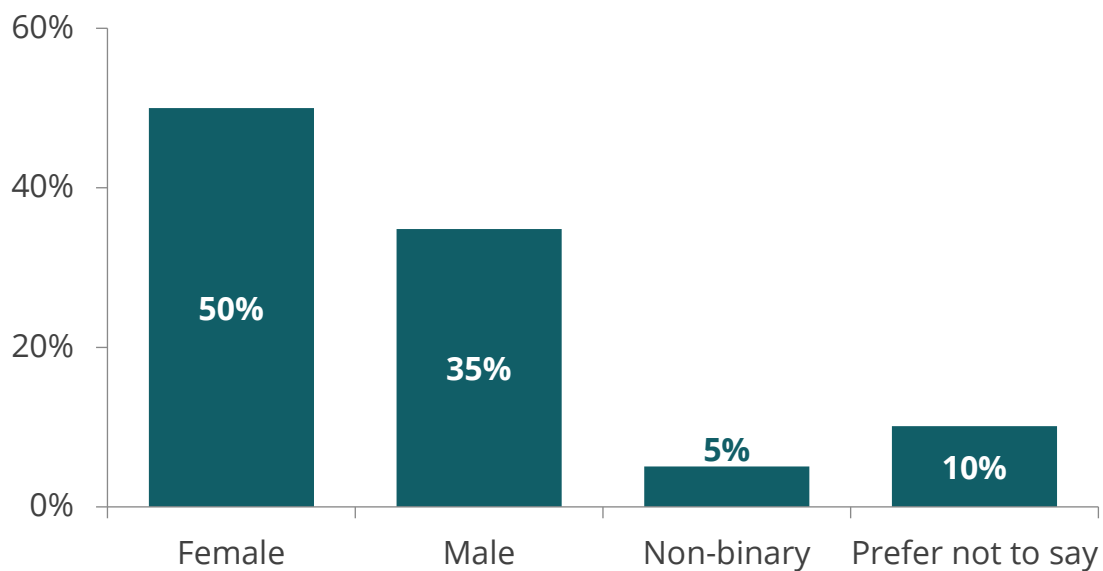
Question 5

If you live in Olympia, which part?



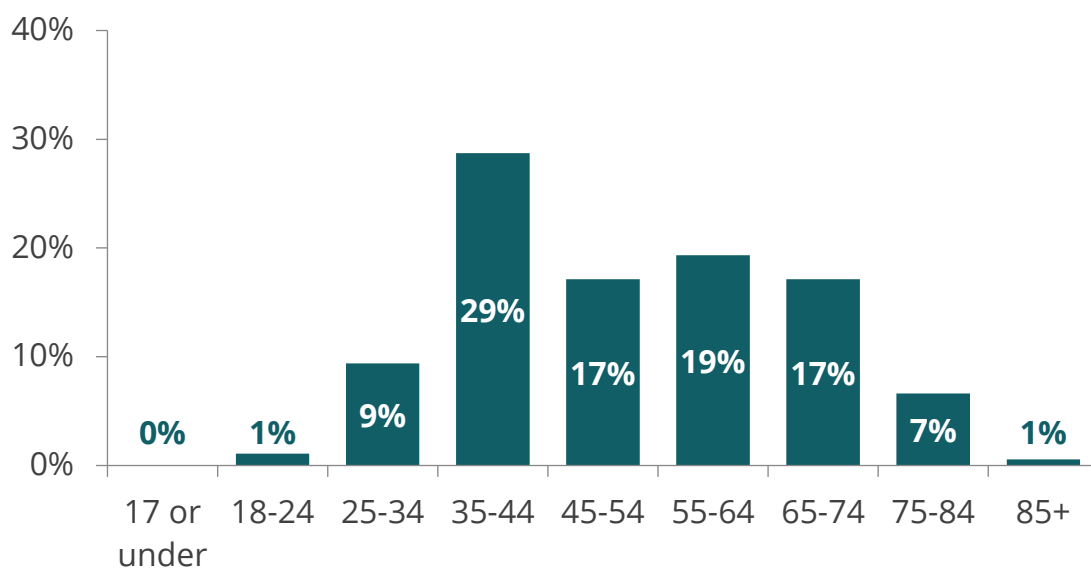
Question 6

What is your gender identity?



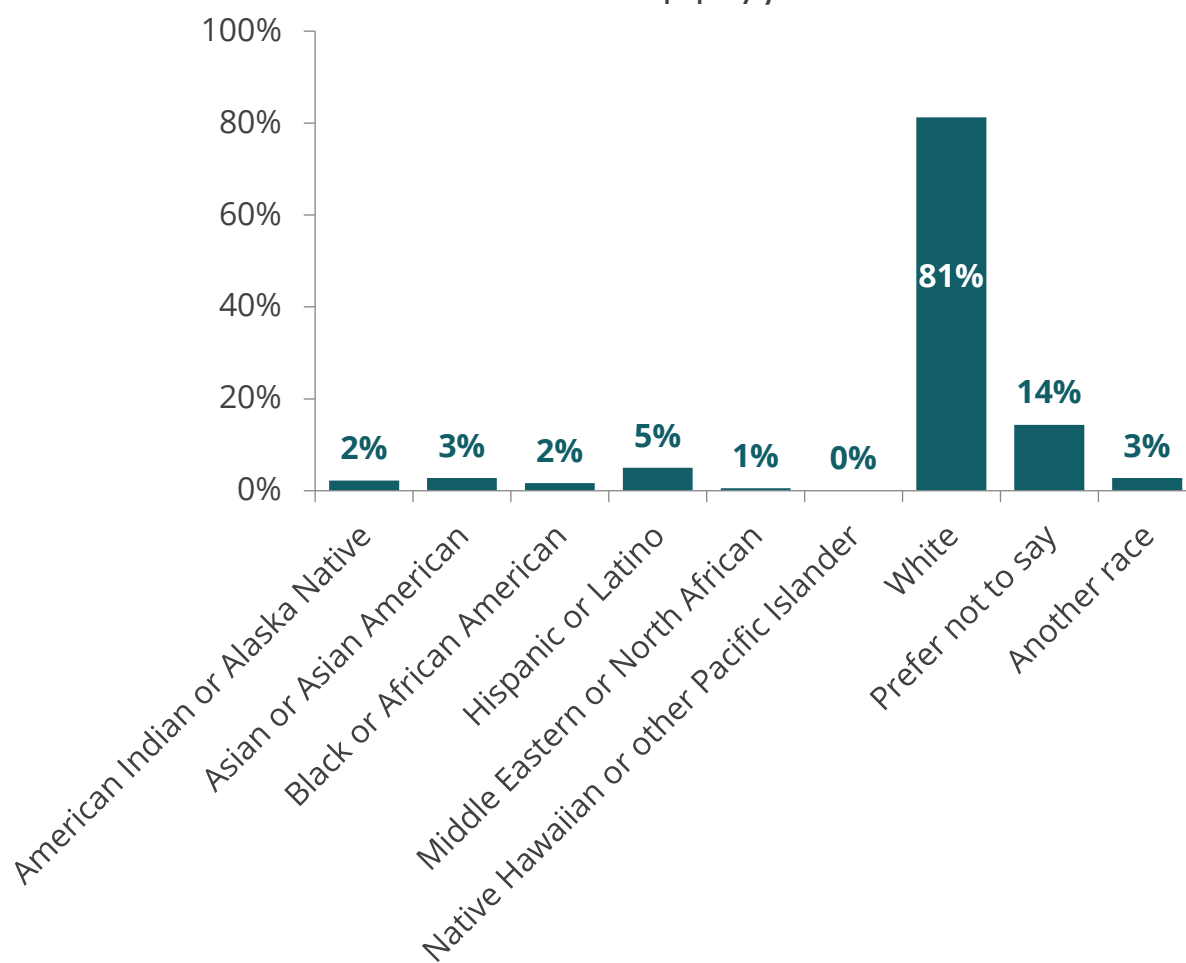
Question 7

What is your age?



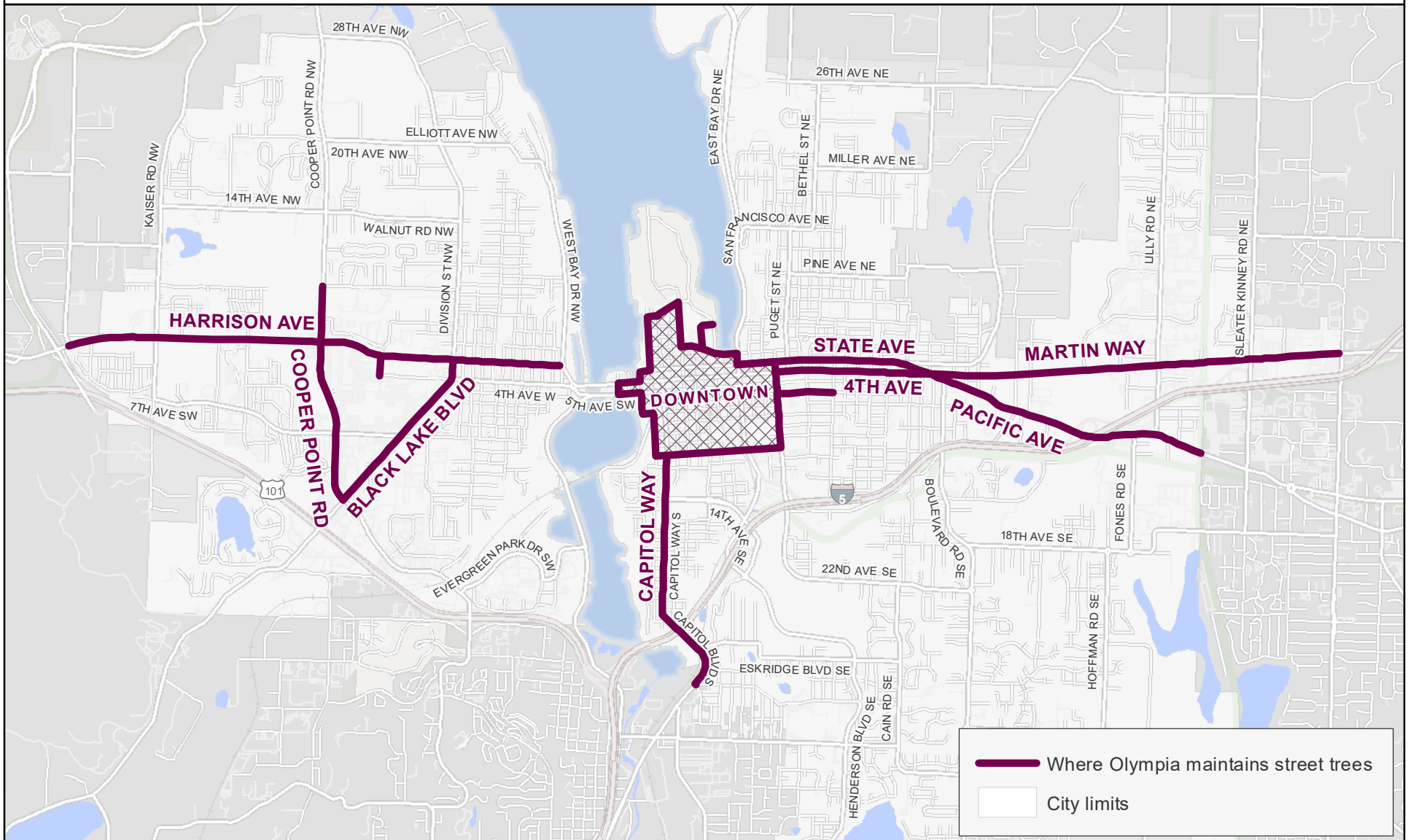
Question 8

What is your race or ethnicity? (pick all that apply)





Street tree maintenance areas And City-prioritized sidewalk repairs



0 0.5 1
Miles

Map printed 9/15/2023
For more information, please contact:
Michelle Swanson, AICP, Senior Planner
mswanson@ci.olympia.wa.us
360.753.8575

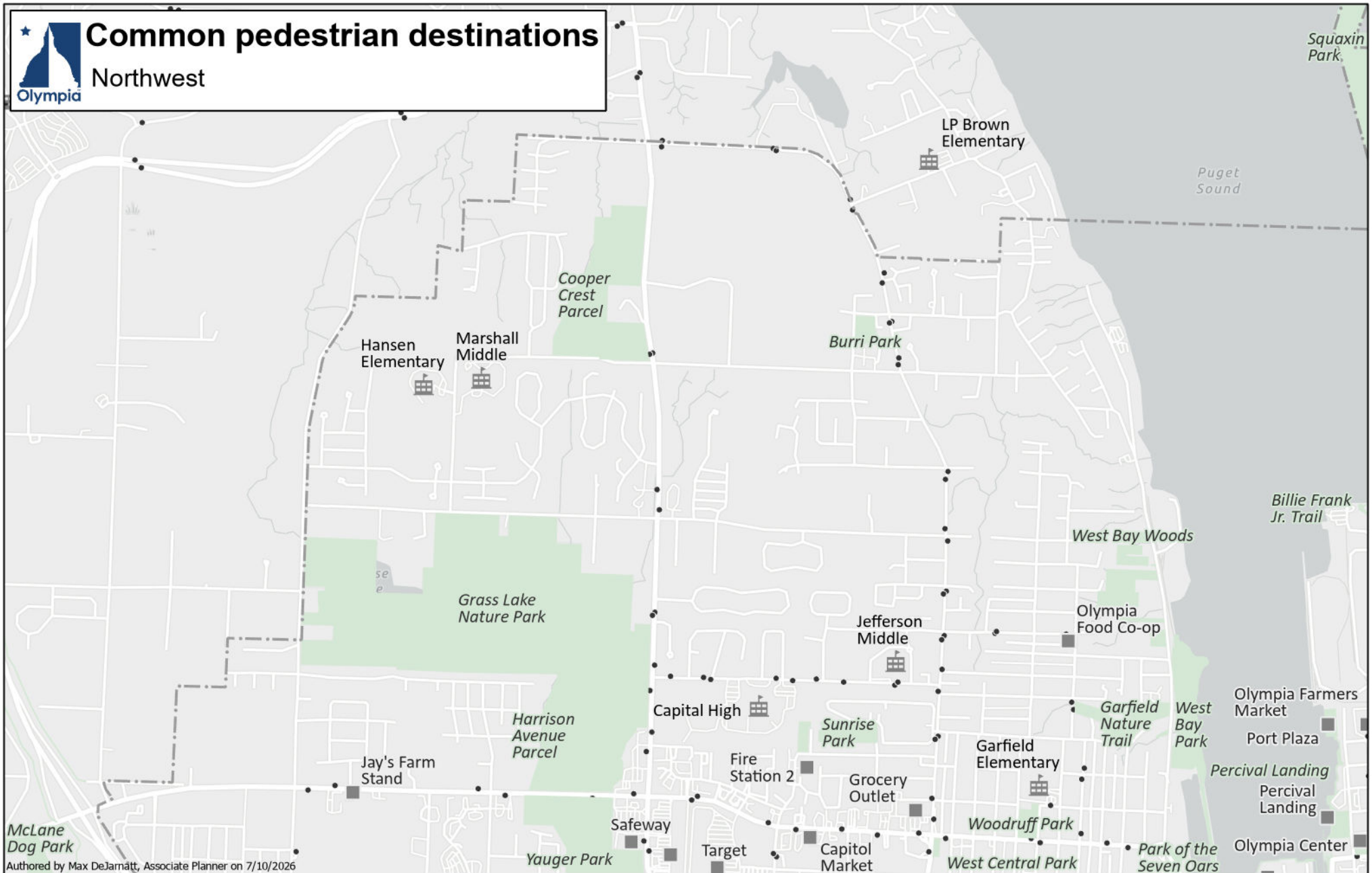
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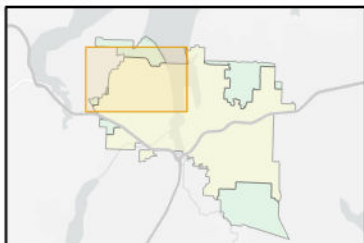


Common pedestrian destinations

Northwest



Authored by Max DeJarnatt, Associate Planner on 7/10/2026



Common pedestrian destinations

- Bus stop
- School
- Other common pedestrian destination
- Park
- Olympia city limits

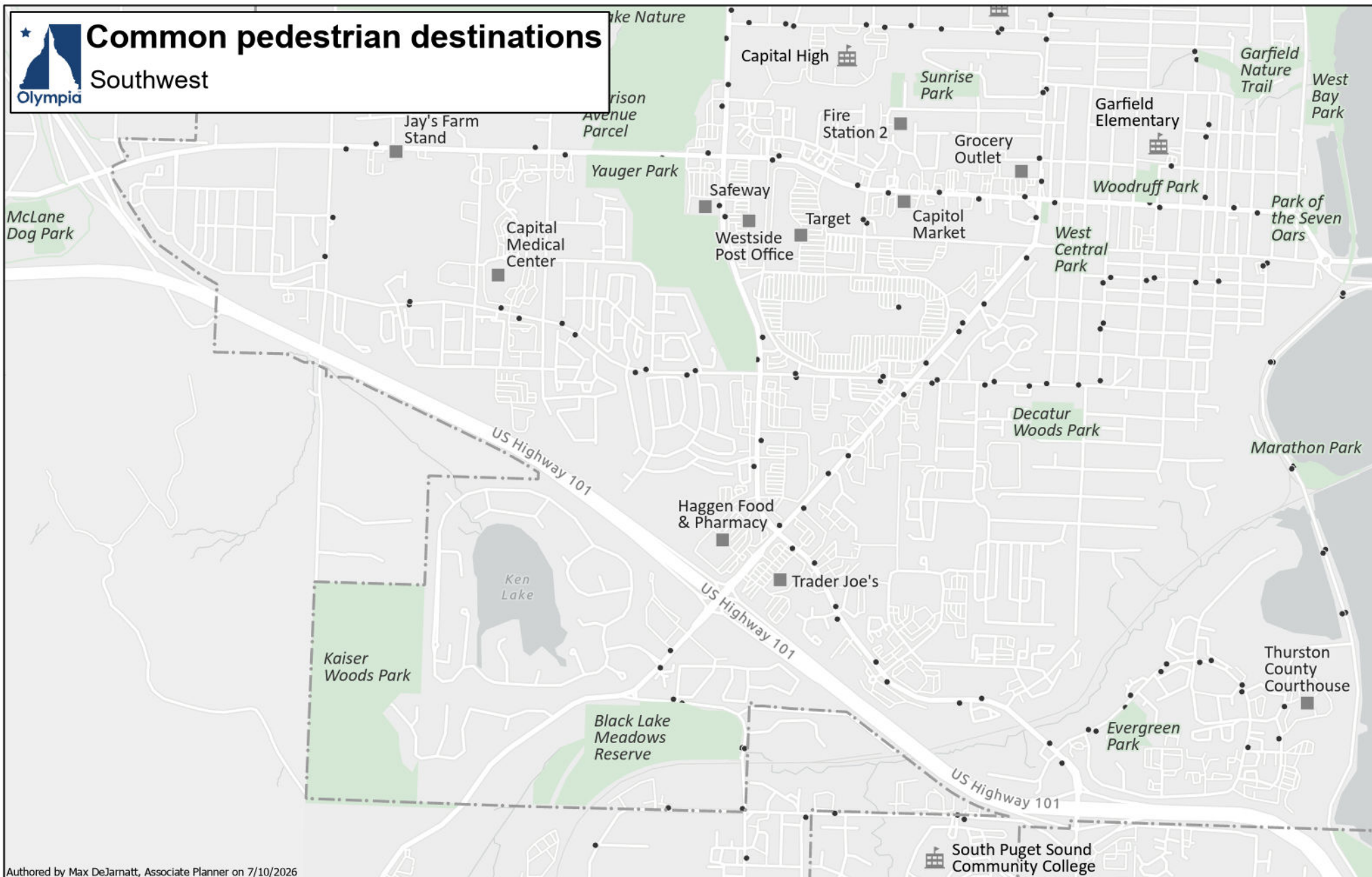
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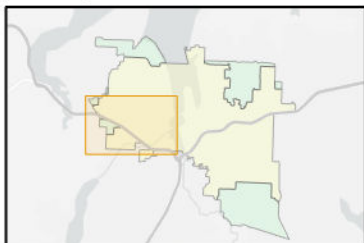


Common pedestrian destinations

Southwest



Authored by Max DeJarnatt, Associate Planner on 7/10/2026



Common pedestrian destinations

- Bus stop
- School
- Other common pedestrian destination
- Park
- Olympia city limits

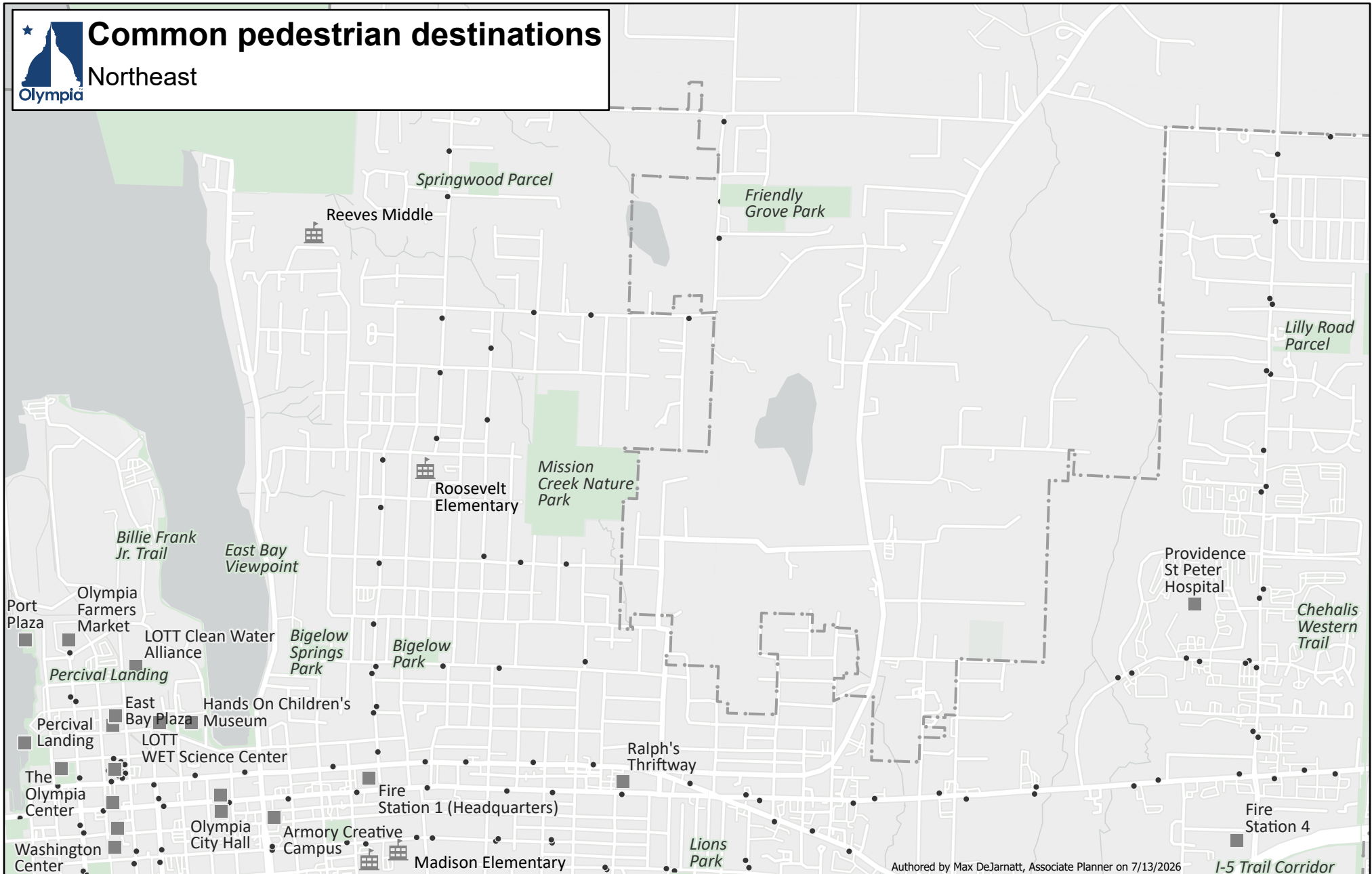
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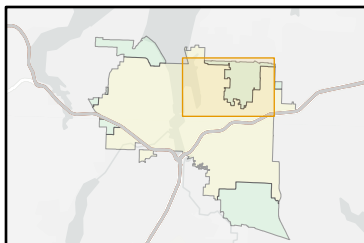
Common pedestrian destinations

