

Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING THE CITY OF OLYMPIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, INCLUDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP, AND AMENDING THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS PART OF THE PERIODIC UPDATE UNDER THE WASHINGTON STATE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT**

WHEREAS, the Washington Growth Management Act (chapter 36.70A RCW) requires that the City of Olympia and other jurisdictions within Thurston County adopt comprehensive plans; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia City Council adopts this Comprehensive Plan in order to meet the mandates of the Growth Management Act; and

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Act affords cities significant flexibility and there are various legitimate alternative methods to accomplish the requirements of the Growth Management Act; and

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Act, in RCW 36.70A.130, requires the City of Olympia to take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to ensure their continued compliance with the requirements in chapter 36.70A RCW by December 31, 2025 (also known as "periodic review" and "periodic update"); and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia used the Washington State Department of Commerce Growth Management Services Division's Periodic Update Checklist for Fully-Planning Cities to establish the minimum scope of work for the update, which addresses both Comprehensive Plans and Development Regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia conducted its review and update in a phased manner, reviewing each chapter through a public process while also coordinating review across all chapters to retain consistency throughout the Plan; and

WHEREAS, dedicated webpages for the periodic update were created so that residents, business owners, and anyone interested in the planning process could find information about the chapters at any time; and

WHEREAS, the City Staff conducted a "kick-off" public meeting on May 10, 2023, to inform community members about the process and the estimated timelines for the periodic update; and

WHEREAS, a community survey was conducted from May 1, 2023, through May 31, 2023, on the Community Values and Vision statements in the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, a public Open House on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update process was held on July 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, City staff regularly provided updates on the planning process to the public through the issuance of newsletters and communication with Parties of Record; and

WHEREAS, each optional and required draft chapter (or "element") of the Plan was reviewed by the Social Justice and Equity Commission and the Planning Commission as part of the development of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, many chapters were reviewed by additional Advisory Committees, including the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Heritage Commission; the Utility Advisory Committee, and the Youth Council; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2022, the Mayor of Olympia wrote a letter to the Squaxin Island Tribe inviting tribal participation in the periodic update process; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council and Squaxin Island Tribal Council met on March 6, 2024, to collaborate on the Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update; and

WHEREAS, participation and collaboration on the Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan was provided by the Squaxin Island Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the proposed comprehensive plan (Exhibit A) includes a capital facilities element that complies with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070, which is entitled Capital Facilities Plan and 2026-2031 Financial Plan, adopted by the Olympia City Council on December 16, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan (Exhibit A) goals and policies influenced by or related to shorelines are consistent with the adopted City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology, entitled Shoreline Master Program, and the goals and policies of that Shoreline Master Program, as amended, are hereby incorporated into the Olympia Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia established and broadly disseminated to the public a public participation program for the review and revisions to its Comprehensive Plan, consistent with RCW 36.70A.130(2), 36.70A.035, and 36.70A.140; and

WHEREAS, the Community Planning and Economic Development Department issued a Determination of Significance (known as a "DS" under the State Environmental Policy Act) and Request for Comments on Scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposal on February 23, 2024, with a comment period that was open through 5:00 p.m. on March 25, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on May 13, 2025, with a comment period open through June 13, 2025. The City issued a Final EIS on July 11, 2025, addressing the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, Thurston County completed its review and evaluation report in accordance with RCW 36.70A.215 in June 2021. The City of Olympia City Council has reviewed that report and concluded that sufficient capacity exists in the current urban growth area adopted by the Thurston County Commissioners to accommodate projected growth; and

WHEREAS, there are no inconsistencies between the policies in the proposed City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan (Exhibit A) and the actual and projected growth patterns examined in the report; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia provided the draft of each chapter of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan to the Washington State Department of Commerce as follows: Introduction Chapter on March 25, 2025; Community Values and Vision Chapter on April 15, 2025; Public Participation and Partners Chapter on July 15, 2024; Climate Action and Resilience Chapter on May 21, 2025; Natural Environment Chapter on June 12, 2024; Land Use and Urban Design Chapter on May 29, 2025; Transportation Chapter on June 21, 2024; Housing Chapter on June 13, 2025; Utilities Chapter on June 28, 2024; Parks, Arts, and Recreation Chapter on November 1, 2023; Economy Chapter on October 30, 2023; Public Safety Chapter on October 9, 2024; and the Capital Facilities Plan Chapter on September 24, 2024; in accordance with RCW 36.70A.106; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia Planning Commission held public hearings on each chapter of the Plan as follows: Introduction Chapter on June 16, 2025; Community Values and Vision Chapter on June 16, 2025; Public Participation and Partners Chapter on October 21, 2024; Climate Action and Resilience Chapter on August 4, 2025; Natural Environment Chapter on September 16, 2024; Land Use and Urban Design Chapter on July

21, 2025; Transportation Chapter on February 3, 2025; Housing Chapter on August 18, 2025; Utilities Chapter on August 19, 2024; Parks, Arts, and Recreation Chapter on January 22, 2024; Economy Chapter on February 26, 2024; and Public Safety Chapter on September 16, 2024; Capital Facilities Plan Chapter on January 27, 2025; to receive public testimony on the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia Planning Commission provided written recommendations for each chapter as follows: Introduction Chapter on June 16, 2025; Community Values and Vision Chapter on June 16, 2025; Public Participation and Partners Chapter on November 4, 2024; Climate Action and Resilience Chapter on August 4, 2025; Natural Environment Chapter on October 7, 2024; Land Use and Urban Design Chapter on August 4, 2025; Transportation Chapter on February 24, 2025; Housing Chapter on September 15, 2025; Utilities Chapter on October 7, 2024; Parks, Arts, and Recreation Chapter on February 26, 2024; Economy Chapter on March 18, 2024; Public Safety Chapter on October 7, 2024; and Capital Facilities Plan Chapter on January 29, 2025 for City Council consideration prior to adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) submitted a comment letter dated July 29, 2025, stating that the Olympia Transportation Element does not contain all of the mandatory elements contained in RCW 36.70A.060(6)(a), including multimodal levels of service for state-owned facilities or any specific actions or requirements for bringing into compliance any transportation facilities or services that are below an established multimodal level of service; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia responded to and addressed the WSDOT letter on October 1, 2025, indicating the City of Olympia's established multimodal levels of service and a description of how the Transportation Element satisfies the requirements under RCW 36.70A.060(6)(a); and

WHEREAS, on September 26, 2025, the draft Transportation Element, along with the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter and the Climate Action and Resilience Chapters (as they support the Transportation Chapter), was submitted to Thurston Regional Planning Council for certification with the Regional Transportation Plan, the guidelines and principles of RCW 47.80.026, and the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(6); and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2025, Thurston Regional Planning Council certified the Transportation Element of the Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, most chapters and the Planning Commission recommendations were considered by the Council Committee appropriate to the chapter topic for review and committee recommendation prior to going to City Council for discussion at a Study Session; and

WHEREAS, each draft chapter of the plan was considered by the City Council at a Study Session prior to Council being requested to accept or adopt each chapter; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council adopted Resolutions to accept each chapter of the plan as each chapter was completed as follows: Introduction (M-2649); Community Values & Vision (M-2647); Public Participation & Partners (M-2642); Climate Action & Resilience (M-2271); Natural Environment (M-2617); Land Use & Urban Design (M-2667); Transportation (M-2654); Housing (M-2670); Utilities (M-2627); Parks, Arts & Recreation (M-2616); Economy (M-2660); Public Safety (M-2655); Capital Facilities (M-2625); and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council finds it necessary and in the public interest that the Olympia Comprehensive Plan with appendices included as Exhibit A be adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council determines that the Olympia Comprehensive Plan adopted by this Ordinance maintains and promotes the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council determines that the adoption of the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan meets the criteria set forth in Olympia Municipal Code and all other applicable legal criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council determines that the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the County-Wide Planning Policies, and the regional transportation plan adopted by the Thurston Regional Planning Council in accordance with chapter 47.80 RCW; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia has reviewed its development regulations for consistency with the proposed Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act, and has determined that the City's adopted development regulations are consistent with the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan except for the proposed amendments listed in Sections 3-12 of this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed development regulation amendments in this Ordinance have been considered by the Olympia Planning Commission for recommendation to the Olympia City Council, and upon adoption by the Olympia City Council will fulfill the requirements of RCW 36.70A.130 for review and revision of development regulations by December 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia is making substantial progress on the update of its Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), and in conformance with provisions in RCW 36.70A.130(7) is expected to complete the update of the CAO within twelve or fewer months and no later than December 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia Comprehensive Plan provides policy direction for the City's development regulations, and the determination of consistency of individual development proposals with the comprehensive plan is determined by their compliance with the City's adopted development regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City Attorney's designees have evaluated the constitutional provisions potentially at issue with the adoption of this Ordinance and utilized the process established by the State Attorney General (AG) in evaluating this Ordinance, including an evaluation of the process taken by Council and the AG Advisory Memorandum: Avoiding Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property, consistent with RCW 36.70A.370; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance is supported by the Agenda Item Summary and attachments associated with this Ordinance, along with documents on file with the City of Olympia; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance is adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A and Article 11, Section 11, of the Washington State Constitution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1. Adoption of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan.** The current City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan is hereby replaced with the City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A.

**Section 2. Adoption of the Olympia 2045 Critical Areas Ordinance Amendments Anticipated Timeline.** The proposed critical areas ordinance development regulation amendments considered as part of the Periodic Update are anticipated to be reviewed and adopted per the schedule attached hereto as Exhibit B.

**Section 3. Amendment of OMC 17.04.090.** Olympia Municipal Code Section 17.04.090 is hereby amended to read as follows:

#### **17.04.090 Regulations supplementary to state law**

The regulations prescribed by this title shall be considered as supplementary to RCW Chapter [58.17](#). No map, plat, replat or plan of a proposed subdivision, short subdivision or large lot subdivision shall be recorded or have any validity unless it conforms with the requirements of RCW Chapter [58.17](#).

- A. All plats, short plats, and binding site plans issued for development activities on, or within 500 feet of, lands designated as agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands must contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration. The notice for mineral resource lands must also specify that an application might be made for mining-related activities, including mining, extraction, washing, crushing, stockpiling, blasting, transporting, and recycling of minerals.

**Section 4. Amendment of OMC 18.40.060(J). Olympia Municipal Code Subsection 18.40.060(J) is hereby amended to read as follows:**

#### **Section OMC 18.40.060 - General Standards**

- J. Resource Lands. All plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within 500 feet of, lands designated as agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands must contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forestlands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration. The notice for mineral resource lands must also specify that an application might be made for mining-related activities, including mining, extraction, washing, crushing, stockpiling, blasting, transporting, and recycling of minerals.

**Section 5. Amendment of OMC 18.02.180(E). Olympia Municipal Code Subsection 18.02.180€ is hereby amended to read as follows:**

#### **E. DEFINITIONS - SPECIFIC.**

**Easement.** A right of one owner of land to make lawful and beneficial use of the land of another, created by an express or implied agreement.

**Easement, Conservation.** The grant of a property right stipulating that the described land will remain in its current state, precluding future or additional development.

**Easement, Scenic.** An easement the purpose of which is to limit development in order to preserve or enhance a view or scenic area.

**Elder Care.** See Dwelling, Assisted Living.

**Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.** Structures, machinery, and equipment necessary and integral to support an electric vehicle, including battery charging stations, rapid charging stations, and battery exchange stations.

- a. "Battery charging station" means an electrical component assembly or cluster of component assemblies designed specifically to charge batteries within electric vehicles.
- b. "Battery exchange station" means a fully automated facility that will enable an electric vehicle with a swappable battery to enter a drive lane and exchange the depleted battery with a fully charged battery through a fully automated process.

- c. "Charging levels" means the standardized indicators of electrical force, or voltage, at which an electric vehicle's battery is recharged. The terms 1, 2, and 3 are the most common electric vehicle charging levels, and include the following specifications:
  - i. Level 1 is considered slow charging. Level 1 is present in homes and businesses and typically operates on a 15- or 20-amp breaker on a 120-volt Alternating Current (AC) circuit and standard outlet.
  - ii. Level 2 is considered medium charging. Typically, Level 2 is for home and public charging and operates on a 40-amp to 100-amp breaker on a 208 or 240-volt AC circuit.
  - iii. Level 3 is considered fast or rapid charging. Level 3 is primarily for commercial and public applications (e.g., taxi fleets and charging along freeways) and typically operates on a 60-amp or higher dedicated breaker on a 480-volt or higher three-phase circuit with special grounding equipment.
- d. "Electric vehicle" means any vehicle that operates, either partially or exclusively, on electrical energy from the grid, or an off-board source, that is stored on-board for motive purpose. "Electric vehicle" includes any one of the following: (1) a battery electric vehicle; (2) a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle; (3) a neighborhood electric vehicle; and (4) a medium-speed electric vehicle.

Emergency. An imminent threat to health, safety, or welfare, or an imminent risk of substantial damage to public or private property.

Emergency Housing. A temporary shelter usually in the form of a mobile home which is occupied only during the period of reconstruction of a dwelling following damage sustained by fire, explosion, act of nature or act of public enemy.

Emergency Housing Facility. A temporary emergency housing facility that may include tents and small structures organized and managed as temporary accommodations for homeless people, and may be hosted by entities described in OMC Section [18.50.010](#).

Emergency Repair. Work necessary to prevent destruction or dilapidation of real or personal property or structures immediately threatened or damaged by fire, flood, earthquake or other disaster.

Entertainment Event. Includes any festival, sporting event, celebration, circus, carnival, fair, or other similar event open to the public.

Equipment Cabinet, WCF. Any structure above the base flood elevation (including cabinets, shelters, pedestals, and other similar structures) used exclusively to contain radio or other equipment necessary for the transmission or reception of wireless communication signals.

Equipment Compound, WCF. The fenced area surrounding the ground-based wireless communication facility including the areas inside or under the following: an antenna support structure's framework and ancillary structures such as equipment necessary to operate the antenna on the WCF that is above the base flood elevation including: cabinets, shelters, pedestals, and other similar structures.

Entertainment (Live). Any act, play, revue, pantomime, scene, dance act, or song and dance act, or any combination thereof, performed by one or more persons, whether or not they are compensated for the performance.

Equipment - Light. Machinery which a person does not ride such as chain saws, wheelbarrows, and hand-held tools.

Equipment Rental Service, Commercial. A business which rents or leases equipment for personal or household use, including but not limited to power and hand tools, yard and garden equipment, or party supplies such as dishware, glassware, and folding tables and chairs. This does not include rental of furniture or appliances, which is classified under Furniture, Home Furnishings, and Appliance stores. It also does not include rental or leasing of portable toilets, heavy equipment like bulldozers, or similar services to the construction trades. These are classified as Light Industrial uses.

Essential Public Facilities. Public facilities and privately owned or operated facilities serving a public purpose which are typically difficult to site. They include, ~~but are not limited to,~~ airports; state educational facilities; state or regional transportation facilities; prisons, jails, and other correctional facilities; solid waste handling facilities; inpatient facilities such as group homes and mental health facilities; sewage treatment facilities; ~~and~~ communication towers and antennas; and other facilities identified in RCW 36.70A.200.

Examiner. The Hearing Examiner of the City of Olympia.

Excavation. Any digging, scooping or other method of removing earth material.

Ex Parte Communication. Any written or oral communication made outside of a public hearing and not included in the public record.

**Section 6. Amendment of OMC 18.08.040. Olympia Municipal Code Section 18.08.040 is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**18.08.040 Permitted, conditional and prohibited uses**

A. PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES.

Table 8.01 Permitted and Conditional Uses identifies land uses in the industrial districts which are permitted outright (P) or subject to a Conditional Use Permit (C). The applicable requirements for these uses and activities are identified by a number referencing the list of use regulations under Section [18.08.060](#) Use Standards, Light Industrial/Commercial District, or Section [18.08.080](#) Use Standards, Industrial District. Regulations that pertain only to a specific use in a specific district are identified by a number in the space corresponding to that use and district.

The siting of an organic materials (OM) management facility is only permitted upon approval of a conditional use permit and when identified in an adopted local solid waste management plan (SWMP) to meet OM reduction and diversion goals. Siting must meet criteria described in the local SWMP and RCW 70A.205.040(3).

B. PROHIBITED AND UNSPECIFIED USES.

Land uses which are not listed as permitted or conditional uses are prohibited unless authorized by the Director consistent with Section [18.02.080](#), Interpretations.

<b>TABLE 8.01 PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES</b>		
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	LI/C	I
Additional Regulations	18.08.060(A), 18.08.060(C) 18.44 18.04.060(C)	18.08.080(A), 18.08.080(C) 18.44 18.04.060(C)

<b>1. INDUSTRIAL USES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Food Processing		P
Manufacture, repair, or servicing of goods or products which can be performed with minimal adverse impact on, and pose no special hazard to, the environment and the community, such as: veterinary clinics, dry-cleaning plants, storage of mechanical equipment, auto and marine contractors/builders.	P	P
Manufacture, assembly, bulk storage, processing, repair, or servicing of goods or products which can be performed with minimal adverse impact on, and pose no special hazard to, the environment and community.		P
Off-site treatment & storage facilities for hazardous waste.		C 18.08.080(B)
On-site treatment & storage facilities for hazardous waste as an accessory use, subject to the State siting criteria Chapter <a href="#">70.105</a> , RCW.	P	P
<u>Organic Management Maintenance Facilities</u>	<u>C</u> 18.08.040(A)	<u>C</u> 18.08.040(A)
Recycling Facilities	P	P
<b>2. RETAIL SERVICES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Retail sale of goods or products manufactured on the premises, or utilized in manufacturing, repairing or servicing activities which are permitted in this district.	P	P
<b>3. COMMERCIAL USES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Auto Wrecking & Junk Yards		P
Commercial uses which, although not essential to the successful functioning of these areas, do not create significant interference or conflict with the permitted activities, such as: service stations, hardware stores, eating and drinking places, including drive-ins.	P 18.08.060(B)	P 18.08.080(B)
<b>4. RESIDENTIAL USES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Living or residential quarters as an accessory use such as guards' quarters in large establishments where such quarters are customarily provided for security and/or insurability of the premises.	P	P
Child Day Care Centers	P	P
Secure Community Transition Facilities	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
County Homeless Encampment	C 18.50	
<b>5. OFFICE USES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Government Offices	C	C
<b>6. UTILITIES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Public Utilities	P	P
Radio/TV and Other Communication towers and antennas	P	P
Wireless Communications Facilities	See 18.44	See 18.44
<b>7. PUBLIC FACILITIES</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>

<b>8. ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Airports	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
State or Regional Transportation Facilities	P	P
Prisons	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
Jails	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
Secure Community Transition Facilities	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
Solid Waste Handling Facilities	C 18.08.060(E)	P
Mental Health Facilities	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
Other facilities designated as Essential Public Facilities by the Washington State Office of Financial Management	C 18.08.060(E)	C 18.08.080(E)
<b>9. OTHER</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Crematoriums	P	P
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	P	P
Parking Lots, Off-Site [see 18.38.200]	C	C
Temporary Uses	P 18.08.060(D)	P 18.08.080(D)
Transportation Terminals		P
Uses similar to permitted uses may be allowed subject to site plan review and approval by the Hearing Examiner.		
<b>10. STORAGE FACILITIES</b>	<b>LI/C</b>	<b>I</b>
Ministorage	P	P
Warehousing		P

**Section 7. Amendment of OMC 15.04.020.I. Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 15.04 is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**15.04.020 Definitions**

- I. "Development Activity" means any construction, expansion of a building, structure, or use, ~~or any~~ change in the use of a building or structure, ~~or any changes in the use of the land,~~ that creates additional demand and need for public facilities, ~~with the exception of low-income and emergency housing development as provided for in RCW 82.02.060. "Development activity" does not include:~~
  - ~~(a) Buildings or structures constructed by a regional transit authority; or~~
  - ~~(b) Buildings or structures constructed as shelters that provide emergency housing for people experiencing homelessness, or emergency shelters for victims of domestic violence, as defined in RCW 70.123.020.~~

**Section 8. Amendment of OMC 15.20.030. Olympia Municipal Code Section 15.20.030 is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**15.20.030 Transportation concurrency standards**

The following transportation concurrency standards, established in the Olympia Comprehensive Plan, are hereby adopted for the purposes of this Chapter.

- A. Mobility units of supply, as measured by the proportion of the transportation concurrency project list identified in the Capital Facilities Plan, must exceed the number of mobility units of demand generated by approved developments in Olympia.
- B. Mobility units of supply are considered available to support new development when the transportation improvement is fully funded, as identified in the Capital Facilities Plan.
- C. Transportation improvements on the transportation concurrency project list may be phased and so long as those phases provide person trip capacity, the individual phases can count toward supply when they are funded.
- D. In accordance with the Growth Management Act, highways of statewide significance are exempt from local government transportation concurrency.

**Section 9. Amendment of OMC 18.59.080. Olympia Municipal Code Section 18.59.080 is hereby amended to add a new Section .080 to read as follows:**

**18.59.080 Tribal Participation**

- A. A federally recognized Indian tribe may participate in a county or regional planning process and coordinate with the county and cities that are either required or choose to comply with the provisions of the Growth Management Act. Collaboration and participation is a nonexclusive exercise of coordination and cooperation in the planning process and failure to exercise discretionary collaboration and participation does not limit a party's standing for quasi-judicial or judicial review or appeal under this chapter.
- B. The City of Olympia honors the Accord between the Squaxin Island Tribe and City of Olympia and welcomes tribal participation in local planning processes.
- C. In alignment with the Countywide Planning Policies, the City of Olympia will seek input from local Tribes during its Comprehensive Plan Amendment Processes.

**Section 10. Amendment of OMC 18.06.020(B). Olympia Municipal Code Subsection 18.06.020(B) is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**18.06.020 Purposes**

- B. The purpose of each commercial district is as follows:
  - 1. Community Retail District (CMR).  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Permit businesses which offer the most frequently needed consumer goods and services, in districts of sufficient size to provide a relatively wide range of such goods and services.
    - b. Provide for site development standards which will achieve the clustering of buildings and/or business establishments in such fashion as to create a safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian environment, including access for transit riders and bicyclists, as well as safe and convenient parking and access.
    - c. Allow for clustering of commercial services along urban arterials adjacent to residential neighborhoods, in order to reduce the amount of vehicular travel required of the consumer to acquire such goods and services.
    - d. Allow for residential and mixed-use projects to increase the opportunities for people to live, work, shop, and recreate within walking distance.

- e. Not locate new community retail districts closer than three-fourths of a vehicular mile from one another, or from any other district providing similar services or facilities.
2. Commercial Services - High Density District (CS-H).  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Allow limited commercial services that supplement or enhance activities on the capitol campus, not large-scale retail sales for regional markets.
    - b. Allow high-density multifamily residences near the chief employment centers such as the Downtown Business District, the Capitol Campus, and the central waterfront.
    - c. Be located where high land values and public necessity warrant this type of development.
  3. Auto Services (AS) District.  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Encourage development of a regional center for auto sales and services and related uses.
    - b. Discourage development incompatible with auto sales and services.
  4. Urban Waterfront (UW) District.  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Integrate multiple land uses in the waterfront area of downtown and the West Bay in a way that improves the City's appeal and identity as the Capital City on Budd Inlet.
    - b. Encourage high-amenity recreation, tourist-oriented, and commercial development which will enhance public access and use of the shoreline.
    - c. Encourage development that protects views of Budd Inlet, the Olympics, Mt. Rainier, and the Capitol, and preserves a sense of openness on the waterfront.
    - d. Encourage water-dependent and water-related development (as defined in the Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region) on shoreline properties and permit light manufacturing uses which support nearby industrial and marine related uses.
    - e. Provide shoreline public access to significant numbers of the population, which is a major goal of the Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region. It is also the intent of this district to integrate the policies of the Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region into zoning designations applicable to waterfront properties. It is not the intent of this district, however, to make the restrictions of the Shoreline Master Program legally applicable outside the shoreline management zone.
  5. Downtown Business District (DB).  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Encourage a wide range of activities which make downtown Olympia the cultural, civic, commercial, and employment heart of the community.
    - b. Retain existing downtown housing and encourage additional development of a dense mix of urban housing which is located near jobs, shopping, and transit.
    - c. Provide a full range of urban services, tourism, recreation, and entertainment activities to support downtown workers, residents, and visitors.
    - d. Encourage pedestrian-oriented land uses and design, in order to link downtown activity to the Capitol Campus and the waterfront, and to the gateways to the City.
    - e. Permit development of a scale, height, and bulk which reinforces downtown Olympia's historic character, buildings, places, and street layout. Modern architecture is appropriate if it is consistent with the City's urban design vision.
  6. General Commercial District (GC).  
This district is intended to:
    - a. Provide for those commercial uses and activities which are heavily dependent on convenient vehicular access.

- b. Encourage the location of such uses on sites having safe and efficient access to major transportation routes.
  - c. Discourage extension of "strip" development by filling in available space in areas where substantial auto-oriented commercial development already exists.
  - d. Provide development standards which enhance efficient operation of these districts, and lead to more pedestrian-oriented development.
  - e. Achieve minimum adverse impact on the community, especially on adjacent properties having more restrictive development characteristics.
7. Medical Service District (MS).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Allow the development of major and full-service health care facilities to serve a regional population.
  - b. Permit the clustering of interrelated and complementary health care facilities.
  - c. Permit limited types of nonmedical uses which provide convenience services primarily to medical facility users and employees.
  - d. Allow relatively high density housing near medical facilities to help meet the needs of the large number of people employed there.
  - e. Allow developments which will provide maximum convenience to medical facility users and employees, and an environment conducive to the healing arts. Incompatible land uses and traffic generated by uses other than those providing medical and related services are to be avoided.
8. Neighborhood Retail District (NR).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Permit small retail establishments which offer a limited range of goods within a residential neighborhood.
  - b. Protect existing neighborhood retail districts and permit new establishments where local economic demand and appropriate design can assure compatibility with the neighborhood.
  - c. Be located not less than one-half (1/2) mile from another neighborhood retail district or any other commercial district providing similar services or facilities.
  - d. Have a maximum size for a Neighborhood Retail district of not more than one ~~(1)~~ acre. If located within the Neighborhood Centers Future Land Use Designation then the maximum size for a Neighborhood Retail district may be up to three acres.
  - e. Limit the size, scale and expansion of such establishments in order to minimize traffic volumes and congestion, and other adverse impacts on the neighborhoods in which said establishments are located.
  - f. Ensure that development in this district is characterized by small buildings, low traffic generation, considerable walk-in trade, quiet operations, and little or no night activity.
9. Professional Office/residential Multifamily District (PO/RM).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide a transitional area, buffering residential areas from more intensive commercial uses. Development within this district should be compatible with residential uses and generate low vehicular traffic characteristic of less intrusive uses.
  - b. Provide for a compatible mix of office, moderate- to high-density residential, and small-scale commercial uses, in order to provide opportunities for people to live, work, and recreate in a pedestrian-oriented area.
10. High Density Corridor-1 (HDC-1).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide for a compatible mix of office, moderate to high-density multifamily residential, and small-scale commercial uses.

