



July 28, 2025

Olympia City Council  
cc: Olympia Planning Commission

Honorable Mayor Payne and City of Olympia Councilmembers,

As part of the Olympia 2045 update of the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council has provided the Social Justice and Equity Commission with an opportunity to weigh in on the draft chapters to offer equity-related recommendations. This letter is intended to share with you the Commission's conversation regarding the Climate element, on which the Commission received a briefing at our June 23, 2025 meeting.

The Commission discussed the Introduction chapter with Climate Programs staff and had the opportunity to ask questions related to how equity is addressed in the element and how it was considered during its development. The Commission's discussion centered around the following topics:

- Necessity of partnerships with regional municipalities and transportation providers to improve alternative commuting options for people who work outside of the City/County as part of miles traveled reduction plans. Ensure that future changes to codes or policies to reduce miles traveled do not place burden on families where use of public transit and reduction of miles traveled in a car is not an option.
- Encourage alternative forms of transportation without penalizing community members for use of vehicles for daily commuting needs, recognizing that public transportation or alternative commuting options will not be possible for all.
- Concern that conversion from gas to electric for new construction and existing homes will create a large financial burden on community members. Although beneficial for public health and climate action, expensive upgrades and retrofits may make it more challenging to promote a more diverse community.
- Consideration around changes in technology that support one climate goal may cause a negative impact on the environment in different ways (example: environmental impact of batteries for electric cars)
- What models and projections the City uses to determine the City's primary risks around climate change and the difference between resiliency and mitigation in these areas.
- Community engagement and education strategies for climate programs and helping the community to understand and find ways to participate in the City's climate goals.

Lastly, Commissioners appreciated how previous SJEC feedback was reflected in element updates, and the opportunity to further discuss their thoughts with Climate Programs staff. We appreciate the opportunity to review goals and policies within the Climate element of the Comprehensive Plan, provide feedback on the updated process, and learn how this work promotes equitable growth and development in our community.

Best Regards,

Robin Rosen-Evans, Chair  
Social Justice & Equity Commission  
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