Northeast



Authored by Max DeJarnatt, Associate Planner on 7/13/2026

I-5 Trail Corridor

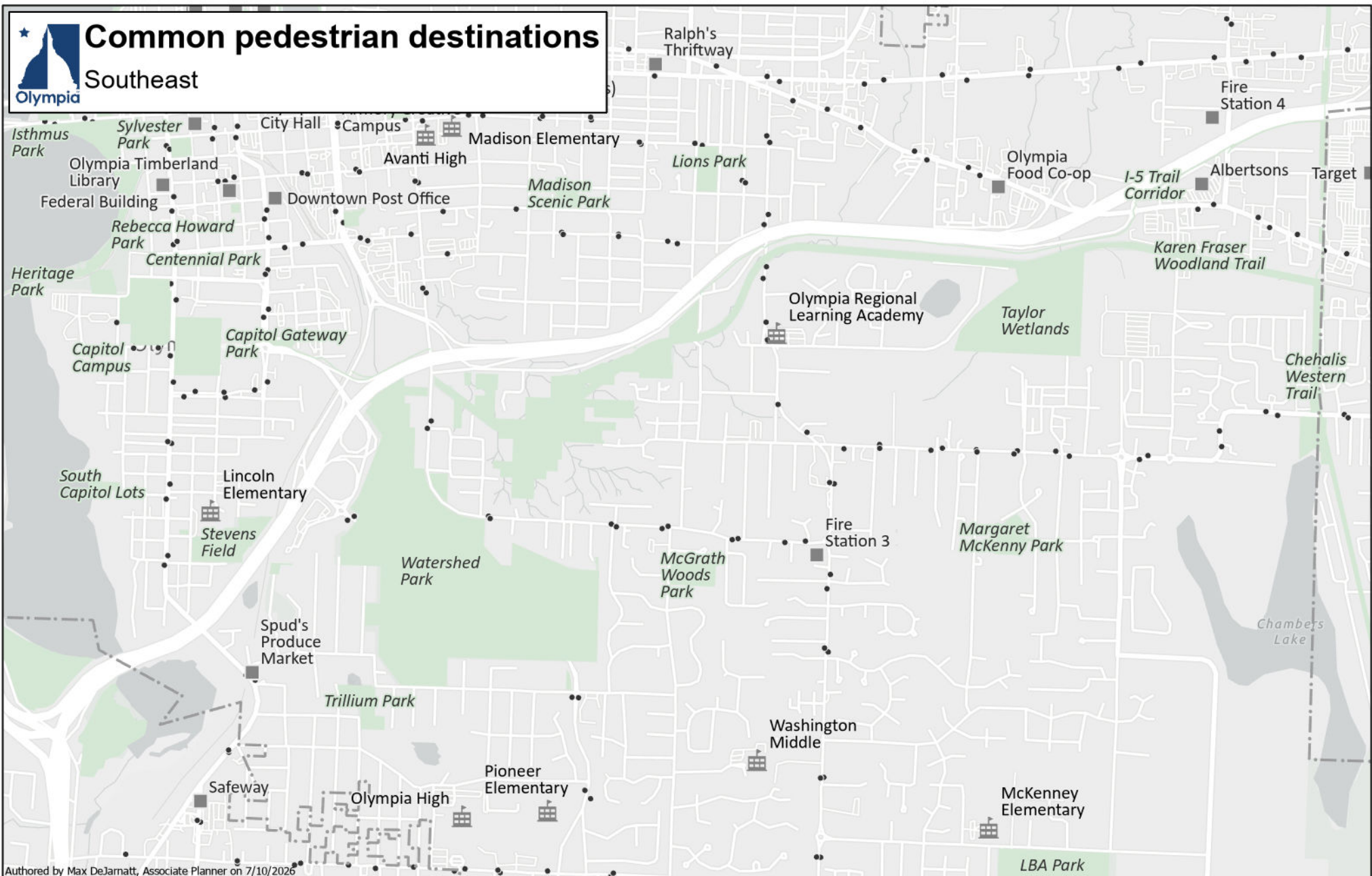


Common pedestrian destinations

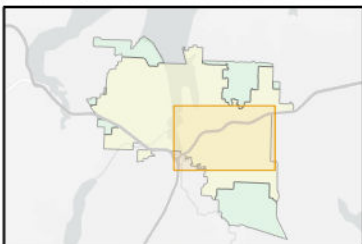
- Bus stop
-  School
-  Other common pedestrian destination
-  Park
-  Olympia city limits

0 1/4 1/2 Miles 

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Authored by Max DeJarnatt, Associate Planner on 7/10/2026



Common pedestrian destinations

- Bus stop
-  School
-  Other common pedestrian destination
-  Park
-  Olympia city limits

0 1/4 1/2 Miles 

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Olympia Planning Commission

July 6, 2026

Olympia City Council
PO Box 1967 Olympia
WA 98507-1967

SUBJECT: Sidewalk Repair Policy

Dear Mayor Payne and Councilmembers:

The Planning Commission received a briefing regarding development of a sidewalk repair policy on May 4th, 2026, with further discussion on June 15th, 2026. It is our opinion that sidewalks in Olympia are critical public transportation infrastructure and that they should receive at least the same public support as streets and roads. Well maintained sidewalks throughout the City of Olympia to be necessary in meeting the Transportation Vision of the Comprehensive Plan. The Sidewalk Condition Assessment (published March 16, 2025) highlights numerous areas of deficiency in maintenance and suggests that the current approach to sidewalk maintenance is failing.

We would like to commend the city for commissioning the Sidewalk Condition Assessment, as well as starting sidewalk maintenance with the resources at hand. We look forward to expanding efforts along with the expanded Transportation Benefit District funding for multimodal transportation. The Planning Commission understands that the current support for sidewalk maintenance is about \$500,000 in annual capital funding and a single fulltime city crew focused on sidewalk maintenance is being established.

The Commission discussed the following aspects of a sidewalk repair policy in anticipation of the City Council considering a new Sidewalk Repair Policy:

- Who pays? The current city ordinances make it the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to maintain the sidewalk in front of their property. The Planning Commission recommends that this policy be updated to make sidewalk maintenance the City's responsibility:
 - First, sidewalks are currently not being adequately maintained. If there was increased enforcement to provide adequately maintained sidewalks, many property owners, particularly homeowners, are not well positioned to pay for or contract sidewalk repair efficiently.
 - Second, sidewalks are key public infrastructure that support all kinds of mobility, including walking, rolling, access to transit, and trips that include driving. The city is better positioned for efficient sidewalk repair and proactively directing funding with equity in mind. Sidewalks should be supported similar to other city-maintained road infrastructure.
 - Consider liability. How does the repair policy effect City or property owner liability?
- Small vs. Large Property Owners. The Planning Commission generally thought that differentiating between property owners (e.g. larger commercial owners or schools vs. single family homes) would

be unfair with costs likely passed on to small businesses or people living in larger apartment buildings.

- Partnerships. Explore grants, non-profit or community resources to assist with neighborhood sidewalk repairs. We understand that construction in the right of way requires bonding and may not be suitable for mechanisms like neighborhood matching grants.
- Site prioritization. One of the major policy questions asked in the city survey on sidewalk policy was whether to prioritize urban corridors or pedestrian destinations. The Planning Commission recommends prioritizing pedestrian “destinations”, with the following considerations:
 - Prioritize sidewalks that serve the most people and trips, but balance with a geographic diversity of destinations so more people can see side walk maintenance in action near where they live, play, and work.
 - Identify lower-severity issues that can be quickly corrected to improve access to functional sidewalks.
 - Collaborate with Intercity Transit to support bus stops (especially stops supporting high ridership and frequent use).
 - We particularly support staff expanding the definition of pedestrian “destinations” to include grocery stores (as presented, defined as w/ “fresh produce”).
- Create a downtown sidewalk repair policy in a future update of the Downtown Strategy. The Leland Consulting Group mentioned this during their briefing to OPC on June 15th, 2026. Downtown is the heart of the city, and attracts many visitors, and would benefit from a sidewalk repair policy for the whole area, rather than on an ad hoc basis.
- Investment in maintenance. We support the city getting started with sidewalk maintenance even as the policy is refined, the need is great, and experience will help guide policy. However, the Planning Commission believes that more resources are needed now to stabilize maintenance, even if it means forgoing other important mobility improvements. Current projected timelines for catching up on the backlog are too long and adequately maintaining infrastructure that we already have should be the most affordable and fastest way to improve mobility for everyone.

Additional considerations.

- Street trees. Sidewalk damage, particularly panel uplift, can often be traced back to tree roots, while trees also contribute to walkability of sidewalks and streets. It is the understanding of the Planning Commission that design requirements for tree placement, soil preparation, and tree species selection have been improved to protect trees and prevent uplift. We encourage flexible policies in sidewalk repair to avoid damaging large trees and continuing to find more space for streets trees in the right of way that avoids conflicts with sidewalks (e.g. wider planting strips). Well maintained sidewalks can go hand in hand with meeting or exceeding tree canopy cover goals.
- Vegetation. The sidewalk condition report noted many sidewalks being blocked by vegetation. It was noted that code enforcement is often successful in these scenarios, but the Planning Commission recommends that any sidewalk maintenance policy needs to be more proactive in enforcement, protect against vegetation on private property damaging sidewalks, and work with the community to make sure vegetation does not block sidewalks.
- Vacancy study. The Planning Commission would like to understand if there is any correlation between sidewalk disrepair and building vacancy.
- The planning commission discussed the possibility of requiring sidewalk repair at the time of sale.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg R. Quetin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "Q".

Greg Quetin
Chair



City Council

Reimagining Public Safety Progress Report Implementation Update

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026
Agenda Item Number: 2.B
File Number:26-0555

Type: study session **Version:** 1 **Status:** Study Session

Title

Reimagining Public Safety Progress Report Implementation Update

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Receive an update on the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations as accepted by the City Council on December 6, 2022. Provide input on areas to prioritize action going forward and the process for prioritizing, tracking and regularly reporting on shared goals and strategies identified in the recommendations.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive an update on the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations as accepted by the City Council on December 6, 2022 and provide input on areas to prioritize action going forward and the process for prioritizing, tracking and regularly reporting on shared goals and strategies identified in the recommendations.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Stacey Ray, Assistant City Manager

Margo Morales, Community Engagement Program Specialist

Background and Analysis:

In February 2021, in the wake of civil unrest and community calls for social justice, the Olympia City Council launched a community-led process to reimagine the City of Olympia's public safety system.

A Community Work Group made up of eight community members, representing a cross-section of demographics, expertise, and lived experiences, led an 18-month effort to understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. The role of the Community Work Group was to learn

about Olympia's public safety system; deeply listen to community members' experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams; and synthesize what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

The Olympia City Council formally accepted the Community Work Group's recommendations on December 6, 2022 (attached). The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies, and numerous actions.

The City Council included in their 2026 work plan a comprehensive update on what's been accomplished since the recommendations were accepted in 2022. Over the last several months, staff from the various parts of the City's public safety system have conducted a detailed review of what recommended actions and strategies have been addressed to date. That information has been compiled into both a spreadsheet and a summary report (attached).

The draft version of this report has been shared with the original community workgroup members to continue to keep them informed. Staff also shared the draft with the Social Justice and Equity Commission for feedback on what areas they view as a priority for action by the City going forward. A comment letter from the Social Justice and Equity Commission is attached.

The purpose of this agenda item is for staff to provide the City Council with an update on the Reimagining Public Safety recommendation implementation efforts, including selected highlights of what's been accomplished.

Staff will also seek input from Council on areas to prioritize action going forward and the process for prioritizing, tracking and regularly reporting on shared goals and strategies identified in the recommendations.

Climate Analysis:

This is not expected to have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

The Community Work Group tasked with developing recommendations was representative of a cross-section of demographics, expertise, and experience. They lead this process through learning about Olympia's public safety system; deeply listening to community members' experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams; and coalescing what they heard into a recommendation. The recommendations are for a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone and are inclusive of the diverse community needs and experiences which informed the work.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Reimagining Public Safety process was initiated in response to community concerns and calls for social justice. Throughout the Work Group's recommendation development process, and after the recommendations were accepted by the City Council, there has been a broad community interest in the work.

There has been specific interest expressed by the Thurston County Chapter of the NAACP in tracking the implementation of the recommendations and the closely related actions of the Civilian Police Auditor and Community Policing Board. Through public comment, their interests include therapeutic courts, building relationships with marginalized groups, and development of a workforce reflective of our community.

Financial Impact:

There is no financial impact created by this briefing. Funding for the individual programs and initiatives noted in the progress report has already been allocated and spent through the City's annual budget process. The Reimagining Public Safety recommendations will continue to inform the City's prioritization of resources and annual budget development process.

Options:

1. Receive an update on the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations as accepted by the City Council on December 6, 2022. Provide input on areas to prioritize action going forward and the process for prioritizing, tracking and regularly reporting on shared goals and strategies identified in the recommendations.
2. Do not Receive an update on the implementation of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations as accepted by the City Council on December 6, 2022 or provide input on areas to prioritize action going forward and the process for prioritizing, tracking and regularly reporting on shared goals and strategies identified in the recommendations.
3. Hold the discussion at another time.

Attachments:

Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations (Full)
Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations (Summary)
Reimagining Public Safety Summary Report
Reimagining Public Safety Progress Tracker
Social Justice and Equity Commission Comment Letter



REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Recommendations for a System that
Fosters Trust and Works for Everyone



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Letter from the City Manager

Three years ago, in the midst of a global pandemic, as the nation was shaken by the 2020 murder of George Floyd and was rising to the urgency of social justice, the Olympia City Council turned its attention to the issue of public safety, forming City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Public Safety. In February 2021, the Council approved a community-led process to reimagine public safety for the City, with a goal of ensuring that our public safety system fosters trust and works for everyone.

We are fortunate in Olympia. Our community is smart, highly engaged and cares deeply about doing right. So, in July 2021, the City turned to our community, launching an inclusive, community-led process to evaluate and arrive at recommendations for enhancing our public-safety system. We called it Reimagining Public Safety.

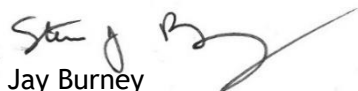
The Work Group, the community members who stepped up to this process, brought differing perspectives and experiences that were representative of our community's diversity of experiences and demographics. The Work Group included members with:

- Lived experience and having been impacted by family members with lived experience;
- Professional and non-professional experience within the public safety system and related areas like substance abuse, job training and affordable housing;
- Strong connections to the Olympia community -- as a resident, owning a business here, having grown up here, work or volunteer in this community; and
- Personal and professional connections to youth and the youth experience in Olympia.

After a challenging and emotional process of approximately 18 months, more than 70 hours of meetings, listening sessions, reviewing materials, shadowing staff and collaborating with one another, the Work Group delivered their recommendations to the City Council.

During a City Council work session, the Work Group members had an opportunity to speak to what was important to them, their experience leading this process, their vision for the public safety in Olympia, what they learned from the community and each other and what they felt were the communities' most significant priorities for implementation.

With this report, we offer the result of the Work Group's efforts back to the community. The work group planted the seeds, it is our responsibility to nurture and help them grow. The City of Olympia is committed to the effort of bringing these recommendations into fruition and moving our system always closer to one that embodies our vision: a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.



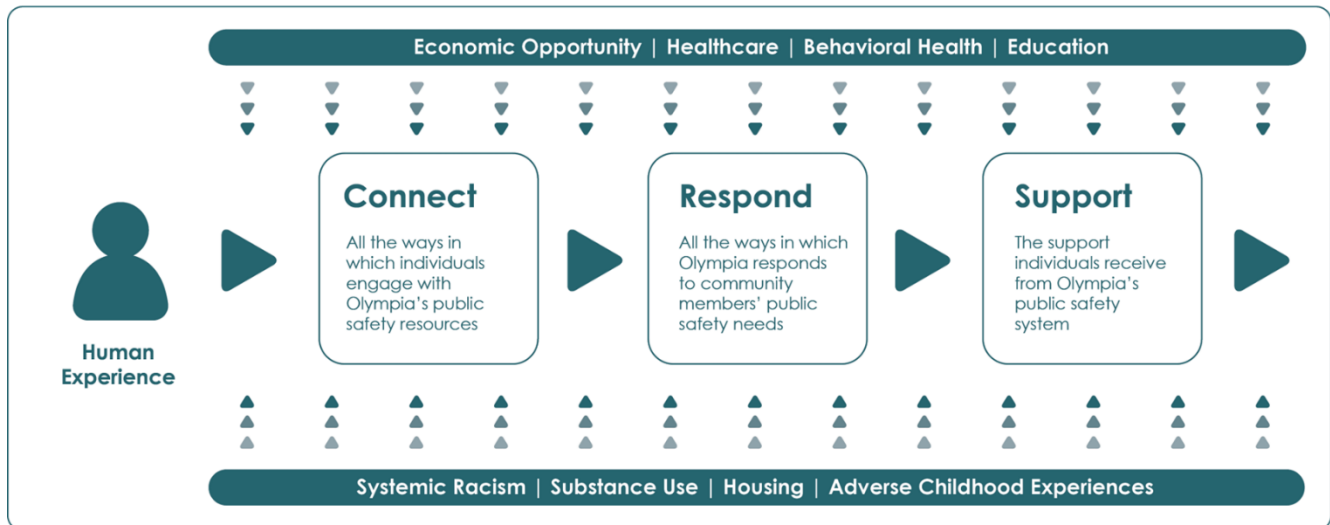
Jay Burney
Olympia City Manager



Overview

In February 2021, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and a call for social justice from the community, the Olympia City Council approved the use of a community-led process to reimagine the City's public safety system. As shared by City Manager Jay Burney, the goal of the process was to ensure everyone who engages with the City's public safety system can trust that it is just, equitable and without bias.

A Community Work Group of eight community members, representing a cross-section of Olympia's demographics, expertise and experiences, led an 18-month effort to listen, hear and understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. Specifically, this group sought to learn about the experiences and stories of community members, how people connected to the public safety system, how the system responded to community members' needs and how individuals were supported as they navigated through and out of the system.



Public safety is complex, and significantly influenced by other factors, such as educational opportunity, access to high quality healthcare and economic opportunity. While acknowledging those critical influences, this process sought to focus on the City's public safety system, including policing, prosecution, public defense, municipal court, corrections, fire and medical response, homeless response, code enforcement, park rangers and those who keep public spaces clean.

The Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group's role in leading this process was to learn about Olympia's public safety system, deeply listen to community members about their lived experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams, and coalesce what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

To hear from the community, the Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, including eight internal City staff listening-and-learning sessions (including an online survey for public safety staff), six general external listening-and-learning sessions, a public-facing survey, and ten different focus groups. The Work Group and City staff worked closely with community partners to make

shifts to their approach and timeframe, and to remove barriers to community members participating and feeling comfortable speaking to their experiences.

The recommendations reflect what the Work Group heard from the community, what they learned from staff and what they learned from one another's own lived experiences. Some actions point to bolstering or expanding existing programs and services, and others will take time to fully implement. There is not an assumption all recommendations will be implemented overnight, and City Council, staff and partner agencies may need to pursue further study, prioritization and funding.

On December 6, 2022, the Olympia City Council formally accepted the Work Group's recommendations. The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies and numerous actions.



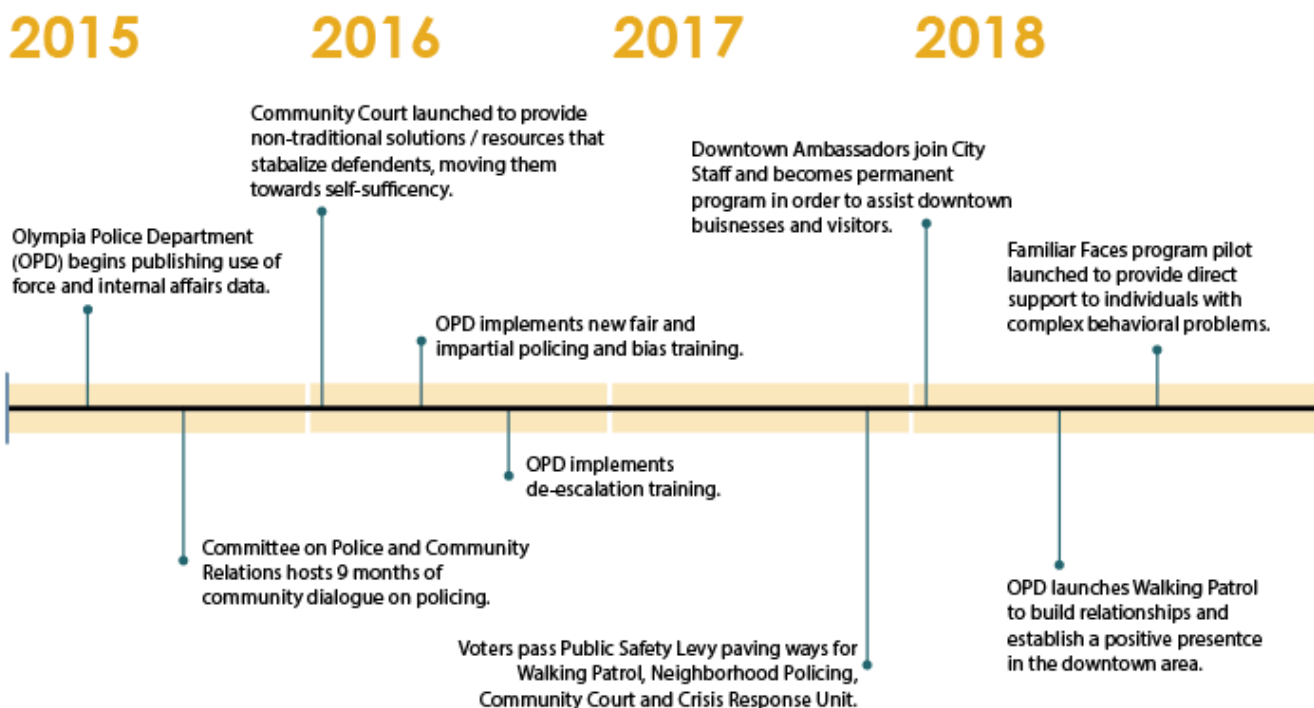
Context

The Reimagining Public Safety effort considered the entire range of public safety related departments and programs to maximize the collective impact of this work and ensure that the reimagining process can move us toward a community where all people can feel safe and flourish. The effort was inclusive and innovative in its conceptualization of the public safety system.

The mission of the **Olympia Police Department (OPD)** is to consistently earn the trust of the residents and visitors in the community. To fulfill this mission, OPD emphasizes fair and equitable outcomes for individuals and the community as a whole. To do this, the OPD conducts patrols and investigations, initiates community engagement, provides crisis services, and works with community partners, courts, prosecution and corrections. The OPD bolsters its responsiveness by fostering community conversations and undergoing contemporary training. It has also implemented nationally recognized programs that have put it at the forefront of alternative crisis response.