- b. Ensure that residential and mixed-use projects are built within walking distance to transit.
  - c. Establish a street edge that is as continuous as possible with buildings which are close to the street and which have multiple floors, distinctive windows facing the street, and entrances that are visible from the street.
  - d. Ensure that projects are designed, using a neighborhood area design theme in order to blend with the historic buildings in the corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods.
  - e. Create a safe, convenient, and attractive environment for pedestrians, transit riders and bicyclists, and which includes parking and convenient access for vehicles.
11. High Density Corridor-2 (HDC-2).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide for a compatible mix of office, medium intensity commercial and moderate to high-density multifamily residential uses.
  - b. Ensure that residential and mixed-use projects are built within walking distance to transit.
  - c. Establish a street edge that is as continuous as possible with buildings which are close to the street and which have multiple floors, distinctive windows facing the street, and entrances that are visible from the street.
  - d. Ensure that projects (buildings) are designed, using a neighborhood area design theme in order to blend with the historic buildings in the corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods.
  - e. Create a safe, convenient, and attractive environment for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists, and which includes parking and convenient access for vehicles.
12. High Density Corridor-3 (HDC-3).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide for a compatible mix of medium to high-intensity commercial, offices, and moderate to high-density multifamily residential uses.
  - b. Ensure that access to transit is a part of all new projects.
  - c. Establish a street edge that is as continuous as possible with buildings which are close to the street and which have multiple floors, distinctive windows facing the street, and entrances that are visible from the street.
  - d. Create a safe, convenient, and attractive environment for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists, and which includes parking and access for vehicles.
13. High Density Corridor-4 (HDC-4).  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide for a compatible mix of high-intensity commercial, offices, and high-density multifamily residential uses.
  - b. Transform these areas to commercial and residential activity centers, over time.
  - c. Ensure that access to transit is a part of new projects.
  - d. Establish a street edge that is as continuous as possible with buildings which are close to the street and which have multiple floors, distinctive windows facing the street, and entrances that are visible from the street.
  - e. Create a safe, convenient, and attractive environment for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists, and which includes parking and access for vehicles.
14. Urban Waterfront - Housing District.  
This district is intended to:
- a. Provide for a neighborhood of residential housing with the option of limited retail/commercial/office or other uses able to locate in a street edge storefront configuration.
  - b. Help meet downtown housing and sustainability density goals, through the use of land for housing in a location, and at a density, that makes the use of a car a choice and not a necessity.
  - c. Contribute to downtown vitality.
  - d. Result in well designed buildings on continuous urban street edges.

- e. Increase resident surveillance and all day use of public spaces to increase safety and decrease vandalism or other security problems.
- f. Help the City achieve land use, transportation, environment, and housing goals.

**Section 11. Amendment of OMC 18.59.055. Olympia Municipal Code Section 18.59.055 is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**18.59.055 Consistency between the zoning map and the future land use map**

- A. Although the Future Land Use map is not specific with regard to the edges of Land Use designations, the zoning map boundaries should not vary more than 200 feet from the land use designation shown on the Future Land Map.
- B. Each Neighborhood Retail or Neighborhood Center district, if any, may be no further than four blocks (approximately 1,000 feet) from a Neighborhood Center location indicated on the Future Land Use Map or is at a location proposed pursuant to the Subarea Planning process described in the Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Districts on the zoning map must correspond to categories of the Future Land Use Map in accordance with the following table and be consistent with the purposes of each designation. Only those districts listed below are deemed to be consistent with the corresponding Future Land Use map designation, provided that zoning districts in locations enacted prior to January 1, 2015, may remain.

<b>FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESIGNATION</b>	<b>ZONING DISTRICT(S)</b>
Low Density Neighborhoods	Residential—1 Unit per 5 Acres Residential Low Impact Residential—4 Units per Acre Residential—4 units per Acre Chambers Basin Residential—4 to 8 Units per Acre Residential—6 to 12 Units per Acre (only when adjacent to similar or higher density zoning district)
Medium Density Neighborhoods	Residential Multifamily—18 Units per Acre Residential Multifamily—24 Units per Acre
Mixed Residential	Mixed Residential 7—13 Units per Acre Mixed Residential 10—18 Units per Acre
Urban Residential <u>*(see also OMC 18.70.190(D))</u>	<u>Residential – 1 Unit per 5 Acres</u> <u>Residential Low Impact</u> <u>Residential – 4 Units per Acre</u> <u>Residential – 4 units per Acre Chambers Basin</u> <u>Residential – 4 to 8 Units per Acre</u> <u>Residential – 6 to 12 Units per Acre</u> <u>Residential Multifamily – 18 Units per Acre*</u> <u>Residential Multifamily – 24 Units per Acre*</u> <u>Mixed Residential 7-13 Units per Acre*</u> <u>Mixed Residential 10-18 Units per Acre*</u>
Neighborhood Centers	Neighborhood Retail Neighborhood Center District
Residential Mixed Use	Residential Mixed Use Urban Residential

<b>FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESIGNATION</b>	<b>ZONING DISTRICT(S)</b>
	Urban Waterfront – Housing
Planned Developments	Planned Unit Developments Neighborhood Village District Community-Oriented Shopping Center Urban Village District
Professional Office and Multi-family Housing	Professional Office / Residential Multi-family
Urban Corridor	High-Density Corridor – 1 High-Density Corridor – 2 High-Density Corridor – 3 (only within area designated High Density Neighborhood Overlay) High-Density Corridor – 4 General Commercial Commercial Services – High Density Manufactured Housing Park Mixed Residential 10 to 18 Units per Acre Residential Multifamily 18 Units per Acre Residential Multifamily 24 Units per Acre
Urban Waterfront	Urban Waterfront Urban Waterfront – Housing
Central Business District	Downtown Business
General Commerce	General Commercial Commercial Services – High Density
Auto Services	Auto Services
Medical Services	Medical Services
Light Industry	Light Industrial / Commercial
Industry	Industrial

**Section 12. Amendment of OMC 18.70.190. Olympia Municipal Code Section 18.70.190 is hereby amended to read as follows:**

**18.70.190 Rezones and text amendments**

- A. Authority. The City Council may, upon its own motion, amend, supplement, or change by ordinance any of the provisions, use district boundaries, or use district classifications established in this Title; provided that:
1. In the case of site-specific rezones which do not require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the Council shall first review the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner. Such cases are Type III applications pursuant to OMC [18.70.040](#).
  2. In the case of all other non-ministerial changes, including text amendments and privately initiated rezones which require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the Council shall first review the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Such cases are considered Type IV applications pursuant to OMC [18.70.040](#).

- B. Collection of rezone applications. Site-specific rezone applications may be submitted at any time. However, for review purposes, such proposals will be collected into two sets in each calendar year. Unless otherwise specifically authorized by the City Council:
1. Proposals submitted between April 1st and September 30th are considered collectively and voted upon by the City Council by March 31st of the following year.
  2. Proposals submitted between October 1st and March 31st are considered collectively and voted upon by the City Council by September 30th of the same year.
  3. Proposals will be considered no more than twice each year.
- C. Decision criteria for rezone requests. The following criteria are used to evaluate each rezone request. A zoning map amendment may only be approved if the Council concludes that at minimum the proposal complies with subsections (A) through (C) of this section. To be considered are whether:
1. The rezone is consistent with either the Comprehensive Plan, including the Plan's Future Land Use map as described in OMC [18.59.055](#), or with a concurrently approved amendment to the Plan.
  2. The rezone maintains the public health, safety, or welfare.
  3. The rezone is consistent with other development regulations that implement the comprehensive plan.
  4. The rezone results in a district that is compatible with adjoining zoning districts; this may include providing a transition zone between potentially incompatible designations.
  5. Public facilities and services existing and planned for the area are adequate and likely to be available to serve potential development allowed by the proposed zone.
- D. Privately initiated rezone requests of properties located in the Urban Residential land use designation (see Future Land Use Map) may not include a request for a rezone to RM-18, RM-24, MR 7-13, or MR 10-18 unless:
1. The subject property is immediately adjacent to the proposed rezone district and the request is for same zoning district it is adjacent to; or
  2. The subject rezone area is a property, or combination of properties, of at least five acres in size.

**Section 13. Adoption of Capital Facilities Plan Goals and Policies.** The goals and policies in the City of Olympia Capital Facilities Plan, 2026-2031 Financial Plan, and as amended after the adoption of this Ordinance, are hereby included as goals and policies of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan.

**Section 14. Shoreline Master Program Goals and Policies.** The goals and policies of the Shoreline Master Program, adopted by the City of Olympia in 2021 and as amended, are hereby incorporated by reference into the Olympia Comprehensive Plan.

**Section 15. Periodic Review.** Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130, with this Ordinance, the City has reviewed and evaluated its Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations and completed its periodic review with respect to the Comprehensive Plan and all Development Regulations, with the exception of the Critical Areas Ordinance which will be adopted in 2026.

**Section 16. Recitals.** The recitals above constitute and must be treated as findings and conclusions in support of this Ordinance and, together with the exhibits and attachments to this Ordinance and the public record compiled and retained by the City during development of the proposed Olympia Comprehensive Plan, comprise the analysis required by applicable provisions of the Olympia Municipal Code and the Washington Growth Management Act.

**Section 17. Severability.** If any provision of this Ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or application of the provisions to other persons or circumstances is unaffected.

**Section 18. Ratification.** Any act consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this Ordinance is hereby ratified and affirmed.

**Section 19. Effective Date.** This Ordinance takes effect on January 1, 2026, as provided by law.

---

MAYOR

**ATTEST:**

---

CITY CLERK

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

*Michael M. Young*

---

SENIOR DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY

**PASSED:**

**APPROVED:**

**PUBLISHED:**

**EXHIBIT A**



# Olympia 2045 | Comprehensive Plan

Volume 1

Ordinance #####, Adopted December 2025



# Information and Resources

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**Yến Huỳnh, Mayor Pro Tem**  
**Dani Madrone**  
**Clark Gilman**  
**Kelly Green**  
**Robert Vanderpool**  
**Jim Cooper**

## Planning Commission

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**Daniel Garcia, Vice-Chair**  
**Tammy Adams**  
**Raphael Garcia**  
**Jessica Grubb**  
**Shawna Mershon**  
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**Aaron Sauerhoff**  
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**Matt Morris, Fire Chief**  
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# Goal and Policy Identification

Note about numbering for goals and policies: Goals and policies in this plan are identified with “G” for goal or “P” for policy. The next letter in the name represents the chapter the goal or policy is in (e.g. C for Climate Action & Resilience or L for Land Use and Urban Design). Goals are numbered sequentially in each chapter and policies under each goal are numbered to represent the goal and policy number (e.g. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

In this example, GT3, represents the third goal in the Transportation chapter. PT3.1 represents the first transportation policy of the thrid transportation goal.

Three chapters in the plan, Public Participation & Partners, Parks Arts & Recreation, and Public Safety all begin with the letter P. P is used for Public Participation & Partners, R is used for Parks, Arts & Recreation, and S is used for Public Safety. Other chapters are identified as follows: Climate Action & Resilience – C; Natural Environment – N; Land Use & Urban Design – L; Transportation – T; Housing – H; Utilities – U; Economy – E.

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# Foreword

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the city's guiding policy document. It provides a path toward the future of our community based on our shared values.

## Background

The City of Olympia adopted its first Comprehensive Plan over sixty years ago. Although for a time, Washington's Planning Enabling Act only required that land use and transportation issues be included, Olympia's plans have also addressed other topics such as parks, schools, utilities, and the local economy. In 1990, the State's Growth Management Act (GMA) directed Olympia's plan, and those of other growing cities and counties, to address statewide goals and include specific 'elements'. The table below shows where the elements required by the GMA are addressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan reflects a major update which was completed in 2014 and further refined in 2025. It accommodates changes since the 2014 Comprehensive Plan was adopted and the changes projected over the next 20 years. Hundreds of community members participated. Under the GMA, the City may amend the Plan annually and must review the entire Plan and amend it as necessary every 10 years.

Olympia's Comprehensive Plan consists of two volumes, the first of which includes 12 chapters, including optional chapters. The second volume is the capital facilities element, including a six-year financial plan for capital projects that is updated regularly. The plan should be read as a whole, as topics are interrelated and typically addressed within a single chapter to avoid repetition. Thus, these chapters are only for organizing the plan's content. They do not reflect the structure of the City's government or any particular model of city planning.

The GMA establishes required elements that must be contained in all Comprehensive Plans. In the Growth Management statute, these mandatory elements are listed under RCW 36.70A.070 in the following order:

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Capital Facilities
4. Utilities
5. Rural Element (for non-urban lands, counties only)
6. Transportation
7. Economic Development<sup>1</sup>
8. Parks and Recreation<sup>1</sup>
9. Climate Change and Resiliency

The following table summarizes the contents of each chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Listed on the far right of the table below are the GMA-mandated element(s), which are addressed in each of the Comprehensive Plan chapters. In some cases, additional GMA requirements are noted as being addressed in Comprehensive Plan chapters. If you are interested in a more detailed description of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the mandatory GMA elements, a “GMA Checklist” has been completed and can be provided to you upon request.

Comprehensive Plan Chapter	Description	GMA-Required Elements Addressed
Volume 1:		
Introduction	Overview of the Plan and its setting <sup>2</sup>	N/A
Community Values and Vision	Summary of the foundations of the Plan	Include a vision for the community at the end of the 20-year planning period; identify community values derived from public participation processes.
Public Participation and Partners	Description of the relationship between the City government and others who implement the Plan	Not a formal GMA element; does meet requirements of RCW 36.70A.035, 36.70A.130 and 36.70A.140
Climate Action and Resilience	Addresses reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled (with supporting land use measures); improves climate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to enhance resiliency and avoids the adverse impacts of climate change; prioritizes environmental justice and avoids creating or worsening localized climate impacts on vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.	Climate Change and Resiliency (elements a-e), addressed in multiple chapters
Natural Environment	Focuses on elements of the community’s environment that were not built by people; it includes the City’s shoreline goals and policies, and addresses means of reducing land use impacts on the natural environment, such as urban forestry.	Land Use; also addresses requirements of RCW 36.70A.170 and .172
Land Use and Urban Design	Addresses the pattern and form of land uses like housing, businesses, and industry, and how to ensure compatibility, blending	Land Use (multiple elements); Housing (elements a-d);

Comprehensive Plan Chapter	Description	GMA-Required Elements Addressed
	and adequate space for each (a GMA-requirement). This chapter encompasses topics like landscaping and architectural design, preservation and the appreciation of historic resources, and more detailed planning for specific areas of the community.	Transportation (element 6(a)(i))
Transportation	Addresses all aspects of mobility including cars, buses, trucks, trains, bikes and walking.	Transportation (all required elements)
Housing	Addresses the need for an adequate housing supply for people of all income levels.	Housing (elements a-h)
Utilities	Overview of plans for both private and public utilities (such as water, sewer, solid waste, and electricity) and their use of land; details regarding utilities are often included in separate “Master Plans”.	Land Use (protection of drinking water, drainage, flooding and stormwater runoff); Utilities (multiple elements)
Parks, Arts and Recreation	Addresses the use of land for parks and open space, and community activities such as recreation, the arts, and other aspects of mental and physical well-being.	Parks and Recreation (elements a-c)
Economy	Description of Olympia’s approach to local investment, business, and jobs within the context of the global economy.	Economy (elements a-c)
Public Safety	Addresses safety services provided by the public sector, such as police and fire protection, the justice system, and code enforcement.	Land Use; Transportation; Emergency Services
<b>Volume 2</b>		
Capital Facilities	The Capital Facilities Plan includes 20-year goals and policies, along with a 6-year plan that is updated annually, and can be found on the City’s website.	Capital Facilities (elements a-e)

<sup>1</sup> Economic Development and Parks and Recreation elements are required only if the state legislature provides funding (RCW 36.70A.070(9)).

<sup>2</sup> When updated in 1994 and in 2014, respectively, an environmental impact statement (EIS) and a supplemental EIS were prepared. A new EIS was created for the Olympia 2045 Plan, developed in 2025. Those documents provide more extensive background information regarding the state of the community at those points in time.

More information about how to use this document is included in the Introduction chapter.

# Introduction



View of the Capitol Building.

The City of Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan builds upon our community’s values and our vision for the future. The goals and policies in this document provide high-level direction for actions the City and other community members may take to realize these values and vision. Goals and policies (including maps) also guide City budgets, master plans, development regulations, and other decisions.

Approximately 17,000 additional people are expected to join our community over the next two decades. This Plan is our strategy for maintaining and enhancing our high quality of life and environment while accommodating expected growth and welcoming new community members. Most readily buildable parcels in the City are already developed to some degree. Thus, over the next 20 years, we expect to see more infill and redevelopment of existing developed areas as we continue to urbanize. This includes more intense development in the three High Density Neighborhood Areas and additional infill in our moderate and lower density zoning districts (see Future Land Use Map in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter). This presents our community with opportunities to restore degraded environments, create vibrant pockets of social and economic activity, and target investments to make more efficient use of and improve existing infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan is not just a plan for city government. Developed with input from thousands of people in our community at different times over decades, the

Comprehensive Plan truly is the community’s plan. Many goals and policies call for coordination and collaboration among individual residents and community members, neighborhoods and civic groups, and city government. The intent is to build on the creativity and strength of our community to shape how we develop, change, and face challenges for positive outcomes.



The Comprehensive Plan is based on community vision, and guides City and other community actions, such as regulations, programs and budgets.

## Implementation

When developing our implementing plans, codes, development regulations and programs, we refer back to the community values and vision, goals and policies, and the guiding principles of this plan, as represented by six focus areas:

- Public Safety - Ensure that all Olympians feel safe and have access to reliable, compassionate care.
- Community Livability - Enrich quality of life and foster belonging for all who live, work, or spend time in Olympia.
- Environmental Stewardship - Preserve and enhance Olympia's natural resources.
- Economy - Promote a diverse and growing economy with pathways to prosperity for everyone.
- Organizational Excellence - Deliver exceptional services and programs that are responsive to the needs of our community.
- Well-Planned City - Plan for, construct and maintain a built environment that ensures the well-being of current and future generations.

We use these focus areas to help us stay the course and report back to the community on our progress on community priorities identified within each of the six focus areas. Annually evaluating our progress supports an honest and data-informed look at how we are doing and helps guide how we should invest our resources (money and staff time). This can include deciding which programs we fund, and what programs and initiatives are implemented as a priority each year. Annual City Council priorities and investments are identified in the City Council Work Plan and shared on the City’s Budget and Performance webpage. Actions in the work plan may take a variety of forms ranging from large construction projects to the creation of new guiding documents and plans.

The City looks for partners from all sectors of the community to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. Partners may include residents, businesses, developers, non-profits, the faith community, schools, neighborhood associations, and other governments and organizations. Partnerships will help our community work together to realize our common vision.

## How to Use this Document

### Chapters

This Comprehensive Plan is separated into two volumes. The first contains 12 chapters and the second is the Capital Facilities Plan.

#### Volume I:

1. Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan
2. Community Values and Vision
3. Public Participation and Partners
4. Climate Action and Resilience
5. Natural Environment
6. Land Use and Urban Design
7. Transportation
8. Housing
9. Utilities
10. Parks, Arts and Recreation
11. Economy and
12. Public Safety

#### Volume II: Capital Facilities Plan

There are many issues that connect these chapters. For example:

- The Land Use Chapter, in conjunction with Public Participation & Partners, Natural Environment, Transportation, Housing, Parks, Utilities, Economy, Climate Action &

Resilience, and Capital Facilities, all provide basic policy guidance for City land use regulations outlined in City codes. They describe generally where various types of land uses should occur, how intense they may be, and how they are designed; types and locations of environmentally sensitive areas to be protected; and the general types of transportation, utility, and park facilities that are planned, including locations for major facilities. More specifically:

- Policies related to greenhouse gas emission reduction and improving resiliency to climate change impacts are included in all chapters.
- Policies related to trees exist in the Natural Environment chapter as well as under Land Use and Urban Design, Transportation, Utilities, and even Economy.
- Policies related to walkability are included under both Land Use and Urban Design and Transportation.
- Various chapters include policies that influence City services, including fire, police, affordable housing, arts, recreation, volunteer services and overall public engagement in civic affairs.
- Some efforts, such as expanding the Arts, Cultures and Heritage (ARCH) Profile in Olympia, are interdisciplinary by design. Policies that support ARCH are included in the Economy, Land Use and Urban Design, and the Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapters.

If viewing an electronic version, use the ‘search’ function to find all of the policies related to specific topics.

## Goals and Policies

The goals in this Plan identify what we hope to achieve as a community. Some goals will take longer than others to realize. Policies describe how the City will act in a broad sense to achieve these goals.

While some policies take a prescriptive approach by outlining what the City will specifically ‘require’ to achieve a goal, other policies present a more flexible approach whereby the City will ‘encourage’ or ‘support’ an action. Each type of approach has inherent trade-offs. Overall, the City’s policy approach within the Plan seeks to balance these trade-offs while meeting community goals.

As an example of a prescriptive approach, one policy requires land uses to prevent and treat stormwater runoff, which provides certainty that the City will use its authority to enforce practices that achieve our clean water protection goals. In order for the City to ‘require’ an action, it must have authority under the law to enforce it.

Sometimes a more flexible policy approach improves the capability of achieving certain goals. Having some flexibility over the 20-year planning period enables the City to respond more quickly to changes in environmental or market conditions. It also allows for tailoring

implementation to geographic or land use type conditions at the zoning level. For example, a policy in the Plan states the City will require development to incorporate measures that reduce risks associated with rising sea levels. The policy includes, as an example, higher finished floor elevations, but does not specify what that particular measure will be. In order to respond appropriately to sea level rise, the City will need an adaptive strategy based on new or updated information. The same adaptive methodology applies to policies regarding infill development. In order to meet our vision of a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly downtown, the City will need flexibility to respond to changing market conditions over the 20-year planning period.

Where the City does not establish requirements, it may ‘encourage’ or ‘support’ actions. For example, one policy encourages the use of fruit and nut trees to support food self-sufficiency. This policy demonstrates the City’s recognition of community support for trees that provide food, while also allowing for flexibility in implementation through incentives or partnerships rather than regulation. To require fruit trees at the broad Plan level could hamper other goals during the implementation phase that call for providing a variety of tree species throughout neighborhoods and planting the right tree in the right place.

While the Plan describes our vision for our future, sometimes goals or policies may seem to be in conflict with each other. For example, a goal to increase density may seem to be in conflict with a goal to preserve open space. Or a goal to increase tree canopy may seem to be in conflict with a goal to increase solar energy access. Over the next 20 years, the complex challenges and opportunities we face as a community will often require us to strike a balance between different goals and policies to provide the best outcome for the community as a whole. Thus, individual goals and policies should always be considered within the context of the entire Plan. We strive for outcomes with multiple benefits. For example, the City will accommodate housing along the shorelines when adequate measures are taken to protect or enhance the shoreline and natural environment. We can add more housing in our neighborhoods while also increasing tree canopy and increasing the number of homes with rooftop solar photovoltaic systems.

Throughout each year, City officials, in consultation with the public, make a range of decisions about how community resources will be used and managed, and how both public and private development will occur. Community plans and programs often result from a conscientious balancing of divergent interests based on the facts and context of a particular situation and on the entire set of Comprehensive Plan goals. Balancing these goals in a way that provides the best overall community benefit requires careful consideration, based on an understanding of multiple community objectives, the specific context, and potential impacts.

## Equity

Additionally, the City of Olympia strives to balance the Plan through a lens of equity for all community members. To build a truly livable and vibrant city, we understand that we must

provide equitable access to the necessities of life. We must consider the diverse needs of our residents, business owners, employees, and guests as we plan for the long-term growth and development of Olympia. Therefore, the Plan should be read by broadly applying equity considerations in all of its goals and policies.

This type of strategic decision-making can often lead to a selection of options that realize multiple goals. For example, when we protect the quality of our air and water, we improve our health and attract long-term investment in our City.



Community members participating in a nighttime parade

## The Local Planning & Development Process

Local planning depends heavily on community involvement. Public engagement is essential for many reasons: it provides for more holistic perspectives on City decisions that affect the entire community and it protects people's rights to participate in the development of plans and development regulations that influence public policy. In fact, the Growth Management Act (GMA) calls for broad public involvement in creating and amending Comprehensive Plans and implementing development regulations.

Local planning is a phased process that also operates within a framework of federal, state, county and local laws. Our local codes and other decisions must be consistent with these laws, in addition to Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. For example, both the U.S. and Washington State Constitutions include private property rights that must be respected by local government agencies.

Once a Comprehensive Plan is adopted, it may be amended annually, with larger updates considered every 10 years. There may be a period of time after the City Council adopts changes to the Plan before staff, the public and policy makers are able to take action to implement it. The City will make every effort to quickly and reasonably develop, review and adopt any new or revised regulations to conform to this Plan.

Development codes to implement the Plan may be amended at any time during the year, but only following a public process guided by both state and local standards. The City Council makes final decisions on plan and code amendments. Typically, the Olympia Planning Commission holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation to the City Council on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan or the implementing development codes.

There are further opportunities for the public to provide input and influence site-specific permitting decisions; however, public influence may be more constrained at this stage. This is because site-specific permit decisions are largely based on whether or not proposals are consistent with established local codes and other laws. This gives predictability to both community members and developers, consistent with the intent of the Growth Management Act. Community members are encouraged to participate in local government, such as by serving on an advisory committee or engaging in public meetings. This includes participating in Comprehensive Plan updates, master plan updates, and amendments to the City code – all of which are the most effective ways of guiding future development. Community members can meaningfully shape future development projects by engaging in the Comprehensive Plan and Code amendment processes because all future projects are evaluated based their ability to meet the minimum requirements of the codes applicable to the proposal. The development codes are a primary way to implement the City goals, objectives and policies as stated in the Plan.

See the [Public Participation & Partners Chapter](#) for more information on how to get involved.

## Context for the Comprehensive Plan

In 1990, the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) was passed in response to rapid and sprawling growth in many parts of the state that was causing a decrease in quality of life, negative effects on the environment, and increased costs for municipal infrastructure and maintenance. Revision of our Comprehensive Plan was a requirement for Olympia under the GMA. Olympia adopted a revised Comprehensive Plan under the Act in 1994.

The Act requires most urban counties and cities in the state to prepare comprehensive plans to address how they will manage expected growth. It directs urban areas, like Olympia, to absorb more of the state's population growth than rural areas, thereby preserving forests, animal habitat, farmland, and other important lands outside of cities

and urban growth areas. Focusing growth in urban areas also reduces traffic, pollution, and the costs of providing city services that protect the health, safety and quality of life of community members.

The Act defines [15 goals](#) to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans. These focus on “smart growth” principles that maximize use of land and existing utilities, protect historic and natural resources, and lower traffic and housing costs. Fortunately, Olympia has been taking this approach for a long time.

Olympia has long understood the merits of planning for the future and has had a Comprehensive Plan since 1959.