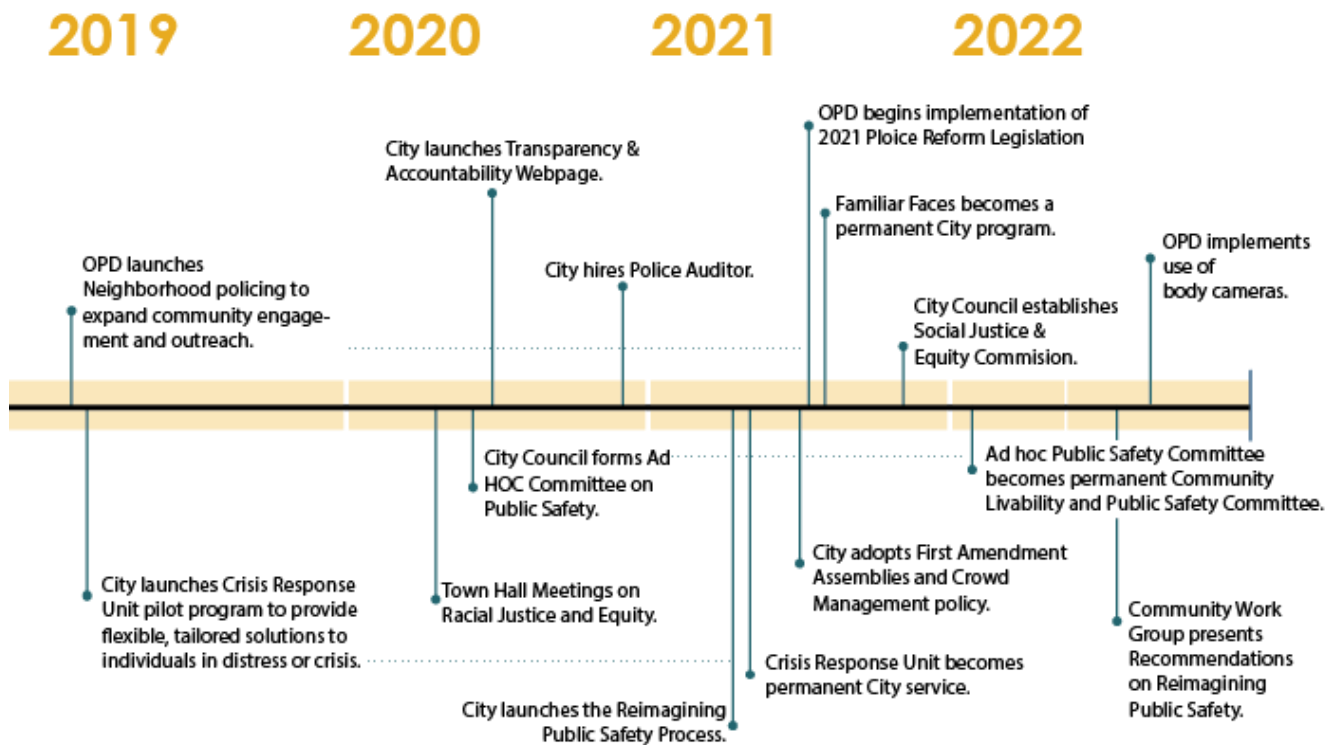
Through its outreach services, including the **Crisis Response Unit (CRU)** and **Familiar Faces**, the OPD can tailor its responses to people in crisis, enabling it to provide assistance that fits each situation. As a result, the OPD can maximize the effectiveness of its resources and provide individuals with more of the help they need. Modeled after the CAHOOTS Program from Eugene, Oregon, Olympia's CRU sends civilian responders, instead of police officers, to respond to individuals facing mental-health and substance-abuse crises. CRU has placed great emphasis on becoming a resource people feel comfortable reaching to for help.

The City's Evolving Response



Familiar Faces serves as a way to meet Olympia’s increasingly complex needs for crisis response and public safety. The program specifically addresses individuals who need extra attention but feel more comfortable working with peer navigators than interacting with traditional law enforcement. Perhaps the biggest contributing factor to the trust built between peer navigators and the individuals they assist comes from shared life experiences. Having personally faced similar lived experiences, the peer navigators within OPD’s Familiar Faces program can relate directly to the circumstances of their clients, allowing them to build the kinds of relationships needed to provide impactful assistance.

The **Olympia Fire Department (OFD)** plays a key role in public safety by responding rapidly to emergencies and reducing risk through prevention, fire and medical education, and disaster preparedness. To expand on and enhance its services, the OFD has moved to support individuals with low-acuity psychiatric or behavioral issues through social work in **OFD CARES** (Community Assistance Referral Education Services). These services help give the OFD the flexibility to respond to various crises in more specialized, efficient and effective ways. They also divert cases that would have otherwise been unnecessarily transported to hospitals, connecting them instead with the social support they require.



With its mission of providing objective, accessible, and timely resolution of all cases appropriately coming before it, protecting the rights of all individuals, and ensuring the dignified and fair treatment of all parties, the **Olympia Municipal Court** works to end the cycle of criminal activity. Public trust and confidence in the court are of paramount concern. To foster them, the court facilitates a fair and impartial process geared toward speedy resolution of cases. In addition to these commitments, the court seeks to provide individuals with resources and possibly alternatives to jail or fines. Coordinating these efforts with **probation programs** like probation supervision, community service, the Safe and Sober Driving Program, a 24-hour alternative DUI program, electronic home monitoring, Day Jail, Work Crew, moral reconnection therapy and the Community Court's criminal court assessment tool helps match individuals with options that give them the support they need. Such considerations can make the difference in helping individuals avoid criminal activity in the future.

The **Olympia Community Court** takes a non-traditional approach that employs practical, targeted solutions instead of traditional punishment. Working together with community partners who specialize in housing services, education, employment, chemical dependency, health care, licensing, mental-health services and veterans services, the program offers individuals a hand up. Personnel emphasize the importance of identifying what immediate social-service resources a person needs and making available options that meet those needs and help the person become self-sufficient.

Taking an approach tailored toward minimizing re-offenses, the **City Prosecutor's Office** meticulously evaluates cases. One objective of this work is to ensure cases are addressed in a timely manner. Another objective is to determine which cases should be declined because they (1) serve no public purpose, (2) are against the purpose of the law or (3) would result in a decreased respect for the law. A third objective is to identify cases that might need to be diverted to another court. Once a case goes to trial, the Prosecutor's Office pursues a fair and just resolution for victims and defendants. Along with the work evaluating and prosecuting cases, the Prosecutor's Office provides services to victims of crime and advocates to protect victims' rights in criminal cases. Meanwhile, the City of Olympia maintains a set of attorneys who provide services as **public defenders**. These attorneys are contractors who work out of their own offices. They advocate for the best outcomes based on defendants' individual situations and seek to connect them with any social services they need. Additionally, the public defenders uphold standards for indigent defense services. Two elements that distinguish Olympia's program from those in many other places are the public defense coordinator and the social-services worker for public defense that are on staff. These staff members help enhance the support defendants receive.

Olympia's **corrections program** focuses on connecting offenders with services that help keep them from re-offending and that give them the best opportunity for a successful return to the community. To do this, corrections staff work with police, courts, the defense, probation, alternative programs and community partners. For example, peer navigators provide support that helps offenders upon their release. Corrections has also made changes to its booking philosophy that are designed to address the needs and circumstances of each offender. These considerations can make a substantial difference in the long-term outcomes of the corrections work.

Public safety contains many different components. However, the process for Reimagining Public Safety prioritized a comprehensive approach aimed at incorporating each department and program in ways that fully account for the needs of the community and allow for the best, most precise response to each situation.

The Community Work Group

In early 2021, the City of Olympia sought nominations for a nine-member Community Work Group that would lead this community-driven process. Integral to the success of this approach was identifying community members dedicated to learning about the public safety system, deeply listening to the communities' lived experiences, and collaborating with staff and one another to develop recommendations that reflect what they heard and learned.

Nominations were received via interviews with key community stakeholders, City staff who work in the public safety system, community partner organizations, community members and City Councilmembers. As a result, ten community members were initially identified to be part of the Work Group, with two members needing to leave the process mid-way due to other obligations.

Reimagining Public Safety Community Work Group Members



Chris Belton



Christina Daniels



Ally Upton



Dr. Matt Goldenberg



Larry Jefferson



Wade Uyeda



Malika LaMont



Vanessa Malapote



Todd Monohon

The Community Work Group put in the time to learn about the public safety system, and how community members experience Olympia's public safety system in terms of how people connect with the system, how our system responds to the needs of community members, and how our system supports those who are navigating through out and into the community. Each Work Group member spent more than 66 hours attending meetings, plus additional time at listening sessions, reviewing process materials, pursuing additional education and shadowing public safety staff.

To hear from the community, the Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, made shifts to their approach and timeframe, and worked to remove barriers to community members participating and feeling comfortable speaking to their experiences. The Community Work Group's outreach and engagement over the past year has included:

- Interviews with individual stakeholders
- City Council work sessions
- A survey and eight listening sessions with public safety staff
- A communitywide survey on *Engage Olympia*
- Seven community listening sessions
- Ten smaller focus groups; and
- Feedback from the public on the proposed recommendations before proceeding to City Council.

Through that outreach and engagement, the Work Group's efforts have centered equity in the final recommendation through the following ways:

- Focus on long-term, systems change
- Approach safety holistically and through the lens of the human experience
- Move people towards wellness
- Acknowledge and address harm
- Assumes those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions
- Reduce barriers and improve system accessibility

The recommendations will be implemented in a variety of ways, including incorporation into strategic planning efforts, the City's annual budget process, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates to operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects.



"The work of this group has been comprehensive and heartfelt. Thank you for creating safe spaces for difficult conversation. Thank you for being courageous and bringing your knowledge, expertise and care for others to this process. Your commitment is deeply appreciated."

~Cheryl Selby
Olympia Mayor, 2016-2023

The recommendations: Four guiding principles

The reimagining public safety work group recommended, and Olympia city council adopted, four guiding principles for the Reimagining Public Safety's goals, strategies and actions.

Any decisions we make, or actions we take:

1. Will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological or economic harm to any member of the community;
2. Will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature;
3. Will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community; and
4. Will be based on the best available information and progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community.



Goal 1 Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

Strategy 1.1 Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness

Actions

- Clearly define the components of the public safety system and what community members need to feel safe (health, emergency response, policing, housing, courts, etc.).
- Establish a vision, mission and values for the City public safety system that reflect our community.
- More clearly identify the City's role in relationship to community organizations and non-profits, and regional partners.
- Establish a culture that eliminates bureaucracy and centers the needs of real people in the development and implementation of processes and services.
- Balance compassion and accountability; hold individuals responsible and accountable in a safe, relational and equitable way when laws are violated to influence behavior and assist individuals in moving towards wellness.

Strategy 1.2 Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system

Actions

- Public safety staff regularly meet with and listen to community members to understand and be responsive to their needs; invest in more collaboration on identifying public safety challenges and solutions.
- Establish a civilian/community member oversight model for the entire public safety system that meets the needs of the community.
- Evaluate how to engage the community in developing and/or reviewing public safety policy. Regularly share, review and learn from data with the community.
- Gather with community members for visioning opportunities, ways to think outside-the-box, and identify impactful and systemic changes.

Strategy 1.3 Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies

Actions

- Track and report on data for race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, economic status, sexual orientation, age and disability status to better understand disparities and areas of concern.
- Include Hispanic/Latino as a race, rather than a separate category for ethnicity.
- Gender data will be trans-inclusive in accordance with the City's resolution protecting transgender and non-binary people.
- Collect data with sensitivity to the power dynamics involved in who's asking, and always include an option not to disclose.
- Data should be disaggregated and analyzed along multiple lines of identity intersections.
- Collect data on individuals included in Community Court and other diversion programs, including numbers and demographic data on who is and is not being diverted.
- Enhance the ability to report and collect data on hate crimes and other associated statistics and develop proactive strategies to address hate crimes.
- Collect data on racial profiling.
- Regularly validate data through independent analysis and share those results with the community.
- Share regular data reports and/or dashboards with the community.
- Establish success metrics for all public safety system programs and use data to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in all parts of the system.
- Proactively seek out new ways to collect data, including enhancing data collection and sharing with Thurston County and the State of Washington.

Strategy 1.4 Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values

Actions

- Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative recruitment strategy to diversify the City's public safety system staff to be more representative of community demographics.
- Recruit and hire more multilingual staff.
- Hire, retain and promote staff that are in alignment with the culture and values of our city; demote and remove staff that are not in alignment.
- Develop a comprehensive, trauma-informed, trauma-responsive and holistic approach to ensure public safety system staff safety, health and wellness.
- Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on- and off-duty.
- Look at offering early retirement or other transition opportunities in response to the toll that strenuous conditions, burnout, and stigma can have on staff members.
- Create a culture in which public safety staff challenge themselves to always be a curious, innovative, and a learning organization.

Strategy 1.5 Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Actions

- Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.
- Host meetings and share information in spaces where people already gather; use community partner networks and connections to share and gather information more effectively.
- Ensure cultural humility and fairness in official statements, publications and web content.
- Establish and regularly report on clear metrics of success for all public safety programs and services.
- Ensure easy and regular access to crime statistics.
- Provide more education to the community on what the municipal public safety system can do with regards to enforcement, investigation, prosecution and sentencing.
- Regularly acknowledge and share with the community the challenges associated with public safety; helping the community to understand the intersections amongst different parts of the system, mental health, economic disparity, substance use, etc. Regularly share the innovations, the progress made on addressing issues, and achievements of the staff, programs, and departments within the City's public safety system.
- Close the loop whenever the public is engaged - do a better job of letting them know how their input is used and draw clear connections to decisions, and changes in policies and programs.

Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

Strategy 2.1 Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system

Actions

- Promote the safety of the houseless community by expanding access to low-barrier transitional and temporary shelter and supportive housing options while reducing unlawful encampments.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding for a Mental Health Crisis Facility to provide a resource for people diverted away from the criminal system or in need of additional crisis support.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding to establish and operate long-term mental health care facilities to divert individuals away from the jail or hospital and reduce the likelihood of them being released back onto the street with little or no connection to care.
- Lobby for reforms to the mental health system to allow for people to be committed without consent when they are a danger to themselves or others.
- Coordinate across government and non-governmental programs to proactively address the substance use disorder and overdose crisis in way that moves people towards stabilization, recovery and wellness.
- Explore innovative policy around decriminalization of substances and safe supply to address the overdose crisis.
- Lobby the state legislature for funding for more substance use disorder treatment facilities with capacity to accept individuals immediately.

Strategy 2.2 Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Actions

- Remove systemic barriers to stabilization (ex. access to supportive housing, affordable housing, employment, etc.)
- Ensure the planning and resourcing for reentry is strongly aligned and in collaboration with existing local non-governmental organizations.
- Provide supportive living environments where individuals have peer support and can establish community.
- Prior to release, prioritize establishing permanent supportive housing for chronically houseless individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders.
- Invest in partner organizations that use peer case managers and peer navigators to support individuals and reduce recidivism.
- Invest in developing new opportunities for formerly justice-involved individuals to achieve stability through economic opportunity, including education, technical skills training and/or entry-level employment.
- Develops ways for community members that are incarcerated with the Department of Corrections and/or Thurston County to work with City-employed peer counselors to connect with reentry services and develop a comprehensive reentry plan well before reentering the community.

Goal 3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

Strategy 3.1 Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system

Actions

- Acknowledge the historical wrongs perpetrated by the public safety system.
- Acknowledge the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.
- Educate public safety staff in the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members.
- Engage with historically marginalized community members to co-create a comprehensive plan for how to repair relationships and work towards healing the community from harm and trauma associated with the public safety system.

Strategy 3.2 Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups

Actions

- Commit to regular meaningful engagement with a diversity of community groups throughout the year to intentionally learn about their cultures, interests, perceptions and concerns.
- Host and participate in community conversations, special events, gatherings, service projects or informal activities with community members.
- Provide resources to support and/or leverage existing informal gatherings and events as opportunities to make connections and build relationships.
- Collaborate on reporting hate crimes, sharing public safety data and identifying solutions.

Strategy 3.3 Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services

Actions

- Use data and community input to understand, communicate and educate about the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.
- Regularly audit all existing policies and procedures using a pro-equity and anti-racist lens.
- Use an equity framework to evaluate all new operational changes, policies and programs.
- Proactively and regularly engage with professional organizations that promote and educate about equitable and anti-racist public safety.
- Ensure that all people encountering the public safety system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns and gender identity.
- Ensure the system is fully accessible for all community members, including those with a disability, who are neurodivergent and/or have a language barrier.
- Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate translation services, outreach and education to ensure the community understands the public safety system and how to use its services.

Strategy 3.4 Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training

Actions

- Expand and improve on anti-racist and pro-equity training requirements and opportunities for all public safety system staff.
- Communicate the value of anti-racist and pro-equity training and connect that value back to the overall City and public safety system vision and values.
- Include inter-cultural development and an understanding of equity in staff evaluations, and professional growth and development plans (e.g., Intercultural Development Inventory).
- Intentionally create opportunities for staff to engage in formal and informal learning experiences (outreach, volunteering, recreational activities, etc.) with community members who are different from them.
- Ensure staff have ongoing safe and supportive spaces and resources for continued pro-equity and anti-racist learning, processing, and dialogue.
- Review existing training for inherent bias, reinforcing outdated practices and methods that are not in line with our city values.
- Emphasize de-escalation and non-violent methods for addressing conflict.

Strategy 3.5 Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized groups

Actions

- Prioritize eliminating or significantly reducing fines and fees for individuals who are unable to pay.
- Join with other municipalities and/or a statewide system for waiving or resolving fees to help people become relicensed.
- Reform the bail process to address the lack of equity for individuals experiencing poverty.
- Improve coordination amongst departments and record-keeping to prevent onerous and inappropriate assignment of fees.
- Streamline the process to resolve fines and fees to prevent them from escalating and avoid an individual needing to navigate the court system.



Goal 4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

Strategy 4.1 Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders

Actions

- Provide more training to emergency call center/911 operators on how to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement responders.
- Use technology solutions to provide for known alternative responders to be called when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis; this can include case workers, family members, peer navigators, mental health professionals, etc.
- Provide education on what the Crisis Response Unit can and can't do when responding to a call.
- Ensure the public has a direct way to request the Crisis Response Unit.
- Explore co-response models that include embedding a social worker with first responders.

Strategy 4.2 Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs

Actions

- Prioritize diversion options first; wherever possible, don't exclude people because of their prior criminal history.
- Create more diversified options for diversion prior to an arrest.
- Build a more robust and available network of services to meet the needs of individuals that are being diverted.
- Ensure that required activities within diversion (e.g., domestic violence treatment) are available locally.
- Make diversion requirements available at low or no cost to participants.
- Expand partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations to create more opportunities to resolve cases before filing and after charges are filed.
- Regularly evaluate partners being used for diversion programs and ensure that they are not creating barriers to participants being able to use or succeed within their programs.
- Use the LEAD diversion model to provide intensive case management services in lieu of charging and booking individuals who have committed low level drug crime and "nuisance crimes," and have continual repeat contact with law enforcement due to their behavioral health issues and poverty.
- Develop a resource for mediation to respond to non-criminal activity or situations that do not require a mental health response.

Strategy 4.3 Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options

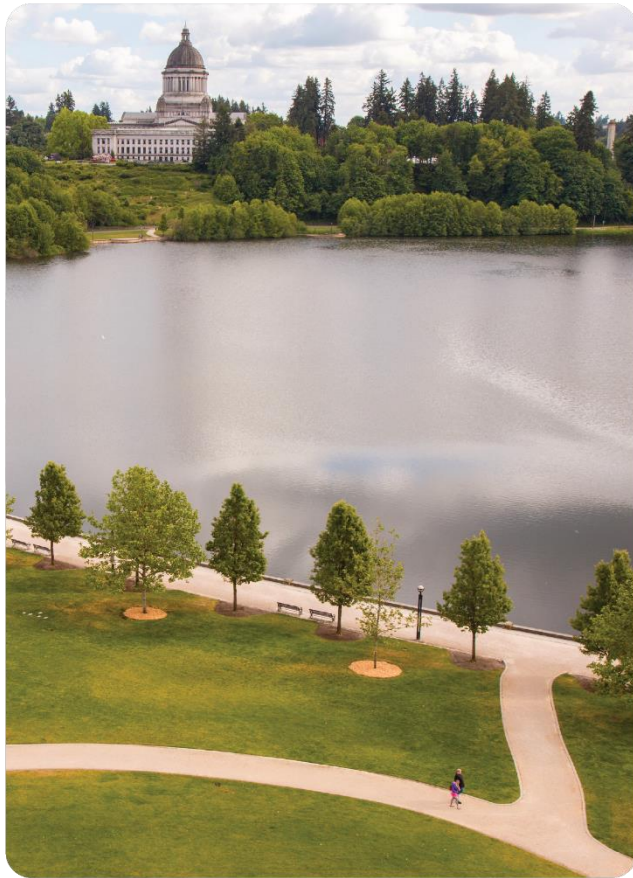
Actions

- Learn about and offer safe and equitable restorative justice practices where victims and offenders can choose to be involved in structured conversational processes where a victim can voice how they have been affected and the offender to take full responsibility and be present for the development of a restitution agreement.
- Access local and state resources to educate the community about restorative and transformative justice practices.

Strategy 4.4 Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts

Actions

- Expand the availability and eligibility for Community Court.
- Establish additional evidence-based therapeutic courts, such as Substance Use Court, Mental Health Court and Veteran's Court as an intervention option that provides supervision, accountability and access to treatment services.



Goal 5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

Strategy 5.1 Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive

Actions

- Proactively develop materials and tools that help community members understand better how to navigate the public safety system.
- Expand support available to victims of all crimes, including those without a suspect, to help them access the system, navigate the system and take the necessary steps to help remedy their situation.
- Ensure victims and defendants can get ready access to reports, filings and other documents they need to understand the status of and expedite their case (e.g., police reports).
- Invest in a municipal facility that supports crisis resolution, detox, medical respite for the houseless and support and space for diversion and therapeutic court options.
- Ensure that individuals in the jail have safe and equitable access to their public defenders, and support service providers.

Strategy 5.2 Evaluate public safety system staffing levels

Actions

- Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.
- Ensure appropriate staffing to be responsive to community expectations for engagement, transparency and reporting, and communications.
- Review and implement policies for staffing levels that ensure manageable court caseloads in which individuals and cases can receive the time and attention needed, with an emphasis on parity between prosecution and public defense.
- Review and implement policies for staffing levels to ensure call responsiveness is appropriate to call volume and needs as established using data.

Strategy 5.3 Improve the responsiveness of emergency services

Actions

- Increase the coordination and training for 911 dispatchers to ensure the right response entity is dispatched to a call for service.
- Right-size the response to the situation; start with the lowest level of department and staffing response needed to assess and respond to the situation.
- Ensure that public safety system staff are responding to calls from community members, acknowledging requests and consistently following up with individuals.
- Expand and resource the types of services that can be provided by unarmed peer responders or an appropriate service provider to meet the level of need.
- Explore creation of a civilian investigation unit to respond to low-level property crimes and other situations in which people do not feel safe interacting with law enforcement.
- Establish clarity on what program and/or responders community members should contact for different public safety situations and needs; provide clear information and instructions for the community.
- Connect frequent and persistent users of the 911 system to long-term, holistic case management that can better address those individuals' behavioral and emotional health needs.

Strategy 5.4 Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

Actions

- Organize the City's unarmed responders into a new "Community Safety Response" Department outside of the Police Department that would include, for example, Crisis Response Unit and Familiar Faces.
- Enhance ongoing coordination amongst the alternative and crisis response teams operating in the city, including both public and non-profit: Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program, Familiar Faces and Crisis Response Unit.
- Physically co-locate with community partners engaged in public safety response (e.g., Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program).
- Ensure that contracts with community organizations to provide public safety support include a living wage for employees.
- Strengthen regional cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies that may co-respond or work closely with Olympia to help ensure our community's innovative and community-driven approaches are recognized and utilized by others.
- Work closely with the local hospitals to identify more effective approaches to treating, holding and releasing individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis.

Strategy 5.5 Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe

Actions

- Expand the Neighborhood Policing unit so that officers not dedicated to responding to 911 calls can spend more time developing relationships with community members and addressing emerging issues of concern.
- Continue to invest in debris removal and maintaining clean public spaces and rights-of-way.
- Proactively work with private owners, providing technical assistance, incentives, grants, etc., to increase property maintenance standards.
- Expand the staffing and hours for the Police Walking Patrol and/or other models to increase support for public safety in Downtown.
- Respond quickly and proactively to neighborhood concerns (ex. newly established encampments, illegal dumping, etc.)

Implementation

This is not a plan that will sit on a shelf, but instead will continue to inform the City's commitment to centering equity in public safety, fostering trust, building capacity to meet the expectations and needs of our community and move people towards wellness.

The Reimagining Public Safety recommendations will be implemented in a variety of ways, including incorporation into strategic planning efforts, the City's annual budget process, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates to operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects. This work will inform the City's Focus Areas of Public Safety and Community Livability.