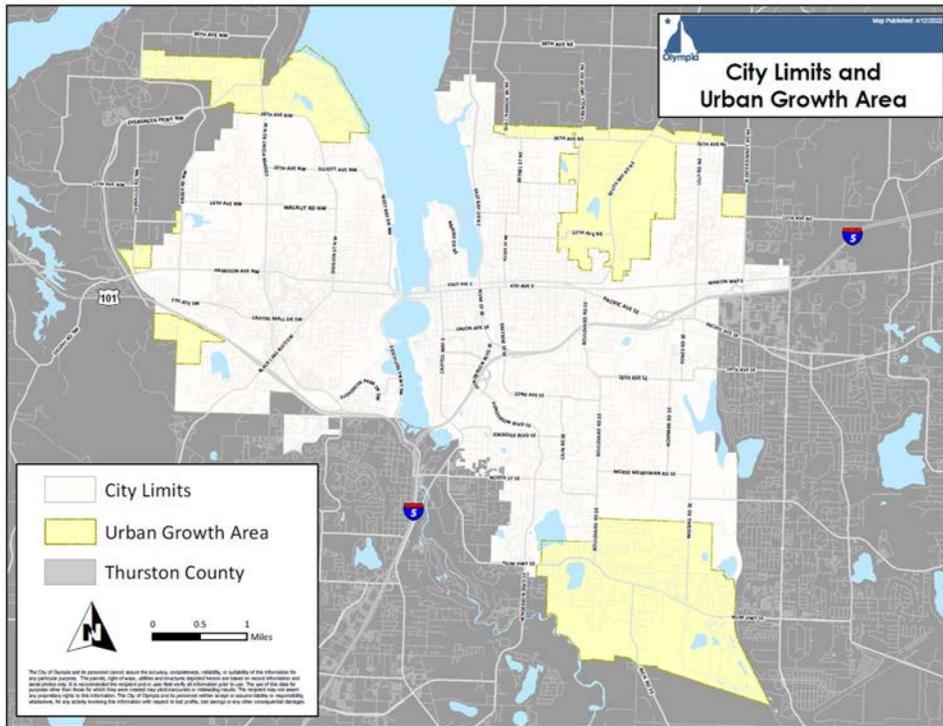
In many ways, our earlier plans created the community we have today. For example, during community outreach for the 1994 plan, residents expressed a desire for Olympia to become a “City of Trees.” In response, the community developed several goals and policies to guide a new Olympia Urban Forestry Program. Since then, we’ve planted thousands of street trees and have been consistently recognized by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA.



Community members volunteering at an Arbor Day event.

## A Changing Community

Our community continues to grow, as more people move here to live, work, pursue education, or start businesses or nonprofit organizations. In 2024, the estimated population of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area was 70,860 residents. Forecasters expect our population will increase to 87,650 by 2045, a rate of just over 1% per year. People are attracted to living here because we have a relatively stable economy, a beautiful environment, friendly and safe neighborhoods, good schools and lower living costs than our neighbors to the north. Many of these new residents will work within the current City limits and the unincorporated Urban Growth Area.



Map of Olympia and its Urban Growth Boundaries.

Olympia’s urban growth area is about 16,000 acres. This includes about 12,000 acres within City limits and 4,000 acres in the unincorporated area, which may eventually be annexed into the City. In cooperation with Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, Thurston County has established and periodically reviews Urban Growth Areas. In these areas, urban growth is encouraged; outside of them, rural densities and services will be maintained.

Much of the land in the City is already developed or partially developed, but there is still adequate room to accommodate our expected population and employment growth. This land capacity analysis can be found in the Thurston County [Buildable Lands Report](#). Future growth will occur at various densities, in accordance with the Future Land Use Map (see Land Use and Urban Design chapter).

## Preserving our Sense of Place and Connections

The City embraces our Comprehensive Plan as an opportunity to enhance the things that matter most to Olympians. As we grow and face change, Olympians want to preserve the unique qualities and familiarity of our community. We draw a sense of place from the special features of our city: walkable neighborhoods, historic buildings, views of the mountains, the Capitol and Puget Sound, and our connected social fabric. These features help us identify with our community, enrich us, and make us want to invest here socially, economically and emotionally.

During the development of this Plan, many people expressed a desire to maintain a “small town feel” of knowing their neighbors and feeling connected to their community. Olympians want to feel connected to each other and to our built and natural environment, to have social connections that enrich our lives. We want to live in a friendly and safe community where we know our neighbors and shopkeepers, and run into friends along the sidewalk. We value harmony with nature, thriving small businesses, places to gather and celebrate, and an inclusive and equitable local government.



Neighborhood-scale shopping and gathering spaces.

Olympians welcome growth as long as our environment and sense of place are preserved. That means protecting the places and culture that we recognize as “Olympia,” even if those things are a little different for each of us. It also means focusing on our community values and vision as we grow.

## Key Challenges

Our community will face several challenges as we move forward. These challenges are intertwined and must be addressed in a manner to eliminate or at least minimize potential burdensome impacts from being experienced more by certain groups than others, especially in regard to gender, racial, or economic inequality. We must ensure that we address and do not exacerbate any disparate impacts that are the result of past or present policies. We will need to balance these issues with intention to achieve the best overall outcomes. There are major global, national, and local influences that present both challenges and opportunities for our local community. Implementation of the vision and goals in this Plan will require creative solutions so that Olympia can:

**Balance Protection of the Natural Environment as the Built Environment Grows:**

Our community will change over time as we continue to grow and welcome new neighbors and businesses. We need to continue to work diligently to address the housing crisis by increasing a housing supply that is affordable to people and families at all income levels. We must also provide space for the jobs, services, and activities people need. We can do this while protecting open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas that make our community unique and special, providing connections to nature, and protecting the functions and values of the natural environment.

**Take Action and Prepare for Our Changing Climate:**

Over the next 20 years, we will need deliberate action to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions while also taking measures to increase our resilience to anticipated impacts of our changing climate. Achieving our emissions reduction goals will require significant changes in how we produce and use energy, consume goods and services, and travel. However, we have the knowledge and technologies to address this challenge. As climate change worsens, we will need to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from acute events and long-term changes. Protecting our community's health, critical infrastructure, natural environment, and local businesses from extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and sea level rise is a key challenge we will face. Together, we will strengthen all sectors of Olympia to build resilience to these impacts.

**Become a More Sustainable City:** As the capital of the State of Washington, Olympia has a unique opportunity to lead on key issues in the State, such as sustainability. The City needs to make investments based on an integrated framework that compares lifecycle costs and benefits of all City investments and to encourage sustainable practices by individuals and organizations through education, technical assistance, and incentives. These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that our community is largely built out. For example, adding sidewalks to places that do not have them to support different modes of transportation is more complex when the streets are already there and need to be retrofitted. In many cases, it may make driving more convenient than walking, rolling, bicycling, or taking transit, even for short trips. Decisions made in the past continue to impact and challenge us.

**Accommodate Growth:** Community members need to collaborate with the City to identify housing and service programs for increased populations of seniors and those who are homeless or insecure in their housing. Together we must find ways to add more housing that is accessible and affordable to the people who do or want to call Olympia home, while maintaining a variety of neighborhoods that people want to live and thrive in. This can and should be accomplished in ways that promote equity and social interactions for our community members. Such development must be served with quality infrastructure for utilities, such as drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water, and a transportation system that offers choices between travel modes.

**Equitable Economic Opportunities:** There are challenges related to addressing jobs and economic opportunities in an equitable manner, especially for blue collar career paths. We will work with our community members, educational institutions, and businesses to ensure such opportunities and programs are available and accessible to all community members.

**Integrate Shoreline Management Program (SMP):** Special coordination is necessary to integrate the SMP with the Comprehensive Plan. Olympians value ample public space along their marine shoreline and waterways to balance growth downtown. Olympia supports the efforts to restore the shoreline of Capitol Lake to the Deschutes Estuary.

**Support Our Downtown:** Located on Puget Sound and along the Deschutes River, downtown is the site of many historic buildings and places, and is home to many theatres, galleries, and unique shops as well as the State Capitol. At the same time, Olympia's downtown has yet to fully become the walkable, comfortable place the community desires. To add vibrancy while retaining our desired sense of belonging and social connection will require more downtown residents, better amenities, attractive public spaces, green space, thriving local businesses, accessible mobility improvements, and welcoming design.

**Conserve and Protect Limited Natural Resources:** As we grow, our land and water supplies will need to support more people. We can take advantage of growth as a tool to reshape our community into a more sustainable form; to do so, we must support growth and environmental protection, use our resources wisely, and consider the carrying capacity of the land.

**Public Safety:** All Olympians and visitors to our community deserve to feel safe and have access to reliable, compassionate care. We must maintain public safety and enhance preparedness for evolving conditions and future emergencies.

**Fund a Long-Term Vision:** We must identify strategies, explore operating efficiencies, and develop partnerships to provide the diversity and flexibility to fund our vision. The economy fluctuates and funding circumstances change. This affects our ability to carry out planned actions over the years. Present resources are already stretched thin, and there is little ability to take on new programs without new revenue sources. Cities face, and will continue to face, challenges associated with declining revenues due to state laws and policies.



People enjoying a sunny day along the waterfront.

## For More Information

- The [Washington State Growth Management Act](#) establishes rules to guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations that shape growth over a 20-year horizon.
- The [Buildable Lands Report](#) prepared for Thurston County by the staff of the Thurston Regional Planning Council helps Olympia determine the quantity of land to provide for population and employment growth.
- Thurston Regional Planning Council's [The Profile: Thurston County Statistics & Data](#).
- Learn more about how the Comprehensive Plan guides City actions in the City Work Plan on the [Budget & Performance webpage](#).

# Community Values & Vision



Community members enjoying festive activities Downtown.

During the Comprehensive Plan update process, the City and the public engaged in a broad review of Olympia's Comprehensive Plan. The City held numerous public meetings and collected hundreds of comments from community members about what they value in Olympia and their vision for Olympia's future. These community values and visions are distilled below and reflected in the goals and policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Additionally, the Squaxin Island Tribe and the City of Olympia have an [Accord](#) and have committed to long-term actions, through understanding and mutual respect, to work cooperatively and collaboratively. The Tribe has offered these words of welcome:

*"We welcome current and future generations of Olympians to our traditional lands. The land and waters of the Olympia area are special to the Squaxin people. As the first inhabitants, we call this area Bus-Chut-Wud (bəʃətɬwəd) meaning land of the black bears and we call the local river and bay waters, Steh-Chass (stəʃas) after the original band of indigenous people who lived here before American settlement. As Squaxin people we have always held deep values of gratitude, friendship, community and stewardship. And today we are so thankful for the friendship and partnership with the City of Olympia, for they, the leadership and members of the greater Olympia community, share these same values."*

# Collaboration with Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the Accord between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Olympia resides within the traditional lands of the Steh-Chass band of indigenous people of the Squaxin Island Tribe, who were removed from their land for the settlement that became Olympia. The Tribe has offered these words for acknowledgement:

*“The Squaxin Island Tribe’s habitation of what is now Olympia spans thousands of years. The ancestral families who lived and thrived here named it Steh-Chass, and occupied prosperous villages along the shores. Archeological findings of ancestral artifacts in the area suggest habitation by Squaxin ancestors since the retreat of the glaciers during the last Ice Age. Today, the Squaxin people continue stewardship of these ancestral lands, from the Deschutes watershed and what is now Budd Inlet. The Steh-Chass (Squaxin) continue to call themselves ‘People of the Water’ because of the bounty of the region’s waterways and artesian waters, which have sustained the people for millennia.”*

The City of Olympia will continue to strengthen our government-to-government relationship with the Squaxin Island Tribe to support our shared environmental, economic, and community goals.

We acknowledge past harms to the natural environment by earlier development patterns and practices. These include early settlement actions and developments that occurred prior to local, state, and federal environmental protection measures that have been improved and refined over time.

We acknowledge Olympia’s history of racially restrictive covenants, redlining, and displacement of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). We acknowledge that our historic population of Chinese Olympians, who built much of Olympia’s original infrastructure, were actively excluded through anti-Chinese sentiment and restrictive immigration laws, resulting in the loss of Olympia’s once-thriving Chinatown and a dwindling Chinese population.

We acknowledge past harms to members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, with the plus sign representing other identities within the broader LGBTQIA2S+ community), that resulted in

some people feeling they were not fully welcome, protected, or included equitably in our shared community.

These institutional and systemic barriers are still prevalent and have resulted in a lack of equitable access to resources and opportunities. We are dedicated to rebuilding trust through reconciliation and making ongoing efforts to remove these barriers.

## Equity

### What Olympia values:

*As evident through the City’s Housing Needs Assessment, our community is becoming more diverse. This includes changes in racial demographics, an increase in the number of aging adults, and changes in average household size and income. Olympians value and respect the identities and lived experiences of our community members and military families, including but not limited to diverse family structures, race, color, religion, religious beliefs or spirituality, creed, national origin, immigration or refugee status, marital status, military or veteran status, financial stability, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, or language. We believe that embracing equity enhances the livability and vibrancy of our beautiful city for all residents.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*We envision a future where Olympia has a diverse, inclusive, and accessible community, a robust and resilient local economy, a healthy environment that sustains each of us, and a strong multicultural arts and heritage presence for all to enjoy.*

To build a truly livable and vibrant city, we understand that we must provide equitable access to the necessities of life, including housing, mobility, food, services, education, clean air and water, and meaningful work. We must consider the diverse needs of our residents in planning the long-term growth and development of Olympia, considering both quantitative and qualitative data from our community to drive decision-making. Giving everyone an opportunity to participate in the civic, economic, and cultural life of the city will lead to a greater quality of life and a sustainable local economy.

The City of Olympia is committed to fostering a community where all individuals are treated with dignity, equity, and respect. We desire to be a city of peace and are committed to remaining a sanctuary city. We believe all community members should be free from political persecution; be served and protected by the City regardless of immigration status; have reproductive health care and services while recognizing a woman’s right to reproductive choice; and by reaffirming the City’s dedication to protecting LGBTQIA2S+ rights.

We recognize that equity is essential to all areas of the Comprehensive Plan and are committed to working to eliminate inequity in our community.

## Public Participation and Partners

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value their right to participate in City government, and to engage in meaningful, open and respectful community dialogue regarding decisions that affect our community.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Through collaborative and open discussions, Olympians embrace a shared responsibility to make our community a better place.*

The City of Olympia places a high priority on engaging community members and regularly demonstrates how the voices of the community are heard. When issues come up, the City's healthy public participation process helps each segment of the community to understand the larger picture and the need to act in the best interest of the City as a whole. Olympia engages the public in major decisions through a variety of methods, including community conversations, public forums, and interest-based negotiation, and makes sure these community members know how their input was used. Olympia strives to make engagement equitable and accessible to all members of the community and is committed to providing opportunities for those members who have historically been marginalized. Because of this, the City has built trust with the community.

## Climate Action and Resilience

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value innovative, community-driven, and justice-centered climate solutions that achieve net-zero emissions, prepare for and adapt to a changing climate, and promote thriving communities for current and future generations.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*A net-zero city that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

**Net-Zero:** We are working toward a net-zero future where all Olympians have access to clean, affordable energy and abundant options to walk, bicycle, and ride transit.

Thoughtful land use will create compact, connected and mixed-use neighborhoods, making it easier for people to live near the places where they work, shop and play. Living lighter will be the easiest and best option for everyone.

**Justice-Centered:** Olympia prioritizes the health and well-being of communities that are disproportionately burdened by environmental impacts and actively works to address past harms.

**Resilient:** Olympia will continue developing built, natural, and social infrastructure that promotes human and environmental well-being. A resilient Olympia will withstand more frequent and intense extreme weather events due to climate change through effective, coordinated emergency management. Enhancing natural areas, strengthening community bonds, and preparing our built environment will ensure all Olympians benefit from climate adaptation actions.

## Natural Environment

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value our role as stewards of the water, air, land, vegetation, and animals around us, and believe it is our responsibility to future generations to restore, protect, and enhance the exceptional natural environment that sustains us.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, beautiful, and resilient natural environment that enables both human and wild communities to thrive.*

Olympia’s unique natural setting will continue to make Washington State’s capital city great. By working closely with surrounding governments, we can successfully preserve, protect and restore the natural heritage we share.

As a result of this cooperative effort, Olympia will enjoy a community free from invasive species with a dense tree canopy that will beautify our downtown and neighborhoods, and improve the health, environmental quality and economy of our city. Though our population will increase, our air and water will be cleaner and wildlife habitat will be preserved to maintain a biologically healthy diversity of species. Salmon will return and spawn in the streams where they were born. Seals, sea lions, orcas, and otters will roam the waters of southern Puget Sound.

## Land Use and Urban Design

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a resilient community that supports active living and the forging of social bonds, a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels are welcomed*

*and can afford to live, neighborhoods with distinct identities, and historic buildings and places. We value a comfortable downtown and city that is welcoming to pedestrians of all abilities, increased urban green space, locally produced food, and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A welcoming and inclusive, accessible, resilient and vibrant city rich in opportunities to participate in daily life. A community where people can meet their needs within a short distance of their homes, and where urban growth and urban green spaces coexist and support each other.*

We envision a capital city of pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, livable and affordable neighborhoods, safe and meaningful street life, and high-quality civic architecture. Through collaboration with other agencies and partners, our urban waterfront will be a priceless asset, eventually running along the Deschutes River from Tumwater’s historic buildings, down past Marathon and Heritage parks to Percival Landing and the Port Peninsula.

Capitol Way will be a busy and historic boulevard linking the waterfront and downtown to the Capitol Campus. By creating plazas, expanded sidewalks, and public art in public places, we will stimulate private investment in residential and commercial development, increasing downtown Olympia’s retail and commercial vitality.

Olympia will work to create "urban nodes" of higher density and mixed-use development in specific locations along our urban corridor. We will encourage infill projects and remodeling of older structures; in turn, we will begin to create a more walkable community, where historic buildings and neighborhoods are valued, preserved, and adapted to new uses.

Well-implemented neighborhood planning will help us determine unique neighborhood assets to protect and enhance; where and how to increase density and retain green space; and develop safe and convenient access to everything from grocery stores, to schools, neighborhood parks, community gardens and neighborhood gathering places.

## Transportation

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians want an inclusive transportation system that supports the economy, everyone’s well-being, and limits impacts to the environment. We want to use the system to connect to our homes, businesses and gathering spaces, and promote a healthy city.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A sustainable, equitable, accessible and resilient transportation system that prioritizes public transit, walking, rolling, and biking over single-occupancy vehicles. We aim to create vibrant, connected neighborhoods where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can move safely and efficiently, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions and building a stronger, more inclusive community.*

**Inclusive:** The transportation system will be inviting to all people, whether they are walking with or without a walking aid, using a wheelchair to roll, riding a bike, taking transit, or driving. People will feel and be safe when using the transportation system.

**Biking & Walking:** All Olympians will be able to walk, roll, bike, or take transit to work, school, shopping, and recreation. Bike lanes and sidewalks will be safely integrated and often buffered from traffic along arterials and collectors throughout the city. People walking, rolling, and biking will have contact with nature along their way, whether it's on trails, pathways, or streets. Sidewalks will encourage people walking or rolling to stop and enjoy public spaces or visit shops in commercial areas. Trees will line the streets. Pedestrian and bicycle routes will interface seamlessly with transit so people can ride the bus to go farther than they are comfortable walking, rolling, or biking.

As the community grows, both public and private investments will be needed to provide the transportation infrastructure investments envisioned for our community.

## Housing

### What Olympia Values:

*Our city is committed to fostering well-planned neighborhoods that reflect our heritage while embracing innovation, ensuring that housing options are available for all income levels and life stages.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*A diverse, inclusive, and sustainable community where everyone has access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing.*

**Affordability & Accessibility:** We strive to provide housing options that meet the needs of all residents, from low-income families to seniors and students, ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Sustainability & Smart Growth:** We embrace responsible development practices that preserve our environment, promote efficient land use, and encourage diverse housing types within vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

**Equity & Inclusion:** We work to eliminate barriers to housing, prevent displacement, and create a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels can thrive.

**Collaboration & Innovation:** We partner with regional stakeholders, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to develop creative solutions that expand housing opportunities.

**Community & Livability:** We prioritize the character and quality of our neighborhoods by promoting well-designed housing that supports diverse communities, public transportation access, and local economic growth.

Through these commitments, we will ensure that our community remains a welcoming and thriving place for generations to come.

By adopting affordable housing program criteria, the City will help ensure all residents can meet their basic housing needs. We believe this will contribute to a regional goal to end homelessness and displacement in our community. In turn, this would contribute to reducing the costs of emergency and social services.

## Utilities

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value community decision making and control, and cost-effective, locally provided service delivery that is provided through its city-owned utilities. We value our high-quality drinking water supply which exceeds all drinking water regulatory standards. We protect Puget Sound and local waterways by preventing pollution and effectively treating stormwater and wastewater before it is discharged into Puget Sound and local waterways. We value a clean, sanitary city where waste products are disposed of properly and a reduction in use occurs to conserve energy and resources.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Clean, plentiful water and significant reduction of pollution and waste.*

Through careful planning, improved efficiency of our drinking water use, and voluntary conservation, Olympia will be able to meet the water needs of its future population. Improved wastewater and stormwater treatment and management will support a healthy community of native aquatic life in Budd Inlet and our local waterways.

We will place less pressure on landfills through our recycling and composting programs and efforts to support state packaging and product lifecycle initiatives, local solid waste incentives, and the voluntary actions of our community members. Olympia households no longer use harmful products that could contaminate local water bodies.

To use community resources wisely, city-owned utility assets are maintained or replaced at the ideal time so that future ratepayers inherit reliable water, wastewater, stormwater and garbage services. Additionally, Olympians benefit from the early and ongoing collaboration with private utilities by City staff.

## Economy

### What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a diverse and inclusive economy that offers a variety of education, employment and business opportunities accessible to all. We take pride in our status as Washington State's Capital, our local businesses, unique places and spaces, and the creative spirit of our community.*

### Our Vision for the Future:

*Every Olympian is afforded quality lifelong opportunities that build pathways to upward mobility and financial stability. Olympia is a safe, resilient and welcoming city with abundant community character, making our city a choice place to live and a destination for visitors.*

Because of our careful planning, the Olympia economy will remain stable, especially when compared to similar cities throughout the state and region. The City's investment in the downtown will encourage -mixed-income housing, many new specialty stores and boutiques, and attract visitors to places such as Percival Landing, the Hands on Children's Museum, and our many theatre and art venues. Its work to strengthen regional shopping nodes, such as the area around Capital Mall, will provide high-density housing, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, making our state capital a popular destination to live, work, play and study.

Entrepreneurs, attracted to an urban environment with an open and accepting culture, will create new start-ups in Olympia that diversify our job market and economy, making it less vulnerable to downturns in state government.

Meanwhile, on the city's outskirts, small farms will continue to expand. Local food producers will further diversify local employment opportunities and help local residents and businesses be less vulnerable to the rising cost of imported food.

# Parks, Arts and Recreation

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the role parks, open space, recreation and art play in our lives. These contribute to our sense of community and to our physical, emotional, environmental, and economic well-being.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, fun, welcoming, safe and enriching place to live for all Olympians.*

**Places where we can move:** The many parks and open spaces throughout our community will be key to maintaining the health of our children and all Olympians. The Olympia School District will work with the City to allow maximum feasible public use of school district gyms and playgrounds.

**Programs that support health:** The City’s work with school districts and local and state health agencies will foster programs that encourage good nutrition and exercise. These programs will complement other City regulations that are encouraging both urban agriculture and markets for sale of local and regional produce.

**A biking city:** Olympia will be continually expanding and upgrading its bicycle facility network and will see major increases in bike use, for both commuting and recreation. In selected areas where cyclists tend to concentrate, the City will provide separated bike facilities.

**Olympians walk – everywhere:** We envision a city in which all neighborhoods have sidewalks on at least one side of major collector streets. This, along with more pedestrian crossing improvements and neighborhood pathways, traffic calming devices, and enforcement of traffic laws, will contribute to a dramatic increase of walking in Olympia.

**An arts magnet:** The City will continue to sponsor and support music and art events and festivals, which attract residents and visitors from throughout the area. The City will take advantage of provisions in state law to fund art throughout Olympia.

# Public Safety

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the protection our police, fire, and crisis response and emergency medical services provide, as well as the proactive steps public safety partners take to*

*prepare for and manage impacts from natural disasters and other emergencies. They also value code enforcement services that help maintain the safety and appeal of our diverse neighborhoods and districts.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A secure and resilient community where public safety services are delivered with professionalism and compassion for all.*

The strong code enforcement programs that will emerge from community involvement in every neighborhood will help protect the safety and distinct identity of all Olympia neighborhoods.

## For More Information

- [Accord](#) between the Squaxin Island Tribe and City of Olympia
- Olympia Sanctuary City [webpage](#)
- 1985 Resolution ([M-1192](#)) – City of Peace
- 2016 Resolution ([M-1857](#)) – Sanctuary City
- 2022 Resolution ([M-2348](#)) – Reproductive Rights
- 2025 Resolution ([M-2591](#)) – LGBTQIA2S+ Community
- A Progress Report on Olympia’s Equity Journey [webpage](#)
- Social Justice and Equity Commission [webpage](#)
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion [webpage](#)

# Public Participation and Partners



Community members participating in a Homeless Response meeting.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value their right to participate in city government, and to engage in meaningful, open and respectful community dialogue regarding decisions that affect our community.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*Through collaborative and open discussions, Olympians embrace a shared responsibility to make our community a better place.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Introduction

Successful communities face their challenges collectively and employ the energy of different stakeholders. Without diverse participation in community decision-making, it is all too easy to descend into political gridlock over complex problems.

The voices of residents, local business owners, and organizations provide the perspective and information that are absolutely essential to effective planning and decision-making regarding issues that will shape our community for generations to come. For this reason,

the City has a strong, ongoing program to reach out and partner with all sectors of the community.

The City has found cooperative relationships between members of the community and policy-makers that will continue to be essential if we are to achieve the collective vision and goals described in this Plan. It will continuously work to improve upon methods for encouraging community members to engage at multiple levels as we continue to look for creative solutions to the challenges we all share.



Children enjoy a walk in the woods on a beautiful day in Olympia.

## **Public Participation is Essential**

Active participation in civic affairs is an important part of life in Olympia, and the City has a long history of providing forums for community members to get involved. Our open government policies are essential to ensure residents, business owners, employees, and other community members can effectively participate in any number of issues.



Olympia Youth Council and the Olympia City Council (2024).

There are several ways to participate in local government planning and decision-making in Olympia:

- Run for [City Council](#) and vote in the election
- Serve on an [advisory board](#). Olympia has more than a dozen volunteer advisory boards that study critical issues and provide careful advice to the City Council.
- Testify at a public hearing, share your perspective or experience in a letter, or participate in a community workshop or meeting, and participate in opportunities to provide online, digital feedback through Engage Olympia. The City keeps a [calendar](#) and posts [online agendas](#) of such events.
- Stay informed by subscribing to the City’s newsletter (E-news) and following the City on social media.
- Participate as a work group member focused on diving deep into a specific challenge within a set period of time. Stipends are often available to help reduce barriers to participation.
- [Volunteer](#) in one of many City programs aimed at helping the community help itself, such as Stream Team, Volunteers in Police Services, and Park Stewardship.
- Get involved with [neighborhood programs](#). The City provides notification of certain development proposals, grant opportunities, and other benefits to Recognized Neighborhood Associations (RNA) and the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CNA).
- Partner with the City to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. The City looks for partners from all sectors of the community to be involved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Participate in planning for a “sub-area” that could include your own neighborhood.

As Olympia grows and changes, the City will be collaborating with local residents and business owners to make key planning decisions on roads, walkways, bike paths, housing densities, and transit – to name a few.

Public outreach is essential, but also challenging due to the following factors:

- Our population is more diverse than ever, but our outreach resources are limited.
- Our desire to be responsive to community concerns must be balanced with very real legal and fiscal constraints, finite resources, and with our responsibility to make decisions for the overall public good, rather than for the benefit of individuals.
- Residents, business owners, and local organizations may not fully understand the land-use development process, which can make it difficult for them to be involved in a meaningful way.
- Community members don't always agree on issues and may have significantly different views or opinions.
- Community members may have limited availability and/or free time to respond to outreach efforts and utilize participation opportunities due to other responsibilities in their lives.

To address these challenges, the City has begun to diversify methodologies and processes for community outreach and participation opportunities while ensuring that they are equitable and inclusive. The City will seek to reach those members of the community most impacted and least able to participate, including vulnerable and overburdened populations and communities on the frontline. The City will work to go into the community to meet with people where they live, work, and play.

The City is always looking for new and creative ways to engage the community, including using technologies such as social media, online discussion portals, and high-quality visual maps. The City strives to create clear, concise, and jargon-free information so that people from all walks of life can easily and quickly understand the issues and provide input. The City hopes this will inspire partnerships that will help the community to pool its resources so that needed changes can be made more quickly and efficiently.

While Olympians are involved in all aspects of community planning, the land development process is often where neighborhood organizations and community members first engage. The experience tends to be frustrating because influence over decisions at this stage is somewhat limited. The City's intent in initiating sub-area planning is to give community members a chance to get involved early in the planning process for a relatively small area that includes their own neighborhood. Many communities refer to this type of planning process as "neighborhood planning." To avoid confusion with Olympia's numerous Recognized Neighborhood Associations, the City refers to the process as "sub-area planning."

Through sub-area planning, the City, [Recognized Neighborhood Associations](#), and the Council of Neighborhood Associations work with stakeholders to identify neighborhood assets, challenges, and priorities for development. Activities are geared toward learning; for the City to learn about neighborhood needs and desires, and for these groups to learn about the plans and regulations that guide development in their area; and how land use decisions also must comply with federal, state, and local laws. Although this process does not guarantee a neighborhood will get everything it wants, sub-area planning can help it get organized for future projects that will influence the direction of community decisions.



Community members engaged in discussion during a meeting on housing issues.

## Goals and Policies

**GP1 The City, individual community members, and other agencies and organizations all have a role in helping accomplish the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.**

**PP1.1** The City will actively employ innovative and inclusive methods and strategies to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. The city will continue to collaborate with partners, including City Advisory Committees and Commissions, neighborhoods, and other community groups, so that the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan reflects community priorities.

**PP1.2** Annually measure and highlight progress towards achieving the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, including how well we are achieving our engagement goals. Continue to

inform the community of the progress and recognize community partners who contribute to achieving the vision.

**PP1.3** As the Comprehensive Plan is implemented, the City will provide education, technical assistance, volunteer opportunities, and other methods to include the community in this work.

## **GP2 People of all ages, backgrounds, and physical abilities can access public meetings and information.**

**PP2.1** Make information and outreach materials available through a variety of means for all community members, including, but not limited to, youths, seniors, those with disabilities, and underrepresented groups.

**PP2.2** Use and consistently evaluate new technologies to improve ways for community members to receive information and provide input.

**PP2.3** Evaluate and pursue intentional methods to inform and engage community members, vulnerable and/or overburdened populations, communities on the frontline, and underrepresented groups who may not ordinarily get involved in civic affairs.

## **GP3 City decision processes are transparent and enable effective participation of the public.**

**PP3.1** Support City staff and encourage other community leaders to strengthen their capacity to design and implement effective public involvement strategies.

**PP3.2** Help the general public understand the structure of local government, how decisions are made, and how they can become involved.

**PP3.3** Give community members, neighborhoods, and other interested parties opportunities to get involved early in land use decision-making processes. Encourage or require applicants to meet with affected community members and organizations.

**PP3.4** Create structured opportunities for people to learn about city issues, share their experiences and motivations, and discuss public issues productively.

**PP3.5** Partner with recognized neighborhood associations and other organizations in the community to host engagement opportunities on issues of common interest.

**PP3.6** Develop public participation plans when amending or updating the Comprehensive Plan or master plans. Develop public participation or communication plans for other major projects.

**PP3.7** Amend the Comprehensive Plan each year to incorporate the updated Capital Facilities Element and act upon other proposed changes to the Plan. Adopt these amendments only after notifying the public and providing opportunities for public comment.

**PP3.8** Seek input from the community, including neighborhood associations and other groups, before final decisions are made to site public and private utility facilities, especially when they may have a significant impact.

**PP3.9** The City will strive to hear from all demographics of the community in an equitable way.



Community members attend an open house about planning for our future.

**GP4 Community members and other key stakeholders feel their opinions and ideas are heard, valued, and used by policy makers, advisory committees, and staff.**

**PP4.1** Build trust among all segments of the community through collaborative and inclusive decision-making.

**PP4.2** Replace or complement the one-way testimony format with an approach that allows meaningful dialogue between and among community members, stakeholders, City Council members, advisory boards, and staff.

**PP4.3** Clearly define public participation goals and choose strategies specifically designed to meet those goals.

**PP4.4** Evaluate public participation strategies to measure their effectiveness in meeting desired goals.

**PP4.5** Select strategies from the full spectrum of public participation tools and techniques and utilize existing and emerging best practices.

**PP4.6** Strive to inform the community about how their comments are considered and used in the decision-making process.

**GP5 Sub-area planning is conducted through a collaborative effort by community members and the City, and is used to shape how neighborhoods grow and develop.**

**PP5.1** Work with neighborhoods to identify the priorities, assets, and challenges of designated sub-area(s), as well as provide information to increase understanding of land-use decision-making processes and the existing plans and regulations that could affect them.

**PP5.2** Encourage wide participation in the development and implementation of sub-area plans.

**PP5.3** Recognize the role that sub-area plans play in City decision-making and resource allocation.

**PP5.4** Provide opportunities for initiation of sub-area planning by either neighborhoods or the City.

**PP5.5** Encourage collaboration between neighborhoods and City representatives.

**PP5.6** Engage in collaborative and continued partnerships with sub-area representatives.

## Our Partners: Strong Interjurisdictional Partnerships Help Our Region Thrive

Our City has strong planning partnerships with other area jurisdictions, and these have helped our region thrive. The [Thurston Regional Planning Council \(TRPC\)](#), plays an important role in fostering this collaboration. TRPC consists of decision makers from numerous jurisdictions and organizations in Thurston County who meet regularly to discuss important regional issues. They also prepare a variety of plans and studies on environmental quality, land use and transportation, demographic trends, and other issues – all of which provide a framework for making informed decisions. Its work has influenced many parts of this Plan.

Because the City recognizes that our community is affected by forces outside our jurisdictional borders, we regularly coordinate with Thurston County and its other cities. We share [County-Wide Planning Policies](#), which ensure our comprehensive plans are coordinated and consistent. These policies express shared regional goals to:

- Improve livability.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of our environment.
- Preserve open spaces.
- Offer varied and affordable housing.
- Provide high-quality urban services at the lowest possible cost.
- Plan for development in the urban growth area so that upon annexation, these areas transition from the county to cities (from rural to urban) in an organized way.



Children at a community Touch-A-Truck event.

In addition to our County-Wide Planning Policies, the cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater work with Thurston County to establish and periodically review Urban Growth Areas, where high-density, urban growth is encouraged (See Land Use and Design chapter).

Olympia’s Urban Growth Area includes areas in unincorporated Thurston County, which the City expects to eventually annex. For this reason, it’s important for the City of Olympia and Thurston County to establish and maintain common zoning and development regulations for these areas and avoid annexations that create illogical boundaries, which increase the cost of city services. The City and County periodically review the Urban Growth Boundary to get an accurate picture of future urban development.

Because this Plan applies, in part, to unincorporated Thurston County lands, it guides Thurston County decisions within Olympia Urban Growth Areas. The parts of this Plan that apply to these overlapping areas are referred to as the "Joint Plan" for Olympia’s Urban Growth Area and are also part of the [Thurston County Comprehensive Plan](#).

The City also works closely with policymakers from the State of Washington, Port of Olympia, Olympia School District, and other jurisdictions to share information and collaborate when public resources can be pooled.

In 2022, the Olympia City Council and the Squaxin Island Tribal Council signed an Accord that commits the two governments to work together on several long-term actions, including supporting economic and infrastructure opportunities, responding to climate change, and promoting a healthy exchange of cultures through public art and community service. The accord formalizes the bond of respect and friendship between the two governing bodies. It lays out a shared commitment to work in harmony for the economic, environmental, and cultural future of both communities.



Celebration at Squaxin Park on Indigenous Peoples Day.

The goals and policies below relate to partnerships focused on growth management.

## Goals and Policies

### **GP6 Olympia accommodates growth in a way consistent with the regional goals expressed in County-Wide Planning Policies.**

**PP6.1** Cooperate with Thurston County and its other municipalities to ensure comprehensive plans are coordinated and consistent.

**PP6.2** Cooperate with Thurston County and the cities of Lacey and Tumwater to ensure our Urban Growth Boundaries are consistent with [County-Wide Planning Policies](#).

**PP6.3** Work with Thurston County on its land-use designations for unincorporated county areas within the city's Urban Growth Boundary so they will be compatible with the City's policies and development standards if they are annexed.

**PP6.4** Coordinate the hearings and actions of the Olympia and Thurston County planning commissions when amendments are proposed to the City's Comprehensive Plan that could affect unincorporated growth areas.

## For More Information

- Olympia has a Council-Manager form of government. The Constitution and laws of Washington State and the [Olympia Municipal Code](#) authorize the City Council to make decisions regarding City affairs. The City Council is elected by the public; the City Manager is appointed by the Council and is responsible for administration and staff.
- State and local laws establish minimum requirements for public participation. Such laws include: parts of the [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA) and [State Environmental Policy Act](#) (SEPA), the [Open Public Meetings Act](#), [Public Records Act](#), and Olympia's Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code.
- The Washington State [Growth Management Act](#) establishes rules to guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations that shape growth over a 20-year horizon.
- [County-Wide Planning Policies](#) establish how Thurston County and the cities and towns within will work together to achieve our regional goals.

- The [Buildable Lands Report](#) prepared for Thurston County by the staff of the [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#) helps Olympia determine the quantity of land to provide for population and employment growth.
- The parts of this Plan that apply within unincorporated Thurston County are part of the [Thurston County Comprehensive Plan](#).
- The City of Olympia [Advisory Committees web pages](#) have information about the role and work of advisory committees.
- The City of Olympia [Neighborhood Programs web pages](#) have information about how to form a Recognized Neighborhood Organization and how neighborhoods can get involved and make a difference.
- The City of Olympia participates in a broad range of interjurisdictional committees and boards such as the Economic Development Council, Animal Services, Law and Justice Council, Regional Housing Council, and the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Committee. [Councilmembers](#) are given committee or board assignments as a way for the City to participate and be represented on a broad variety of interjurisdictional issues.
- The [Centennial Accord between the Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Washington State and the State of Washington](#) and [Millennium Agreement](#) outline the City's government-to-government relationship with federally recognized Indian tribes
- [Municipal Resource Services Center](#) (MSRC) provides information about issues and laws that shape local government.
- The City often references information from [The International Institute for Public Participation](#). This institute has developed a core set of public involvement principles and a Spectrum of Public Participation that outlines participation approaches along a continuum.

# Climate Action and Resilience



Two people and a dog enjoy a walk at Yauger Park.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value innovative, community-driven, and justice-centered climate solutions that achieve net-zero emissions, prepare for and adapt to a changing climate, and promote thriving communities for current and future generations.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A thriving, net-zero city that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the [Accord](#) between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

# Introduction

The City of Olympia recognizes that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activity are driving climate change, the consequences of which pose substantial risks to the health, well-being, and prosperity of our community and planet.

Climate change – which manifests through both extreme events and gradual shifts in environmental conditions – is already having profound impacts on the natural environment, built assets, and quality of life in the Pacific Northwest. In Olympia, we are experiencing – and will continue to experience – worsening climate-related challenges. These include rising average temperatures, more days of extreme heat, increased risk of drought and wildfire, and greater exposure to wildfire smoke. We also anticipate more frequent flooding from more intense rainfall and rising sea levels. The impacts from these climate shifts threaten public health, the built and natural environment, our economy, and cherished ways of life within Olympia.

As of 2023, the State’s Growth Management Act requires Olympia to address climate change in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. We must address two key aspects of our contribution to and planning for climate change:

- **Reducing GHG Emissions:** We will establish goals and policies that help reduce Olympia’s greenhouse gas emissions and the number of miles each of us travels by automobile.
- **Strengthening Climate Resilience:** We will establish goals and policies that strengthen our climate preparedness, adaptation, response, and recovery efforts.

These two efforts go hand in hand: while reducing emissions helps slow climate change, resilience ensures our community can withstand its unavoidable impacts. Often, solutions for reducing emissions and building resilience provide co-benefits, or outcomes from a policy or program that have positive impacts in multiple areas. Together, these two strategies aim to maximize economic, environmental, and social co-benefits, while prioritizing environmental justice and mitigating health disparities experienced by vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

Olympia has been a local leader in addressing climate change for decades, publishing our first Climate Plan, *City of Olympia’s Response to the Challenge of Global Climate Change*, in 1991. Over the past 30 years, the City’s work to prepare for climate impacts and reduce locally generated greenhouse gas emissions has continued to grow. In 2021, the City established a Climate Program to help advance climate action and resilience in Olympia.

The strategic direction outlined in the new climate element builds upon this strong foundation and further advances the City towards achieving Olympia’s vision for the future. Many of the goals and policies presented in the climate element were included in previous comprehensive plans. As a part of this update process, we identified existing goals and

policies that already support the City’s climate goals and modified some measures to reflect our evolving understanding of climate trends. We added other goals and policies to address existing gaps and new opportunities. This work was informed by the City’s previous climate and related planning efforts, including the Olympia [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) (2021) and [Carbon Wedge Analysis](#) (2021), [Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan](#) (2020), [Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan](#) (2019), [Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment](#) (2025), [Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region](#) (2023) and [Olympia Annex](#) (2024), [Shoreline Master Program](#) (2021), [Transportation Master Plan](#) (2021), and other City master plans.

While the climate element establishes a 20-year strategic vision for climate action and resilience in Olympia, we recognize that the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to ongoing and future climate impacts extends well beyond this planning horizon. The steps we take today will not only address near-term challenges but also lay the foundation for future actions that further reduce emissions and build long-term resilience.



A person buying vegetables at the Olympia Farmer’s Market.

## Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2019, the City of Olympia adopted a [Youth Climate Inheritance Resolution](#), committing to working with the youth of Olympia on the collective actions and strategies necessary to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040. Olympia also joined the Cities Race to Zero Campaign in 2021, reaffirming its commitment to inclusive climate action and reducing emissions in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement (2016). In April 2022, Olympia City Council formalized Olympia’s Race to Zero [commitment](#), pledging to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 59% below 2019 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2040.

Although Olympia’s contribution to global GHG emissions is relatively small, every community has a role to play in addressing climate change. Bold, local leadership reflects our commitment to an equitable global effort and serves as an inspiration for climate action throughout our region and among local governments.

Like many cities across the United States, Olympia’s greenhouse gas emissions have continued to grow over time. The City’s most recent [GHG inventory](#), completed in 2023 for the year 2021, shows that the primary sources of inventoried GHG emissions in Olympia are:

- Transportation (34%)
- Commercial energy use (27%)
- Residential energy use (22%)

In 2021, the Olympia community emitted an estimated 616,650 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e), which represents a decrease of approximately 22% compared to 2019. Although population growth and hotter summers contributed to an increase in energy demand during this time, we reduced our overall emissions by transitioning to cleaner sources of electricity and reducing the number of miles each of us traveled in our vehicles. Much of the reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT) during this period can be attributed to reduced travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this reduction in VMT has only been partially sustained, with travel partially rebounding toward pre-pandemic levels since 2021.

Olympia’s GHG inventory follows the [U.S. Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) (USCP), a nationally accepted method for estimating GHG emissions at a community-wide scale. This method focuses on GHG emissions produced by activities occurring within Olympia’s city limits, such as transportation, energy use, and waste management.

The USCP does not require communities to account for emissions resulting from the production and transportation of goods and services consumed locally but produced elsewhere. These emissions are excluded, since local governments have limited ability to influence them. However, they still represent a significant contribution to global emissions. Research by [C40 Cities](#) suggests that in some cities, nearly 85% of emissions associated with goods and services consumed locally are generated elsewhere. As a result, Olympia’s total carbon footprint is likely higher than what is captured in the City’s GHG inventory.

Olympia’s approach to reducing GHG emissions is guided by our understanding of local emission sources, ongoing trends, and the policy tools available to local governments to influence meaningful change. The following goals and policies support the City’s efforts to reduce GHG emissions across sectors.

## **GC1 Olympia reduces community-wide GHG emissions 59% below 2019 levels by 2030 and achieves net-zero emissions by 2040.**

**PC1.1** Implement local policies and programs to achieve adopted emissions reduction targets. Prioritize actions that advance high-impact strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address community priorities, prioritize environmental justice, and provide additional co-benefits.

**PC1.2** Continue collaborating with regional partners to implement the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and coordinate greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies across Thurston County.

**PC1.3** Update Olympia’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory at least every three years to track progress and refine emissions reduction strategies.

**PC1.4** Support state advocacy initiatives to divest from fossil fuels and shift public investments toward clean energy and low-carbon alternatives.

Additional goals and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are integrated across all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. For more information, see the [Climate Element Goals and Policies Index](#).



A cyclist waits to board an InterCity Transit bus

## **Strengthening Climate Resilience**

Climate resilience is “the ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities” (RCW 70A.65.010). In other words, resilience strengthens our

community's ability to withstand and recover from events made worse by climate change through proactive planning and preparedness. The development of the Resilience strategy fulfills the first part of Olympia's commitment to the [Cities Race To Resilience](#) campaign, which includes conducting a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, integrating climate adaptation and resilience across all aspects of city planning, and taking action to improve community-wide resilience.

Building resilience requires strategic intervention across all sectors of the community, including public health, the environment, and the economy. These strategies include forward-thinking planning, operational preparedness, education and outreach, and physical adaptation. Developing and maintaining strong partnerships with community and regional organizations is fundamental to community-wide resilience.

To develop a plan for building Olympia's climate resilience, the City evaluated how current and future climate hazards could affect the people, places, and sectors Olympians value most. In 2025, Olympia published a [Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment](#) (CRVA), which identified the specific community assets most vulnerable to predicted climate conditions. The CRVA considered:

- **Infrastructure Assets** – Buildings, stormwater and sewer systems, the drinking water system, the transportation network, and the energy system.
- **Economic and Community Assets** – Local businesses, tourism, recreation, community events, and community gardens.
- **Environmental Assets** – Freshwater ecosystems, marine ecosystems, and forests.
- **Health and Safety Assets** – Emergency management and public health.

Key findings from the CRVA highlight the threat climate change poses to Olympia's natural environment, health, and well-being. Over the next 20 years, Olympia's marine, freshwater, and forest ecosystems will be strained by increasing temperatures, drought conditions, and excess rainfall. Olympia's public health will face significant risk as extreme heat episodes become more intense, longer, and more frequent. More frequent wildfires strain our emergency response, and smoke compounds the health impacts of hotter summers. Lastly, the impact of increasing amounts of sea level rise will push the limits of our existing infrastructure systems.

Guided by the CRVA, the Resilience strategy establishes goals and policies that directly respond to these findings. The goals and policies will help Olympia prepare for and respond to climate hazards that pose a high risk to Olympians and our community assets. While adaptation plays a critical role in minimizing the effects of climate change, not all climate-related impacts or disasters can be predicted or fully prepared for. A resilient Olympia must also be ready to act quickly and recover efficiently, as climate impacts worsen and become more frequent.

The following goals and policies provide a framework to guide the City's efforts to prepare for, adapt and respond to climate change.

## **GC2 Olympia plans for future climate impacts and takes action to prepare for, adapt and respond to anticipated climate hazards.**

**PC2.1** Implement local policies and programs to enhance climate resilience. Prioritize actions that reduce significant climate risks, address community priorities, prioritize environmental justice, and provide additional co-benefits.

**PC2.2** Continue collaborating with regional partners to implement the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan, Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region, and other strategies to prepare for and adapt to climate impacts.

**PC2.3** Monitor the latest climate science and models to assess how climate change is impacting the region.

**PC2.4** Update Olympia's Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment alongside 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates to reflect the latest understanding of climate trends and their impact on community assets. Adjust resilience strategies as needed to address evolving risks and conditions.

Additional goals and policies to plan, prepare, adapt, and respond to climate hazards are integrated across all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. For more information, see the [Climate Element Goals and Policies Index](#).



Community members gather in downtown Olympia to celebrate ArtsWalk.

# Advancing Environmental Justice

Climate change does not affect all Olympians equally. Climate impacts disproportionately harm some people and groups. These communities, often referred to as frontline communities, are highly exposed to climate risks due to where they live, and have fewer resources, safety nets, or political power to respond effectively. People with lower incomes, communities of color, Indigenous peoples, migrants, and refugees often experience the consequences of climate change first and worst. Older people, children, people experiencing homelessness, outdoor workers, incarcerated individuals, renters, people with disabilities, and those with chronic illnesses are also particularly vulnerable to negative climate impacts.

Existing social, economic, and environmental challenges, such as a lack of affordable housing, rising costs, and pollution, further intensify the effects of more frequent and severe climate-related events. Repeated impacts make it harder for both people and ecosystems to recover from climate disruptions. These interconnected issues can exacerbate financial stress, strain public services, and harm public and environmental health.

Strategic investments, policies, and programs can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve climate resilience, while helping to address existing inequities in Olympia. As we implement the climate element, we will carefully evaluate the costs, benefits, and potential social and environmental impacts of each policy. We will prioritize actions that deliver environmental justice co-benefits and support frontline and historically underserved communities. This includes identifying and minimizing any unintended impacts on closely related issues, such as environmental pollution and housing affordability, to ensure balanced and effective outcomes that support the entire community.

By integrating environmental justice throughout all phases of policy development, engagement, and implementation, we will ensure that climate actions effectively reach and support our most vulnerable residents. This approach fosters a resilient community where everyone can both participate in and benefit from climate action.

**GC3 All community members – especially those most affected by climate change – benefit from climate action and have equitable opportunities to influence policy decisions.**

**PC3.1** Conduct intentional outreach with frontline communities and youth to enable equitable engagement in the development and implementation of climate action and resilience initiatives.

**PC3.2** Partner with community-based organizations to engage diverse groups in developing and implementing climate solutions while addressing existing disparities. Support these organizations in building capacity for climate action.

**PC3.3** Provide guidance and resources, such as technical support, rebates, and other incentives to reduce barriers to climate action for all community members. Prioritize strategic investments to support frontline communities and address existing disparities in Olympia.

**PC3.4** Evaluate costs, benefits, and potential impacts of all new climate policies and programs. Address unintended impacts of policies and programs for all Olympians.

## **Building Institutional Capacity for Climate Action**

Olympia must continue building institutional capacity across all City departments to effectively address climate change and ensure long-term resilience. A well-equipped City workforce, with the necessary staffing, resources, and expertise, is critical to implementing climate policies, responding to emerging challenges, and fostering community-wide engagement. By investing in training, professional development, and cross-departmental collaboration, the City can strengthen its ability to integrate climate action across all sectors. Securing sustainable funding and refining strategies through data-driven evaluation will further enhance Olympia’s ability to meet climate goals, adapt to changing conditions, and support equitable climate action for all residents.

### **GC4 Olympia has the staffing, resources, and funding to effectively implement climate action and resilience measures.**

**PC4.1** Fully staff City positions across all departments to support climate-related actions and hazard response.

**PC4.2** Develop a comprehensive funding strategy to support the implementation of climate policies and programs.

**PC4.3** Develop City-wide staff capacity through training and professional development to enhance expertise in climate resilience, emissions reduction, and equitable community engagement.

**PC4.4** Integrate climate resilience and emissions reduction efforts across all City departments to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive approach to climate action. Coordinate implementation with regional partners to the greatest extent possible.

**PC4.5** Monitor the effectiveness of climate programs and policies, using data-driven evaluation to refine strategies and improve outcomes over time.

## An Integrated Approach

Olympia’s climate element is not a standalone chapter, but an integrated strategy woven throughout the entire Comprehensive Plan. Recognizing that climate change affects all aspects of our community, and that our community’s contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions are influenced by all sectors and systems, we have embedded climate goals and policies across multiple chapters.

This method ensures a collaborative, cross-sectoral approach. Because these challenges are interconnected, the solutions must also be comprehensive.

The Climate chapter outlines Olympia’s comprehensive approach to climate action, combining emissions reduction, resilience planning, environmental justice, and institutional capacity-building. It establishes overarching emissions reduction and resilience goals, as well as a framework for addressing climate action that applies to all goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use and Urban Design chapter focuses on integrating climate considerations into how Olympia grows. It includes goals and policies to support compact development that makes it easier to get around without a car and green infrastructure that improves resilience and livability. This chapter also addresses the actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment and adapt buildings to protect public health and well-being from climate hazards such as extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

The Housing chapter integrates climate action with housing affordability by ensuring that housing is affordable for all income levels, resilient to climate hazards, energy-efficient, and located near public services.

The Transportation chapter focuses on reducing vehicle miles traveled by making it easier to walk, roll, bike, and take transit. This chapter also supports the transition to electric

vehicle (EV) and e-bike use, with an emphasis on providing equitable access to EV charging.

The Parks, Arts & Recreation chapter prepares Olympia’s parks and recreational facilities to withstand climate impacts, such as flooding, extreme heat, and drought. This chapter also describes the role of parks and public spaces in building community resilience and providing climate co-benefits such as cooling and stormwater management.

The Utilities chapter describes how Olympia’s public utilities are adapting to address climate risks and how the City will partner with Puget Sound Energy to meet rising electricity demand. This chapter also addresses the importance of reducing waste and increasing capacity to divert compostable and recyclable materials from landfills.

The Economy chapter promotes a climate-smart economy by preparing a workforce for green jobs and supporting businesses in adapting to climate impacts. It also encourages circular economy practices and helps small businesses build resilience to extreme weather and other hazards.

The Public Safety chapter focuses on how the City is preparing for and responding to public health challenges, such as extreme heat, wildfire, and smoke.

The Capital Facilities chapter ensures that public infrastructure investments consider long-term climate impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and integrate climate projections into design and construction.

A description of how each chapter contributes to the climate element is included below. The goals and policies that are a part of the integrated Climate Element are tagged with *(Climate)* within each individual chapter. For a complete list of climate goals and policies that have been integrated across all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, see the [Climate Element Goals and Policies Index](#).

## Natural Environment

### Strengthen the Environment’s Ability to Withstand Climate Change

Freshwater, marine, and forest ecosystems will be strained in the coming 20 years as temperatures increase, droughts become more frequent, rainfall events become more intense, and sea levels rise. Drought and extreme heat could disrupt pollinator cycles, trigger pest outbreaks in forests and agriculture, and cause algal blooms in aquatic ecosystems. Heavier rainfall can increase the amount of harmful pollutants entering our freshwater environments from stormwater runoff. Regional trends in ocean acidification and sea level rise will continue to threaten our marine ecosystems. Restoration projects

and land management strategies will require additional resources to support ecosystems in adapting to more extreme weather conditions.

In sum, climate change will stress critical areas, disrupt ecosystem composition, functions and services, and threaten overall species biodiversity. Strengthening the resilience of our natural environment to these climate hazards protects vital and cherished ecosystems, while making our communities more livable in the face of a changing climate. Climate goals and policies within the Natural Environment chapter focus on protecting important species, critical areas, and intact sensitive habitats, while also enhancing ecosystem structure, function, and processes to support climate adaptation. We will prioritize nature-based solutions, such as living shorelines, green stormwater infrastructure and urban forests to the greatest extent feasible, to improve air and water quality, creating a healthier environment for both humans and wildlife. These strategies involve changing how we plan, design, invest, and maintain both the built and natural environment to reduce the impact of future climate conditions and support carbon storage.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Natural Environment chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Cultivate a Connection to Nature

Olympians hold a strong connection to our natural environment and value all that it brings to our lives. As climate change puts local ecosystems at risk, we recognize the inherent value our community places on the environment and the mental and physical health benefits that come from a connection to nature. Through environmental education programs, public art installations, and collaborations with the Squaxin Island Tribe, we will work to cultivate a sense of connection to and promote stewardship of the natural world.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Natural Environment chapter and showed with the tag (*Climate*).