Some of the recommended actions are already underway and others will take time. These recommendations were put forward knowing that the Olympia City Council, City staff and partner agencies will need to further study the efficacy, prioritize and identify funding to make this work possible.

The City uses, and is currently developing, measures of success to assess and guide implementation of these recommendations on an ongoing bases.

Further Acknowledgements

This process was made possible through the vision and guidance of the 2021* and 2022 Olympia City Council who provided funding, support to the Community Work Group and trust in the Olympia community. Thank you to Mayor Cheryl Selby, Mayor Pro Tem Clark Gilman, Councilmember Jim Cooper, Councilmember Yến Huỳnh, Councilmember Dani Madrone, Councilmember Lisa Parshley, Councilmember Dontae Payne and Councilmember *Renata Rollins.







REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Recommendations for a Public Safety System that Fosters Trust and Works for Everyone



In February 2021, in the wake of civil unrest and a community call for social justice, the Olympia City Council responded with a community-led process to reimagine the City of Olympia's public safety system.

A Community Work Group of eight community members, representing a cross-section of demographics, expertise, and experiences, led an 18-month effort to understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. Their role in leading this process was to learn about Olympia's public safety system; deeply listen to community members' experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams; and coalesce what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

To hear from the community, the Community Work Group hosted extensive public engagement opportunities, made shifts to their approach and timeframe, and worked to remove barriers to community member participation by seeking ways to make sharing their experiences more comfortable. To center equity in their work, the Community Work Groups applied the following intentions throughout this process:

- Focus on long-term, systems change
- Approach safety holistically and through the lens of the human experience

The Reimagining Public Safety process had a scope that included the entire range of public safety-related departments and programs:

Olympia Police Department, the Crisis Response Unit (CRU), Familiar Faces (peer navigators), Olympia Fire Department, Olympia Municipal Court, Olympia Community Court, Public Defense and the City Prosecutor's Office.

- Move people towards wellness
- Acknowledge and address harm
- Assume those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions
- Reduce barriers and improve system accessibility

These efforts capture the collective voice of our community.

The Olympia City Council formally accepted the Community Work Group's recommendations on December 6, 2022.

The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies and numerous actions. This work is the challenge we must accept to realize a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.





Four Guiding Principles

Any decisions we make or actions we take...

1. Will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological or economic harm to any member of the community;
2. Will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature;
3. Will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community; and
4. Will be based on the best available information and process will be measured and regularly reported to the community.
5. (Note: Please reference the full Reimagining Public Safety report for the individual actions that will help Olympia move towards the following goals.)

Goal 1: Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

- Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness
- Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system
- Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies
- Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values
- Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

- Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system
- Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Goal 3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

- Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system
- Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups
- Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services
- Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training
- Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized



Recommendations for a Public Safety System that Fosters Trust and Works for Everyone



Goal 4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

- Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders
- Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs
- Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options
- Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts training

Goal 5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

- Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive
- Evaluate public safety system staffing levels
- Improve the responsiveness of emergency services
- Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe



CONTINUING FORWARD



Fostering belonging and connection with community members who have been historically unengaged in City processes and decision-making



Identifying the Olympia Police Department's strategic priorities for the next five years



Exploring enhancements to community involvement and oversight of the Olympia Police Department



Evaluating Police Department staffing and resources to continue to strive to meet community needs, expectations, and priorities.

What Success Looks Like

Olympians will recognize that they have been heard as these recommendations are implemented across processes that reach deep into our organization: in strategic planning, annual budgeting, department and program work plans, policy changes, updates in operations, expansion of community partnerships, grants and pilot projects.

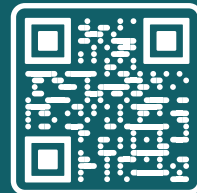
City Public Safety leaders will monitor and regularly report to the City Council and community our progress. In 2023, such efforts include: enhancing Olympia's approach to the community oversight of law enforcement, deploying police vehicle cameras, improving collection and reporting of data, and enhancing ways to strengthen community connections.

Olympia's public safety system has for years prided itself on its work to be transparent, forward leaning and responsive to our community's values, and we will continue to strive to serve our community in the ways expressed through *Reimagining*, with a goal of a public safety system that fosters trust and works for everyone.

To review the full plan, visit <https://qrco.de/OlyRSP>



LEARN MORE:



<https://qrco.de/OlyRSP>



City of Olympia Reimagining Public Safety 2026 Progress Report

Our Vision A Vibrant, Healthy, Beautiful Capital City



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Background

In February 2021, in the wake of civil unrest and community calls for social justice, the Olympia City Council responded with a community-led process to reimagine the City of Olympia's public safety system. Public safety is complex, and significantly influenced by other factors, such as educational opportunities, access to high quality healthcare and economic opportunity. While acknowledging those critical influences, this process sought to focus on the City's public safety system including policing, prosecution, public defense, municipal court, corrections, fire and medical response, homeless response and code enforcement. In this progress report we did not specifically focus on the City's Homeless Response because their work is captured in the [One Community Plan](#).

A Community Work Group made up of eight community members representing a cross-section of demographics, expertise, and lived experiences led an 18-month effort to understand how Olympia community members experience public safety. The role of the Community Work Group was to learn about Olympia's public safety system; deeply listen to community members' experiences, concerns, hopes and dreams and synthesize what they heard into a recommendation for the City Council.

The Olympia City Council formally accepted the Community Work Group's recommendations on December 6, 2022. The final recommendations include four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies and numerous actions.

Four Guiding Principles

The Work Group's recommendations included four guiding principles, committing that any decision or action taken...

- 1) Will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological or economic harm to any member of the community;
- 2) Will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature;
- 3) Will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community; and
- 4) Will be based on the best available information and process will be measured and regularly reported to the community.

Five Goals

In addition to the four guiding principles, the bulk of the Work Group's recommendations are broken down into five goals, 21 strategies, and numerous recommended actions.

Goal 1: Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

- Strategy 1.1: Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness
- Strategy 1.2: Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system
- Strategy 1.3: Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies
- Strategy 1.4: Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values
- Strategy 1.5: Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

- Strategy 2.1: Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system
- Strategy 2.2: Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Goal 3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

- Strategy 3.1: Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system
- Strategy 3.2: Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups
- Strategy 3.3: Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services
- Strategy 3.4: Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training
- Strategy 3.5: Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized groups

Goal 4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

- Strategy 4.1: Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders
- Strategy 4.2: Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-bookings diversion programs
- Strategy 4.3: Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options
- Strategy 4.4: Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts

Goal 5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

- Strategy 5.1: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive
- Strategy 5.2: Evaluate public safety system staffing levels
- Strategy 5.3: Improve the responsiveness of emergency services
- Strategy 5.4: Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners
- Strategy 5.5: Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe

Municipal Court and Jail Services Transition

Since the Council's acceptance of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations, there have been several major updates to the City's public safety system, notably the closure of the Olympia City Jail and the transition of municipal court services to be contracted through Thurston County.

At the time the recommendations were developed, the City had its own municipal jail. The Olympia City Jail was used to house misdemeanor offenders. Built in the 1960's, it lacked many of the qualities a modern facility offers such as natural sunlight, outdoor recreation, and large open spaces. In 2023, the City closed its jail and contracted with the Nisqually Jail for services. The newer Nisqually Jail facility offered the ability to house individuals in our care in a way that is more aligned with the City's values than the older municipal jail facility.

Additionally, in February of 2026 the City transitioned its municipal court services to a regional model, facilitated by Thurston County District Court. It is important to acknowledge this transition and the immediate impact on availability of alternative courts, like Community Court. At the time of this report's publishing, therapeutic courts had not yet been established for Olympia with the District Court. Thurston County has committed to the Reimagining Public Safety goals and will continue to work with the City to move forward in establishing services that are in alignment with the goals and strategies of this plan. Representatives from Thurston County's district court along with the City's Prosecution and Public Defense presented an update to the City Council at a [May 12, 2026 study session](#), discussing the transition process, current services, and next steps.

2026 Progress Report

The Reimagining Public Safety recommendations were accepted by City Council in December of 2022. Since then, there have been periodic updates published on the City's website and the guiding principles and goals have been referenced in operational decision making, however there has not been a comprehensive update given to the City Council or the community on what actions have been taken across the system to move the work forward.

The purpose of this report is to provide the City Council and the community with a comprehensive update on the progress to date of moving forward the recommended strategies and actions within the Reimagining Public Safety goals across the City's public safety system.

Overview

Outlined in the following sections are selected updates from the five goals of the recommendations. To view a full detailed list of updates, please see the attached appendix. Within the updates, many actions with noted progress come from Goal 1 and Goal 5. When viewed holistically, the updates also fall into two major themes: strengthening and building relationships, and expansion of alternative services.

Through all parts of the City's public safety system, we saw an intentional effort to build and strengthen relationships, and increase coordination with other partners in the system, service providers, and the public. Inside the City's public safety system, the Olympia Police Department and Olympia Fire Department have made an intentional effort over the last five years to increase joint training and improve coordinated response. This includes training on responding to individuals in crisis and active shooter training. Examples of increased coordination with regional public safety partners include the Olympia Fire Department's Assistant Chief of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regularly attending the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee, and the Olympia Police Department coordinating with local law enforcement agencies to establish a Special Investigations Response Team (SIRT).

Examples of expanded alternative services include the expansion of the Olympia Police Department's Crisis Response Unit (CRU) to include a downtown walking unit, and the Olympia Fire Department's launch of the Community Assistance and Education Services (C.A.R.E.S) program.

Goal 1- Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

The first goal of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations is to build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system. The strategies for accomplishing this include regular assessment of outcomes, emphasis on wellness for staff and community members, and increase community participation in the system itself.

Strategy 1.1 – Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness

The Olympia Police Department has emphasized the balance of compassion and accountability through the utilization and expansion of their Outreach Services programs like the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and building relationships with service providers. There is also overlap with this action and the work the Prosecutor's Office has been doing toward increasing coordination within the system (Strategy 5.4). The Prosecutor's Office regularly connects with officers to collaboratively solve issues and recommend resources for individuals with a goal of moving people toward wellness and breaking cycles of repeated contact with the criminal justice system.

Strategy 1.2 – Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system

In 2024, the City Council accepted recommendations from the Social Justice and Equity Commission (SJEC) on Community Oversight of Law Enforcement. The recommendations included enhancements to the role of the Civilian Police Auditor, as well as the creation of a Community Policing Board. The Community Policing Board (Board) was established in 2025, with Council approving member appointments in September. In March of

2026 the Board had their first meeting with the Civilian Police Auditor and provided community perspective and feedback on the Auditor's first draft report.

Strategy 1.3 – Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies

In 2025, the Olympia Police Department's data dashboard went live on the [City's Performance Measures](#) web page, including data related to calls for service, response times, officer training, and Outreach Services. In 2026, the Olympia Fire Department also launched a data dashboard on the City's web page with data on department response times, number of incidents responded to, and response reliability and performance.

Data is also a central part of the Civilian Police Auditor's work in assessing police department use of force incidents and complaints investigations for indications of bias or racial profiling. Findings are included in their regular reports which are issued twice a year and are available on the [City's Police Oversight](#) web page.

Strategy 1.4 – Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values

Recruitment and retention of staff reflective of our community values has been a focus of both the Police and Fire departments. The Olympia Fire Department (OFD) has focused its recruitment efforts on local colleges with the aim of hiring staff representative of our community's demographics. The Olympia Police Department (OPD) has attended a variety of recruitment events including events specifically for hiring women in law enforcement, and veterans career fairs. OPD has also focused on expanding multilingual staff with expansion of bilingual allowances for qualifying members of all their labor groups. Currently OPD has staff certified in Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Mongolian.

Peer Support programs are also an important tool for staff wellness, and both OPD and OFD have grown their Peer Support networks in the past five years. OPD expanded their Peer Support team to include non-commissioned staff. OFD established their Peer Support policy in 2020 and has expanded their program to include 14 members. Both programs offer ongoing training and meetings for members of their Peer Support teams.

Strategy 1.5 – Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Expansion of both formal and informal communication tools have been part of the actions addressed in this section by the Police and Fire Departments. The Olympia Fire Department (OFD) launched a Facebook page to better connect with the community around their work. The Olympia Police Department (OPD) also added a Facebook page to their social media presence, as well as dedicated web pages for information and data transparency related to the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Flock Camera programs. The department ultimately ended the Flock camera program in 2025 in response to community concerns about the security of

the program's data and the program no longer being in alignment with the goals of the Reimagining Public Safety recommendations.

OPD regularly meets with community groups to share information and create opportunities for community members to ask questions and bring forward community concerns. The Neighborhood Policing and Outreach Services staff participate in a variety of neighborhood and community meetings, as well as host events like Coffee with a Cop. The Chief and executive level leadership team has also made an intentional effort to engage with community organizations and faith groups, particularly around community concerns like federal immigration enforcement activity and the City's sanctuary city resolutions.

The Civilian Police Auditor's contract also includes regular communication with the community about their work. In 2025, the City Council hired OIR Group to fill the role of Civilian Police Auditor. October of 2025 OIR Group and the newly established Community Policing Board co-hosted an open house for community members to learn more about their work and share community perspectives and priorities with OIR Group.

In May of 2026, representatives from Prosecution, Public Defense, and the Thurston County District Court provided the City Council and community with a formal update on the transition of Olympia's court services and discussed future opportunities like establishing therapeutic courts for Olympia.

Goal 2 – Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

This goal emphasizes reducing overall crime by addressing root causes and contains two strategies with a variety of suggested actions. Many of the recommended actions center around lobbying the state legislature for funding or State level reforms.

Strategy 2.2 - Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

The City's Public Defense is a current recipient of RCW 10.101 grant funds awarded by Washington State Office of Public Defense. Currently this funds a part-time Social Services Worker at 16 hours/week through mid-2027. This staff member connects justice involved defendants with services such as drug and alcohol treatment, mental health support, and housing support in an effort to remove barriers to stabilization.

With the City's transition to District Court there is now access to Mental Health Probation for individuals under court supervision. Prosecutors have the option to ask for individuals to be placed on Mental Health Probation, if appropriate, providing more hands-on support for individuals supporting them towards wellness and stabilization.

Goal 3 – Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

The focus of the strategies in this goal are to address past harms, work towards healing and authentic relationships, and create a system that is anti-racists and equitable.

Strategy 3.1 – Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system

Education around the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members is a central action under this strategy. The City continues to focus on education for staff to deliver systems that promote healing. Olympia's Code Enforcement staff receive training provided by the Washington Association of Code Enforcement. Be the Culture's presentation addressing "DEI as Customer Service: Evaluating Codes with Equity in Mind, Enhancing Compliance with DEI-Sensitive Education Practices" is an example of the types of trainings completed in the last few years.

OPD officers have also received training provided by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) on a variety of topics, including, but not limited to:

- Introduction to the Historical Intersection of Race and Policing
- People First: Awareness, Challenges, and Response to Poverty and Recidivism
- Introduction to Indigenous Concepts and Culture
- LGBTQ+ Core Competency
- The Criminal Legal System: Structural Inequalities, Monetary Sanctions, Policy and Reform

Strategy 3.2 – Build authentic relationships with marginalized groups

OPD Leadership are investing in relationship building with groups not traditionally engaged with law enforcement. Chief Parker prioritizes regularly meeting with faith-based organizations, community groups, and non-profits to learn and create opportunities for dialogue. She has most recently met with the Islamic Center of Olympia, Temple Beth Hatfilo, PFLAG, and the NAACP.

OPD's Community Policing team continues to host and participate in community conversations and informal events. Examples of informal events are the annual pop-up popsicle distribution events at Olympia parks in the summer, Cocoa with a Cop events at Oly on Ice in the winter, and Coffee with a Cop at local coffee shops and multifamily housing community centers throughout the year.

Strategy 3.3 – Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services

The Olympia Police Department (OPD) regularly reviews and updates its policies and procedures and holds staff accountable to these standards. Two policies of note are [Policy 320- Standards of Conduct Policy](#) which was updated December 21, 2022 and [Policy 318 – Interactions with Transgender Individuals](#) which was updated February 1, 2024.

Code Enforcement has also been committed to an intentional emphasis on ensuring that all people encountering the system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns and gender identity. An example of this is the relationship Code Enforcement has built with downtown community organizations. In the past, Code Enforcement cases with one of these organizations relied on infractions to gain compliance, but by consistently placing an intentional emphasis on respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns and gender identity, and relationship building, recent complaints have been resolved through voluntary compliance leading to better outcomes for everyone involved.

OPD has also taken steps to improve accessibility for community members including partnering with community members on development of the Body Worn Camera Policy and creating resources like the department's Deaf/Hard of Hearing Resource Card, and additional training on Deaf Awareness for officers. In 2026 the department also added Axon Translate services linked to officer's body worn cameras to provide real time translation of over 50 languages.

Strategy 3.4 – Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training

One of the specific actions recommended in this strategy is to emphasize de-escalation and non-violent methods of addressing conflict. Deescalation training is incorporated throughout Olympia Police Department (OPD) trainings. For example, it is included in all the department's reality-based training. OPD officers are also trained in deescalation through annual Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Patrol Tactics In-Service (PTI), and Effective Communications training. In 2024, officers also had the opportunity to receive specialized de-escalation training specifically for interactions with juveniles, in response to a recommendation from the Civilian Police Auditor.

Strategy 3.5 – Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized groups

In 2024 the Olympia Police Department's Records Division partnered with the City Clerk's Office to align the Body Worn Camera and Public Records Request fee structures with best practice and other municipalities structures. Changes to the fee structure included:

- Improvements to how estimated fees are calculated upfront for requestors, and;

- Clarifying who qualifies for free records requests.

The updated fee structure was completed in September of 2024 and better ensures transparency by decreasing the amount time it takes staff to process BWC requests.

Goal 4 – Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

The overall goal in this section is to reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. There are a variety of strategies and actions in this section focused on alternative response programs, therapeutic courts, and diversion programs. With the transition of the City's court services to District Court, many of the recommended strategies and actions in this goal will be future opportunities in partnership with the District Court and other community partners.

Strategy 4.1 – Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders

Since the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) team's establishment as City employees in 2021, the Olympia Police Department has steadily grown the program and its services as part of the Outreach Services Division. In 2023, the CRU team expanded hours of service to include swing shift operations and in 2024, expanded the program to include a downtown Walking CRU unit. The expansion of CRU staffing and services provided additional opportunities for CRU team members to attend meetings with stakeholders and provide education on what the CRU team can and can't do, and how to directly request CRU services.

Goal 5 – Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

The highest percentage of actions addressed to date are part of the five strategies included in Goal 5 which centers around the public safety system being accessible and responsive. The strategies address conditions that contribute to people feeling unsafe, coordination in the system and with partners, responsiveness of services, staffing levels appropriate for community expectations of services, and the system being accessible and supportive.

Strategy 5.1 – Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive

In 2021, the City Prosecutor's Office hired a second victim advocate. Previously they were only able to provide support for victims of Domestic Violence crimes. In alignment with the recommended action of expanding

support available to victims of all crimes, the additional victim advocate allowed the Prosecutor's Office to expand their support for victims to include 'general victim advocate crimes' in August of 2021.

In 2023, the City transitioned to a contract with Nisqually Jail for misdemeanor jail services. Initially, there were challenges with ensuring that the public defenders could consistently access their clients that were housed at Nisqually in an efficient manner. The City's Public Defense Program Manager, supported by the Olympia Police Department's Operational Support Lieutenant, worked diligently with Nisqually to find additional avenues for efficient and consistent access to clients. As a result, there are now two dedicated zoom meetings scheduled each week, which provides public defenders the opportunity to schedule a confidential meeting on a zoom platform with their clients held in Nisqually Jail.

In 2025 the Olympia Police Department's detective's unit launched an alternative reporting program for victims of sexual assault. "Seek Then Speak" is a confidential and interactive tool that helps adult (18 and above) survivors of sexual assault find information, explore support options, and begin the reporting process – on their terms. This provides a trauma-informed alternative that puts control back in the hands of survivors.

Strategy 5.2 – Evaluate public safety system staffing levels

Across the City's public safety system, several assessments of staffing levels have been completed. In 2023 the Olympia Police Department conducted a staffing study which included recommendations for increased staffing levels. Based on that assessment, the City Council approved an additional nine police officer positions. The Crisis Response Unit (CRU) also saw an expansion to include swing shift coverage in April of 2023 and a dedicated downtown Walking CRU team established in 2024. An additional Familiar Faces Peer position was also created as a result of the staffing study, however due to budget challenges this additional position was never filled and needed to be eliminated in 2026. This remains an identified opportunity area for the future.

In 2025, The Olympia Fire Department completed their Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover, outlining the community needs relating to fire department performance and response.

In response to updated Washington State Supreme Court Standards for Indigent Defense, Public Defense adjusted workloads in 2025 by adding additional public defense case credits, increasing the case credit value, and reducing the number of maximum credits allowed per public defender. It is also responsive to the recommended actions in this section by ensuring manageable caseloads so that individuals and cases receive the time and attention needed.

Strategy 5.3 – Improve responsiveness of emergency services

In 2025, the Olympia Fire Department (OFD) completed a review of dispatch criteria related to Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) calls for service. From 2024 to 2025 the OFD Deputy Chief of Operations also reviewed the department's dispatch protocols and adjusted for the number of units and personnel responding to emergencies.

In March of 2023, the Olympia Police Department (OPD) worked with TCOMM to draft a response protocol for the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) team, helping guide dispatchers in utilization of CRU in responding to appropriate calls for service.

Improved responsiveness of emergency services also included expanding resources so that the response meets the level of need for community members. To this end, in 2023, OFD established their Community Assistance and Education Services (C.A.R.E.S) program, with the goal of supporting a healthier community and reducing reliance on the 911 system for non-acute concerns. OFD also began providing low acuity ambulance transport in 2024, creating an additional level of response to meet different levels of need from community members.

OPD also expanded their services to include Community Service Officers (CSO) who can respond to found property, assist with traffic control, and transports. The program initially included four CSOs positions, but in 2025 two positions were put on hold due to budget reductions. In 2026, those positions were reallocated and the department is actively seeking to fill the vacancies.

Strategy 5.4 – Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

In alignment with this strategy, the Olympia Police (OPD) and Fire Departments (OFD) have invested in increasing their joint response training over the past five years, increasing the number of joint scenario-based trainings for critical incident responses. They also coordinated on establishing a new program and draft policies for Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) to improve their coordinated response.

OPD's Outreach Services, including the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and Familiar Faces, have also intentionally focused on ongoing coordination with private and non-profit alternative and crisis response programs like Arrest and Jail Alternatives, Olympia Health and Recovery Services, and the Thurston County Resource Hub as examples.

Strategy 5.5 – Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe

The City's Code Enforcement Program has focused on partnerships with other departments and programs to address property maintenance standards and keeping public spaces clean. They partner with the Clean Team on debris removal. The [Clean Team](#) is a City program responsible for supporting general upkeep and cleaning in and around public spaces, primarily focused on Downtown Olympia. Code Enforcement staff meet biweekly with the Clean Team supervisor to ensure problem areas are being addressed effectively and Clean Team is supported in clarification of property lines related to clean up requests.

Code Enforcement also emphasizes education and working with property owners to address complaints through voluntary compliance. One example of this was a property where the residents were involved in a

domestic violence case being investigated by the Olympia Police Department (OPD), while also generating code complaints contributing to their neighbors feeling unsafe. Code Enforcement worked with OPD to prioritize the physical safety of the victim and allow them time to work through a protection order, while helping neighbors to understand the plan for addressing their code complaints with the property owner. Code Enforcement then followed up and worked with property owners to understand and work through the maintenance standards.

Future Opportunities

There were many future opportunities identified around data collection and application, particularly where there are limitations with current report writing and data collecting software. The Police Department is actively pursuing a new records management system that would be more flexible in allowing the department to effectively collect additional data beyond the federal requirements, as well as more inclusive collection of gender data. The software is anticipated to allow OPD to analyze additional demographic information, such as Hispanic/Latino as an ethnicity. OPD also recognized that although there is already a mechanism in place to collect hate crime data, there is an opportunity for the department to provide more community education on hate crimes and how to report them.

Part of the contracted scope of services with Thurston County for court services includes the utilization of therapeutic courts. Reestablishing therapeutic courts for Olympia cases is an opportunity aligned with Goal 4 and will be a collaborative effort between City and District Court staff, including Prosecution and Public Defense. Increased staffing in the City Prosecutor's office to support establishment of therapeutic courts and traffic enforcement is an additional opportunity to address community needs and expectations. Additional information on this opportunity is available in the [May 12, 2026 Council Study Session](#).

In alignment with the Olympia Police Department's staffing study, the department has identified the hiring of additional Familiar Faces peers would increase the program's ability to serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Next Steps

The next step will be to bring City staff together to discuss potential priority areas in continuing to move this work forward. This will include utilizing the feedback from the Social Justice and Equity Commission, refinement of data used to guide decision making, and assessment of available resources. Staff are also committed to a regular cadence of reporting back to Council and the community on this work.



City of Olympia

Reimagining Public Safety

2026 Progress Report / July 2026

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Goal 1: Build trust and legitimacy in the City's public safety system

Strategy 1.1: Center the City's public safety system on moving people towards wellness

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Clearly define the components of the public safety system and what community members need to feel safe (health, emergency response, policing, housing, courts, etc.)					
More clearly identify the City's role in relationship to community organizations and non-profits, and regional partners					
Establish a vision, mission and values for the City public safety system that reflects our community	2021 Updated Mission, Vision, Values statements	Fire	Chief Flowers/Whittney Ramirez	Complete	Mission "Respond rapidly, with highly trained professionals to mitigate emergencies for our community. We are dedicated to reducing risk through prevention, fire and medical education and disaster preparedness." Vision "To be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. To continually invest in safety and long term well-being of our firefighters. To provide vital information, education and training. To leverage equipment and technology for increased efficiency. To critically review and improve our service delivery." Values "Professionalism - Commitment to excellence
<i>Establish a vision, mission and values for the City public safety system that reflects our community</i>	2024 Updated Mission, Vision, Values statements with a focus on strengthening community trust	Police	DC Brady / Whittney Ramirez	Complete	Mission "The Olympia Police Department provides services, builds partnerships, and enhances public safety to strengthen community trust and improve quality of life for current and future generations." Vision "A safe and vibrant community for all." Values "Teamwork, accountability, compassion and integrity."
Establish a culture that eliminates bureaucracy and centers the needs of real people in the development and implementation of processes and services					
Balance compassion and accountability; hold individuals responsible and accountable in a safe, relational and equitable way when laws are violated to influence behavior and assist individuals in moving towards wellness.	OPD balances the need for compassion through Outreach Services or other community resources, with the need to also hold certain behaviors accountable. OPD has worked hard with service providers to find other resources for individuals when feasible to avoid incarceration when possible.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Also see Strategy 5.4

Strategy 1.2: Expand the role of community in the City's public safety system

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	NOTES
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Public safety staff regularly meet with and listen to community members to understand and be responsive to their needs; invest in more collaboration on identifying public safety challenges and solutions.	OPD staff attend regular meetings with community members, businesses, and other community groups to work collaboratively on issues.				Examples: monthly Regional Retail Theft meetings with area business and other law enforcement agencies, Neighborhood Association meetings, visits with local faith communities.
Establish a civilian/community member oversight model for the entire public safety system that meets the needs of the community	2025 established Community Policing Board	City	Margo Morales	Complete	Recommendations from the Community Oversight of Law Enforcement process accepted by City Council in July 2024 included changes to Police Auditor scope of work, and established Community Policing Board. The Board was established in the fall of 2025 and had their first official business meeting in March 2026. The purpose of the board is to ensure Olympia Police Department accountability and transparency.
Evaluate how to engage the community in developing and/or reviewing public safety policy. Regularly share, review, and learn from data with the community.					
Gather with community members for visioning opportunities, ways to think outside-the-box, and identify impactful and systemic changes					

Strategy 1.3: Use data to regularly monitor outcomes and inform decision-making and strategies

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Track and report on data for race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, economic status, sexual orientation, age and disability status to better understand disparities and areas of concern	The current records management system does not allow flexibility in what demographics data it collects. It is something that we are aware of and are working on efforts within our new system to see if this will be possible with the new program.	Police	DC Brady	Exploring for future transition to new records software	
Include Hispanic/Latino as a race, rather than a separate category for ethnicity.	This is a federal reporting issue and not something that we are able to change in our current reporting systems. It is something that we are aware of and are working on efforts within our new system to see if this will be possible with the new program.	Police	DC Brady	Exploring for future transition to new records software	
Gender data will be trans-inclusive in accordance with the City's resolution protecting transgender and non-binary people.	OPD is very mindful in the narrative of the reports to use trans-inclusive language and document how community members choose to be identified. Part of our reporting for federal requirements does not allow us to accurately reflect this in the data, but in our communications with community members and in our narratives we are very mindful.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	OPD has been very mindful in our training and use of inclusive descriptors. Records management software is limited in what data can be collected, OPD but has made changes to training and expectations for reports to ensure the narratives are inclusive.
Collect data with sensitivity to the power dynamics involved in who's asking, and always include an option not to disclose.					
Data should be disaggregated and analyzed along multiple lines of identify intersections					
Collect data on individuals included in Community Court and other diversion programs, including numbers and demographic data on who is and is not being diverted.					

Enhance the ability to report and collect data on hate crimes and other associated statistics and develop proactive strategies to address hate crimes.	OPD collects data on hate crimes.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing/Future Opportunity	The mechanism for reporting and tracking is in place, however the department recognizes that there could be more community education on what a hate crime is and how to report it.
Collect data on racial profiling.	Civilian Police Auditor assess for indications of bias in uses of force as part of their regular auditing function. Findings are included in their regular reports.	City Manager's Office	Margo Morales	Ongoing	Link to Annual Report covering 2025.
Regularly validate data through independent analysis and share those results with the community	In 2024 Council accepted recommendations from the Social Justice and Equity Commission on an expanded role of the Civilian Police Auditor. The Police Auditor reviews all use of force incidents as well as complaints and provides a mid-year and annual report to Council on their findings with recommendations for policy and training updates.	City Manager's Office	Margo Morales	Ongoing	OIR Group was hired in May 2025 to fill the expanded role. The Community Policing Board was established in Fall 2025 to support the work of the auditor, providing community perspectives on their work. See link above to Police Auditor's report.
Share regular data reports and/or dashboards with the community.	2025 OPD Launched a data dashboard as part of the City's ClearPoint data page.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	Updated annually. OPD Data Dashboard
<i>Share regular data reports and/or dashboards with the community.</i>	2026 OFD Launched a dashboard on ClearPoint data page.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	Will likely add more metrics in the future but started with four. Data updated annually. OFD Data Dashboard
Establish success metrics for all public safety system programs and use data to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in all parts of the system.					
Proactively seek out new ways to collect data, including enhancing data collection and sharing with Thurston County and the State of Washington,					

Strategy 1.4: Develop a healthy and inclusive workforce that reflects our community's values

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative recruitment strategy to diversity the City's public safety system staff to be more representative of community demographics.	OFD increased recruitment and engagement with local community colleges and universities to hire staff representative of community demographics.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Ongoing	OFD also occasionally partners with Thurston County Medic One on recruitment events. Most recently OFD participated in recruitment events at Pierce College, Tacoma Community College, and Central Washington University
<i>Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative recruitment strategy to diversity the City's public safety system staff to be more representative of community demographics.</i>	OPD strives to hire the best qualified applicants while being ever mindful of the need to enhance diversity. OPD strives to recruit diversity in our staff and this can be seen in an examination of recent hiring that includes many diverse individuals.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	In past couple years OPD attended career events at Olympia High School, Capital High School. South Puget Sound Community College, Central Washington University, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University and career events specifically for Women in Law Enforcement (UW Tacoma) and Veterans Career fairs at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.
Recruit and hire more multilingual staff.	OPD has hired more multi-lingual staff in the last few years. OPD also offers bilingual allowances for staff that qualify <i>Guild, Teamsters, Sgts</i>	Police	DC Brady / Whittney Ramirez	Ongoing	Currently - Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Mongolian

Hire, retain and promote staff that are in alignment with the culture and values of our city; demote and remove staff that are not in alignment.	Promotional processes intentionally included community members from the Social Justice & Equity Commission/Community Policing Board etc.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Members of the Community Policing Board and Social Justice & Equity Commission have participated in the most recent lieutenant promotion process, and sergeant promotion process to ensure alignment with community values and increased community participation in law enforcement.
<i>Hire, retain and promote staff that are in alignment with the culture and values of our city; demote and remove staff that are not in alignment.</i>	OPD has focused heavily on our hiring and recruitment to ensure staff values align with the values of our city. This is further promoted through our rigorous training programs.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	
Develop a comprehensive, trauma-informed, trauma-responsive and holistic approach to ensure public safety system staff safety, health and wellness.	In the past 2-3 years OPD worked very hard to increase staff health and wellness. Joined The Counseling Team International (TCTI) to provide free mental health services to employees. Also added a new health screening program called Sigma Tactical.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	Sigma Tactical provides advanced screening to look for signs of cardiac or other medical related issues with employees.
Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on-and off-duty.	OPD Peer Support expanded their program to include civilian staff.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	OPD provides initial training for members joining the team, annual meeting of all peer support team members, and other trainings as available.
<i>Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on-and off-duty.</i>	OFD expansion of their Peer Support program.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	Program started in 2019 and established a policy in 2020. The department has intentionally expanded the program in the past few years and now has 14 members. They meet quarterly as a team and participate in trainings, as well as County level training opportunities twice a year.
<i>Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on-and off-duty.</i>	City offers Ready Rebound benefit services to improve staff access to care after on the job injury, and facilitate faster recovery and return to work.	Human Resources	Whittney Ramirez	Complete	Started with OFD in 2019 and incrementally expanded until all City staff were included in 2025
Look at offering early retirement or other transition opportunities in response to the toll that strenuous conditions, burnout, and stigma can have on staff members.					
Create a culture in which public safety staff challenge themselves to always be a curious, innovative, and learning organization.	OPD encourages staff to always be learning and seeking training opportunities for growth. OPD has focused heavily on training to make sure staff is on the forefront of learning. Chief Parker has implemented opportunities for employees to make suggestions for changes that will be thoroughly reviewed and considered by the administration.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	City has had a long history of investing in OPD officer training. All officers have at least 80 hours of training available per year compared to the state requirement of 24 hours. In 2025 OPD invested an average of 97.2 training hours per commissioned officer. Additional training data is available on the OPD Data Dashboard

Strategy 1.5: Regularly and proactively communicate about public safety in Olympia

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.	In February of 2024 OPD added a Facebook page to their social media presence to increase regular communication with community.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	Social media - Facebook, Instagram, X, Neighbors, Nextdoor.

Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.	Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Web page - post information to the website on about each usage of UAS generally within a week. Flock transparency portal - provided monthly reports on FLOCK usage, including types and number of cases as well as success stories. Flock page was sunset after the program was ended.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	Link to UAS website
Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to City public safety information.	OFD added a Facebook page to increase regular communication with community in 2023	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	OFD looking at additional and alternative tools to increase their ability to communicate with the community.
Host meetings and share information in spaces where people already gather; use community partner networks and connections to share and gather information more effectively.					
Ensure cultural humility and fairness in official statements, publications and web content.					
Establish and regularly report on clear metrics of success for all public safety programs and services.	OFD Dashboard launched in 2026 on the City's performance and budget page	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	Dashboard includes four measures: number of calls, responses, performance and reliability. See link in Strategy 1.3
Ensure easy and regular access to crime statistics.	OPD Data Dashboard includes crime stats, as does OPD weekly update	Police	DC Brady	Complete	Dashboard launched in 2025, additional measures added in 2026 for a total of 11 measures. See link in Strategy 1.3
Provide more education to the community on what the municipal public safety system can do with regards to enforcement, investigation, prosecution and sentencing.					
Regularly acknowledge and share with the community the challenges associated with public safety; helping the community to understand the intersections amongst different parts of the system, mental health, economic disparity, substance use, etc. Regularly share the innovations, the progress made on addressing issues, and achievements of the staff, programs, and apartments within the City's public safety system.	OPD regularly communicates with many community groups regarding these challenges. Particularly through Community Policing and Outreach Services (neighborhood meetings, Community Academy, Coffee with a Cop)	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	In 2025 the Neighborhood Police attended 98 meetings and events with non-profits, community groups, neighborhood organizations, businesses and service organizations. Chief Parker also attended meetings with local faith based groups, non-profits and community organizations. In 2025 Outreach Services staff attended 10 community events.
Close the loop whenever the public is engaged - do a better job of letting them know how their input is used and draw clear connections to decisions, and changes in policies and programs.					
Other related	Council Study Session with representatives from the District Court, Prosecution, and Public Defense to update the City Council and community on the transition of Olympia's court services.	Courts/ Prosecution/ Public Defense	Bryanna Pinkston / Diane Whaley	Complete	Link to Council Study Session Recording

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Goal 2: Reduce overall crime by addressing root causes

Strategy 2.1: Develop and expand resources to address root causes of individuals engaging with the public safety system

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Promote the safety of the houseless community by expanding access to low-barrier transitional and temporary shelter and supportive housing options while reducing unlawful encampments.					
Lobby the state legislature for funding for a Mental Health Crisis Facility to provide a resource for people diverted away from the criminal system or in need of additional crisis support.					
Lobby the state legislature for funding to establish and operate long-term mental health care facilities to divert individuals away from the jail or hospital and reduce the likelihood of them being released back onto the street with little or not connection to care.					
Lobby for reforms to the mental health system to allow for people to be committed without consent when they are a danger to themselves or others.					
Coordinate across government and non-governmental programs to proactively address the substance use disorder and overdose crisis in way that moves people towards stabilization, recovery and wellness.					
Explore innovative policy around decriminalization of substances and safe supply to address the overdose crisis					
Lobby the state legislature for funding for more substance use disorder treatment facilities with capacity to accept individuals immediately					

Strategy 2.2: Support successful community reentry and stabilization of justice-involved individuals

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Remove systemic barriers to stabilization (ex. Access to supportive housing, affordable housing, employment, etc.)	Public Defense has had a grant with Washington State Office of Public Defense since 2018 for a part time, 16 hour per week Social Services Worker.	Public Defense	Diane Whaley	Ongoing	Public Defense actively pursues this grant every year to maintain this position. The Social Services Worker connects justice involved defendants with services such as drug and alcohol services, mental health, housing, etc.
Ensure the planning and resourcing for reentry is strongly aligned an in collaboration with existing local non-governmental organizations.					
Provide supportive living environments where individuals have peer support and can establish community.					
Prior to release, prioritize establishing permanent supportive housing for chronically houseless individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders.					

Invest in developing new opportunities for formerly justice-involved individuals to achieve stability through economic opportunity, including education, technical skills training and/or entry-level employment.					
Develops way for community members that are incarcerated with the Department of Corrections and/or Thurston County to work with City-employed peer counselors to connect with reentry services and develop a comprehensive reentry plan well before reentering the community.					
<i>Other related</i>	In 2026, Mental Health Probation became available to Olympia through the District Court.	Courts/Prosecution	Bryanna Pinkston	Ongoing	With the transition to the County for court services, City Prosecutors can request that individuals needing additional mental health support be placed on Mental Health Probation, instead of traditional Probation, to provide additional hands-on support. This is a new opportunity since transitioning court services to Thurston County District Court.

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Goal 3: Acknowledge and correct the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members

Strategy 3.1: Work towards healing the community from harm created by the public safety system

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Acknowledge the historical wrongs perpetrated by the public safety system.					
Acknowledge the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.					
Educate public safety staff in the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members.	OPD has had numerous required CJTC trainings on these topics to include: LGBTQ+ Core Competency; The Criminal Legal System: Structural Inequalities, Monetary Sanctions, Policy and Reform; People First: Awareness, Challenges, and Response to Poverty and Recidivism; Understand the Diversity and Complexity of Asians and Asian American Communities; Introduction to the Historical Intersection of Race and Policing; Who are Sikhs?; Introduction to Indigenous Concepts and Culture.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	
Educate public safety staff in the disproportionate impacts the system has on marginalized community members.	Continued DEI training at code enforcement annual conferences and ongoing training discussions.	Code Enforcement	Dalton Maurer	Ongoing	Washington Association of Code Enforcement hosted 2022 DEI training presented by Be Culture. Training titled "DEI as Customer Service, Evaluating Codes with Equity in Mind, Enhancing Compliance with DEI-Sensitive Education Practices"
Engage with historically marginalized community members to co-create a comprehensive plan for how to repair relationships and work towards healing the community from harm and trauma associated with the public safety system.	OPD is actively emphasizing this work by meeting with different groups throughout our community to build relationships and work toward healing. Chief Parker participated in many meetings hosted by local faith centers particularly focused on responding to community concerns in the past year.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Some examples are the Islamic Center of Olympia, Temple Beth Hatfilo, PFLAG, and the NAACP.

Strategy 3.2: Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
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Commit to regular meaningful engagement with a diversity of community groups throughout the year to intentionally learn about their cultures, interests, perceptions and concerns.	Chief Parker has heavily emphasized this throughout the last year meeting with very diverse groups throughout our community. Community Policing and Outreach Services also supporting this work, meeting with various community groups.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	In 2025 the CRU Team started collaborating with the Thurston County Project SAFER (Special Assistance for Emergency Response) to build trust with community members who have developmental disabilities and their families. They attended a number of relationship building events, and started offering home visits which can be requested through the Thurston County SAFER program website.
Host and participate in community conversations, special events, gatherings, service projects or informal activities with community members.	OPD staff regularly participate in informal community activities such as Coffee with a Cop, and pop-up events in the summer at local splash parks.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	
Provide resources to support and/or leverage existing information gatherings and events as opportunities to make connections and build relationships.					
Collaborate on reporting hate crimes, sharing public safety data and identifying solutions.					

Strategy 3.3: Develop equitable and anti-racist procedures, policies, and services

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Use data and community input to understand, communicate and educate about the disproportionate impacts the public safety system has on marginalized community members.					
Regularly audit all existing policies and procedures using a pro-equity and anti-racist lens.	OPD Policy Committee regularly reviews and updates policies and procedures. The Civilian Police Auditor also includes recommendations for policy and procedure updates based on their findings.	Police/City	DC Brady/ Whittney Ramirez/ Margo Morales	Ongoing	
Use an equity framework to evaluate all new operational changes, policies, and programs.	City developed an equity framework that launched January 2, 2023 for staff to use when working on changes to policies, programs, and moving forward projects.	City	Keli Drake	Complete	Equity statements should be included in all staff reports coming before Council.
Proactively and regularly engage with professional organizations that promote and educate about equitable and anti-racist public safety.	Chief Parker and the administration have had meetings with NAACP and other groups, and plan to continue having meetings with these groups to work collaboratively.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Some examples are the Islamic Center of Olympia, Temple Beth Hatfilo, PFLAG, and the NAACP
Ensure that all people encountering the public safety system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns, and gender identify.	OPD policy requires and addresses this issue. OPD regularly trains and encourages our employees to always be respectful. OPD members are held accountable to our policies when in violation of these standards.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Policy 318 - Interaction with Transgender Individuals was updated February 1, 2024 and Policy 320 - Standards of Conduct was updated December 21, 2022

<i>Ensure that all people encountering the public safety system are treated with respect, including respecting chosen names, pronouns, and gender identify.</i>	Code Enforcement has strongly focused on respectful communication, technical competence, and solution-oriented thinking. "Education before enforcement"	Code Enforcement	Dalton Maurer	Ongoing	Example: Relationship with a downtown community organization embodies this. Initial contact in 2021 had to rely on infractions to gain compliance with codes. Code Enforcement emphasized relationship building with this group, specifically through respectfully communication and emphasis on respecting preferred names and pronouns. Have had ongoing success supporting the group with addressing code complaints. Most recent interaction in 2025 were resolved through voluntary compliance, resulting in better outcomes for everyone involved.
Ensure the system is fully accessible for all community members, including those with a disability, who are neurodivergent and/or have a language barrier.	OPD has hired many bilingual speakers as well as contracts with Language Line to provide interpreter services to assist in communication where language barrier exists. In 2025 OPD completed 8 hr. training on Deaf Awareness and in 2026 moved to Axon Translate that interprets in real time more than 50 languages through officer's body cameras.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Other recent related work includes officer trainings on interacting with community members with a disability, and community members with neurodivergence. OPD also met with stakeholders in the development of it's Body Worn Camera policy in 2022. In 2020 the Community Policing Division collaborated with a local Deaf/Hard of Hearing resource group in Olympia to develop a resource card to help with officer communications with deaf/hard of hearing drivers on traffic stops.
<i>Ensure the system is fully accessible for all community members, including those with a disability, who are neurodivergent and/or have a language barrier.</i>	Translation of Code Enforcement documents as-needed to support clear communication with customers.	Code Enforcement	Dalton Maurer	Ongoing	This service has been available through the State for sometime, however Code Enforcement recently became aware. They started using the State's contracted translation services in 2025 to support communication with customers on an as-needed basis.
Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate translation services, outreach and education to ensure the community understands the public safety system and how to use its services.					

Strategy 3.4: Expand and improve anti-racist and pro-equity training

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Expand and improve on anti-racist and pro-equity training requirements and opportunities for all public safety system staff.					
Communicate the value of anti-racist and pro-equity training and connect that value back to the overall City and public safety system vision and values.					
Include inter-cultural development and an understanding of equity in staff evaluations, and professional growth and development plans (e.g. Intercultural Development Inventory).					
Intentionally create opportunities for staff to engage in formal and informal learning experiences (outreach, volunteering, recreational activities, etc.) with community members who are different from them.					
Ensure staff have ongoing safe and supportive spaces and resources for continued pro-equity and anti-racist learning, processing, and dialogue.					

Review existing training for inherent bias, reinforcing outdated practices and methods that are not in line with our city values.					
Emphasize de-escalation and non-violent methods for addressing conflict.	OPD Officer trainings regularly include de-escalation. The department offered a specialized de-escalation training for interactions with juveniles in 2024.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Juvenile de-escalation training was in alignment with recommendation from the Civilian Police Auditor. De-escalation is woven into all department reality based training. All Use Of Force curriculum incorporates Reality Based Training.

Strategy 3.5: Examine when and how to eliminate or significantly reduce fines and fees that are inequitable and have a disproportionate impact on low-income and marginalized groups

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Prioritize eliminating or significantly reducing fines and fees for individuals who are unable to pay.					
Join with other municipalities and/or a statewide system for waiving or resolving fees to help people become relicensed.					
Reform the bail process to address the lack of equity for individuals experiencing poverty.					
Improve coordination amongst departments and record-keeping to prevent onerous and inappropriate assignment of fees.	Aligned Body Worn Camera and Public Records Request fee structure with best practices adopted by other municipalities. Ensuring transparency and responsive access to records, and that the system is designed to serve everyone.	Police/City Clerks Office	DC Brady	Complete	The previous fee structure was not aligned with best practice. Update was completed in September of 2024. The work was a partnership between the City Clerk's Office and OPD Records Staff to bring the fee structures into alignment with best practices.
Streamline the process to resolve fines and fees to prevent them from escalating and avoid an individual needing to navigate the court system.					

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Goal 4: Reduce the number of individuals who connect initially and repeatedly with law enforcement and the criminal justice system

Strategy 4.1: Expand the availability and use of unarmed crisis responders

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Provide more training to emergency call center/911 operators on how to identify community needs that may be handled by non-law enforcement responders.					
Use technology solutions to provide or known alternative responders to be called when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis; this can include case workers, family members, peer navigators, mental health professionals, etc.					
Provide education on what the Crisis Response Unit can and can't do when responding to a call.	Community Policing and Outreach Services regularly share with community at meetings/events about CRU's role in the system	Police	DC Brady/Ren Emerson	Complete/Ongoing	In 2025 the Crisis Response Unit attended 10 community events to increase awareness about the program and their services. The Neighborhood Policing Unit also regularly shares about CRU when attending neighborhood and community meetings.
Ensure the public has a direct way to request the Crisis Response Unit.	CRU can be requested directly by contacting Dispatch.	Police	DC Brady/Ren Emerson	Complete	Call non-emergency dispatch or 911. Neighborhood Police Officers frequently share with community on how to access CRU services. Dispatch will still triage the call, so if not appropriate to send CRU will send a different resource.
Explore co-response models that include embedding a social workers with first responders.					
<i>Other related</i>	C.A.R.E.S program established in 2023 and provides short term case management services. Serves as a pathway/connection point between emergency services and applicable social service programs.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	The C.A.R.E.S. team strives to support a healthier community and reduce reliance on the 911 system and local emergency departments for non-acute concerns.
<i>Other related</i>	OPD has an in-house Designated Crisis Responder (DCR) - The model is primarily Alternative Response but as needed can co-respond with Officers/CRU	Police	DC Brady/Ren Emerson	Complete	Original pilot program contract with Olympic Health and Recovery Services (OHRS) in February 2021. Full contract started in September 2021. Provides better follow up and response times. Creates better outcomes for individuals.