A child walking on a trail through the woods.

## Land Use and Urban Design

### Plan for Density and Future Climate Conditions

Like many communities, Olympia must address cost-of-living, housing supply, and future climate risks over the next 20 years. Decisions about how and where we develop and redevelop directly impact greenhouse gas emissions, our ability to adapt to climate change, and address other community priorities. At times, some of these goals may appear to be at odds. For example, maintaining tree canopy cover might seem to conflict with efforts to expand solar energy access or increase housing density. However, these solutions do not need to be applied universally across Olympia to be effective.

Through smart urban design and development, we can pursue solutions that address multiple community priorities at the same time. By creating denser, walkable neighborhoods, people can more easily access their daily needs without a vehicle. This reduces transportation emissions and improves community health and the local economy. By directing development to urban corridors and supporting residential infill development, we can provide ample housing close to services, while reducing urban sprawl. This helps protect critical areas, preserve agricultural and forest lands in rural areas of Thurston County, and reduce exposure to climate hazards along the wildland-urban interface and in geologically hazardous areas. As we develop, we can incorporate green infrastructure, such as trees, green spaces, and rain gardens, throughout our community to improve air quality, cool our neighborhoods, and support mental health for current and future Olympians.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Adapt the Built Environment to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Protect Public Health

Energy use in residential and commercial buildings is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Olympia, accounting for 49% of community-wide emissions. Local analyses show that we can meet our emissions reduction targets by improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings, electrifying heating and cooling to phase out fossil fuels, and supporting the transition to 100% renewable electricity. While the Washington State Building Code already supports high standards for energy efficiency and air filtration in new buildings, additional work is needed to retrofit existing buildings.

In addition to the energy used to heat, power, and cool buildings, millions of tons of carbon emissions are also released during the lifecycle of common construction materials like concrete, steel, and insulation. These materials account for [11% of global GHG emissions](#). Finding ways to reuse existing buildings, reduce the use of high-embodied carbon materials, and promote low-carbon materials for new development can further reduce GHG emissions associated with new construction.

Building upgrades also play a vital role in protecting public health and enhancing community resilience. Older homes and buildings in Olympia often lack the infrastructure needed to protect the health and well-being of our community from increasing heat waves, wildfire smoke, and flooding. By retrofitting existing buildings and ensuring new construction incorporates features such as air filtration, cooling, and flood protection, we can better prepare for current and future climate hazards. These improvements are particularly important for vulnerable populations, helping ensure that all community members have safe shelter during extreme weather and other climate-exacerbated hazards.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



Heat pump outdoor units installed at a home in Olympia.

## Promote Local Energy Infrastructure

While energy production and grid resilience are largely the responsibility of our energy utility, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), we can support the transition to renewable and resilient energy through smaller-scale renewable energy installations. Local solutions — such as rooftop solar, microgrids, and battery storage — reduce energy costs, support grid reliability, and provide backup power during outages.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Housing

### Address Housing and Climate Challenges Together

The challenges and solutions to affordable housing and climate change are directly linked. A lack of affordable housing contributes to urban sprawl, which leads to increased transportation-related emissions as people need to drive longer distances and rely on personal vehicles to access jobs, services, and amenities. These development patterns also expose more people to climate hazards, particularly along the wildland-urban interface. At the same time, climate hazards exacerbate the housing and affordability crisis by reducing the supply of housing and increasing costs of food, energy, and other basic needs.

Addressing these shared challenges requires a similarly integrated approach. We can address both climate and housing goals by preserving existing housing stock, prioritizing infill development through new construction and redevelopment, supporting adaptive reuse. We can also retrofit existing housing to improve energy efficiency and climate

resilience. Maintaining naturally occurring affordable housing, or housing that is affordable without federal subsidies, helps prevent the displacement of low-income residents while avoiding the greenhouse gas emissions associated with new construction. Retrofitting existing homes to improve energy efficiency and climate resilience lowers utility costs, while also improving occupant health, safety, and comfort.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Housing chapter and shown with the tag *(Climate)*.

## Provide Stability and Services During Climate Emergencies

Responding to events worsened by climate change will take both human and financial resources, stretching our existing capacity and personnel. Ensuring that our community social service providers are prepared for and can respond to unexpected, acute events can save lives. Many public health adaptation strategies focus on sheltering indoors to protect from extreme weather either in homes or in community centers. Emergency providers can fill an immediate gap for unsheltered individuals in the aftermath of a climate-related event. Long-term, we strive for everyone in Olympia to have a stable source of affordable and safe housing and the ability to shelter in place during extreme weather. This will protect human health and well-being during more frequent and intense extreme heat and wildfire smoke events and reduce the burden on our emergency response services.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Housing chapter and shown with the tag *(Climate)*.



An apartment complex providing emergency and permanent supportive housing in Olympia.

# Transportation

## Make it Easier to Walk, Roll, Bike, and Take Transit

The second largest contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Olympia is the transportation sector, making up 34% of inventoried emissions. Among transportation-related emissions, passenger vehicles are the largest source, followed by heavy-duty trucks and other commercial vehicles. One of the most important ways for the transportation sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to significantly reduce the number of miles Olympians travel by vehicle. To achieve our reduction targets, Olympia must reduce the annual number of miles we travel by vehicle 20%, or 93,466,000 miles, by 2040. This means reducing the number of miles each person travels by car to 5,357 miles per year by 2040.

Achieving these VMT reduction targets will require significant investment and transformation of Olympia's transportation system. This includes improving infrastructure to make walking, rolling, biking, and taking public transit safe and inviting. By providing shaded sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and comfortable places to rest along the way, we can encourage people to walk, roll, and bike more often. Encouraging and supporting regional transportation partners to provide reliable, frequent public transit service will make public transportation more efficient and accessible for Olympians and those who visit to work, shop, access services, or have fun.

As we reshape our city to expand pedestrian-, bicycle- and transit-supportive infrastructure, we must also shorten the distances people travel by building more housing near destinations and key services along frequent transit routes. We can do this best by continuing and accelerating our long-standing support for the region's approach of increasing density along urban corridors (see the Transportation Chapter for more information).

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Transportation chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



A cyclist uses bike infrastructure to move around Olympia.

## Enable the Transition to Electric Mobility

Reducing the number of miles we travel by vehicle is the most effective way to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation.

However, it will take many decades to achieve the land use and transportation infrastructure changes that will make walking, rolling, biking, or taking transit the best choice for most trips in Olympia. In the meantime, electric vehicles (EVs) and other types of electric micromobility, such as e-bikes, play an important role in reducing transportation-related GHG emissions.

State [requirements](#) for all new light-duty vehicles to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035 will support an increase in EV ownership in Olympia. Ensuring 100% of gasoline vehicles and 75% of diesel vehicles are electric or fueled by zero-emission fuels by 2040 will help Olympia achieve our GHG reduction targets.

Adequate charging infrastructure is needed to support the transition to electric vehicles. Concern about the lack of available and sufficient EV charging stations is a commonly cited barrier to EV adoption. This is particularly true for renters, who often face additional challenges in accessing EV charging at home. Ensuring equitable access to low-cost charging stations for all community members, regardless of where they live or work, is a critical step to support the transition to electric vehicles.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Transportation chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



An adult and two children charge an electric vehicle in front of Olympia City Hall.

## Prepare Our Streets for Extreme Weather

Climate hazards, including extreme heat, extreme precipitation, and sea level rise, will impact our transportation network over the next 20 years. Rising temperatures and extreme heat may cause street surfacing to crack or buckle. Rising sea levels may flood critical transportation routes, delaying emergency services and disrupting key transportation infrastructure, like the 4th and 5th Avenue Bridges. Heavy rain could flood intersections and increase runoff, polluting local water bodies.

Adapting the transportation network through climate-smart design, maintenance, and planning can help prevent these impacts. A well-connected street grid enables fast emergency response during localized climate-related events while promoting walking or rolling, biking, and taking transit. The City will continue to work with regional and state partners to monitor at-risk transportation assets and will make repairs and improvements when needed. These strategies will help reduce economic and community disruptions from both short-term and long-term climate events, ensuring that Olympians can safely and easily get to where they live, work, shop, and play.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Transportation chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

# Parks, Arts & Recreation

## Ensure Parks are Resilient to Climate Impacts and Advance Climate Action

Over the next 20 years, Olympia’s parks will face increasing climate pressures, including extreme heat, drought, and an increased risk of landslides due to extreme precipitation. These conditions will affect the health of our urban forests and may temporarily close park amenities, limiting people’s ability to enjoy outdoor activities. Rising temperatures may increase the use of parks, while wildfire smoke and extreme heat episodes may impact the accessibility and enjoyment of parks, trails, and public spaces. Drought conditions may increase the likelihood of wildfire in forested areas.

To address these challenges, we will need to change how we design and manage Olympia’s parks and recreation activities. We will make sure future investments support the timely recovery of our park infrastructure and environment from potential climate disruptions. We will adjust forest maintenance practices in our parks using the best available science to reduce the potential of small, urban wildfires. At the same time, we will identify opportunities for our parks to contribute to broader community-wide resilience and climate action. This includes building new trail networks to make it easier to get around without a car, as well as designing public spaces that are ready for climate challenges, mitigate hazards, and provide multiple benefits such as stormwater treatment and shade. Prioritizing parks within a half mile of every resident, while supporting overall improvements to the public transit system, will help ensure all Olympians can access parks without a car.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Parks, Arts & Recreation chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



A group of volunteers helps with forest management in Squaxin Park.

## Foster Community Connection and Belonging

Building community and creating a sense of togetherness are critical but often overlooked components of climate resilience. Fostering community and belonging helps combat climate anxiety and feelings of helplessness, while also strengthening our collective capacity to respond to climate challenges. Resilient communities know their neighbors, care about their well-being, and are better prepared to face climate challenges together. Olympia’s parks, arts, and recreation programs play an important role in achieving these goals. Parks provide spaces for people to gather, play, and celebrate. Public art, cultural events, and recreation programs strengthen shared connections, while multimodal trails encourage walking, rolling, and biking, making it easier to get around while spending meaningful time outdoors. Nature parks provide opportunities to experience the outdoors and contribute to the protection of urban forests.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Parks, Arts & Recreation chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Utilities

### Support the Transition to a Zero-Waste City

In many communities, a large portion of greenhouse gas emissions comes from the consumption of goods and services, rather than activities occurring within the community. While these emissions are challenging to measure on a community scale, national trends suggest that they are often larger than the sector-based emissions typically measured by cities. Addressing these emissions is an important part of local climate action, including here in Olympia.

We can work towards reducing these consumption-based emissions by transitioning toward a circular economy, which minimizes material use, redesigns materials and products to be less resource-intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. While local governments have limited influence over global supply chains and individual consumer behavior, there are still steps we can take to advance this goal. This includes implementing programs and policies to reduce waste generation for businesses and individuals, while increasing capacity for waste diversion through material reuse, recycling, and composting programs.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Utilities chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Monitor and Protect Water Resources

As rainfall events become more intense, existing impervious surfaces can lead to water runoff, which reduces groundwater recharge and transports pollutants to streams and water bodies. These impacts threaten water quality and aquatic ecosystems. While our drinking water supplies already have significant resilience built in, hotter and drier summers mean we must actively monitor potential impacts to drinking water systems and aquatic ecosystems to ensure they are protected.

The City will focus on integrating nature-based, green infrastructure solutions to manage stormwater; encourage water conservation, reclamation, and reuse; and prevent excess water from entering stormwater and wastewater systems.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Utilities chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## Reduce Flooding From Extreme Rainfall and Sea Level Rise

Heavy rainfall and rising sea levels pose a substantial challenge for Olympia. Extreme rainfall events could overwhelm the combined stormwater and sewer system, leading to flooding, localized backups, and discharge of untreated wastewater into Budd Inlet. Over the next 20 years, rising sea levels will increase the frequency of tidal flooding events, threaten critical infrastructure located downtown, and require City resources to respond to the events. The steps we take today will help the City mitigate current flood risks, while preparing for the higher levels of sea level rise anticipated by 2100.

We will need to invest significant financial and staff resources to address these impacts. The City will identify emerging challenges, improve our response, and upgrade vulnerable infrastructure to prepare for future climate conditions. We will stay updated on new scientific findings to improve how we design and manage stormwater, sewer, and drinking water systems. The City will also continue to be an active member of the Olympia Sea Level Rise Collaborative, working to reduce the risk and mitigate impacts of flooding due to sea level rise in downtown Olympia.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Utilities chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



City Public Works employees respond to flooding in downtown Olympia.

## Secure the Energy Grid

Meeting Olympia’s climate goals depends on the production of 100% renewable electricity by 2045 and the strategic electrification of homes, businesses, and vehicles. Accommodating the resulting increase in electricity demand will require significant investments in new and upgraded electric infrastructure. While energy efficiency, conservation, and demand response technologies can help manage consumption, they will not eliminate the need for expanded transmission and distribution systems, local energy generation, and energy storage.

While our energy utility, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), is responsible for meeting growing energy needs, the City still has a role to play in supporting this transition. This includes facilitating the timely planning of critical infrastructure, streamlining local permitting and approvals for electric infrastructure projects, and supporting local energy generation to enable community-wide electrification.

At the same time, more frequent extreme heat events and increasing wildfire risks could threaten our energy supply in several ways. On hot days, increased demand could overload the power grid, causing blackouts that disrupt homes, businesses, and essential services. During extreme heat and drought events, utility operators may need to shut off power lines to reduce wildfire risk. These power outages and shutoffs can have serious effects on health and daily life.

We will work closely with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to strengthen our energy infrastructure and add backup systems to keep essential services running. Burying utility lines underground wherever feasible and beneficial will help make our energy systems less vulnerable to extreme weather events. Supporting the development and installation of distributed energy grids will provide additional energy redundancy for critical infrastructure systems and protect the health of vulnerable populations.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Utilities chapter and shown with the tag *(Climate)*.

## Economy

### Develop a Climate-Smart Economy and Workforce

The shift to a low-carbon economy is underway, spurring the adoption of climate-friendly business practices and the growth of the workforce to support climate action. Fueled by public and private investment, along with strong state and local climate goals, we anticipate the need for hundreds of skilled workers, such as solar installers and electric vehicle technicians, as well as new industries to help us transition to a net-zero community and zero-waste economy. Olympia’s youth value businesses and professions that align with climate action and resilience. By supporting local sectors that embody these values, we can build a sustainable economy that future generations will be proud to inherit.

The City will partner with local workforce development organizations and schools at all levels to ensure that Olympia and our youth are prepared for the next generation of “green jobs”. We will also work with local and regional partners to encourage the establishment of local circular economy hubs, which enable the collection, processing, and distribution of reused and recycled materials.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Economy chapter and shown with the tag *(Climate)*.



Community members participate in the annual Procession of the Species Celebration event.

## Support Businesses in Preparing for Climate Impacts

Climate change presents growing challenges for local businesses, including disruptions from extreme weather, supply chain uncertainties, and rising costs. Brick-and-mortar businesses may experience reduced foot traffic during extreme heat and smoke events, while outdoor events could see a decline in visitors and tourists. Industries that rely on outdoor workers, like the construction sector, or difficult indoor conditions, like restaurant kitchens, may need to adapt to accommodate hotter summers. More frequent flooding due to sea level rise will also impact downtown Olympia, the economic and cultural heart of our city and region.

Managing these climate impacts may be particularly challenging for small, locally owned businesses that may have fewer resources to bounce back after disruptions. As extreme heat, heavy rainfall, and flooding from sea level rise become more common over the next 20 years, it's important for businesses and community events to plan and prepare for potential impacts. We will build and maintain a strong and diverse economy that is resilient to climate hazards, and provide planning support to ensure that local businesses are prepared for and can recover from climate impacts.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Economy chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

# Public Safety

## Protect Public Health Through Emergency Preparedness and Response

Extreme weather, such as heat waves, wildfire smoke events, and heavy precipitation, poses serious health risks to Olympians, especially children, older adults, pregnant people, outdoor workers, and people experiencing homelessness. These conditions can cause heat-related illness, worsen respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and make it unsafe to be outdoors or indoors without adequate cooling or air filtration for long periods of time. Increased emergency calls and hospitalizations during these events can strain our healthcare and emergency systems, reducing their capacity for fast emergency response. Protecting public health and well-being is at the heart of the City's mission. To accomplish this goal, we must take a broad approach that helps people safely shelter indoors (see the Housing and Land Use and Urban Design chapters), prepares the community for specific extreme weather events, and prioritizes proactive planning, outreach, and investment.

Working in partnership with Thurston County, local agencies, and community-based organizations, we will develop the resources, plans, and capacity necessary to prepare for and respond to extreme weather. This includes supporting community centers, healthcare professionals, and social service organizations that provide critical services during extreme weather events, as well as ensuring emergency responders have the latest training and equipment to address regional wildfire risks. Through a regional and coordinated approach, we will be prepared as a community to stay safe and protect community health during increasingly extreme weather.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Public Safety chapter and shown with the tag (*Climate*).



Olympia first responders walk with children along a street.

# Capital Facilities Plan

## Make Climate-Smart Investments in Public Infrastructure

Heavy rainfall, sea level rise, and extreme heat events can strain the engineering and design capacities of our public infrastructure. As these events become more frequent and intense, we must ensure that public infrastructure and capital facilities are designed, engineered, and constructed to withstand future conditions. Systematically accounting for climate projections across the lifespan of capital projects in the design and development phases will ensure that we make smart investments for the future and reduce the risk of infrastructure failure. Capital projects can also provide additional greenhouse gas emissions reduction benefits by supporting development priorities, such as urban infill, and active and low-carbon mobility.

Supporting goals and policies are included in the Capital Facilities Plan and shown with the tag (*Climate*).

## For More Information

- The [Climate Element Goal and Policy Index](#) includes all cross-listed goals and policies that make up the Climate Element from each chapter within the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Climate Element Implementation Plan provides additional guidance for implementing climate measures, including the implementation lead, timeframe, and examples of implementation actions.
- The [2021 GHG Emissions Inventory](#) provides a more detailed assessment of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Olympia.
- The [2021 Emissions Reduction Analysis](#) describes sector-based targets necessary for the City of Olympia to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.
- The [Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment](#) outlines the current and future impacts of climate change on the Olympia community and prioritizes actions to reduce those impacts.
- The [Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan](#) provides comprehensive strategies for minimizing and preventing flooding downtown through at least 2100.
- The [Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan](#) serves as a road map for ongoing regional collaboration to reduce local contributions to climate change.

# Natural Environment



Two young children stand near the shoreline during high tide at Squaxin Park.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value our role as stewards of the water, air, land, vegetation, and animals around us, and believe it is our responsibility to future generations to restore, protect, and enhance the exceptional natural environment that sustains us.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, beautiful, and resilient natural environment that enables both human and wild communities to thrive.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the [Accord](#) between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

# Introduction

Olympians appreciate the important interdependence between people and nature. We understand that a healthy natural environment is necessary to support healthy, resilient, and sustainable communities. In Olympia, opportunities abound to experience and take part in the stewardship of the natural environment. We plant trees, remove invasive plants, raise chickens, build pollinator gardens, recycle, and walk to the neighborhood store. Parks and natural areas improve our mental and physical health, and are home to rare birds, native salmon, lush wetlands, and the tallest of evergreen trees. Connecting with the environment and protecting it for future generations is a strongly held value for Olympians. We recognize our role as land stewards and our responsibility to protect water quality, promote clean air, restore important habitat, and uphold Tribal treaty rights.

Olympia embraces its role as a leader in the effort to create a sustainable community dedicated to the conservation, protection, and restoration of the natural environment. The City will continue this work—through leadership, community engagement, regional partnerships, and planning—as we address emerging environmental challenges.

Our community includes all people who live, work, and/or play in Olympia. Together, we recognize that natural resources are precious and limited, and that our growing population will continue to test those limits. Our ability to meet several key challenges will define how well we collectively manage our natural environment in the coming decades.

## Key challenges:

- **A growing population** will put more pressure on these resources; to remove trees, to replace natural land surfaces with roads, buildings, and parking lots, and by encroaching on environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Increased waste and pollution** from the cars we drive, the products we use, and industrial processes will pose additional risk to environmental and human health.
- **Environmental health disparities** exist because not everyone in Olympia has benefitted equitably from past efforts to promote a healthy natural environment. Some have been historically left out of such efforts and are more burdened than others by environmental impacts like air pollution and extreme heat.
- **Climate change** is affecting sea level rise, unpredictable rainfall, increased stormwater runoff, changes in food supply, and increased stress on humans, habitats, and wildlife.

All of these challenges have the potential to impact the quality of our natural resources and overall well-being. We hope this community vision will define a path for change for us to follow as we continue to face these challenges in the next 20 years.

As Olympia continues to grow, it will be essential to reach a careful balance between planning for growth and stewarding our natural environment.



A volunteer pulls invasive English ivy during a habitat stewardship work party.

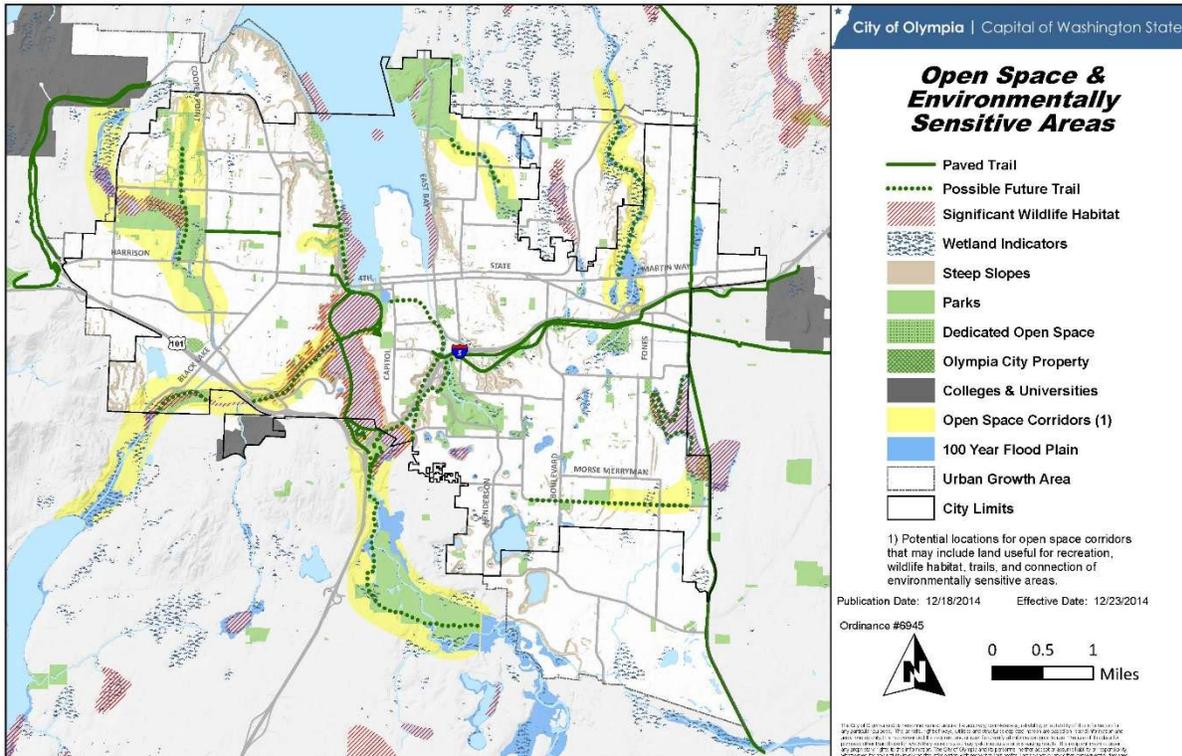
As a key land steward, the City’s role is to encourage and regulate new development and land management practices in a way that minimizes negative environmental impacts and supports healthy, resilient communities. We will achieve this by:

- Carrying out the state’s Growth Management Act that requires cities to plan for anticipated population growth and embrace the need for denser development so that larger expanses of rural land can be preserved.
- Prioritizing geographic areas and equitable land management strategies that will provide the greatest environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits.
- Collaborating across Departments and with private developers to encourage low-impact development and nature-based green infrastructure solutions.
- Continuing the City’s role as caretaker of Olympia’s urban forest, a diverse mix of native and ornamental trees that promote a healthy, sustainable, and beautiful city across both urbanized and natural landscapes.
- Incorporating the recovery of Pacific Northwest salmon species in watershed planning and land management strategies, understanding that what benefits salmon also benefits healthy, sustainable communities and is a critical component of upholding Tribal treaty rights.

The Open Space and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map reflects those areas in the City and Urban Growth Area (UGA) that are already preserved as open space, or that may be good opportunities for future preservation as open space.

Shown on the map are environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, and significant wildlife habitat. Many of these areas are protected by Critical Areas regulations so the map serves to highlight those areas for further evaluation prior to any new development project.

The map also reflects locations where there may be a greater potential for creating or enhancing existing open space corridors for recreation, stormwater management, and wildlife habitat. These areas may still be undeveloped, owned or managed by the City, connected to other nearby open space areas, or have environmentally sensitive areas present.



View Map – Open Space Environmentally Sensitive Areas

## Goals and Policies

**GN1 Important ecosystem structure, function, and processes are protected by Olympia’s planning and regulatory activities.**

**PN1.1** Administer development regulations that protect environmentally sensitive areas, drainage basins, and wellhead areas.

**PN1.2** Coordinate Critical Areas regulations and stormwater management requirements regionally based on the best scientific information available.

**PN1.3** Limit development in areas that are environmentally sensitive, such as steep slopes and wetlands. Direct development and redevelopment to less sensitive areas. (Climate)

**PN1.4** Promote programs and policies that protect and restore natural systems such as wetlands, streams, riparian areas, shorelines, and stands of mature trees. (Climate)

**PN1.5** Preserve the existing soils and vegetation on a portion of new development sites; integrate existing site contours into the project design and minimize the use of grading and other large-scale land disturbances.

**PN1.6** Regularly review and update regulations and design standards for new developments and redevelopment that will manage stormwater and minimize impacts to receiving waters, protected wildlife species, and other environmentally sensitive areas.

**PN1.7** Limit hillside development to site designs that incorporate and conform to the existing topography and minimize their effect on existing hydrology.

**PN1.8** Limit the negative impacts of development on public lands and environmental resources and require full mitigation of impacts when they are unavoidable.

**PN1.9** Increase the use of low impact development and nature-based (“green”) infrastructure methods through education, technical assistance, incentives, regulations, grants, and private-public partnerships. (Climate)

**PN1.10** Design, build, and retrofit public projects using sustainable design and green building methods that require minimal maintenance, fit naturally into the surrounding environment, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (Climate)

**PN1.11** Require development to mitigate impacts and avoid future costs by incorporating timely measures, such as the clean-up of prior contamination as new development and redevelopment occurs. (Climate)

**PN1.12** Promote infill development and redevelopment on already urbanized areas and impervious surfaces before developing on forested and natural lands.