Strategy 4.2: Develop and expand pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion programs

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Prioritize diversion options first; wherever possible, don't exclude people because of their prior criminal history.					
Create more diversified options for diversion prior to an arrest.					
Build a more robust and available network of services to meet the needs of individuals that are being diverted.					

Ensure that required activities within diversion (e.g., domestic violence treatment) are available locally.					
Make diversion requirements available at low or no cost to participants.					
Expand partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations to create more opportunities to resolve cases before filing and after charges are filed.					
Regularly evaluate partners being used for diversion programs and ensure that they are not creating barriers to participants being able to use or succeed within their programs.					
Use the LEAD diversion model to provide intensive case management services in lieu of charging and booking individuals who have committed low level drug crime and "nuisance crimes," and have continual repeat contact with law enforcement due to their behavioral health issues and poverty.					
Develop a resource for mediation to respond to non-criminal activity or situations that do not require a mental health response.					

Strategy 4.3: Offer restorative practices and transformative justice options

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Learn about and offer safe and equitable restorative justice practices where victims and offenders can choose to be involved in structured conversational processes where a victim can voice how they have been affected and the offender to take full responsibility and be present for the development of a restitution agreement,					
Access local and state resources to educate the community about restorative and transformative justice practices.					

Strategy 4.4: Expand the availability and use of therapeutic courts

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Expand the availability and eligibility for Community Court.					
Establish additional evidence-based therapeutic courts, such as Substance Use Court, Mental Health Court and Veteran's Court as an intervention option that provides supervision, accountability and access to treatment services.					

Reimagining Public Safety

Guiding Principles

- Will not perpetuate or cause additional physical, psychological or economic harm to any member of the community
- Will be pro-equity and anti-racist in nature
- Will be based on meaningful collaboration and authentic engagement among everyone in the community
- Will be based on the best available information and progress will be measured and regularly reported to the community

Goal 5: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive

Strategy 5.1: Ensure the public safety system is accessible and supportive

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Proactively develop materials and tools that help community members understand better how to navigate the public safety system.					
Expand support available to victims of all crimes, including those without a suspect, to help them access the system, navigate the system and take the necessary steps to help remedy their situation.	In May 2021 hired a second victim advocate. Prosecution now has two full time advocates expanding capacity to support victims.	Prosecution	Bryanna Pinkston	Complete/Ongoing	Previously were only doing DV crimes. With the additional staff support they were able to expand to "general victim advocate crimes" in August of 2021
Ensure victims and defendants can get ready access to reports, filings and other documents they need to understand the status of and expedite their case (e.g., police reports).	Public Records information is readily available and information is provided on OPD's website for how to obtain reports and information.	Police	DC Brady	Complete/Ongoing	Implementation of Body Worn Cameras (BWC) created a new position within Records dedicated to responding to requests, and created an additional IT support position to support digital records. See additional notes on public records requests fee structure related to BWC in Strategy 3.5
Invest in a municipal facility that supports crisis resolution, detox, medical respite for the houseless and support and space for diversion and therapeutic court options.					
Ensure that individuals in the jail have safe and equitable access to their public defenders, and support service providers.	As of February 2026, public defenders now have two allotted days per week for one hour each to allow confidential client meetings via Zoom with Olympia inmates housed in Nisqually Jail.	Public Defense	Diane Whaley	Complete/Ongoing	Lt. Wyllie at OPD and Diane have worked extensively over the last year to improve access to council. This includes many steps that have been taken with the Nisqually Jail to include more access to tablets and set hours to provide access and support. Over 80% of sexual assault survivors choose not to report their experiences to law enforcement—often due to fear they will not be believed or that the process will retraumatize them. Seek Then Speak provides a safe, trauma-informed alternative that puts control back in the hands of survivors. Link to Seek Then Speak website
Other Related	In 2025 OPD detectives launched an alternative reporting program for victims of sexual assault. "Seek Then Speak" is a confidential and interactive tool that helps adult (18 and above) survivors of sexual assault find information, explore support options, and begin the reporting process - on their terms.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	

Strategy 5.2: Evaluate public safety system staffing levels

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.	Completed Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover at the end of 2025. This document outlines the community needs relating to fire department performance and response.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	
Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.	OPD staffing study was completed in 2023 and published in 2024. Recommendation was made for increased staffing levels. City Council approved an additional 9 police officer positions.	Police	DC Brady	Complete/Ongoing	Also recommended the expansion of Familiar Faces and an additional position was funded. Then, based on City budget the position was frozen, and ultimately cut for 2026.
Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.	Expansion of CRU to include swing shift coverage in April 2023 and Walking CRU in January 2024	Police	DC Brady/Ren Emerson	Complete	

Evaluate current public safety system staffing levels in relationship to the growing community needs and expectations for moving individuals towards wellness, expanding the collection and use of data and enhancing call responsiveness.	Increase staffing in City Prosecutor's office to support traffic enforcement and establishment of therapeutic courts.	Prosecution	Bryanna Pinkston	Future Opportunity	
Ensure appropriate staffing to be response to community expectations for engagement, transparency and reporting, and communications.					
Review and implement policies for staffing levels that ensure manageable court caseloads in which individuals and cases can receive the time and attention needed, with an emphasis on parity between prosecution and public defense.	The City has added additional public defense case credits to ensure compliance with the Washington State Supreme Court's Standards for Indigent Defense to ensure manageable caseloads for public defenders so that criminal cases can receive the time and attention needed.	Public Defense	Diane Whaley	Complete/Ongoing	Case credit value has been increased along with a 10% reduction in maximum case credits allowed per public defender.
Review and implement policies for staffing levels to ensure call responsiveness is appropriate to call volume and needs as established using data.					

Strategy 5.3: Improve the responsiveness of emergency services

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Increase the coordination and training for 911 dispatchers to ensure the right response entity is dispatched to a call for service.	The Assistant Chief of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regularly attends Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) – Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Committee. In 2025 they completed a review of dispatch criteria related to Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) calls for service.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Ongoing	
<i>Increase the coordination and training for 911 dispatchers to ensure the right response entity is dispatched to a call for service.</i>	OPD worked with TCOMM to draft a response protocol for the CRU team and TCOMM works hard to dispatch calls to CRU as appropriate.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	March of 2023
Right-size the response to the situation; start with the lowest level of department and staffing response needed to assess and respond to the situation.	From 2024 to 2025 the Deputy Chief of Operations reviewed run cards and made adjustment for the number of units and personnel responding to emergencies.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	Run Card: Structured, often computerized, dispatch protocol that predetermines which emergency units respond to specific locations based on incident type and severity. It ensures the closest/most appropriate resources are deployed.
<i>Right-size the response to the situation; start with the lowest level of department and staffing response needed to assess and respond to the situation.</i>	OPD strives to adequately staff calls for service with appropriate resources and to use CRU as appropriate. This is an ongoing effort.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	The Civilian Police Auditor Workplan includes looking at opportunities for additional or more collaborative use of CRU and will make recommendations in their 2026 report
<i>Right-size the response to the situation; start with the lowest level of department and staffing response needed to assess and respond to the situation.</i>	OPD has implemented Community Service Officers (CSO) to respond to traffic control, found property, transport assistance, etc. <i>OPD plans to work on expanding the response of CSOs as appropriate and subject to labor negotiations.</i>	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Two positions were temporarily frozen in 2025 due to budget. Actively working to fill those vacancies in 2026 (total of 4 CSO positions)
Ensure that public safety system staff are responding to calls from community members, acknowledging requests and consistently following up with individuals					
Expand and resource the types of services that can be provided by unarmed peer responders <u>or an appropriate service provider to meet the level of need.</u>	OFD began providing low acuity ambulance transport by staffing two Aid Units that are staffed by two firefighter/EMTs.	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	Started in 2024, started billing in October 2024
Explore creation of a civilian investigation unit to respond to low-level property crimes and other situations in which people do not feel safe interacting with law enforcement.					
Establish clarity on what program and/or responders community members should contact for different public safety situations and needs; provide clear information and instructions for the community.	Community members should contact TCOMM Dispatch, who is the point of contact and has criteria for connecting the right response to the need. This information is regularly shared at community meetings and on social media educational posts.	Police/Fire	DC Brady/Chief Flowers	Complete/Ongoing	OPD and OFD continue to work with TCOMM to adequately identify the best response for situations. The primary contact for all services is through TCOMM via the emergency or non-emergency lines and they work to triage calls to the appropriate response. Officer and supervisors have the ability to also triage calls and shift calls to other resources such as CRU or OFD C.A.R.E.S. OPD has ensured that TCOMM has in clear instructions on how CRU should be dispatched.

Connect frequent and persistent users of the 911 system to long-term, holistic case management that can better address those individuals' behavioral and emotional health needs.	Familiar Faces Program (FF) was established in late 2018 as contracted employees. They became City staff in March 2021. An OPD staffing study in 2024 recommended the addition of another peer, however due to budget the additional position was ultimately cut.	Police	DC Brady/Ren Emerson	Ongoing	Due to current capacity for OPD Familiar Faces staff, they partner with community services likeCommunity Catholic Services' AJA Peer navigators to support community members.
<i>Connect frequent and persistent users of the 911 system to long-term, holistic case management that can better address those individuals' behavioral and emotional health needs.</i>	OFD Cares Program established in 2023. The C.A.R.E.S. team strives to support a healthier community and reduce reliance on the 911 system and local emergency departments for non-acute concerns. CARES program staff regularly engage with high utilizers of the 911 system to provide access to resources	Fire	Chief Flowers	Complete	

Strategy 5.4: Enhance coordination amongst different parts of the system, City and community-led response programs, and regional partners

Action	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Organize the City's unarmed responders into a new "Community Safety Response" Department outside of the Police Department that would include, for example, Crisis Response Unit and Familiar Faces.					
Enhance ongoing coordination amongst the alternative and crisis response teams operating in the city, including both public and non-profit: Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program, Familiar Faces and Crisis Response Unit.	OPD Outreach Services has regular meetings with AJA, Downtown Stakeholders (Walking Patrol, Downtown Guides, AJA, Intercity Transit), Downtown Vibrancy, and Fusion. OPD Outreach Services regularly coordinates and shares information with AJA, OHRS, UGM, Interfaith, OFD CARES, Franklin Harm Reduction Center, Providence Street Med, Downtown Guides, Clean Team, Resource HUB, Family Support Center, Hope & Healing, CYS, APS, Catholic Community Services, DDA, and Intercity Transit.	Police	DC Brady/ Ren Emerson	Ongoing	2024 highlights: Alternative Mobile Services Association, Co-Responder Outreach Alliance, Peer Olympia, Arrest and Jail Alternatives (AJA), Olympic Health and Recovery Services (OHRS) Council of State Government (CSG), Thurston Co Resource Humb, Criminal Justice Training Commission. 2025 highlights: Co-Responder Outreach Alliance (CROA), Peer Olympia, AJA, OHRS, CSG, Thurston Co Resource Hub, Providence Street Medicine, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) From Ren's List...
Physically co-locate with community partners engaged in public safety response (e.g., Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program).					
Ensure that contracts with community organizations to provide public safety support include a living wage for employees.					
Strengthen regional cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies that may co-respond or work closely with Olympia to help ensure our community's innovative and community-drive approaches are recognized and utilized by others.	This is an ongoing effort with all of our partner law enforcement agencies. See notes section for examples of recent regional cooperative efforts.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	Examples of cooperative efforts: Reginal Detectives Meetings including all Thurston County LE agencies. Re-establishing regional CompStat meetings. In July 2025 established the Special Investigations Response Team (SIRT) addressing regional crime trends. In 2022 established Regional Organized Retail Theft meetings with local retailers and local LE agencies.
Work closely with the local hospitals to identify more effective approaches to treating, holding and releasing individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis.					
<i>Other related - coordination amongst different parts of the system</i>	OFD & OPD have done joint trainings for decades, however in the past 5 years there has intentional emphasis on joint reality based training for critical incidents and public order responses.	Police/Fire	DC Brady / Chief Flowers	Ongoing	Training Examples: Active shooter training, Public Order training, hyperactive delirium training. Draft policy provided by Lt Wyllie. These trainings are not just theoretical response plans in a classroom, but are hands on reality based trainings to improve coordinated responses and outcomes for the community. Established a new program and draft policies in 2021 for Tactical Emergency Medical Services (TEMS). Also established Hyperactive Delirium Protocol for coordinated response to individuals in crisis.
<i>Other related - coordination amongst different parts of the system</i>	In the last two years Prosecutors office staff have worked to strengthen relationships with OPD, attending trainings and being a resource for officers to ask questions and collaboratively solve issues.	Prosecution	Bryanna Pinkston	Ongoing	This Improves outcomes for victims, and defendants and improved access to resources.

Strategy 5.5: Address conditions or situations that contribute to people feeling unsafe

Actions	Deliverable	Department	Staff	Status	Notes
Expand the Neighborhood Policing unit so that officers not dedicated to responding to 911 calls can spend more time developing relationships with community members and addressing emerging issues of concern.	Due to staffing challenges, OPD has not been able to expand the unit. However the department maintains committed to the unit and its work in spite of staffing challenges as evident in their community engagement data.	Police	DC Brady	Ongoing	For the last few years the Neighborhood Policing unit (NPO) has not been consistently fully staffed do to patrol staffing needs as well as budget impacts with a staff positions eliminated at the end of 2024. In spite of these challenges the NPO team has remained committed to developing relationships and attending community meetings and events. 2022: 207 events 2023: 248 events 2024: 234 events 2025 161 events
Continue to invest in debris removal and maintaining clean public spaces and rights-of-way.	Code Enforcement focus heavily on safe and walkable streets and sidewalks and partner with Clean Team on debris removal.	Code Enforcement	Dalton Maurer	Ongoing	Meet weekly or at least biweekly with Clean Team supervisor to ensure problem areas are resolved, property lines clarified, and that the work gets done.
Proactively work with private owners, providing technical assistance, incentives, grants, etc., to increase property maintenance standards.	Share information, resources, and treat situations as a partnership with community members and stakeholders rather than just an expectation from the government	Code Enforcement	Dalton Maurer	Ongoing	Example: Cross-departmental work with OPD on a nuisance property where there was also a domestic violence case. Shared appropriate information with neighbors regarding the situation and provided victim with time to work through a protection order prioritizing their safety and security before following up about property maintenance standards and working on that portion.
Expand the staffing and hours for the Police Walking Patrol and/or other models to increase support for public safety in Downtown.	2024 established Walking CRU team for downtown. On foot and present in the downtown core.	Police	DC Brady	Complete	
Response quickly and proactively to neighborhood concerns (ex. Newly established encampments, illegal dumping, etc.)	City's CORE Team meets bi-weekly to discuss issues. Frequent contact and colaboration with other departments ensures effective coordination.	Code Enforcement/Police	Dalton Maurer/DC Brady	Ongoing	CORE Team consists of Homeless Response, Neighborhood Police, Clean Team, Parking Enforcement, Code Enforcement. Invite other departments/teams as relevant to upcoming projects. Plan to create the CORE team was pitched March of 2022 with first meeting following later that year.



To: Olympia City Council

June 22, 2026

Honorable Mayor Payne and City of Olympia Councilmembers,

On December 6, 2022 the Olympia City Council formally accepted the Reimagining Public Safety Recommendations. These recommendations were developed through an 18-month process led by a Community Work Group. Continued community involvement in this work remains important. The Social Justice and Equity Commission discussed the draft Reimagining Public Safety Progress report at their June 22, 2026 meeting. This letter is intended to share with you the Commission's discussions regarding the draft report.

The Commission's discussion centered around the following topics:

- Emphasis on juveniles within the criminal justice system is missing from the recommendations.
- Discussed what opportunities exist for accurate and comprehensive hate crime reporting.
- Would like the City to design and implement strategies and programs around restorative justice.
- Concern that the transition of jail services may have strayed from the original goals and intent.
- Discussed how to push/encourage the work forward and not allowing it to stagnate due to budget and resource constraints. Look for opportunities within the recommendations that can be prioritized that are not cost prohibitive.
- Ensure that the work is not performative by establishing a staff liaison or community work group dedicated to staying connected and moving the work forward.
- Goal 3 should be a focus of attention moving forward for work of Reimagining Public Safety. There is more work to be done in the healing and correcting of disproportionate impacts. The Social Justice and Equity Commission can be active in supporting this goal. (e.g.) the positive impacts of the Community Oversight of Law Enforcement process in furthering the strategies of Goal 1.
- Identify performance metrics to determine the success of these goals and values.
 - Success should also be measured by community feedback. Stories are a form of data communicating impact.
- Discussed how the federal climate may create a challenge in capturing the experiences of marginalized groups in our community.
- Establish and enhance community presence through communication and outreach:
 - Celebrate the work being done in the community.
 - Demonstrate greater transparency to build public trust.
 - Improve communication with the community about Reimagining Public Safety and using diverse tools like utility billing inserts, OlyTV3, in-person engagement, social media, etc.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Reimagining Public Safety Progress Report, provide community perspectives, and continue to support community involvement in the work of Reimagining Public Safety.

Best Regards,


[Robin Rosen-Evans \(Jun 23, 2026 09:17:01 PDT\)](#)

Robin Rosen-Evans, Chair
Social Justice & Equity Commission

RR:mm



City Council

City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies Recommendations Discussion

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026
Agenda Item Number: 2.C
File Number:26-0566

Type: study session **Version:** 1 **Status:** Study Session

Title

City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies Recommendations Discussion

Recommended Action

The Community Livability and Public Safety Committee recommends discussing recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.

City Manager or Committee Recommendation:

Discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.

Staff Contact:

Stacey Ray, Assistant City Manager, 360.753.8150

Presenter(s):

Stacey Ray, Assistant City Manager

Background and Analysis:

On May 14, 2025, the Community Livability and Public Safety Committee (CLPS) discussed the effectiveness of City Council appointed advisory bodies in meeting the communication and community engagement goals for which they were created.

Assistant City Manager Debbie Sullivan presented an extensive evaluation of the existing bodies that included analysis of advisory body works plans, referrals from Council, attendance and member survey results (Attachment A). Following discussion, CLPS directed staff to continue the evaluation process, and to bring back recommendations on possible changes for the Committee's consideration.

In September 2025, the City contracted with Genevieve Canceko Chan to build upon the evaluation work previously completed by Assistant City Manager Sullivan. Her work supplemented the existing analysis with additional stakeholder engagement, further examination of systemic issues and barriers to participation, and identification of common challenges experienced by both staff and community

members involved with advisory bodies. The evaluation also included outreach to other cities undertaking similar evaluations of their advisory bodies, as well as meetings with City staff liaisons to Council-appointed advisory bodies to gather feedback on draft recommendations.

On February 25, 2026, CLPS received a briefing on this work, including recommendations centered on two pathways for improvement: changes to make the current system more efficient and effective, and a scenario that envisions a multi-faceted and multidisciplinary approach to community engagement and advisory bodies. CLPS directed staff to further develop both options.

Since February, staff and the consultant have surveyed current advisory body members, met with advisory body chairs, advisory body staff liaisons, and the Social Justice & Equity Commission to seek additional input. The Social Justice & Equity Commission was asked to review and comment on the recommendations with an emphasis on reducing barriers for community members to engage with the City and supporting diverse experiences and perspectives in City decision-making.

On May 27, 2026, CLPS received a second briefing on this work. Staff presented two more detailed options: one focused on current system process improvements and opportunity areas to restructure existing advisory bodies, and one focused on the development of an engagement toolkit, including multiple ways to engage community members in addition to or in lieu of an advisory body. CLPS directed staff to bring forward to a Council study session a package of recommendations for process improvements, restructuring opportunities for several advisory bodies, and a multi-faceted engagement tool kit. The advisory bodies being put forward for potential restructuring include the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Design Review Board, Social Justice & Equity Commission, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

CLPS also hosted their annual meeting with City Council appointed Advisory Body chairs and co-chairs on June 24, with the topic being the advisory body work plan process. The outcomes from that meeting have also been incorporated into the overall findings from this process.

For this agenda item, staff will present a package of recommendations forwarded by CLPS for City Council discussion and consideration. The recommendations are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of advisory bodies in achieving the City Council's community engagement goals and fall into three categories: transitioning to an engagement toolkit that provides a variety of approaches for gathering meaningful community input; restructuring existing advisory bodies to improve efficiency and effectiveness; and enhancing processes to address ongoing challenges related to recruitment, onboarding, and work planning.

Climate Analysis:

This discussion is not expected to have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity Analysis:

Public engagement that is equitable and inclusive of diverse community member perspectives is foundational to building trust in government, formulating effective policies, and developing programs that best meet community needs and priorities. The assessment of the current advisory body system is intended to identify barriers to participation and explore additional engagement strategies to allow for more diverse perspectives to be represented in Council and staff decision-making.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The community has a high interest in participating in local government decision making. Advisory bodies have historically provided opportunities for more direct Council engagement with the community around policy decisions and Council decision-making. Over the last several years, however, staff and Council have explored and experienced success in using a variety of other ways in which to engage community members, broadening the voices and perspectives represented in planning efforts and community conversations.

Financial Impact:

The City contracted with consultant Genevieve Canceko Chan to complete an evaluation process for Council-appointed advisory bodies. The consultant's scope of work includes crafting recommendations on improving the advisory body system, including addressing the recruitment and appointment process, work planning, and Council and advisory body member satisfaction. The contract is valued at \$35,875 and is funded through the General Fund.

Options:

1. Discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.
2. Do not discuss recommendations related to City Council appointed advisory bodies.
3. Hold the discussion at another time.

Attachments:

May 2025 Advisory Body Evaluation Presentation to Community Livability & Public Safety Committee
Advisory Body Evaluation Process Briefing Paper
Advisory Body Member Survey Results Summary
Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Summary
Annual Meeting with Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Summary
Social Justice & Equity Commission Letter



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Agenda

1. Purpose
2. Primary Mission
3. Workplan and Meeting Structure
4. Recruitment
5. What We're Hearing and Experiencing
6. Discussion and Next Steps

2

Why This? Why Now?

1. An evaluation of the Council-Appointed Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees has not been performed – requested by Staff Liaisons and Advisory Bodies
2. Methods for engaging and communicating with the public has evolved
3. Staff and volunteers report difficulty achieving a quorum, the need to cancel meetings, and confusion regarding purpose and impact
4. Need to evaluate use of resources for public engagement

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What do we want to know?

1. Is Council receiving public input in a way that is effective, meaningful, and inclusive?
2. Are the advisory bodies effectively achieving their purpose?
3. Is the meeting format and frequency effective?

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Purpose

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Council's Purpose for Advisory Bodies

Council Guidebook

- Assist Council when formulating public policy and transforming policy decisions into action.
 - Standing committees
 - Special Purpose Committees
 - Ad Hoc Task Forces

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How a Body is Established

Standing Committees

- Action by the full Council through Ordinance
- Volunteer members recommended to full Council by Community Livability and Public Safety Committee following interviews

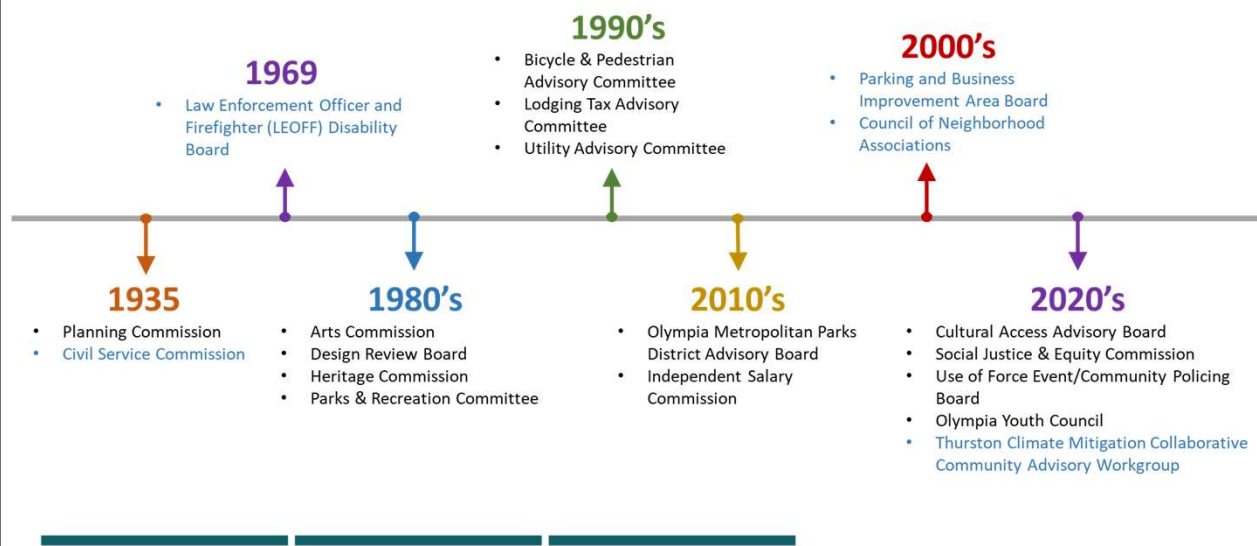
Ad Hoc Committee

- Simple majority vote of Council regarding Scope and Term

Source: Council Guidebook

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Appointed Body and Year Established



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Board

*A group of persons having **managerial, supervisory, investigatory, or advisory powers.***

1. Cultural Access Advisory Board
2. Design Review Board
3. Community Policing Board
4. *LEOFF Disability Board*
5. *Parking & Business Improvement Area Board*

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Committee

*A group of people entrusted by a government or other official body with **authority to take on a task or mission.***

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
2. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
3. Olympia Metropolitan Park District Advisory Committee
4. Park and Recreation Advisory Committee
5. Utility Advisory Committee

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Commission

*A body of persons **delegated** to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matters.*

1. Arts Commission
2. Heritage Commission
3. Planning Commission
4. Salary Commission
5. Social Justice & Equity Commission
6. *Civil Service Commission*

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Current Boards, Committees, & Commissions

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Arts Commission | 9. Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board |
| 2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee | 10. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee |
| 3. Community Policing Board | 11. Planning Commission |
| 4. Cultural Access Program Advisory Board | 12. Social Justice and Equity Commission |
| 5. Design Review Board | 13. Utility Advisory Committee |
| 6. Heritage Commission | 14. Youth Council |
| 7. Independent Salary Commission | |
| 8. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee | |

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Other Boards, Committees, and Commissions Supported by City Staff

1. Civil Service Commission
2. Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter (LEOFF) Disability Board
3. Parking and Business Improvement Area Board
4. Council of Neighborhood Associations
5. Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Advisory Workgroup
6. *Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee*
7. *Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative Executive Committee*

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Primary Mission by Body

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Mandated by State or Interlocal Agreement

Required

1. Community Policing Board
2. Design Review Board*
3. Heritage Commission*
4. Planning Commission
5. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
6. Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board

Not Required

1. Arts Commission
2. Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
3. Cultural Access Advisory Board
4. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
5. Independent Salary Commission
6. Social Justice and Equity Commission
7. Utility Advisory Committee
8. Youth Council

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Workplan & Meeting Frequency

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Setting the Annual Work Plan

Work Plan Items Proposed

1. Required
2. Council requested
3. Staff Initiated
4. Requested by the Advisory Body
4. Housekeeping

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2024 Work Plan Content

Council Request 4

Staff Initiated 33

Advisory Body Request 21

Observations

- Most work plan items are briefings by staff related to programs, services, and regulatory updates
- Two of the four Council requested items were related to the Comprehensive Plan
- The items requested by the bodies are interest-based regarding other City Programs and Services

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Work Plan Approval Process

1. Drafted by Staff
2. Developed with Committee
3. Reviewed by Community Livability and Public Safety Committee then forward to Council
4. Approved by Council

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Council-Appointed Body	Planned Meetings	Canceled (2023)	Canceled (2024)
Design Review	24	11	16
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory	6	0	0
Heritage Commission	12	5	5
Planning Commission	24	4	3
Lodging Tax Advisory	3	1	2
Parks & Rec Advisory	8	2	1
Arts Commission	12	2	1
Social Justice and Equity Commission	12	2	0
Metropolitan Park District Advisory Committee	2	0	0
Utility Advisory	8	+2	0
Youth Advisory Council	12	0	0
Cultural Access Advisory Board	As Needed		
Salary Commission	As Needed		
Use of Force Board	As Needed		

Meeting Frequency & Attendance

- Number of planned meetings is not required in OMC with exception of Salary Commission; however, expectation is that they meet monthly
- Heritage Commission canceled half of their meetings in 2023 and 2024
- Design Review Committee canceled 70% of their meetings in 2024
- Social Justice and Equity Commission 4 people absent at 50% of meetings; 6 commissioners resigned since inception (2021)

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What We're Hearing & Experiencing

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What We're Hearing

Advisory Committees

- 78% agree their workplan is meaningful
- 74-75% agrees that the Council values their work, and it advances the Council's priorities
- 2% agree they meet too frequently
- 93% enjoy serving on the Committee; 89% are satisfied with the committee's work
- Desire to regularly connect with Council regarding their impact and purpose

Staff

- 38% agree their workplan is meaningful
- 54% agrees that the Council values their work, and it advances the Council's priorities
- 16% believe they meet too frequently (50% were neutral)

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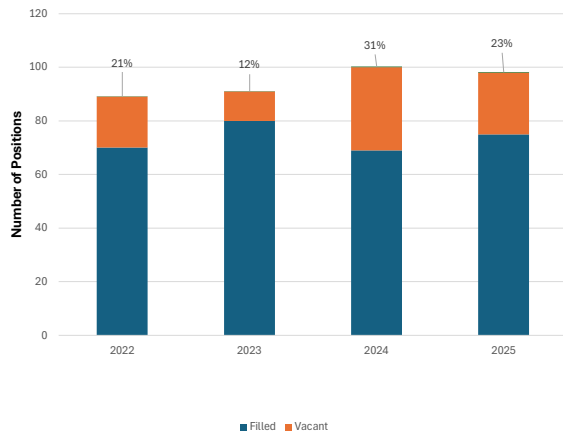
What We are Experiencing

- Over-represented with residents who are familiar with government policy and processes
- High turnover on some bodies
- Challenge meeting quorum
- Staff is implementing new engagement techniques on major, complex policy work
- Maintaining Advisory Bodies is resource intensive

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Annual Recruitment

Filled vs. Vacant Positions by Year



- In 2024 and 2025, 4 out of 12 bodies had 3 or more vacancies
- In 2024 and 2025, the number of people seeking an additional term was far less than the number of vacancies
- Bodies with the highest turnover:
 - Heritage Commission
 - Social Justice and Equity Commission
 - Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Bodies with the least turnover:
 - Use of Force
 - Cultural Access
 - Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
 - Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board

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What the Experts are saying

Public engagement is premised on the belief that everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that will affect their life. For some, the logistics of engagement may conflict with responsibilities.

- *Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement*
Simon Fraser University

"It is a simple but sobering fact of life that most experiences with Advisory Committees – after an initial two-to-three-years' honeymoon – are bad experiences both for the agency and for the potentially affected interests."

- Hans Bleiker,
Institute for Participatory Management and Planning

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City Approach: Meaningful and Inclusive Engagement

- Elevate diverse and inclusive engagement
- Involve people who are most impacted by the policy, issue, or plan being considered
- Establish respectful, authentic, and trusting relationships that can be sustained over time
- Co-create with communities to address barriers to participation
- Adapt engagement strategies as needed based on experience

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City Efforts to Improve Equitable & Inclusive Engagement on Public Policy

Examples:

1. Transportation Master Plan
2. Social Justice and Equity – Founding Members Work Group
3. Reimagining Public Safety – Work Group
4. Community Oversight of Law Enforcement – Commission AND Community Work Group
5. Olympia Strong
6. Youth Council Establishment

Tools & Techniques: Engage Olympia, Story Map, social media, temporary work groups, partner with historically under-represented communities, tailored engagement, prioritize accessibility

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Who Participates on Advisory Bodies

- Open to residents
- Each body is 9 to 11 members with 3-year terms (total of 9 years)
- Individuals choose to apply

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Why This? Why Now?

1. An evaluation of the Community-Member Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees has not been performed – requested by Staff Liaisons and Advisory Bodies
2. Methods for engaging and communicating with the public have evolved
3. Staff and volunteers report difficulty achieving a quorum, the need to cancel meetings, and confusion regarding purpose and impact
4. Need to evaluate use of resources for meaningful public engagement

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Discussion

1. Affirm Public Engagement Goals
2. Reflect on Research
3. Identify Key Take Aways
4. Develop Options

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Discussion Prompts

Affirm Engagement Goals:

1. Meaningful input to guide policy and decision-making
2. Equitable and inclusive engagement
3. Impactful participation and experiences for members
4. Sustainable use of resources (staff and funding)

Discussion:

Question #1: *What are the key takeaways from the information shared and/or your experience?*

Question #2: *What's most important to you in how we achieve these outcomes?*

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Advisory Bodies Analysis and Recommendations

Issue: Are council appointed advisory bodies still meeting their original purpose? Is the City Council receiving meaningful input from these chosen community representatives? Do the advisory bodies reflect equitable and inclusive representation? Are the advisory body members having an impactful experience? Are advisory bodies a sustainable and effective use of resources?

Recommendation:

Adopt a multi-prong community engagement toolkit (i.e., community collaborators, connectors, and academies) and possibly reconfigure eligible advisory bodies into multidisciplinary advisory bodies and/or where scope and project work overlap. These recommendations would be accompanied by new operational changes – including shifts in recruitment and work plan timelines, standardized orientations, and advisory body criteria tests and audits – to improve accessibility, responsiveness, and resource efficiency. Used together, these tools can create a more holistic approach to community issues and solutions.

Background on advisory body analysis

At their May 2025 meeting, the Community and Livability Public Safety (CLPS) Committee discussed the role of council appointed advisory bodies. Up until this point, a comprehensive evaluation of the City's 14 advisory bodies had not been performed.

Their initial questions focused on the following:

- Can we improve the relationship between City Council and advisory bodies? There seemed to be a disconnect between City Council's priorities and initiatives and advisory body work plans.
- Can we change the recruitment process? The current single recruitment period was time intensive, not equitable in format, and not responsive to mid-year vacancies.
- Can we re-evaluate the structure and management of advisory bodies themselves, including meeting frequency, onboarding, etc.? Inconsistencies across the advisory bodies have led to some confusion about scope and expectations among both staff liaisons and community members.
- Would it be possible to consolidate some advisory bodies? Some advisory bodies had overlapping or wide scopes, while some have not had any recent referrals from Council.

Executive staff presented to CLPS data gathered from staff liaisons and advisory body members, including exit surveys from former members:

- Several advisory bodies consistently canceled meetings or were frequently not meeting quorum (e.g., Heritage Commission canceled half of their meetings in 2023 and 2024; Design Review Committee canceled 70% of their meetings in 2024; and Social Justice and Equity Commission had 4 people absent at 50% of their meetings).

- There was high turnover in membership among some bodies (e.g., Heritage Commission, Social Justice and Equity Commission, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee).
- There was recurring difficulty in finding viable candidates to fill vacancies;
- Only 4 out of 58 items on 2024 advisory body work plans were Council referrals; the other 54 items were either staff initiated or advisory body member requests (e.g., informational briefings about city programs and services).
- Lastly, while the appointed members found their board or commission terms meaningful to them (78%), many were unsure whether their advisory body was impactful on policy making or a good use of staff time and resources.

Together, CLPS and executive staff affirmed these community engagement goals:

- Meaningful input to guide policy and decision-making;
- Equitable and inclusive engagement;
- Impactful participation and experiences for members; and
- Sustainable use of resources (staff and funding).

With these goals in mind, CLPS directed staff to move forward with a recommendation to have advisory bodies meet only as needed based on their work plans. They also directed staff to research the resource impact to staff liaisons for other possible council advisory options.

At their June 2025 meeting, CLPS met with the chairs, vice chairs, and staff liaisons of the advisory bodies. The group discussed what they felt was working well, and where they believed improvement was needed. Overall there was appreciation for the dedication of the staff liaisons and the general educational experiences of serving on these advisory bodies. However, below were also shared concerns and questions:

- Desire a better understanding of how government works;
- Need more clarity of expectations, purpose, and scope;
- Need a more defined relationship with Council, Council's priorities, and how their work is related to Council's work plans;
- Standardize feedback loop after recommendations are sent to Council;
- More options to hear diverse voices;
- Consider joint meetings with multiple advisory bodies for major topics/recommendations to Council.
- Ways to recruit and engage the next generation and future constituents;
- Ways to recruit and engage impacted communities.

Consultant's research and review of advisory bodies

With Director of Communications Kellie Purce Braseth retiring in June 2025, the City contracted with myself (Genevieve Canceko Chan) to continue the review process and to provide recommendations on the following:

- 1) how advisory bodies can be organized, scoped, managed, and staffed so they can work more efficiently and effectively; and
- 2) how the recruitment process can be updated to maximize board/committee/commission members' time, expertise, and interests, and better support priorities of the City Council's workplan.

I was drawn to the project given my background in strategic communications, board management, and community relations, as well as my experience serving on the first cohort for the Social Justice and Equity Commission and more recently on the Cultural Access Advisory Board.

At the September 2025 CLPS meeting, I shared that my scope of work would include reviewing and synthesizing past notes, presentations, and surveys collected by City staff and advisory members; interviewing advisory body liaisons and chairs; and researching and contacting other municipalities about their experiences with advisory bodies and community engagement efforts. I also shared that I planned to talk with CLPS chair and Mayor Pro Tem YẾN Huỳnh and Assistant City Manager Debbie Sullivan during the research process.

Confirmed and new insights from advisory body interviews

Between September 2025 and January 2026, I interviewed 12 staff liaisons and 5 advisory body members. While all valued the importance of, and the opportunity for, community input on policies and projects, all concurred with what was previously mentioned: inconsistent onboarding, unclear scope or expectations, redundant work across advisory bodies, and the feeling that their work was far removed or not visible to Council or the general community.

Some new ideas that were expressed were:

- A shared orientation for both staff liaisons and new members, so that key expectations and training was standardized across all the advisory bodies, and to build a sense of cohort among all incoming advisory board members.
- More mid-year contact built-in with the City Council to better understand priorities and share progress on work plan items.
- Opportunities to work directly with other advisory bodies on shared issues or projects.
- Ways for advisory board members to engage directly with general community members or impacted communities on issues they are tasked with.
- A way to assess whether a new advisory body is needed and/or if an existing advisory body is no longer needed.

Insights from other municipalities on use of advisory bodies and community engagement tools

During this same time, between September 2025 and January 2026, I interviewed comparable mid- to large-sized municipalities: Lacey, WA; Portland, OR; Boulder, CO; Ann Arbor, MI; and Asheville, NC. Many were undergoing (or recently underwent) similar reviews of their use of

advisory bodies and community engagement strategies overall, mostly prompted by budget issues, equity initiatives, and/or recent community disillusionment/distrust with city government.

Boulder established an entirely new Engagement Strategic Framework in 2016 to rebuild trust with its constituents. Ann Arbor also similarly restructured to better align communications with community engagement efforts and improve transparency. Asheville was undergoing a major pause and re-evaluation of its advisory bodies: the city was devastated by Hurricane Helene in 2024 and needed to centralize city government initiatives and programs under the four recovery priorities (People and Environment, Housing, Infrastructure, and Economy). In 2022, Portland changed to a mayor-council form of government, necessitating a review and streamlining of their advisory bodies and they launched the Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project in fall 2025.

Many cities echoed concerns related to the lack of clarity around purpose and scope of advisory bodies; underrepresentation of impacted communities; redundancies in work and process; and advisory board members feeling removed from City Council and/or policy decisions.

The cities shared some new and innovative ideas:

- Co-locate communications and community engagement teams for better coordination on outreach efforts.
- Adopt criteria tests and audit tests for standing advisory bodies.
- Create or organize multidisciplinary advisory bodies around values or strategic objectives.
- Stand up web-based dashboard for city programs, initiatives, and issues to share info and show how community members can get involved.
- Expand options for community education, involvement, and input (e.g., community academies, community connectors)

Below is an at-a-glance summary of how different cities approached community engagement:

	Lacey, WA	Portland, OR	Boulder, CO	Ann Arbor, MI	Asheville, NC
Communications with Community Engagement	X		X	X	
City-wide interdepartmental engagement committees			X	X	
Criteria Tests and Audit Tests for advisory bodies		X			X
Community	X		X	X	

Academies for general education or open forums					
Community Connectors or Ambassadors for different constituent groups		X	X	X	
Community Collaborators or subject matter experts for ad hoc working groups or task forces		X	X		
Multidisciplinary advisory bodies		X			X
Rolling recruitment for advisory bodies	X	X	X		
Web dashboard of projects, initiatives, and community engagement opportunities for transparency and accessibility			X	X	

Draft Recommendations for the City of Olympia

Based on the research outlined above, I prepared an initial draft of recommendation for CLPS and shared these recommendations with Stacey Ray and Margo Morales at their February 25, 2026 meeting. The recommendations were split into two categories:

- Operational improvements to current advisory body system
- Reimagining community engagement

Operational improvements to current advisory body system

- **Recruitment timing** - Shift recruitment timeline so new members start at the beginning of the new calendar year and can participate in work plan planning

- **Onboarding** - Standardize onboarding and orientation across advisory bodies
- **Work plan alignment** - Align advisory body work plans with Council work plan
- **Criteria test** - Establish a criteria test for creation of new advisory body
- **Audit** - Implement a regular audit of the existing advisory bodies to discern whether they should continue, be converted into another community engagement tool, or sunsetted

Reimagining community engagement

Under this category, there are new engagement options to fit each unique project or program. Together, these options are an engagement toolkit that hopefully better values volunteers' and staff's time, expertise, and interests. The new tools are:

- **Community Academies** - Help educate community members on how local government works. Not a community forum in that this is not a space for debate or grievances to the City, but an opportunity for the City to cover common questions about departments, projects, services, or opportunities to get involved.
- **Community Connectors** (e.g., trusted community liaisons or leaders) - Individuals with connections to specific constituent groups in the community.
 - Helps host conversations with the specific groups around City initiatives.
 - Helps disseminate information.
 - Builds trust and relationships for more authentic engagement.
- **Community Collaborators** (e.g., subject matter experts) - Individuals with special interest or expertise who can be tapped to serve on ad hoc working groups or focus groups.
 - Diversifies voices and perspectives on issues.
 - With a defined length of time for projects, there's a shorter time commitment than traditional advisory bodies.
 - Opportunity to keep past advisory body members connected to the work and not lose their experience/expertise when no longer on a board
- **Multidisciplinary Advisory Bodies** - Re-organize eligible advisory bodies to align with Comprehensive Plan Focus Areas
 - Encourages multidisciplinary problem solving.
 - Responsive to feedback from 2025 Advisory Body Chairs meeting about collaboration across sectors.
 - Better reflection of how the community experiences government.
 - Aligns with the way we talk about and approach the work throughout the City.

Testing and vetting recommendations

After presenting to CLPS, Stacey Ray, Margo Morales, and I met with and shared the proposed recommendations with the following stakeholder groups and asked for their feedback.

- Staff liaisons (2 meetings in January and March)
- Social Justice and Equity Commission (SJEC) (April 20, 2026 and May 18, 2026)
- Advisory body chairs (May 7, 2026)

To reach a broader stakeholder audience, a survey was sent to all current advisory body members and staff liaisons to assess their personal experience with advisory bodies and to ask them to review the suggested new tools for community engagement, including community academies, collaborators, connectors and multidisciplinary advisory bodies.

- See Survey Results

Overall, response has been positive to the recommendations, seeing opportunities to improve accessibility and diversity in representation of community voices; intersectional understanding of issues and approach to solutions; and more efficient, impactful deployment of staff resources. There continue to be questions around implementation, distinctions in application between community engagement tools, and concerns around a potential loss of depth of expertise if there are fewer advisory bodies and/or fewer advisory body seats.

- See Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

- See Letter from SJEC

Updated presentation to CLPS

Informed by the stakeholder comments and survey results collected, Stacey Ray, Margo Morales and I returned to CLPS for the May 27, 2026 meeting with updated recommendations. CLPS weighed the different recommendations and added comments in the following areas:

Recruitment:

- Very interested in shifting the advisory body recruitment period to align onboarding of new advisory body members with the start of the new calendar year (January). This way new members can also participate and be more vested in the work plan process.
- Also interested in splitting up recruitment so CLPS is only reviewing and filling vacancies for half of the advisory bodies each year. This may require adjusting term lengths.
- By reducing the number of vacancies to fill each year, CLPS hopes to improve the interview process for a better assessment of candidates. Also, CLPS wants to keep track of those candidates who were not immediately appointed and use them as a bench in case of vacancies that may occur mid-term.

Work plan and scopes:

- Very interested in moving the advisory body work plan approval to after the City Council and committee work plans have been finalized. This way advisory bodies can incorporate any Council referrals or priorities into their upcoming work plan, creating better alignment.
- When considering restructuring current advisory bodies, Stacey Ray presented some opportunities and options that included: integrating an advisory body into another existing advisory body; reducing the work plan scope and/or number of meetings; shifting the requirement to be completed administratively by staff; and using a different, more appropriately scaled community engagement tool (e.g., community collaborators).

At the end of the meeting, CLPS directed staff to continue to develop recommendations based on their comments and to bring them to the City Council for a study session on July 21.

CLPS Study Session with advisory body chairs on work plans

On June 24, 2026, CLPS held its annual meeting with advisory board chairs and liaisons to focus on the related issue of work plans, extending an invitation to the rest of the City Council: all current City Council members, including the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, were present. Everyone self-sorted into one of four tables and Assistant City Manager Stacey Ray asked each table to discuss and comment on the following three questions:

- What does impactful work mean for you and the other members of your advisory body?
- How might we ensure strong alignment between the City Council's Annual Work Plan and advisory body work plans?
- Is there a role for a referral process, and if yes, what might make that process most effective?

Overall, advisory body members were consistent in defining impactful work as making a recommendation or influencing an outcome that improves how our diverse community experiences and engages with the City, e.g., services are more equitable or more accessible, environments or events feel physically and psychologically safer. There was a strong desire among both the City Council members and advisory board members to move schedules and recruitment so that the City Council work plan could be completed and approved, and therefore inform advisory body work plans. There was also interest among advisory board members to have a more formal and explicit feedback loop. First, this would help advisory bodies stay updated on what happens after they forward a recommendation to the City Council. Second, this feedback loop could be a mechanism for advisory bodies to bring emerging issues to the City Council for consideration for future work plan items or amendments.

- See CLPS and Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

Attachments:

Timeline (see below)

Advisory Body Members Survey Results

Letter from SJEC

Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

CLPS and Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

Timeline

Advisory Bodies Analysis and Recommendations

May 2025: On May 28, Assistant City Manager Debbie Sullivan presented data on the effectiveness of council appointed advisory bodies to the Community and Livability Public Safety Committee (CLPS).

June 2025: On June 25, 2025, CLPS held its annual meeting with the advisory body chairs and staff liaisons.

September 2025: With the retirement of Communications Director Kellie Purse Braseth, the city contracted me to continue this work.

September 2025 - January 2026: Interviewed staff liaisons, advisory body members, and other municipalities. Shared a preliminary draft of the recommendations with Debbie Sullivan, Stacey Ray, and Margo Morales.

Municipalities contacted included:

- Lacey, WA: Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager and Jenny Bauersfeld, Communications Specialist
- Portland, OR: Ocean Jasso, Advisory Bodies Program, Office of Community and Civic Historic Resources Commission
- Boulder, CO: Ryan Hanschen, Engagement Specialist
- Ann Arbor, MI: Jasmine Isaac-Ofuri, Community Engagement Specialist and Robert Kellar, Communications Specialist
- Asheville, NC: Alex Smith, Assistant City Clerk

January 2026: Margo Morales, Stacey Ray, and I met with a subset of advisory body staff liaisons to review a preliminary draft of the recommendations.