## **GN2 Prioritized land is preserved and sustainably managed.**

**PN2.1** Evaluate, acquire and manage land by a set of priorities that considers the full spectrum of environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits, such as Tribal treaty rights, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, access to nature, recreation opportunities, environmental justice, and climate resilience. (Climate)

**PN2.2** Preserve land and when there are opportunities to expand and connect habitat and protect the most environmentally sensitive or socially important landscapes. (Climate)

**PN2.3** Identify, remove, and prevent the use and spread of invasive plants and wildlife. (Climate)

**PN2.4** Preserve and restore native plant communities by including restoration efforts and volunteer partnerships in all City land management.

**PN2.5** Design improvements to public land using vegetation that is attractive, adapted to a changing climate, supports a variety of wildlife, and requires minimal long-term maintenance. (Climate)

**PN2.6** Conserve and restore wildlife and aquatic habitat in both existing habitat corridors and other ecologically important sites. Protect salmon, amphibians, pollinators, migratory birds, and other similarly prioritized species. (Climate)

**PN2.7** Increase awareness of the importance of pollinator species and biodiversity for food security and habitat health. Promote landscaping, gardening, and habitat stewardship practices that support pollinators. (Climate)

**PN2.8** Practice sustainable maintenance and operations activities that reduce the City's environmental impact.

**PN2.9** Evaluate, monitor, and measure environmental conditions. Use this data, along with the best available science, to develop short- and long-term management strategies.

### **GN3 A healthy and resilient urban forest is protected and valued for its contribution to the environment and community.**

**PN3.1** Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan to establish tree canopy goals and inform the policies, programs, operations, and resources needed to implement those goals. The strategies described will strike a balance between environmental protection and sustainable urban growth. (Climate)

**PN3.2** Manage the urban forest such that both the benefits and burdens of trees are distributed equitably across all of Olympia's communities or neighborhoods.

**PN3.3** Preserve existing mature, healthy, and safe trees first to meet site design requirements on new development, redevelopment and City improvement projects.

**PN3.4** Consider climate resilience and adaptation strategies when developing planting plans, including species selection, planting locations, stock type, invasive pest susceptibility, materials sourcing, and maintenance. (Climate)

**PN3.5** Provide new trees with the necessary soil, water, space, and nutrients to grow to maturity, and plant the right size tree where there are conflicts, such as buildings, overhead utility wires or sidewalks. (Climate)

**PN3.6** Protect the natural structure and growing condition of trees to minimize necessary maintenance and preserve the long-term health and safety of the urban forest. (Climate)

**PN3.7** Adopt and promote vegetation management practices that decrease climate-exacerbated risks to both human and ecosystem health from severe wildfires. (Climate)

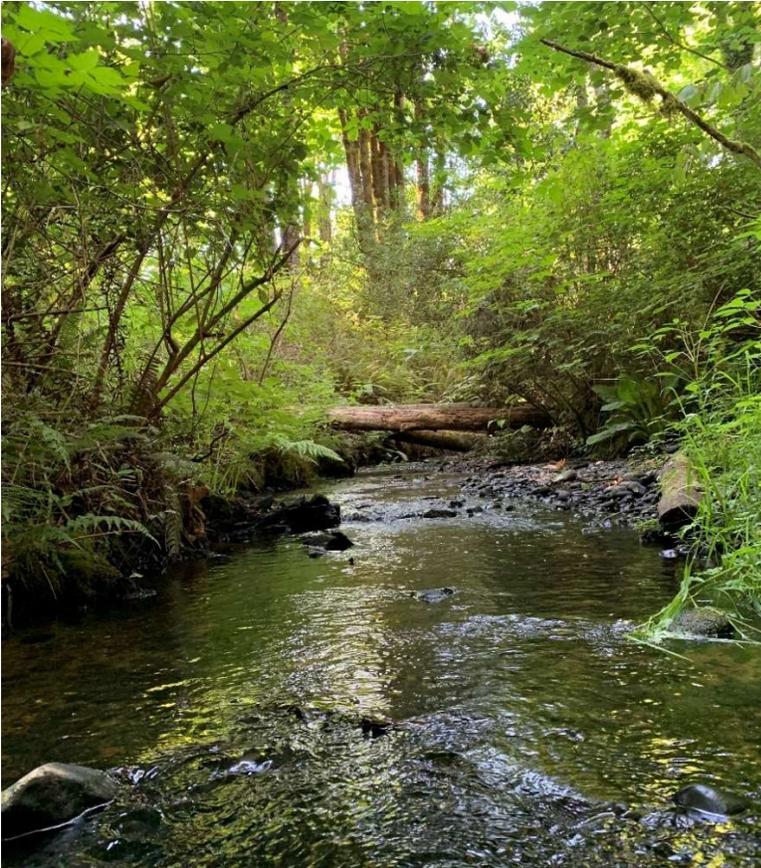


A row of oak trees along a grassy strip provides shade over the street and sidewalk.

## Protecting Our Water Resources

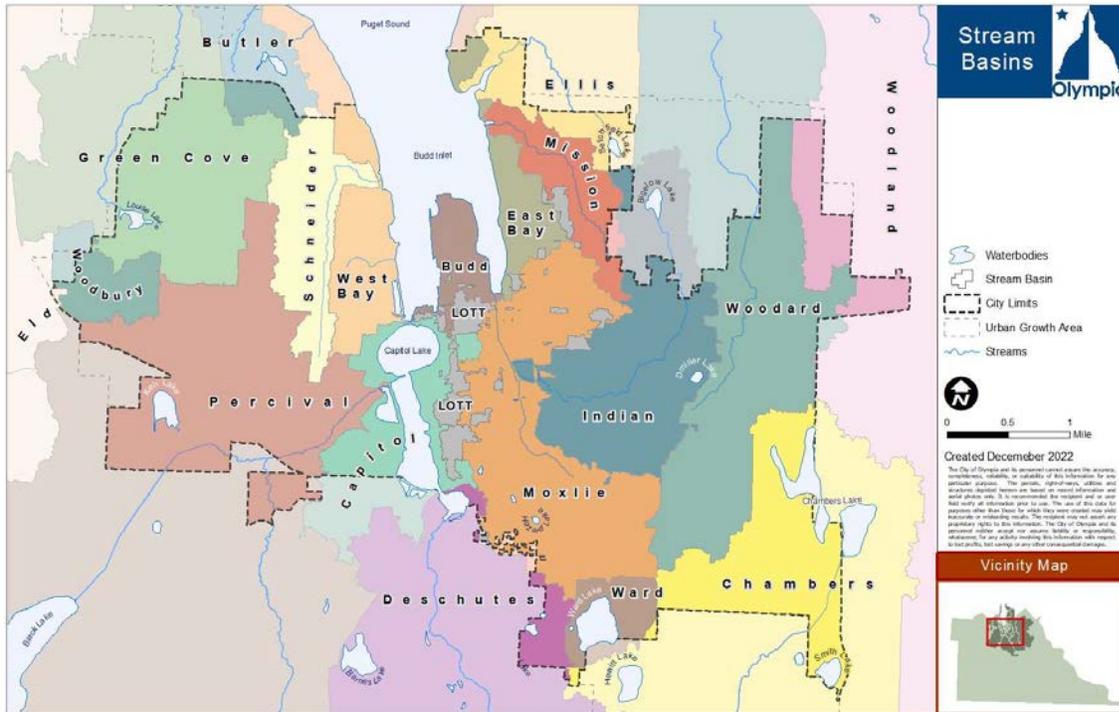
Olympia is fortunate to be surrounded by water and to have abundant fresh and marine water ecosystems. We kayak the waters of Budd Inlet, hop over rain puddles on the way to

school, and explore Ellis or Mission Creek as we hike through Squaxin Park. Deep, underground aquifers provide our drinking water. Our many streams, wetlands, and shorelines are valuable for a diversity of wildlife. Some of these aquatic habitats also provide a multitude of ecosystem services that benefit people, like reducing flooding and filtering polluted stormwater runoff. The City of Olympia integrates the recovery of Puget Sound salmon populations across each of its land management, habitat stewardship, and conservation strategies. Additional goals and policies related to water quality and salmon recovery can be found in the Stormwater element of the Utilities chapter.



Moxlie Creek flows through Watershed Park.

Within Olympia's 24-square-mile area, there are nine major streams, four lakes, four large wetlands, and six miles of marine shoreline. As water moves down from Olympia's higher elevations to the Sound, it filters through the ground into a number of separate drainage basins or watersheds.



View Map - Olympia Drainage Basins.

Protecting water resources is one of Olympia’s core values and is necessary to our upholding of Tribal treaty rights. We recognize that many of our water resources have been damaged by development, pollution, and climate change. The natural processes that would normally protect these resources, such as undeveloped land and wetlands, which filter stormwater pollutants and reduce runoff, must be protected and restored. If we take steps to restore these natural processes, we’ll be ensuring clean water, resilience to impacts related to climate change, and abundant aquatic life in Puget Sound for us, and for future generations.



A standing dead tree “snag” provides wildlife habitat next to a wetland at Yauger Park.

## Goals and Policies

**GN4 The waters and natural processes of Budd Inlet and other marine waters are protected from degrading impacts and significantly improved through upland, riparian and shoreline preservation and restoration.**

**PN4.1** Plan for the health and recovery of Budd Inlet on a regional scale and in collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe and all potentially affected agencies and stakeholders. (Climate)

**PN4.2** Prioritize and implement restoration efforts based on the best scientific information available to restore natural processes and improve the health and condition of Budd Inlet and its tributaries. Align prioritization and implementation with regional action strategies designated for the recovery of salmon in Puget Sound.

**PN4.3** Restore and protect the health of Puget Sound as a local food source.

**PN4.4** Continue to champion future phases of planning and implementation toward restoring the Deschutes Estuary and surrounding shorelines of Budd Inlet. (Climate)

**PN4.5** Support shellfish production and eelgrass planting in Budd Inlet. (Climate)

**GN5 Ground and surface waters are protected from land uses and activities that harm water quality and quantity.**

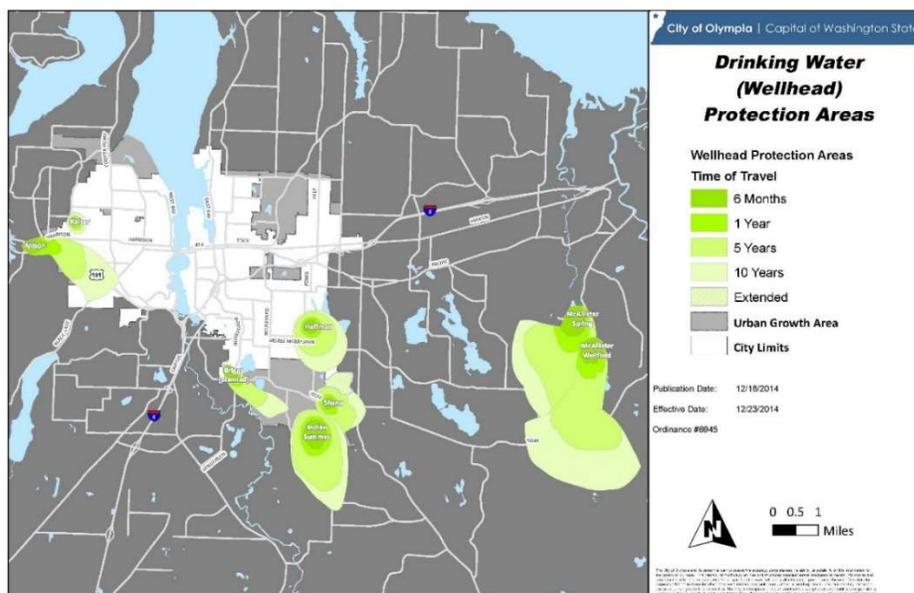
**PN5.1** Communicate and collaborate across Departments regularly to promote sustainable transportation, housing, and economic development projects that include green stormwater infrastructure and other nature-based solutions to managing stormwater.

**PN5.2** Reduce the rate of aquatic habitat loss and expansion of impervious surface in the community, and provide stormwater treatment for all new impervious surfaces.

**PN5.3** Establish a roadway stormwater infrastructure retrofit prioritization for water quality treatment in environmentally sensitive watersheds to support the recovery of salmon and other aquatic species.

**PN5.4** Minimize the location and impacts of encampments on water bodies and other sensitive natural areas while reducing health and safety risks to people experiencing homelessness.

**PN5.5** Limit or prohibit uses that pose a risk to water supplies in Drinking Water (Wellhead) protection areas based on the best scientific information available and the level of risk. Require restoration of any such areas that have been degraded.



View Map: Olympia Wellhead Protection Areas.

## **GN6 Healthy aquatic habitat is protected and restored.**

**PN6.1** Restore and manage vegetation next to streams and wetlands, with an emphasis on restoring and enhancing native vegetation, to greatly improve or provide new fish and wildlife habitat.

**PN6.2** Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, riparian restoration, and protecting water quality. (Climate)

**PN6.3** Establish and monitor water quality and aquatic habitat health indicators based on the best scientific information available.

**PN6.4** Use regulations based on the best available science and other means to prevent a net loss in the functions and values of existing wetlands and streams, while striving to increase and restore wetlands and streams over the long-term. (Climate)

**PN6.5** Retain and restore floodways to a natural condition.

**PN6.6** Preserve and restore the aquatic habitat of Budd Inlet and other local marine waters, including adjacent shoreline habitats. (Climate)

**PN6.7** Partner with other regional agencies and community groups to restore aquatic habitat through coordinated planning, funding, and implementation.



Stream Team volunteers assist City staff in collecting benthic macroinvertebrate samples to assess water quality in Schneider Creek.

## Reduce Pollution

Population and development growth over the next 20 years will put increasing pressure on air, noise, and light pollution. Overall, Olympia’s air quality is often better than what federal standards require. However, regional impacts to air quality from wildfire smoke are an increasing concern due to climate change. This poses a threat to all Olympians but is particularly harmful to vulnerable members of our community.

As a community, we can commit to developing and adopting equitable and sustainable solutions for commuting, heating our homes, powering our economy, and lighting our streets, sidewalks, and businesses. We must continue to develop programs and resources that protect Olympia from the effects of pollution.

## Goals and Policies

**GN7 Local air quality is better than state and federal minimum standards.**

**PN7.1** Partner with other state and local agencies to monitor, reduce and eliminate sources of air pollution that can be replaced with more efficient or cleaner methods and technologies.

**PN7.2** Partner with other state and local agencies to offset anticipated negative impacts on air quality by taking further steps to reduce air pollution, such as commute reduction programming and tree planting.

**GN8 Artificial sources of nighttime light are minimized to protect wildlife, vegetation and the health of the public, and preserve views of the night sky.**

**PN8.1** Design nighttime lighting that is safe and efficient by directing it only to the areas where it is needed. Allow and encourage reduction or elimination of nighttime light sources where safety is not impacted.

**PN8.2** Eliminate or reduce lighting near streams, lakes, wetlands, and shorelines to avoid disrupting the natural development and life processes of wildlife.

**GN9 Risk to human health and damage to wildlife and habitat due to harmful toxins, pollution, or other emerging threats is tracked by appropriate agencies and significantly reduced or eliminated.**

**PN9.1** Minimize the City's purchase and use of products that contribute to toxic chemical pollution when they are manufactured, used, or disposed.

**PN9.2** Identify products and practices that should be phased out by the community, and provide education on their negative impacts and the best available alternatives.

**PN9.3** Maintain City land and properties using non-chemical methods whenever possible; use standard *Integrated Pest Management* practices and other accepted, natural approaches to managing vegetation and pests. (Climate)



Residential light post.

## Connect with the Natural World

Planting trees, observing birds in a nest, or lying on a sunny patch of grass are some of the ways we bring quiet into our lives and reconnect with the natural world. Researchers are now learning that connecting to the natural world isn't just a luxury, but a necessity for a healthy, safe, and engaged community.



A group of children get an up-close look at marine wildlife of Budd Inlet through a microscope.

We interact with the natural world in a variety of ways—from gardening to commuting by bike, to learning a new outdoor activity, to stopping to chat with a neighbor under the shade of a tree. These activities all foster a strong connection to our community and an interest in stewarding our natural environment.

# Goals and Policies

**GN10 All members of the community can experience the natural environment through meaningful volunteer experiences, active recreation, and interactive learning opportunities.**

**PN10.1** Ensure that all members of the community have access to a nearby natural space that gives them opportunities to see, touch, and connect with the natural environment.

**PN10.2** Give all members of the community opportunities to experience, appreciate, and participate in volunteer stewardship of the natural environment. Ensure that the many benefits and opportunities provided by this work reach all of Olympia’s communities equitably. (Climate)

**PN10.3** Honor and incorporate Indigenous history, knowledge, stewardship practices, cultural connections to the land, and promote outcomes related to Tribal treaty rights. (Climate)

**PN10.4** Provide environmental education programs, classes, and tours that teach outdoor recreation skills and foster an understanding and appreciation for the natural environment. Ensure that such opportunities are culturally appropriate and accessible to all.

**PN10.5** Provide outreach, education and technical support to local community groups and neighborhoods who want to monitor and care for their local park or natural area.

**PN10.6** Foster a sense of place and community pride by carefully stewarding the trees, plants, and wildlife unique to Puget Sound. Preserve the Indigenous history of stewardship on these lands since time immemorial. (Climate)

## Shoreline Master Program

The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a set of local policies and regulations adopted by the City and approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology under the State’s Shoreline Management Act. The SMP generally applies to all major water bodies and lands within 200 feet of those waters.

The policies are incorporated into the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the regulations are in chapter 18.20 of the Olympia Municipal Code. Development in and adjacent to shorelines governed by the SMP must comply with these provisions and all other federal and state requirements.

The Shoreline Master Program was last updated in 2021.



Birds resting on top of pilings in the water.

## Goals and Policies

**PN11.1** The goals, policies, and regulations of Olympia’s Shoreline Master Program are based on the governing principles in the Shoreline Master Program Guidelines, WAC 173-26-186, and the policy statement of RCW 90.58.020. It is the policy of the City to provide for the management of the shorelines of Olympia by planning for and fostering all reasonable and appropriate uses. This policy is designed to ensure the development of these shorelines in a manner which, while allowing for limited reduction of rights of the public in the navigable waters, will promote and enhance the public interest. This policy contemplates protecting against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the State and their aquatic life, while protecting generally public rights of navigation and corollary rights incidental thereto.

- A. The interest of all of the people shall be paramount in the management of those areas of Puget Sound lying seaward from the line of extreme low tide. Within this area, the City will give preference to uses in the following order of preference which:
1. Recognize and protect the state-wide interest over local interest;
  2. Preserve the natural character of the shoreline;
  3. Result in long-term over short-term benefit;
  4. Protect the resources and ecology of the shoreline;
  5. Increase public access to publicly-owned areas of the shorelines;
  6. Increase recreational opportunities for the public in the shoreline;
  7. Provide for any other element as defined in RCW 90.58.100 as deemed appropriate or necessary.
- B. The policies of Olympia's Shoreline Program may be achieved by diverse means, one of which is regulation. Other means may include but are not limited to acquisition of lands and/or easements by purchase or gift, incentive programs, and implementation of capital facility and/or non-structural programs.
- C. Regulation of private property to implement Shoreline Program goals such as public access and protection of ecological functions and processes must be consistent with all relevant constitutional and other legal limitations.
- D. Regulatory or administrative actions must be implemented consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine and other applicable legal principles as appropriate and must not unconstitutionally infringe on private property rights or result in an unconstitutional taking of private property.
- E. The regulatory provisions of this Shoreline Program are to be limited to shorelines of the State, whereas the planning functions of the Program may extend beyond the designated shoreline boundaries.
- F. The policies and regulations established by this Shoreline Program are to be integrated and coordinated with the other goals, policies and rules of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan and development regulations adopted under the Growth Management Act (GMA).
- G. The policies and regulations of Olympia's Shoreline Program are intended to protect shoreline ecological functions by:

1. Requiring that current and potential ecological functions be identified and understood when evaluating new or expanded uses and developments;
  2. Requiring adverse impacts to be mitigated in a manner that ensures no net loss of shoreline ecological functions. Mitigation shall include avoidance as a first priority, followed by minimizing, and then replacing/compensating for lost functions and/or resources;
  3. Ensuring that all uses and developments, including preferred uses and uses that are exempt from a shoreline substantial development permit, will not cause a net loss of shoreline ecological functions;
  4. Preventing, to the greatest extent practicable, cumulative impacts from individual developments;
  5. Fairly allocating the burden of preventing cumulative impacts among development opportunities; and
  6. Including incentives to restore shoreline ecological functions where such functions have been degraded by past actions.
- H. The policies and regulations of Olympia’s Shoreline Program should provide resilience for shoreline ecosystems, functions, and developments in response to sea level rise.

**PN11.2 Shoreline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Goals**

- A. The Shoreline Management Act and the Shoreline Master Program Guidelines place a primary emphasis on the protection of shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes. In accordance with the Guidelines (WAC 173-26), Olympia’s Shoreline Program must ensure that shoreline uses, activities, and modifications will result in no net loss to these processes and functions.
- B. The protection, restoration and enhancement of shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes, especially as they pertain to the long-term health of Budd Inlet, are high priorities of Olympia’s Shoreline Program. The policies and regulations established therein are to be applied to all uses, developments and activities that may occur within the shoreline jurisdiction.
- C. The City recognizes that there are many existing sources of untreated stormwater within the shoreline jurisdiction and that these sources of nonpoint pollution have negative impacts on shoreline ecological functions. The City’s Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual of Olympia is the primary regulatory tool that addresses

stormwater treatment and is periodically updated in response to changing guidelines from the Department of Ecology and changes in best management practices.

### **PN11.3 Shoreline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Policies**

- A. All shoreline use and development should be carried out in a manner that avoids and minimizes adverse impacts so that the resulting ecological condition does not become worse than the current condition. This means assuring no net loss of ecological functions and processes and protecting critical areas that are located within the shoreline jurisdiction.
- B. Natural features of the shoreline and nearshore environments that provide ecological functions and should be protected include but are not limited to marine and freshwater riparian habitat, banks and bluffs, beaches and backshore, critical saltwater and freshwater habitat, and wetlands and streams. Shoreline processes that should be protected include but are not limited to erosion and accretion, sediment delivery, transport and storage, organic matter input, and large woody debris recruitment. See WAC 173-26-201(2)(c).
- C. Preserve and protect important habitat including but not limited to the Port Lagoon, Mission Creek, Ellis Cove, Grass Lake, Chambers Lake, and Percival Canyon.
- D. Development standards for density, setbacks, impervious surface, shoreline stabilization, vegetation conservation, critical areas, and water quality should protect existing shoreline functions and processes. During permit review, the Administrator should consider the expected impacts associated with proposed shoreline development when assessing compliance with this policy.
- E. Where a proposed use or development creates significant adverse impacts not otherwise avoided or mitigated by compliance with Olympia's Shoreline Program, mitigation measures should be required to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes.
- F. The City should work with other local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, Tribes, and non-government organizations to ensure that mitigation actions carried out in support of the Olympia Shoreline Program are likely to be successful and achieve beneficial ecological outcomes. This includes such measures as mitigation banks, fee in lieu programs, and assisting applicants/proponents in planning, designing, and implementing mitigation.
- G. The City should develop a program to periodically review conditions on the shoreline and conduct appropriate analysis to determine whether or not other actions are necessary to protect and restore shoreline ecology to ensure no net loss of ecological functions.

- H. Allow offsite mitigation when doing so would serve to better accomplish the goals and objectives of the Shoreline Management Act to protect and preserve ecological functions, or provide public access, or promote preferred shoreline uses, provide for appropriate development incentives and/or alternative mitigation options.
- I. The City should encourage innovative mitigation strategies to provide for comprehensive and coordinated approaches to mitigating cumulative impacts and restoration rather than piecemeal mitigation.
- J. When available and when appropriate to the situation, the City should allow for offsite mitigation approaches, including Advance Mitigation, Fee-In Lieu, and Mitigation Banking.
- K. As part of the next update of the Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual of Olympia, the City will consider methods and measures to encourage existing development, redevelopment and new development within the shoreline jurisdiction to comply with the City's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual of Olympia and best management practices.

**PN11.4 Shoreline Use and Development Policies**

- A. The City should give preference to those uses that are consistent with the control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon uses of the State's shoreline areas.
- B. The City should ensure that all proposed shoreline development will not diminish the public's health, safety, and welfare, as well as the land or its vegetation and wildlife, and should endeavor to protect property rights while implementing the policies of the Shoreline Management Act.
- C. The City should reduce use conflicts by prohibiting or applying special conditions to those uses which are not consistent with the control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment or are not unique to or dependent upon use of the State's shoreline. In implementing this provision, preference should be given first to water-dependent uses, then to water-related uses and water-enjoyment uses.
- D. The City should continue to develop information about the impacts of sea level rise on the shoreline and other affected properties; the City should develop plans to address the impacts of sea level rise in collaboration with impacted property owners, the community and the Department of Ecology. These plans should include at minimum flood prevention approaches, shoreline environment impact considerations and financing approaches. The City should amend the Shoreline Master Program and other policy and regulatory tools in the future as necessary to implement these plans.

- E. The City should consider the impacts of sea level rise as it plans for the rebuild of Percival Landing and other shoreline improvements and it should be designed to provide for a reasonable amount of sea level rise consistent with the best available science and the life cycle of the improvements.
  
- F. The City should collaborate with private property owners, business owners and community members in the implementation of the Shoreline Master Program to explore creative ways to reduce ecological impacts when new development or redevelopment is proposed. This objective may best be accomplished by developing flexible approaches to shoreline development where the total environmental benefit is enhanced through such measures. Opportunities for collaboration may include:
  - 1. Provision of advanced stormwater management and treatment within the shoreline.
  - 2. The restoration, repair and replacement of Percival Landing where appropriate.
  - 3. Provision of direct physical access to the water where appropriate.
  - 4. Provision of a shoreline trail where feasible and consistent with applicable laws.
  - 5. Provision of native vegetation preservation and restoration where appropriate.
  - 6. Bulkhead removal and replacement of hardened shoreline with soft structural stabilization measures water-ward of Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) where appropriate.
  - 7. Provision of water related recreation, active playgrounds, and significant art installations, performance space, or interpretive features where appropriate.
  - 8. Space for preferred shoreline uses should be reserved. Such planning should consider upland and in-water uses, water quality, navigation, presence of aquatic vegetation, existing shellfish protection districts and critical wildlife habitats, aesthetics, public access and views.

#### **PN11.5 Aquatic Environment Management Policies**

- A. The *Aquatic* environment designation should apply to lands water-ward of the Ordinary High Water Mark.

- B. Allow new overwater structures only for water-dependent uses, public access, or ecological restoration.
- C. The size of new overwater structures should be the minimum necessary to support the structure's intended use.
- D. In order to reduce the impacts of shoreline development and increase effective use of water resources, multiple uses of overwater facilities should be encouraged.
- E. All development and uses on navigable waters or their beds should be located and designed to minimize interference with surface navigation, to consider impacts to public views, and to allow for the safe, unobstructed passage of fish and wildlife, particularly those species dependent on migration.
- F. Uses that adversely impact the ecological functions of critical saltwater and freshwater habitats should not be allowed except where necessary to achieve the objectives of RCW 90.58.020, and then only when their impacts are mitigated according to the sequence described in WAC 173-26-201(2)(e) as necessary to assure no net loss of ecological functions.
- G. Shoreline uses and modifications should be designed and managed to prevent degradation of water quality and alteration of natural hydrographic conditions.
- H. Soft shore stabilization methods or habitat restoration approaches should be encouraged when ecological functions can be improved, such as through restoration as envisioned in the West Bay Environmental Restoration Assessment Report for some reaches.