February 2026: Stacey Ray and I presented initial recommendations to CLPS, including operational improvements; criteria tests for standing a new advisory body and audits to assess whether existing advisory bodies should continue; suggestions for diversifying community engagement tools, including multidisciplinary advisory bodies.

March 2026: Margo Morales, Stacey Ray, and I met again with staff liaisons to review the initial recommendations.

April 2026: City sent out a survey to all current advisory body members and staff liaisons to assess their personal experience with advisory bodies and to ask them to review the suggested new tools for community engagement, including community academies, collaborators, connectors and multidisciplinary advisory bodies. In addition, Margo Morales, Stacey Ray, and I met with the Social Justice and Equity Commission to apply an equity analysis on the suggested new community engagement tools.

May 2026: On May 7, we met with the chairs and staff liaisons of advisory bodies in a working session to discuss the suggested new community engagement tools as well as proposed operational improvements. Shared results of the advisory body member surveys. Debriefed with advisory bodies liaisons to collect key takeaways and reactions from the working session.

On May 18, Margo Morales, Stacey Ray, and I also returned to the Social Justice and Equity Commission to update them on the chairs' meeting and to support further discussions before they drafted their response letter to CLPS.

On May 27, Stacey Ray, Margo Morales, and I presented updated recommendations regarding recruitment, scope, and structure of council-appointed advisory bodies to CLPS. CLPS directed staff to continue to develop recommendations based on their comments and to bring them to the City Council for a study session to be held on July 21.

June 2026: On June 24, CLPS met with advisory chairs and staff liaisons in a working session focused on advisory body work plans. The meeting format included participants splitting up into groups and discussing and sharing ideas around the following three questions:

- What does impactful work look like?
- Can we create stronger alignment between the City Council's work plan and advisory body work plans?
- Is there a role for a referral process?

July 2026: Per the recommendation from CLPS, the City Council will hold a study session on July 21 to review the advisory bodies recommendations.

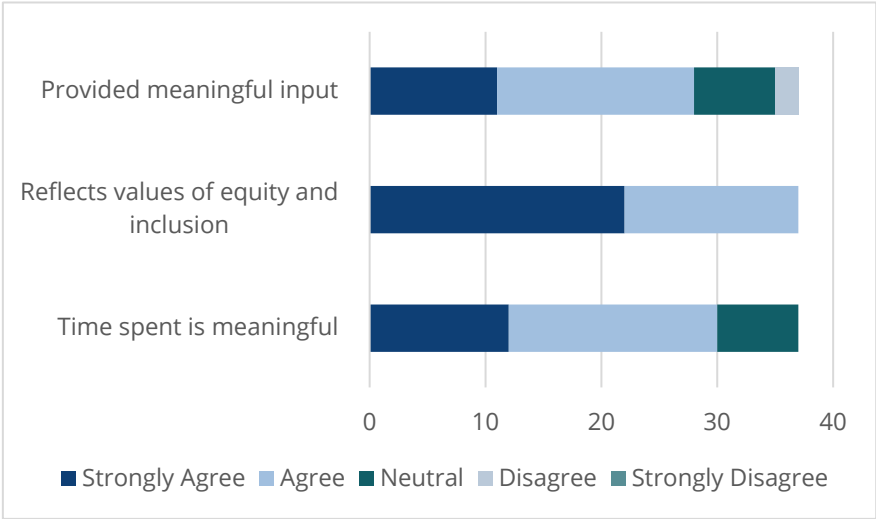


In 2025 the City Council asked staff to evaluate how the City is engaging with the community around council policy decisions and develop recommendations for opportunities to improve the experiences of volunteers and effectiveness of this work. As part of the process, staff surveyed current members of Council Appointed Advisory Bodies on their personal experience and seek recommendations to enhance engagement. We received 37 responses from members of 11 advisory bodies.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Advisory Body members were asked to consider their experiences and evaluate if they felt they had provided meaningful input that shaped a policy or decision, if their body reflected values of equity and inclusivity, and if the time they spent felt meaningful and valuable.

Most responses were positive, with 75.6% sharing they Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they provided meaningful input during their advisory body experience and the time spent was meaningful and valuable. 59.5% Strongly Agreed that their body reflects the values of equity and inclusivity.



Two respondents scored that they did not think they had provided meaningful input on policy and decision making; however, of the 28 people who provided comments, nine respondents gave statements about feeling their input was not impactful. The comments included respondents questioning whether their feedback was used, concerns about being included too late in the process, and a lack of alignment with Council work plans or understanding the process for providing input to Council.

NEW METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

The survey included four new suggested engagement opportunities and asked respondents to consider their effectiveness in creating meaningful input to guide policy and decision making, equitable and inclusive engagement, and impactful participation and experiences for members.

Community Collaborators

Most responses to this recommendation were positive, with over 75% of respondents indicating that this option would be Somewhat or Very effective at meeting the three engagement goals. The one Very Ineffective response had a clarifying comment that questioned whether these collaborators would be advising the Advisory Bodies.

Community Connectors

Most responses to this recommendation were also positive, with close to 80% indicating they believed this option would be Somewhat or Very Effective at meeting the three engagement goals.

Community Academies

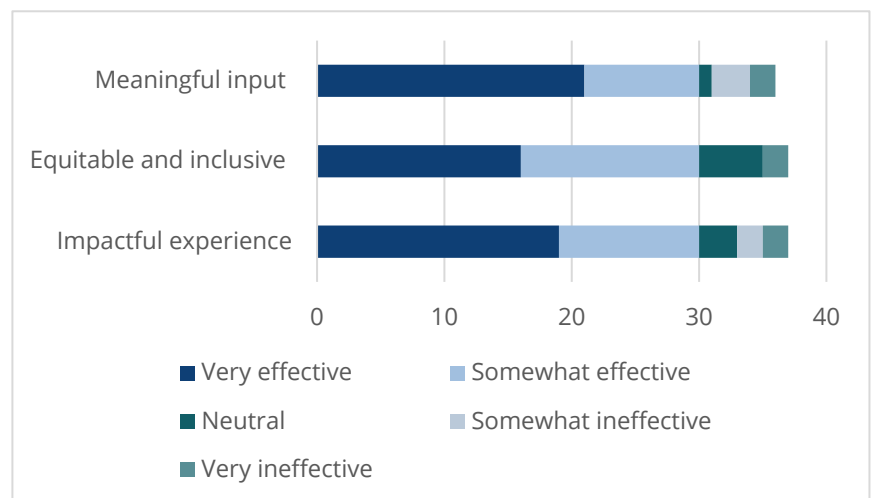
Most responses to this recommendation were also positive, with this option receiving the highest Very Effective rating (56.7%), for a total of 82.8% when combining Very and Somewhat Effective. Some people felt this would be ineffective in providing meaningful input to guide policy. However, it may not have been clear to all respondents that the intent of this recommendation is to create a better-informed community that will then be better able to provide meaningful input through other engagement methods.

Multi-disciplinary Advisory Bodies

Most responses (81%) felt this could be a Somewhat or Very Effective method for achieving all three engagement goals (meaningful input; equitable and inclusive; and impactful experience).

There were a few Very Ineffective ratings for this option: however, respondents noted questions about how the multidisciplinary bodies would be formed and whether there would be sufficient cross-

departmental staff support. Another respondent was also concerned that aligning Advisory Bodies according to Focus Areas would still result in siloing.



CONCLUSION

The responses received from this survey were consistent with the feedback received from other focus groups and stakeholder conversations. Respondents value the opportunity to provide community perspectives and feedback to City Council and staff that support policy and decision making; however, the current system does not always feel effective.

Additional tools and methods of community engagement would increase opportunities for community members to provide input, but some refinement, particularly for the concept of multi-disciplinary advisory bodies, would help determine when and how to use each tool.

May 7, 2026 Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes



Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

On May 7, 2026, Stacey Ray, Margo Morales, and Genevieve Canceko Chan hosted a special meeting with current advisory body chairs, vice chairs, and staff liaisons to discuss the proposed recommendations regarding Council appointed advisory bodies that were first shared with CLPS in February. The advisory body chairs and vice chairs rotated through four stations. One station covered operational changes to the current advisory body structure (e.g., recruitment timeline shift, work plan development alignment, flexible meeting schedules, audit and criteria tests for advisory bodies). The three other stations covered new community engagement tools: community academies; community collaborators and connectors; and multidisciplinary advisory bodies. For each station, the current advisory body members were asked to consider the following:

- How does this recommendation create opportunity for community members to provide meaningful input to guide policy and decision making?
- How does this recommendation support community members having an impactful and meaningful experience?

Below is a summary of the chairs' and vice chairs' remarks. (Note: Comments shared by multiple people are in boldface.)

Table #1 - Changes to the Current Advisory Body Structure

- **Like aligning Council and Advisory Body work plans.**
 - This takes into account master plans.
 - Helps council to be more coordinated with advisory bodies, vice versa.
 - Makes the advisory body work more exciting, pertinent.
- **Shifting the recruitment timeline makes sense**
 - Helps to better align with work plan development.
- Like having a vetted bench (i.e., applicants who were interviewed, approved by CLPS, not appointed) for open seats.
- **In-person, standardized and consolidated onboarding is a great idea.**
 - Like consistency between boards for everyone.
 - Creates a sense of a cohort during orientation.
 - Can orient new members to Council work plans.
 - Allows for onboarding on a separate day from regular advisory body meetings.
 - Should hold when convenient to members.
 - Inventory what information people need to best participate.

- Might still have a smaller advisory body specific orientation for new members.
- As City Council or staff audit existing boards:
 - Consider that different advisory body functions might skew them to look more or less productive (e.g., fewer, but bigger projects).
 - Be clear about which law is requiring an advisory body
 - Should audit advisory bodies every 5-10 years, consider best practices
 - Clarify the role of advisory bodies, i.e., what is outside of their scope/purview
- Advisory bodies need access (transparent systems) to background information for complex topics (e.g., how to balance number of info sessions during advisory body meetings).
 - Often longer-term members keep this knowledge in their heads.
 - It can be helpful to have institutional knowledge on advisory bodies.
- **Still need a way for Council to close the loop with advisory bodies after they give recommendations to Council – Don't 'ghost' the advisory bodies.**
- Advisory bodies can give valuable/meaningful input to staff and staff can bring topics to advisory bodies before fully baked.
 - Is there a better mechanism for advisory bodies to communicate with Council on emerging issues?
 - Help/guidance for people who want to give public comment effectively; can staff direct commenters to better venue(s) for comments?

Table #2 - Community Academies

- Good jumping off point.
 - Lower bar of commitment.
 - Broader vs. deeper engagement.
 - Good for networking, building community.
- Can build understanding of complex governance.
 - Demystifies procedure.
 - Helpful for information dissemination.
 - Could be an opportunity for project post mortem – why some feedback was/wasn't used.
 - Potential to catch the “interested” over the “driven”.
 - Good outlet for engaged but in-expert, or not yet ready, community members.
- Pipeline, opportunity to express interest; creates a “bench” for future civic participation.
 - Can temper expectations (e.g., “so you wanna be on a commission”).
 - Relieves some pressure on staff (i.e., to educate/communicate/prepare community members/volunteers on projects).
- Lacey and Yelm have great examples.
- **Can the curriculum be mobile? Or only at City Hall?**
 - **Should meet people where they are.** Could use connectors to host satellite workshops outside of City Hall.
 - Childcare: coordinate with the library; build some safety around childcare.
 - Can this be done in other languages?
 - Student level programing could have great potential.

- How to ensure broad participation?
 - Needs broad PR support to ensure diversity.
 - Available through Arts/Parks catalogue.
- Question: is it People > City or City > People?
 - What are the guiding documents? When/how can it create impact?
 - How will topics be decided? Will they align with the comp plan for example?
 - If the framework doesn't match community interests, it could diminish community engagement.
 - The more concrete the topic (less vague) the more productive.
 - Build in opportunities for impact for participants – ensure attendees know how they can have impact.
 - Maybe the City could iterate and improve over time.
- Rethink “academies” as the term might turn people off.

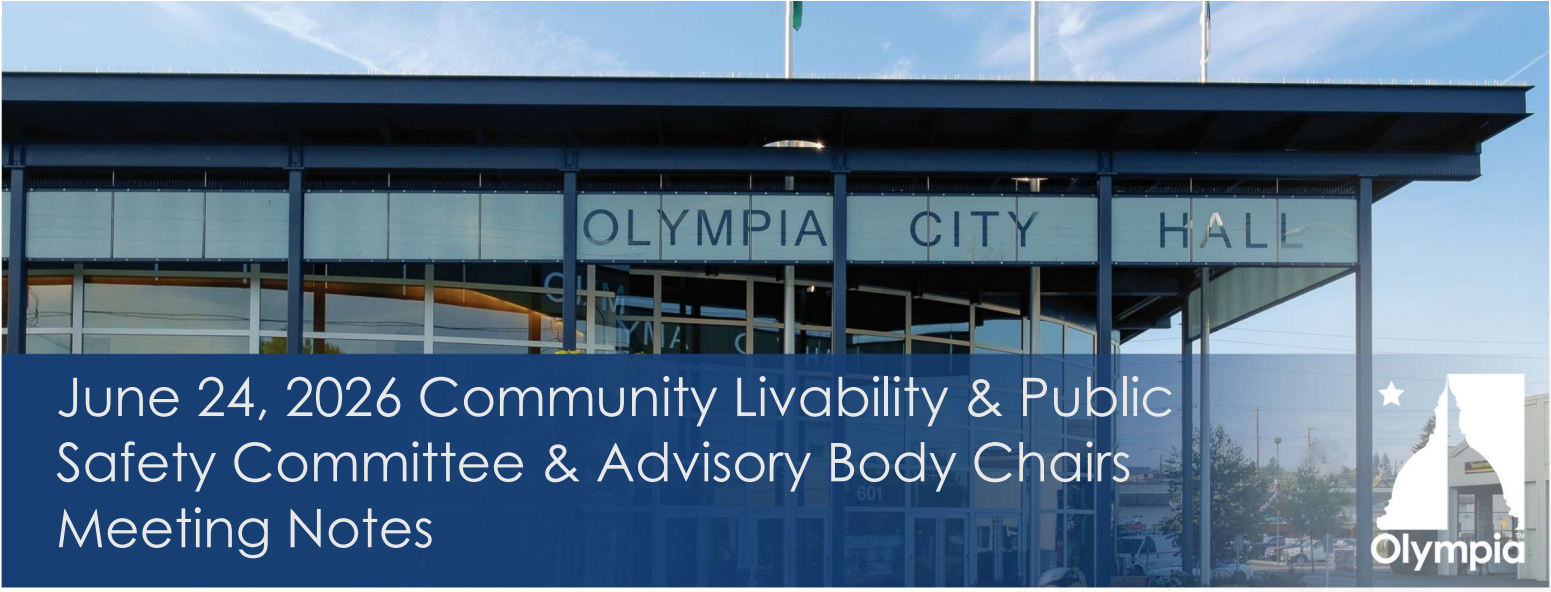
Table #3 - Community connectors and collaborators

- Connectors and collaborators can identify/provide input on topics of interest, relevance for deeper community education (like the community academy).
- Having both collaborators and connectors may help to “hedge your bets” or open a different approach when one doesn't serve very well or goes sideways.
- **Provides potential to retain subject matter experts after they leave advisory bodies.**
 - **Past advisory body members as community collaborators who can share institutional knowledge** (e.g., SJEC members connecting City staff with Muslim community).
- Connectors (i.e., liaisons or bridges to different constituent groups):
 - May serve better to reach those who don't or can't typically engage with City government.
 - Can go to people where they are at.
 - However, may skew toward already well organized and established communities.
- Collaborators (i.e., ad hoc advisors):
 - Can be subject matter experts who have info on a topic and may differ from advisory members, who offer perspective on impact, often as “end users”.
 - Have deep but limited expertise in single subject or perspective.
- Does the City have criteria for finding/selecting community connectors/collaborators?
 - How does one become a collaborator/connector? Would have to do a lot of outreach to open these orgs to collaborators.
 - How does the City fully identify and utilize subject matter experts?
 - How are different constituencies identified?
- Must have clarity about how collaborators/connector input will be used, and how it will make an impact.
 - Does the input from collaborators/connectors go to an advisory body? Or straight to council? Folks need to know up front.
 - When considering their input, be mindful that connectors/collaborators may not be comprehensive in representation.
- Community collaborators/connectors require ONGOING relationships.
 - Trust building requires consistent participation of/engagement with City elected and staff.

- Participation even when the City doesn't "need" something from that community or group.

Table #4 - Multidisciplinary Advisory Bodies

- Provides opportunities for feedback across multiple disciplines/departments.
- Addresses lack of trust due to too many committees: current system has too many decision points, participation fatigue.
- This model could be scaled up to involve more people, e.g., create ad hoc committees.
- **Opportunity for work across/between disciplines (parks, trails, transportation).**
- Connecting and expanding connections that you might not normally connect with. It's proactive.
- Interdisciplinary approach tied to clear outcomes: people understand how their input is used, where input has clear impact; people understand at the beginning not just the end.
- Current committees can be siloed – a new structure could help address issues holistically.
- Could create different silos and risk losing important intersectionality/context relationship between groups?
- How can we carry forward systems and institutional knowledge? Some areas require deep expertise with a steep learning curve.
- **Collapsing committees could result in loss of depth of expertise?**
- Could work well for some areas/advisory committees but not all?



June 24, 2026 Community Livability & Public Safety Committee & Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes



Community Livability & Public Safety Committee (CLPS) and Advisory Body Chairs Meeting Notes

On June 24, 2026, CLPS hosted its annual meeting with current advisory body chairs, vice chairs, and their staff liaisons to discuss ways to improve the advisory bodies' work plan process. They were joined by City Manager Jay Burney and all seven City Council members. After everyone self-sorted into one of four tables, Assistant City Manager Stacey Ray asked each table to discuss and comment on three questions:

- What does impactful work mean for you and the other members of your advisory body?
- How might we ensure strong alignment between the City Council's Annual Work Plan and advisory body work plans?
- Is there a role for a referral process, and if yes, what might make that process most effective?

Below is a consolidated summary of remarks.

What does impactful work mean for you and the other members of your advisory body?

- When a recommendation and/or resulting work item is visible or tangible to the community.
- When a recommendation or outcome improves how our diverse community experiences and engages with the City, e.g., services are more equitable or more accessible, environments or events feel physically and psychologically safer.
- When a recommendation and/or resulting decision builds community trust in the government process.
- When a referral from the City Council matches with what the community sees as a priority issue or emerging need.
- When advisory bodies can be engaged early enough (e.g., early policy drafts or near the beginning of project timeline) to make meaningful commentary or ask relevant questions that can still affect next steps.

How might we ensure strong alignment between the City Council's annual work plan and advisory body work plans?

- Overall, most feel that the City Council's work plan should inform or drive advisory body work plans.
- Shift the timing so that the City Council's work plan is completed and referrals determined and assigned before advisory bodies finish drafting their work plan.
- Plan for a public presentation of the City Council's final work plan, and all related advisory body referrals, so all advisory body members can see the bigger picture for the year.
- Advisory bodies could submit an end-of-year report (around October or November) on the status of their current work plan items to help the City Council prepare for their next work plan. This report could include unresolved work items and/or top 3-4 priorities or emerging issues that the City Council should address.

- Expand the scope of work plan items so that advisory bodies could be assigned more work that does not rise to the level of importance of, but still supports, City Council (e.g., reviewing or sorting data, evaluating applications based on Council-approved metrics)?
- Create a standard and regular method to track progress on projects or policies so advisory bodies know their status after they have shared their recommendation to the City Council or staff.
- What happens to work plan items from the previous year that remain open? Can the City Council confirm whether to continue, pause, or close a work plan item?

Is there a role for a referral process, and if yes, what might make that process most effective?

- Yes, advisory bodies would like to be able to raise emerging issues to the City Council. However, what are the parameters?
 - Should a referral from an advisory body to the City Council mirror the same elements/requirements of a referral from the City Council to advisory bodies (e.g., issue, urgency, what are the desired outcomes)?
 - Does raising a question or an issue to the City Council necessarily mean they are asking for a referral from Council?
 - What are the obligations for the City Council to respond to a referral from an advisory body?
- Where should community members go if they have a concern or question to raise? Should they go directly to the City Council via public comment? Or a council committee like CLPS? Or a relevant advisory body meeting?

Additional questions or suggestions:

- Can there be a more formal “closing the loop” or post-mortem for projects or policies that advisory bodies were involved with?
 - Can the City Council or staff report back to advisory bodies on whether or how their recommendations or projects are helpful, and why?
 - How are advisory bodies’ work or contribution shared with the public?
- When the City Council or staff prepare a referral, can there be more clarity of the advisory body’s scope or role in decision-making process? Can this include a better understanding of the life cycle of a project or potential impact?
- What are advisory bodies’ role(s) or responsibilities, if any, in engaging directly with the community?
- Can there be more regular contact with the City Council, e.g., maybe a touch base with Council or CLPS biannually or quarterly to share progress on work plan issues or emerging items?
- What does a mid-year non-work plan item look like?
- Overall, members would like to see more clarity or documentation around the following processes:
 - Council to committee/advisory body (referral)
 - Committee to council (recommendation)
 - Committee to director (recommendation)
 - Director to committee (referral)



To: Community Livability and Public Safety Council Committee

May 18, 2026

Honorable Chair Madrone and Community Livability and Public Safety Committee Members,

In 2025 the Council directed City staff to do an assessment of the Council Appointed Advisory Body system, and community engagement strategies. At their April 20, 2026 meeting the Social Justice and Equity Commission received a briefing on the assessment of City Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and draft recommendations on opportunities to further support meaningful and inclusive community engagement. Commissioners continued their discussion of the draft recommendations at their May 18, 2026 meeting. When considered holistically, the Commission expressed support for the package of recommendations. The following is a summary of the Commission's additional recommendations for CLPS to consider:

- Supportive of shift in recruitment timelines and rolling recruitment to ensure vacancies are efficiently filled and new members are engaged in the work plan development process.
- Additional engagement tools like community academy, community connectors and community collaborators are positive steps in reducing existing barriers to participation for community members. Acknowledged that these will not reduce all barriers but are an improvement on the current system.
- Utilizing ad hoc committees and short-term collaborator groups could increase the City's ability to be present in the community, allowing for flexibility, adaptability, and engagement on emergent issues.
- Community Academies could be an effective way to build trust, invite questions, and inspire hands-on learning about City government.
- Multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving makes sense and could more effectively collect diverse perspectives on issues, as opposed to groups where everyone is like-minded.
- These recommendations allow for various degrees of participation and/or commitment.
- Community members most impacted by issues might still not have capacity or sense of safety to be able to directly participate.
- Consider that an overly broad scope may discourage folks from participating who have specific interests and/or areas of expertise. Some community members may not see themselves reflected in the work, resulting in the City's loss of critical perspective.
- Prioritize community outreach programs and partnerships (e.g. schools, businesses, faith-based organizations), and hosting sessions in community as opposed to asking people to come to City Hall.
- Provide robust internal framework so community engagement work is not performative; improve feedback loop and demonstration of how community engagement and feedback have been impactful in policy development and decision making.

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- Staff time would still be required to engage with connectors and collaborators. Potential reduction in advisory bodies could allow staff to shift their time from support of advisory bodies to supporting other engagement tools.
- Explore what motivates community members to participate with the recommended engagement tools.
- Evaluate the stipend system and how to provide meaningful compensation for community connectors or collaborators, especially considering the value of lived expertise and emotional labor in parity with traditional compensated labor and/or education. The process should not be overly burdensome and prohibitive for participants.
- Consider geographic diversity when appointing advisory body members.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft recommendations for Council Appointed Advisory Bodies and community engagement and provide community perspectives on how the recommendations could support community engagement around policy development and decision-making.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin C. Rosen-Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robin" and last name "Rosen-Evans" clearly legible.

Robin Rosen-Evans, Chair
Social Justice & Equity Commission

RR:mm