**PN11.6 Natural Environment Management Policies**

- A. The *Natural* environment designation should be assigned to shoreline areas if any of the following characteristics apply:
  1. The shoreline is ecologically intact and therefore currently performing an important, irreplaceable function or ecosystem-wide process that would be damaged by human activity;
  2. The shoreline is considered to represent ecosystems and geologic types that are of particular scientific and educational interest; or
  3. The shoreline is unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to ecological functions or risk to human safety.

- B. Squaxin Park is one of a few shorelines along Budd Inlet that is ecologically intact. Therefore, any use or modification that would substantially degrade the ecological functions or natural character of this shoreline area should not be allowed.
- C. Scientific, historical, cultural, educational research uses, and water-oriented recreation access may be allowed provided that no significant ecological impacts on the area will result. Recreation uses should be limited to trails and viewing areas.
- D. Uses should be highly restricted and allowed only with a conditional use permit for water-oriented recreational uses.
- E. New roads, utility corridors, and parking areas should be located outside of the shoreline jurisdiction.

**PN11.7 Urban Conservancy Environment Management Policies**

- A. The *Urban Conservancy* environment designation should be applied to shoreline areas appropriate and planned for development that is compatible with maintaining or restoring ecological functions of the area, that are not generally suitable for water-dependent uses and that lie in incorporated municipalities and urban growth areas if any of the following characteristics apply:
  1. They are suitable for water-related or water-enjoyment uses;
  2. They are open space, flood plain or other sensitive areas that should not be more intensively developed;
  3. They have potential for ecological restoration;
  4. They retain important ecological functions, even though partially developed; or
  5. They have potential for development that is compatible with ecological restoration.
- B. Uses that preserve the natural character of the area or promote preservation of open space or critical areas should be the primary allowed use. Uses that result in the restoration of ecological functions should be allowed if the use is otherwise compatible with the purpose of the *Urban Conservancy* environment and the setting.
- C. Standards should be established for shoreline stabilization measures, vegetation conservation, water quality, and shoreline modifications. These standards should ensure that new development does not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions or further degrade shoreline values.

- D. Public access trails and public passive recreation should be provided whenever feasible and significant ecological impacts can be mitigated.
- E. Water-oriented uses should be given priority over non-water oriented uses. For shoreline areas adjacent to commercially navigable waters, water-dependent uses should be given highest priority.
- F. Restoration and protection of shorelands, stream openings and associated wetlands within the *Urban Conservancy* environment should be given high priority.

**PN11.8 Waterfront Recreation Environment Management Policies**

- A. The *Waterfront Recreation* environment designation should be assigned to shoreline areas that are or are planned to be used for recreation, or where the most appropriate use is for recreation open space or habitat conservation.
- B. Development standards should take into account existing improvements and character of park areas, allow for development of low-intensity recreational uses, and restoration of shorelines. Low intensity recreation should be non-motorized and not significantly alter the landscape, such as running and walking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, picnicking, nature study, and quiet contemplation and relaxation. Associated facilities might include trails, open fields and lawn areas, picnic shelters, public art, interpretive exhibits and supporting parking and restrooms.
- C. Trails, water access, interpretive sites, viewing platforms and passive recreation areas should be allowed within setbacks and vegetation buffers when significant ecological impacts can be mitigated.
- D. Preferred uses include trails, water-related recreation, active playgrounds, and significant art installations, performance space, interpretive features, open lawn areas, play equipment, shelters, picnic areas, launch ramps, viewing platforms and accessory uses. Special events may take place.
- E. Shoreline restoration should be a priority. All development should ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions.

**PN11.9 Marine Recreation Environment Management Policies**

- A. The *Marine Recreation* environment designation should be assigned to areas on the Port Peninsula that are used or planned to be used for boating facilities, water-oriented recreation and commercial uses. Preferred uses include:

1. Boating facilities including marinas, launch ramps, boat moorage, maintenance and repair, and upland boat storage; together with offices and other associated facilities;
  2. Water-oriented recreation such as trails and viewing areas; water access, water-related recreation, active playgrounds, and significant art installations, performance space, or interpretive features; and
  3. Water-oriented commercial uses.
- B. Operation and management of the *Marine Recreation* environment should be directed towards maintaining and enhancing water-oriented services, while ensuring that existing and future activity does not degrade ecological functions.
- C. All development should ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions.
- D. Innovative approaches to restoration and mitigation should be encouraged, including incentive and alternative mitigation programs such as Advance Mitigation and Fee In-lieu.
- E. Encourage bulkhead removal and replacement of hardened shoreline with soft structural stabilization measures.
- F. The City recognizes the Port’s responsibility to operate its marine facilities and to plan for this area’s future use through the development and implementation of its Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements.
- G. The City recognizes that the Marine Recreation shoreline (Reach 5C) and the adjoining Urban Conservancy/Urban Intensity shoreline in Reach 6A provide a variety of benefits to the community including boat moorage, utility transmission, transportation, public access, water enjoyment, recreation, wildlife habitat and opportunities for economic development. These benefits are put at risk by continued shoreline erosion. The City recognizes that there exists a need to develop a detailed plan for shoreline restoration and stabilization for Reaches 5C and 6A and encourages the Port to partner in this effort.
1. This plan may include:
    - a. Measures to enhance shoreline stabilization through the introduction of bioengineered solutions.
    - b. Measures to incorporate habitat restoration water-ward of the OHWM.

- c. Measures to incorporate public access and use through trails, public art, parks and other pedestrian amenities.
  - d. Measures to incorporate sea level rise protection.
  - e. Setbacks, building heights and building design considerations.
2. Upon completion of a jointly developed shoreline restoration and stabilization plan for Reaches 5C and 6A, the City will initiate a limited amendment to the SMP to implement this Plan.

**PN11.10** Shoreline Residential Environment Management Policies

- A. The *Shoreline Residential* environment designation should be applied to shoreline areas if they are predominantly single-family or multi-family residential development or are planned and platted for residential development.
- B. Establish standards for density or minimum frontage width, setbacks, lot coverage limitations, buffers, shoreline stabilization, vegetation conservation, critical area protection, and water quality, taking into account the environmental limitations and sensitivity of the shoreline area, the level of infrastructure and services available, and other comprehensive planning considerations.
- C. Multi-family development and subdivisions of land into more than nine (9) parcels should provide public access.
- D. Commercial development should be limited to water-oriented uses and not conflict with the character in the *Shoreline Residential* environment.
- E. Water-oriented recreational uses should be allowed.
- F. Encourage restoration of degraded shorelines in residential areas and preservation of existing vegetation.
- G. Encourage bulkhead removal and replacement of hardened shoreline with soft structural stabilization measures.

**PN11.11** Urban Intensity Environment Management Policies

- A. The *Urban Intensity* environment should be assigned to shoreline areas if they currently support high intensity uses related to commerce, industry, transportation or navigation, and high-density housing; or are suitable and planned for high-intensity water-oriented uses.

- B. Olympia’s shoreline is characterized by a wide variety of “urban” uses and activities, including commercial, industrial, marine, residential, and recreational uses. Together, these uses and activities create a vibrant shoreline that is a key component of Olympia’s character and quality of life. These types of uses should be allowed within the *Urban Intensity* environment, with preference given to Water-Dependent and Water-Enjoyment uses. Shorelines in this Shoreline Environment Designation (SED) are highly altered and restoration opportunities are limited. The City’s own Percival Landing is a good example of how the immediate shoreline in the Urban Intensity SED should be redeveloped with a focus on public access and enjoyment, sea level rise protection and restoration of shoreline environmental function where feasible.
- C. Nonwater-oriented uses may be allowed where they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-oriented uses or on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.
- D. Preferred uses include water-oriented recreation such as trails and viewing areas, water access, water-related recreation, active playgrounds, and significant art installations, performance space, or interpretive features.
- E. Provide for the restoration, repair and replacement of Percival Landing including consideration of sea level rise protection.
- F. Policies and regulations should assure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions as a result of new development. Where applicable, new development should include environmental cleanup and restoration of the shoreline to comply with any relevant state and federal law.
- G. Where feasible visual and physical public access should be required as provided for in WAC 173-26-221(4)(d) and this shoreline program.
- H. Aesthetic objectives should be implemented by means such as sign control regulations, appropriate development siting, screening and architectural standards, and vegetation conservation measures.
- I. Innovative approaches to restoration and mitigation should be encouraged, including incentive and alternative mitigation programs such as Advance Mitigation and Fee In-lieu.
- J. Encourage bulkhead removal and replacement of hardened shoreline with soft structural stabilization measures.

**PN11.12** Port Marine Industrial Environment Management Policies

- A. The *Port Marine Industrial* environment should be assigned to the shoreline area located within the portion of the Port of Olympia that supports uses related to water-oriented commerce, transportation or navigation, or are planned for such uses.
- B. Highest priority should be given to water-dependent and water-related industrial uses.
- C. The preferred location for non-water-dependent industrial uses is in industrial areas as far from the shoreline as feasible.
- D. Coordinate planning efforts to ensure that there is adequate land reserved for water-dependent industrial uses to promote economic development, and to minimize impacts upon adjacent land uses.
- E. Encourage growth and re-development in areas that are already developed.
- F. Industrial use and development should be located, designed, and operated to avoid or minimize adverse impacts upon the shoreline and achieve no net loss of shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- G. Industrial uses and related development projects are encouraged to locate where environmental cleanup can be accomplished.
- H. Encourage the cooperative use of docking, parking, cargo handling and storage facilities on industrial properties.
- I. Innovative approaches to restoration and mitigation should be encouraged, including incentive and alternative mitigation programs such as Advance Mitigation and Fee In-lieu.

**PN11.13** Archaeological, Historic, and Cultural Resources Policies

- A. The destruction or damage to any site having any archaeological, historic, cultural, scientific, or educational value as identified by the appropriate authorities, including affected Indian tribes, and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, should be prevented.

**PN11.14** Parking Policies

- A. Motor vehicle parking is not a preferred use within the shoreline jurisdiction and should be allowed only as necessary to support authorized uses.
- B. Where feasible, parking for shoreline uses should be located in areas outside the shoreline jurisdiction; otherwise locate parking as far landward of the Ordinary High Water Mark as feasible.

- C. Parking facilities or lots within the shoreline jurisdiction should utilize low impact best management practices where feasible to reduce stormwater impacts.
- D. Design and construct parking facilities or lots to be compatible with adjacent uses and to avoid impacts to the shoreline environment.
- E. Provide walkways between parking areas and the buildings or uses they serve. Such walkways should be located as far landward of the Ordinary High Water Mark as feasible.

**PN11.15 Public Access Policies**

- A. Protect and maintain existing visual and physical public access so that the public may continue to enjoy the physical, visual, and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline.
- B. Incorporate public access into all new development or redevelopment if it creates or increases a demand for public access. Public access should also be required if the proposed use or development impairs existing legal access or rights.
- C. Protect the rights of navigation and space necessary for water-dependent uses when identifying locations for public access.
- D. Public access should be commensurate with the scale and character of a proposed use or development. Requirements should be reasonable, effective and fair to all affected parties including but not limited to the landowner and the public.
- E. Developments, uses, and activities on or near the shoreline should not impair or detract from the public's use of the water or rights of navigation.
- F. Impacts resulting from public access improvements should be mitigated in order to avoid a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.
- G. Public access should be designed to provide for public safety and comfort, and to limit potential impacts to private property.
- H. Public access should be designed with provisions for persons with disabilities.
- I. Public access should connect to public areas, undeveloped rights-of-way, and other pedestrian or public thoroughfares.
- J. Public access and interpretive displays should be provided as part of publicly-funded projects.

- K. On-site public access may not be required by a new development or redevelopment if adequate public access already exists in the immediate vicinity, per 18.20.450 and .460.

**PN11.16** Scientific and Educational Activity Policies

- A. Encourage scientific and educational activities related to shoreline ecological functions and processes, including sea level rise resilience.

**PN11.17** Signage Policies

- A. Signs should not block or otherwise interfere with visual access to the water or shorelands.
- B. Signs should be designed and placed so that they are compatible with the aesthetic quality of the existing shoreline and adjacent land and water uses.

**PN11.18** Vegetation Conservation Area Policies

- A. Developments and activities within the shoreline jurisdiction should be planned and designed to protect, conserve and establish native vegetation in order to protect and restore shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes occurring within riparian and nearshore areas such as:
  - 1. Providing shade necessary to maintain water temperatures required by salmonids, forage fish, and other aquatic biota;
  - 2. Regulating microclimate in riparian and nearshore areas;
  - 3. Providing organic inputs necessary for aquatic life, including providing food in the form of various insects and other benthic macro invertebrates;
  - 4. Stabilizing banks, minimizing erosion and sedimentation, and reducing the occurrence or severity of landslides;
  - 5. Reducing fine sediment input into the aquatic environment by minimizing erosion, aiding infiltration, and retaining runoff;
  - 6. Improving water quality through filtration and vegetative uptake of nutrients and pollutants;
  - 7. Providing a source of large woody debris to moderate flows, create hydraulic roughness, form pools, and increase aquatic diversity for salmonids and other species; and

8. Providing habitat for wildlife, including connectivity for travel and migration corridors.
- B. Restrict clearing and grading within vegetation conservation areas in order to maintain the functions and values of the shoreline environment, including protection of habitat, steep slopes and shoreline bluffs. Any alterations should be the minimum necessary to accommodate an authorized use or development.
  - C. The composition, structure and density of the vegetation should replicate the functions of a natural, unaltered shoreline to the greatest extent feasible.
  - D. Maintaining a well-vegetated shoreline with native species is preferred over clearing vegetation to create views or provide lawns. Limited and selective clearing for views and lawns, or for safety, may be allowed when slope stability and ecological functions are not compromised, but landowners should not assume that an unobstructed view of the water is guaranteed. Trimming and pruning are preferred over removal of native vegetation. Property owners should be encouraged to avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
  - E. Property owners should be encouraged to preserve and enhance woody vegetation and native groundcovers to stabilize soils and provide habitat. Maintaining native plant communities is preferred over non-native ornamental plantings because of their ecological value.
  - F. Develop educational materials and establish a public outreach program to educate shoreline landowners and community members about the importance of protecting and enhancing vegetative buffers along the shoreline, including education about the appropriate and proper usage of fertilizers and pesticides along the shoreline.

#### **PN11.19** View Protection Policies

- A. Preserve views and vistas to and from the water, by public and private entities, to ensure that the public may continue to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline, including views of the water and views of shoreline areas from the water and the iconic views of the State Capitol and Olympic Mountains.
- B. Development should be designed to preserve and enhance the visual quality of the shoreline, including views over and through the development from the upland side of the subject property, and views over and through the development from the water.

#### **PN11.20** Water Quality Policies

- A. All shoreline uses and activities should be located, designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid impacts to water quality.
- B. Stormwater management facilities for new uses and development should be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with the current Olympia Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual of Olympia. To the extent feasible, low impact development best management practices should be incorporated into every project along the shoreline.
- C. To reduce impacts to water quality, the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides or other similar chemical treatments should be avoided. Landscaping should be designed to avoid or minimize the use of such products. Maintenance activities should use integrated pest management best practices. Pesticide free areas should be encouraged.
- D. Uses and activities that pose a risk of contamination to ground or surface waters should be prohibited.

**PN11.21 Agriculture Policies**

- A. Recognize existing agricultural uses within the City and allow them to continue operating.
- B. New agricultural uses should be prohibited.

**PN11.22 Aquaculture Policies**

- A. Aquaculture should not be permitted in areas where it would result in a net loss of ecological functions, adversely impact eelgrass and microalgae, or significantly conflict with navigation and other water-dependent uses.
- B. Aquaculture facilities should be designed and located so as not to spread disease to native aquatic life, establish new non-native species which cause significant ecological impacts, or significantly impact the aesthetic qualities of the shoreline.

**PN11.23 Boating Facilities Policies**

- A. Boating facilities, such as marinas and launch ramps, are water-dependent uses and should be given priority for shoreline location.
- B. Boating facilities and their accessory uses should be located, designed, constructed and maintained to achieve the following:

1. Protect shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes. When impacts cannot be avoided, mitigate to assure no net loss to shoreline ecological functions;
  2. Maintain use of navigable waters, public access areas, and recreational opportunities, including overwater facilities;
  3. Minimize adverse impacts to adjacent land uses such as noise, light and glare, aesthetics, and public visual access; and
  4. Minimize adverse impacts to other water-dependent uses.
- C. Development of new boating facilities should be coordinated with public access and recreation plans and should be collocated with Port or other compatible water-dependent uses where feasible. Affected parties and potential partners should be included in the planning process.
- D. Boating facilities should provide physical and visual public shoreline access and provide for multiple uses including water-related uses, to the extent compatible with shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- E. Upland boat storage is preferred over new in-water moorage.
- F. New covered moorage should be prohibited.
- G. Pilings treated with creosote or other similarly toxic materials should be replaced with steel or concrete pilings to minimize adverse impacts to water quality. Unused or derelict pilings should be removed.

**PN11.24** Commercial Policies

- A. Give preference to water-dependent commercial uses, then to water-related, and then water-enjoyment commercial uses in shoreline jurisdiction. Non-water-oriented commercial uses should require a conditional use permit if located within 100 feet of the water.
- B. The preferred location for non-water-oriented commercial uses is in commercial areas no closer than 30 feet from the shoreline.
- C. Coordinate planning efforts between the City and the Port to promote economic development in downtown Olympia.
- D. Commercial development should be located, designed, and operated to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on shoreline ecological functions and processes.

- E. Commercial development should provide public access to shoreline beaches, docks, walkways, or viewing areas unless such improvements are demonstrated to be incompatible due to reasons of safety, security, or impact to the shoreline environment.
- F. Commercial development should be designed to be visually compatible with adjacent and upland properties and so that the height, bulk, and scale do not impair views.
- G. Commercial development should implement low impact development techniques to the maximum extent feasible.

**PN11.25 Industrial Policies**

- A. Give preference to water-dependent industrial uses first, then to water-related industrial uses over non-water-oriented industrial uses.
- B. Non-water oriented industrial uses should be prohibited within the shoreline jurisdiction.
- C. Coordinate planning efforts between the City and the Port to ensure that there is adequate land reserved for water-dependent industrial uses, to promote economic development, and to minimize impacts upon adjacent land uses.
- D. Locate water-dependent or water-related industrial marine uses in areas already established or zoned for industrial use.
- E. Industrial use and development should be located, designed, and operated to avoid and minimize adverse impacts on shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- F. Transportation and utility corridors serving industrial uses should be located away from the water's edge to minimize ecological impacts and reduce the need for waterfront signs and other infrastructure.
- G. Industrial uses and related development projects are encouraged to locate where environmental cleanup can be accomplished.
- H. Encourage the cooperative use of docking, parking, cargo handling and storage facilities on industrial properties.
- I. Design port facilities to permit viewing of harbor areas from viewpoints, waterfront restaurants, and similar public facilities which would not interfere with Port operations or endanger public health or safety.

**PN11.26 Recreation Policies**

- A. Public recreation is a preferred use of the shoreline. Recreational uses and developments that facilitate the public's ability to reach, touch, and enjoy the water's edge, to travel on the waters of the State, and to view the water and shoreline are preferred. Where appropriate, such facilities should be dispersed along the shoreline in a manner that supports more frequent recreational access and aesthetic enjoyment for a substantial number of people.
- B. Water-oriented recreational uses, such as boating, swimming beaches, and wildlife viewing, should have priority over non-water oriented recreation uses, such as sports fields. A variety of compatible recreation experiences and activities should be encouraged to satisfy diverse recreational needs.
- C. Recreational developments and plans should promote the conservation and restoration of the shoreline's natural character, ecological functions, and processes.
- D. Plan, design, and implement shoreline recreational development consistent with the growth projections, level-of-service standards, and goals established in Olympia's Comprehensive Plan and Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan.
- E. Hiking paths, sidewalks, and bicycle paths in proximity to or providing access to the shoreline are encouraged.
- F. Recreation facilities should be integrated and linked with linear systems, such as hiking paths, sidewalks, bicycle paths, easements, and/or scenic drives.
- G. Recreation facilities should incorporate public education and interpretive signs regarding shoreline ecological functions and processes, historic and cultural heritage.
- H. Recreation facilities should be designed to preserve, enhance, or create scenic views and vistas.
- I. Commercial recreation facilities should be consistent with the provisions for commercial development (see commercial policies above).

**PN11.27 Residential Policies**

- A. All residential developments should be located, designed, and properly managed to avoid damage to the shoreline environment and avoid cumulative impacts associated with shoreline armoring, overwater structures, stormwater runoff, septic systems, vegetation clearing, and introduction of pollutants.
- B. The overall density of development, lot coverage, setbacks, and height of structures should be appropriate to the physical capabilities of the site.

- C. Residential development, including the division of land and the construction of residential units, should be designed and located so that shoreline armoring and flood hazard measures will not be necessary to protect land or structures.
- D. Dwelling units and accessory structures should be clustered to preserve natural features and minimize overall disturbance of the site.
- E. New residential development should provide opportunities for public access.
- F. New residential development should minimize impacts upon views from adjacent residential areas, in keeping with the Shoreline Management Act.
- G. 'Live-aboard' vessels associated with marinas may be allowed, but all other overwater residential development including floating homes should be prohibited. A floating home permitted or legally established prior to January 1, 2011 and floating on-water residences legally established prior to July 1, 2014 will be considered conforming uses.
- H. Whenever possible, non-regulatory methods to protect, enhance and restore shoreline ecological functions should be encouraged for residential development.

**PN11.28** Transportation Policies

- A. New roads and railroads, and expansions thereof should not be built within the shoreline jurisdiction. Where this is not feasible, such improvements should be located and designed to have the least possible adverse effect on the shoreline, not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions, or adversely impact existing or planned water-oriented uses, public access, and habitat restoration and enhancement projects.
- B. Maintenance and repair of existing roads and railroads should avoid adverse impacts on adjacent shorelines and waters.
- C. Transportation facilities should be designed and located to minimize the need for the following:
  - 1. Structural shoreline protection measures;
  - 2. Modifications to natural drainage systems; and
  - 3. Waterway crossings.

- D. Planning for transportation and circulation corridors should consider location of public access facilities, and be designed to promote safe and convenient access to those facilities.
- E. Pedestrian trails and bicycle paths are encouraged where they are compatible with the natural character, resources, and ecology of the shoreline.
- F. Piers and bridges for roads, pedestrian trails, bicycle paths, and railroads are preferred over the use of fill in upland and aquatic areas.
- G. When transportation corridors are necessary, joint use corridors are preferred and encouraged for roads, utilities, and all forms of transportation/circulation.

**PN11.29** Utility Policies

- A. Utility facilities should be designed, located and maintained to minimize harm to shoreline ecological functions, preserve the natural landscape, and minimize conflicts with present and planned land and shoreline uses while meeting the needs of future populations in areas planned to accommodate growth.
- B. Expansion of existing sewage treatment, water reclamation, substations, and power plants should be compatible with recreational, residential, or other public uses of the water and shorelands.
- C. Where water crossings are unavoidable, they should be located where they will have the least adverse ecological impact.
- D. New utilities should use existing transportation and utility sites, rights-of-way and corridors, rather than creating new corridors.
- E. Utilities should be located and designed to avoid impacts to public recreation and public access areas, as well as significant historic, archaeological, cultural, scientific or educational resources.
- F. Encourage the use of utility rights-of-way for public access to and along shorelines.
- G. Design and install utilities in such a way as to avoid impacts to scenic views and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline area.

**PN11.30** Shoreline Modification Policies

- A. Locate and design all new development in a manner that prevents or minimizes the need for shoreline modifications.

- B. Regulate shoreline modifications to assure that individually and cumulatively, the modifications do not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions.
- C. Give preference to those types of shoreline modifications that have a lesser impact on ecological functions.
- D. Require mitigation of impacts resulting from shoreline modifications.
- E. Plan for the enhancement of impaired ecological functions while accommodating permitted uses. Incorporate all feasible measures to protect ecological functions and ecosystem-wide processes in the placement and design of shoreline modifications. To avoid and reduce ecological impacts, use mitigation sequencing set forth in WAC 173-26-201(2)(e) and Section 3.21 of the SMP.
- F. Give preference to nonstructural flood hazard reduction measures over structural measures, where feasible.

**PN11.31 Dredging Policies**

- A. Design and locate new development to minimize the need for dredging.
- B. Allow dredging for water-dependent uses or essential public facilities or both, only when necessary and when significant ecological impacts are minimized and appropriate mitigation is provided.
- C. Allow dredging in locations where a comprehensive management plan has been evaluated and authorized by local and state governmental entities.
- D. Plan and conduct dredging to minimize interference with navigation and adverse impacts to other shoreline uses and properties.
- E. Allow maintenance dredging of established navigation channels and basins.
- F. Conduct dredging and disposal in a manner to minimize damage to natural systems, including the area to be dredged and the area where dredged materials will be deposited. Disposal of dredge materials on land away from the shoreline is preferred over open water disposal.
- G. Re-use of dredge materials is encouraged for beneficial uses such as restoration and enhancement.
- H. Dredging and dredge disposal should not occur where they would interfere with existing or potential ecological restoration activities.

- I. Allow dredging for ecological restoration or enhancement projects, beach nourishment, public access or public recreation provided it is consistent with the policies and regulations of the Master Program.

### **PN11.32** Fill Policies

- A. Fill should be located, designed, and constructed to protect shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes. The quantity and extent of fill should be the minimum necessary to accommodate a permitted shoreline use or development.
- B. Fill landward of the Ordinary High Water Mark should be permitted when necessary to support permitted uses, and when significant impacts can be avoided or mitigated.
- C. Fill should be allowed to accommodate berms or other structures to prevent flooding caused by sea level rise, when consistent with the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan and the flood hazard reduction provisions in this Shoreline Program. Any such fill should include mitigation assuring no net loss of ecological functions and system-wide processes.
- D. Fill for the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of beaches or mitigation projects should be permitted.
- E. Fill water-ward of the Ordinary High Water Mark should be permitted only to accommodate water-dependent uses, public access, cleanup of contaminated sites, the disposal of dredge materials associated with a permitted dredging activity, or other water-dependent uses that are consistent with the goals and policies of Olympia's Shoreline Program.
- F. Fill for the purpose of creating new uplands should be prohibited unless it is part of an authorized restoration activity.
- G. Fill should not adversely impact navigation.
- H. Fill should not be allowed where structural shoreline stabilization would be required to maintain the materials placed.

### **PN11.33** Moorage Policies

- A. New moorage should be permitted only when it can be demonstrated that there is a specific need to support a water-dependent or public access use.
- B. Moorage associated with a single-family residence is considered a water-dependent use provided it is designed and used as a facility to access watercraft, and other moorage facilities are not available or feasible.

- C. Allow shared moorage for multi-family uses or as part of a mixed use development when public access is provided.
- D. Give preference to buoys over piers, docks, and floats; however, discourage the placement of moorage buoys where sufficient dock facilities exist.
- E. Give preference to shared moorage facilities over single-user moorage where feasible. New subdivisions of more than two lots and new multi-family development of more than two dwelling units should provide shared moorage.
- F. Moorage facilities should be sited and designed to avoid adversely impacting shoreline ecological functions and processes, and should mitigate for unavoidable impacts to ecological functions.
- G. Moorage facilities should be spaced and oriented in a manner that minimizes hazards and obstructions to public navigation rights and corollary rights including but not limited to boating, swimming, and fishing.
- H. Encourage the cooperative use of docking facilities in industrial areas instead of new facilities.
- I. Moorage facilities should be restricted to the minimum size necessary to meet the needs of the proposed use. The length, width and height of piers, docks and floats should be no greater than required for safety and practicality for the primary use.
- J. Encourage design elements that increase light penetration to the water below existing or new moorage facilities, such as increasing the structure's height, modifying orientation and size, and use of grating as a surface material. No new over-water covered moorage or boathouses should be allowed.
- K. Moorage facilities should be constructed of materials that will not adversely affect water quality or aquatic plants and animals in the long-term.

**PN11.34** Restoration and Enhancement Policies

- A. Olympia recognizes the importance of restoration of shoreline ecological functions and processes and encourages cooperative restoration efforts and programs between local, state, and federal public agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, and landowners to address shorelines with impaired ecological functions and processes.
- B. Restoration actions should restore shoreline ecological functions and processes as well as shoreline features and should be targeted towards meeting the needs of

both sensitive and locally important plant, fish and wildlife species as well as the biologic recovery goals for State and federally listed species and populations.

- C. Coordinate restoration and enhancement with other natural resource management efforts and plans.
- D. Consider restoration actions outside of the shoreline jurisdiction that have a system-wide benefit.
- E. When prioritizing restoration actions, the City will give highest priority to measures that have the greatest chance of re-establishing shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- F. Incorporate restoration and enhancement measures into the design and construction of new uses and development, public infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities), and public recreation facilities.
- G. Shoreline restoration and enhancement should be considered as an alternative to structural stabilization and protection measures where feasible.
- H. All shoreline restoration and enhancement projects should protect the integrity of adjacent natural resources including aquatic habitats and water quality.
- I. Design, construct, and maintain restoration and enhancement projects in keeping with restoration priorities and other policies and regulations set forth in Olympia's Shoreline Program.
- J. Design restoration and enhancement projects to minimize maintenance over time.
- K. Shoreline restoration and enhancement should not extend water-ward more than necessary to achieve the intended results.
- L. Permanent in-stream structures should be prohibited except for restoration and enhancement structures, and transportation and utility crossings as described elsewhere in this Program. In-stream structures should provide for the protection and preservation of ecosystem-wide processes, ecological functions, and cultural resources. The location and planning of in-stream structures should give due consideration to the full range of public interests, watershed functions and processes, and environmental concerns, with special emphasis on protecting and restoring priority habitat and species.
- M. Restoration and enhancement projects may include shoreline modification actions provided the primary purpose of such actions is clearly restoration of the natural character and ecological functions of the shoreline.

### **PN11.35 Shoreline Stabilization Policies**

- A. Preserve remaining unarmored shorelines and limit the creation, expansion and reconstruction of bulkheads and other forms of shoreline armoring.
- B. New development requiring structural shoreline armoring should not be allowed. Shoreline use and development should be located and designed in a manner so that structural stabilization measures are not likely to become necessary in the future, including a consideration of sea level rise.
- C. Structural shoreline armoring should only be permitted when there are no feasible alternatives, and when it can be demonstrated that it can be located, designed, and maintained in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on shoreline ecology and system-wide processes, including effects on the project site, adjacent properties, and sediment transport.
- D. The reconstruction or expansion of existing hard armoring should only be permitted where necessary to protect an existing primary structure or legally existing shoreline use that is in danger of loss or substantial damage, and where mitigation of impacts is sufficient to assure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions and processes.
- E. Encourage the removal of bulkheads and other hard armoring and restore the shoreline to a more natural condition. Where stabilization is necessary for the protection of private or public property, alternative measures that are less harmful to shoreline ecological functions should be employed. An example of such an approach is included in the West Bay Environmental Restoration Assessment report for some shoreline reaches.
- F. Nonstructural stabilization measures, including relocating structures, increasing buffers, enhancing vegetation, managing drainage and runoff, and other measures, are preferred over structural shoreline armoring.
- G. Failing, harmful, unnecessary, or ineffective structures should be removed. Shoreline ecological functions and processes should be restored using non-structural methods.
- H. Shoreline stabilization and shoreline armoring for the purpose of leveling or extending property, or creating or preserving residential lawns, yards, or landscaping should not be allowed.
- I. Shoreline stabilization measures, individually or cumulatively, should not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions or system-wide processes. Preference should be given to structural shoreline stabilization measures that have a lesser

impact on ecological functions, and mitigation of identified impacts resulting from said modifications should be required.

- J. The City should promote non-regulatory methods to protect, enhance, and restore shoreline ecological functions and other shoreline resources. Examples of such methods include public facility and resource planning, technical assistance, education, voluntary enhancement and restoration projects, land acquisition and restoration, and other incentive programs.
- K. Jetties, breakwaters, or groin systems should not be permitted unless no other practical alternative exists. If allowed, they should be located, designed, and maintained to avoid impacts to shoreline ecological functions and system-wide processes.



A view of the boardwalk, Harbor House, and Percival Landing Park.

## For More Information

- View the [Shoreline Master Program](#)
- Learn more about the [Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan](#)
- View the City's [Storm & Surface Water Plan](#)
- View the City's [Stormwater Management Action Plan](#)

# Land Use and Urban Design



A blending of old and new land uses in the Downtown.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a resilient community that supports active living and the forging of social bonds. A community where people of all backgrounds and income levels are welcomed and can afford to live, neighborhoods with distinct identities, historic buildings and places. We value a comfortable downtown and city that is welcoming to pedestrians of all abilities, increased urban green space, locally produced food, and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A welcoming and inclusive, accessible, resilient, and vibrant city rich in opportunities to participate in daily life. A community where people can meet their needs within a short distance of their homes, and where urban growth and urban green spaces coexist and support each other.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

# Introduction

How we choose to live within, and how we alter, our landscape is critical to our quality of life and whether that quality of life can be sustained and improved.

The State's 1990 [Growth Management Act](#) called for Olympia to establish land use designations and densities sufficient for at least 20 years. The [County-Wide Planning Policies](#) adopted by Thurston County and its seven cities in 1993 and updated in 2025 support concentrating growth in urban areas. These policies encourage infill development first in areas that have adequate public infrastructure and later in areas outside urban cores.

Accommodating our population and employment growth within our existing boundaries is one of the most effective ways to prevent sprawl into the rural areas and resource-rich lands beyond Olympia's urban growth boundary. By 2045, we anticipate a population of 72,040 within city limits and another 15,610 people living in the Olympia urban growth area for a total of 87,650 people. That is an increase of 18,640 people from our 2023 population.

By ensuring that people live close to the places where they work, shop, learn, and receive medical care, we will make it easier for them to get there without relying on a private vehicle. When people live and work within a ten-minute walk or roll to an urban corridor, we also reinforce the community's existing investments in public transit.

This chapter expresses issues and ideas of particular importance to our community: Of particular importance to our community are the following ideas which are expressed in this chapter:

- Encourage development in urban areas where public services and facilities are already present and phase future urban development and public facility extensions outward from these areas (see PL1.1 PL1.2, and PL1.3).
- Explore the possibilities of unique areas giving special attention to Downtown, the Martin Way corridor area, the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea, the eleven planning 'subareas' (often referred to as 'neighborhoods'), and other special geographic areas and focus areas within the community (see the Focus Areas section of this chapter).
- Focus higher residential densities Downtown, along urban corridors, in the High-Density Neighborhoods Overlay areas, and near neighborhood centers (see PL14.2).
- Ensure that neighborhoods are safe, accessible, sustainable, culturally inclusive, and include a variety of housing types nearby goods and services that make walking, rolling, biking, and transit feasible for most trips (see the Neighborhoods section of this chapter).
- Employ innovative development techniques to create a better community, minimize harm to the environment, allow for quiet spaces with residential uses, and allow for places where economic activity is emphasized.

Olympia’s “[Urban Design Vision and Strategy](#)” initially provided direction for this chapter. Many of the core principles of this strategy, including street design, mixed-used development, and alternative transportation, remain values of the Olympia community. In the decades that have passed since this strategy was created in 1991, there are new principles that have been woven throughout this chapter, including those that relate to equity and climate. In particular, the sustainability policies call for us to consider the long-range implications of our land use decisions and to provide for a pattern of development that can be sustained and enjoyed by future generations.

For example, mixed-use 'villages' and opportunities for residential development in commercial areas provide for increasing residential densities by blending land uses.

We can build a community that aligns with our values for future generations by:

- Enabling a lower reliance on private vehicles.  
Supporting compact development that requires less land.
- Efficiently providing streets, sidewalks, utilities, and services.
- Establishing development densities and site designs that protect environmentally sensitive areas and reflect the capacity of natural systems.

This chapter focuses on ‘built’ land uses, including residential and commercial structures and development patterns. We address parks, open spaces, and natural areas in the Parks, Arts, and Recreation and Natural Environment chapters. Land uses of all kinds cannot be isolated from economic topics, especially employment, and we address these intersections in the Economy chapter. We describe facilities and services that support our urban development patterns in the Transportation, Utilities, and Public Safety chapters. In many cases the special area plans described in this chapter will touch on all of those topics and more.

The City of Olympia, in cooperation with Thurston County, plays a major role in determining the location, intensity, and form of land uses in the community. This chapter addresses the proposed uses of land in Olympia’s Urban Growth Area and the design and locations of buildings and other structures within that landscape. It includes:

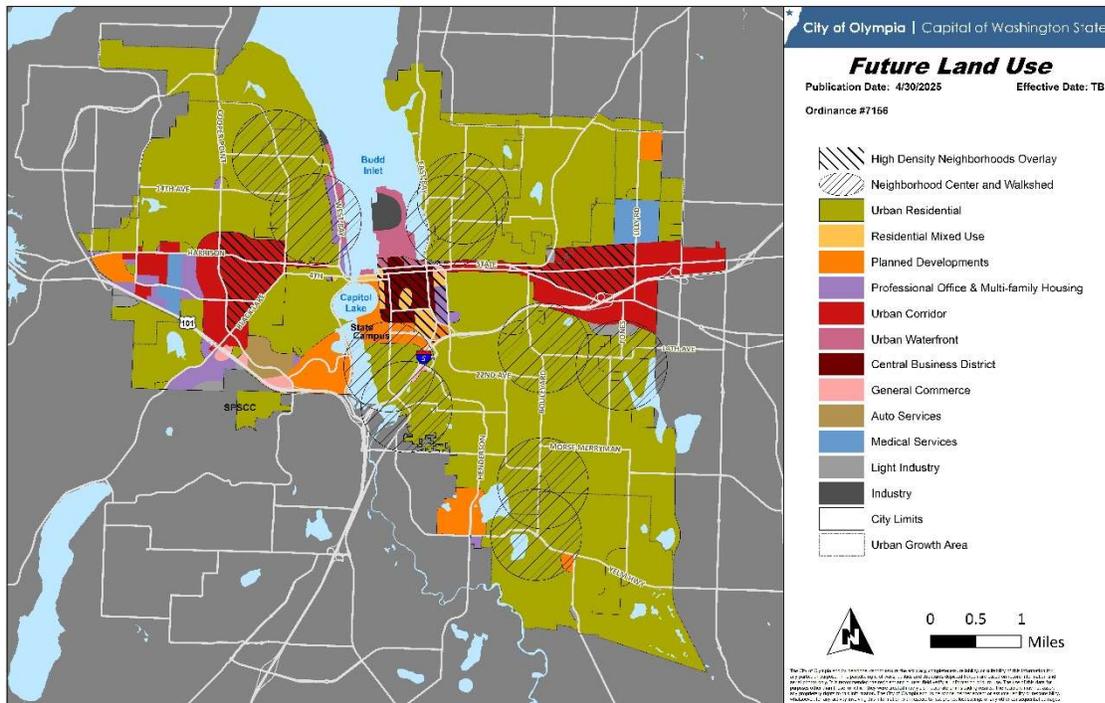
- The location and quantity of those land uses and their relation to each other
- The design of those land uses including buildings and surrounding spaces
- Opportunities for historic preservation
- The aesthetic form of the built environment

The Future Land Use Map shows the approximate locations of various land uses in Olympia’s Urban Growth Area. This map is not a zoning map. Rather it provides guidance for zoning and other regulations to ensure that the use of land and its development are

consistent with this Plan. Although these map lines are approximate, all future land uses should be consistent with the intent of this map and the land use category descriptions in Appendix A as well as the goals and policies of this Plan. In general, zoning and land uses should not deviate from the Future Land Use Map boundaries by more than about 200 feet. Compatible and supporting land uses, such as parks, schools, places of worship, public facilities and utilities, streets and similar features, are expected within these areas. See Appendix A regarding acreages, densities, and building heights of each use category.

Proposed rezones shall meet criteria to be adopted into the Olympia Municipal Code that address:

1. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Consistency with the City’s development regulations that implement the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Compatibility with adjoining zoning districts and transitioning where appropriate.
4. Adequacy of infrastructure for the development potential of the proposed zoning.



Future Land Use Map of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area (see Appendix A for larger map).

The community employs regulations, such as zoning, design review, stormwater, engineering, building, and subdivision standards, to ensure that new development conforms to the goals and policies described in this chapter. The regulations are administered by City staff and a Hearing Examiner selected by the City Council. Capital facility planning and construction by the City of Olympia and other local public agencies

are equally important to this land use and design vision. Continuing cooperation between the State and the City, among the local governments, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, and with special-purpose governments such as the Port of Olympia and the school districts, is critical. For example, it is important that the City coordinates with school districts on school sitings to ensure adequate infrastructure exists to support new school(s).

## General Land Use and Design

To achieve our vision for Olympia we need to plan for quantity – the 18,000+ new community members projected to arrive by 2045 – while we pursue quality in the development of our land use. We commit to land use planning that supports healthy lifestyles, including walking or rolling to nearby services instead of driving.

Olympia was once a port-oriented community with a central business district and compact single-family neighborhoods. Now, Olympia is growing as an urban community, with commercial development outside of Downtown, areas designated for high-density development, and urban residential neighborhoods. Past development patterns have created a city oriented toward personal vehicle use, which will need to change if we are going to move towards a more urban community.

Over the next 20 years, as Olympia becomes a more urban place, the pattern of land use and design of urban areas will change as we accommodate an expanding population. As this happens we will strive to retain our community's character and heritage.

This Plan envisions gradually increasing densities in Olympia accompanied by attractive streets and buildings arranged for the convenience of pedestrians. The location, mix and relationship of land uses to each other and to our streets will be crucial, as will be the character of commercial and residential areas, parks, and open spaces. The Plan envisions new development that will reinforce the community's identity, urban design preferences, and historic form. Selected major streets will gradually transform into attractive, higher-density, mixed residential and commercial "urban corridors" with frequent transit service. Neighborhoods will gradually grow with residential infill, featuring diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles.

Housing will be available within and near shopping and employment areas. Development will be carefully designed to integrate with the adjacent transportation system, and with key locations such as downtown and the hospitals. Neighborhoods and commercial areas will gradually be woven together into a cohesive urban fabric. These neighborhoods will provide ready access from homes to vital businesses, and to parks, schools and other gathering places.

The relationship between the transportation system and other land uses plays a key role in urban life, which is described in the [Transportation chapter](#).

In addition to private uses, such as homes, businesses, and industry, some of the lands within the City will be used for public purposes and facilities. Although some of those lands are identified in this Plan, such as the locations of future streets, other specific needs are identified in more detailed City planning documents, such as the [Water System Plan](#) which identifies this utility's need for infrastructure improvements. Olympia works with Thurston County and other local agencies to identify areas of shared need for public facilities.

Over the next 20 years, our land use and urban design decisions will impact our community's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and our ability to adapt to future climate conditions. Creating more accessible, dense neighborhoods makes it easier for people to meet their everyday needs without relying on cars, which also reduces vehicle emissions. As we develop, we must prioritize energy efficiency while accounting for future climate conditions and changing environmental risks. The Land Use and Urban Design goals and policies we establish will be crucial in achieving net-zero emissions by 2040 and preparing for the increasingly severe impacts of climate change. Refer to the Climate Action and Resilience chapter for additional information on how the City is addressing climate change.

The purpose of the goals and policies below is to direct land use patterns, densities, and design standards which:

- Reflect the community's urban design vision
- Maintain or improve the character of neighborhoods
- Preserve the historic features of Olympia
- Support for a variety of transportation modes, including walking, rolling, biking, transit, and driving.
- Provide people with opportunities to live close to work
- Create desirable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, different lifestyles and income levels, opportunities for social interaction, and a sense of community
- Provide for a compact growth pattern
- Promote energy efficiency
- Reflect the land's physical and environmental capacity
- Ensure equity in land use planning
- Provide space for parks, open spaces, and other community facilities
- Protect views and features of the community's landscape valued by the public.

# Goals and Policies

## **GL1 Land use patterns, densities, and site designs are equitable and support increased urban density, reduced urban sprawl, and decreasing automobile reliance.**

**PL1.1** Ensure that new development is built at urban densities or can be readily modified to achieve those densities; and require that development lacking municipal utility service be designed to cost-effectively transition to using municipal utilities when they become available. (Climate)

**PL1.2** Focus development in locations that will enhance the community and have capacity and efficient supporting services, and where adverse environmental impacts can be avoided or minimized. (Climate)

**PL1.3** Direct high-density development to areas with existing development where the terrain is conducive to walking, rolling, bicycling and transit use and where sensitive drainage basins will not be impacted. (Climate)

**PL1.4** Require functional and efficient development by adopting and periodically updating zoning consistent with the [Future Land Use Map](#). (Climate)

**PL1.5** Require new development to meet appropriate minimum standards, such as landscaping and design guidelines, stormwater and other engineering standards, and buildings codes, and critical area regulations address risks, such as geologically hazardous areas; and require existing development to be gradually improved to such standards.

**PL1.6** Provide for a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in commercial districts and village sites that enables people to walk or roll to work and shopping, supports transit, and includes convenience businesses for residents. Integrate adjacent uses with sidewalks and bike paths leading from residential areas to commercial districts and neighborhood-oriented businesses. (Climate)

**PL1.7** Enable frequent transit service, support housing, utilize existing infrastructure, provide public improvements, and concentrate new major shopping, entertainment and office uses Downtown, in the medical services area of Lilly Road, near the Capital Mall, and in the urban corridors. (Climate)

**PL1.8** Buffer incompatible industrial, commercial and residential uses by requiring landscaped buffers or transitional uses, such as plazas, offices, or heavily landscaped parking; use natural buffers where possible; utilize design requirements such as increased setbacks, height limits, and stepbacks for the upper floors of buildings; and require clustering where warranted.

**PL1.9** Require direct, safe, and convenient pedestrian access to commercial and public buildings from streets, bus stops, and parking lots, and encourage sheltered seating and other uses of vacant sections of the street edge. (Climate)

**PL1.10** Require businesses along transit routes to accommodate transit use by including building entrances near bus stops or other features such as transit shelters or on-site bus access. (Climate)

**PL1.11** Encourage major commercial projects to include display windows, small shops with separate entrances, and plazas with seating and other well-landscaped gathering spaces. (Climate)

**PL1.12** Require new, and encourage existing, businesses to provide bicycle parking. (Climate)

**PL1.13** Work with Thurston County to require new development near Hoskins Field, a General Aviation Airport located in the City of Lacey, to be compatible with the airport. Although Hoskins Field is in the City of Lacey, the runway approach/departure is over properties that are located in the Urban Growth Area for the City of Olympia which is in the jurisdiction of Thurston County. Incompatible land uses should be discouraged. These incompatible land uses may include residential uses, height hazards, uses that attract large concentrations of people, wildlife hazards, and special uses such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes, and uses with explosive or hazardous materials. The City should consult with the Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division and coordinate with the City of Lacey and Thurston County when developing or amending policies or regulations that would affect public airports.

**PL1.14** Give special consideration to achieving environmental justice within our community, such as efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities geographically or among community members.

**PL1.15** Reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires by using land use planning tools and through wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation measures.

**PL1.16** Adopt a moratorium or interim zoning control only in cases of an emergency as defined by State statute.

**PL1.17** Evaluate development regulations and zoning to ensure they are clear, as simple as possible, and not redundant, and update if necessary.

**PL1.18** Evaluate new drive-through uses on a city-wide scale. The evaluation should consider a broad range of factors, including but not limited to, the needs of those with disabilities, climate impacts, pedestrian safety, economic/business impacts, and equity.

**PL1.19** Increase the number of 10-minute neighborhoods through zoning and code changes that support an easily accessible environment, and destinations that serve a range of basic living needs. (Climate)

## Land Use Patterns and Building Forms Determine Energy Efficiency

Land use patterns and development influence energy use. By increasing energy efficiency, we can better meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets. Blending residential units with work places promotes energy efficiency. Higher residential and job densities near commercial districts support bus use and reduce vehicle miles traveled and fuel consumption. In contrast, suburban densities and sprawl result in spending a lot of time and energy on transportation.

The primary residential use of energy is for space-heating. Thus, strengthening building code requirements for energy efficiency is an effective way to reduce energy consumption. When combined with appropriate insulation levels, solar energy can meet half or even more of the heating and cooling needs of a home in Olympia. Effective subdivision layouts that allow solar access can support renewable energy generation, as can public education on energy conservation.

Local governments can further influence residential, industrial, and commercial energy use through education and incentives.

The government sector is a very visible part of the energy picture and can set an example for efficient and conscientious energy use. Education in this sector includes both educating users, such as employees, and informing the public. Government buildings and equipment can be models of efficiency in the use of construction methods and materials, as well as utilizing efficient pumps, heating systems, and lighting. Government operations can also be models of the use of alternative fuel sources and non-motorized travel.

### **GL 2 Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized areas are prioritized to prevent urban sprawl, preserve rural and**

**resource lands in Thurston County, and reduce emissions associated with transportation and land conversion.**

**PL2.1** Participate in a County-wide [“transfer of development rights”](#) program in which a density bonus is achievable through the purchase of transferred development rights from agricultural lands in the rural portion of the county. (Climate)

**PL2.2** Maintain a stable urban growth area to reduce development pressure on natural, rural and working lands within Thurston County. (Climate)

**PL2.3** Identify and implement mechanisms such as fee reductions and expedited review to incentivize multi-family and infill housing development that meets climate-resilient and energy-efficient standards. (Climate)

**GL3 Development standards and site designs reduce exposure to climate hazards and enhance climate resilience to protect public health and safety.**

**PL3.1** Require new development to meet appropriate minimum standards, such as landscaping and design guidelines, stormwater and other engineering standards, buildings codes, critical area regulations, and climate-exacerbated hazards; and require existing development to be gradually improved to such standards. (Climate)

**PL3.2** Establish and update development standards that incorporate best practices for reducing the risk and impacts of wildfire and smoke, extreme heat, intense rainfall, and sea level rise. (Climate)

**PL3.3** Consider and evaluate current and future wildfire risk when updating future land use maps and development standards to mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires. (Climate)

**PL3.4** Encourage shoreline development and waterfront attractions that are consistent with the Sea Level Rise Response Plan. (Climate)

**PL3.5** Encourage and sometimes require buildings and site designs that improve energy efficiency, support passive survivability, and provide backup power through renewable energy generation and storage. This includes street and lot orientation at the time property is subdivided or developed. (Climate)

**PL3.6** Incentivize new commercial and residential construction to include on-site rainwater harvesting facilities, exceed required low impact development standards, and incorporate green stormwater infrastructure approaches. (Climate)

**PL3.7** Encourage development that incorporates best practices to mitigate urban heat islands and stormwater runoff through land use, urban design, and urban greening. (Climate)

**PL3.8** In pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, require sidewalk awnings, shading features or other weather protection on new and substantially remodeled buildings. (Climate)

**GL4 Land management and landscape practices increase the resilience of the built environment, ecosystems and communities to climate change.**

**PL4.1** Collaborate with private landowners to follow best management practices, particularly for properties abutting park, forest land, and environmentally sensitive areas. (Climate)

**PL4.2** Provide resources to community members living in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas to implement fire prevention (e.g., Firewise) practices and support application of such practices through incentives, outreach, and development standards. (Climate)

**PL4.3** Encourage residents to install landscape design features and to keep storm drains clear to reduce risks from changes in seasonal precipitation. (Climate)

**PL4.4** Promote installation of building and landscape design features that encourage water conservation in new and existing construction. (Climate)

**GL5-1. All new and existing buildings are electrified by 2040. New buildings achieve minimum energy efficiency standards, and all existing buildings receive energy efficiency retrofits by 2040.**

**GL5-2. All community members have access to appropriate heating, cooling and air filtration to shelter during extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events.**

**PL5.1** Support state building and energy code development and implementation to improve energy efficiency and electrify new buildings. (Climate)

**PL5.2** Adopt local policies and programs to improve energy efficiency and electrify new and existing buildings to the greatest extent feasible. Provide technical support, incentives, and flexible implementation pathways to minimize impacts to renters, affordable housing providers and small businesses. (Climate)

**PL5.3** Encourage retrofits for cooling and air filtration installation in existing buildings. (Climate)

**PL5.4** Incentivize and support weatherization upgrades, passive survivability, cooling and air filtration systems, and energy redundancy for homes and facilities serving vulnerable populations. (Climate)

**PL5.5** Partner with regional jurisdictions to develop and implement a local policy for assessment and disclosure of residential energy performance ratings at the time of sale, lease, or rent. (Climate)

**PL5.6** Evaluate and establish baseline energy efficiency standards for rental housing, while minimizing displacement and financial burden for renters. (Climate)

**PL5.7** Evaluate and establish building performance standards that exceed state minimum standards for multifamily and non-residential buildings. Provide technical support, incentives, and flexible implementation pathways to minimize impacts to renters, affordable housing providers and small businesses. (Climate)

**PL5.8** Provide technical guidance and other incentives to encourage electrification and energy efficiency retrofits in existing buildings. Prioritize retrofits in overburdened communities and include protections to avoid displacement and financial burden on renters and small businesses. (Climate)

**PL5.9** Foster partnerships with organizations serving overburdened communities to ensure building electrification outreach and incentive programs build capacity and alleviate cost burdens for all residents. (Climate)

**PL5.10** Reduce energy use and phase out natural gas use in existing city-owned facilities and public infrastructure. Require new city-owned and funded facilities to be built all-electric. (Climate)

## **GL6 New construction and redevelopment prioritize materials and building practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions**

**associated with the production, transportation and disposal of building materials.**

**PL6.1** Encourage and incentivize the preservation and reuse of existing buildings and building materials. (Climate)

**PL6.2** Evaluate and address development regulations that may pose barriers to reuse and adaptative reuse of existing buildings. (Climate)

**PL6.3** Encourage efficient use of building materials. Provide guidance and resources to reduce the use of high-embodied carbon materials in new construction and building retrofits. (Climate)

**PL6.4** Analyze and implement opportunities to encourage design for deconstruction and reuse of materials rather than demolition. (Climate)

**GL7 The production of local renewable energy increases communitywide.**

**PL7.1** Facilitate the development of community-owned, small-scale renewable energy generation projects, such as solar and geothermal energy. (Climate)

**PL7.2** Support development of local microgrid solar and battery storage facilities, especially for critical infrastructure and community centers. (Climate)

**PL7.3** Update development standards to reduce barriers to siting, permitting, and construction of small-scale renewable energy and battery storage systems within City limits. (Climate)

**PL7.4** Incentivize or require solar panels, when feasible, on new buildings with large rooftops, as well as within or over parking areas. (Climate)

**PL7.5** Encourage the use and development of bidirectional energy systems to support renewable energy production and manage peak demand on the electric grid. (Climate)

**PL7.6** Install solar photovoltaics on all available and feasible city-owned properties, including but not limited to, building rooftops, municipal water pump sites and parking lots. (Climate)

# Urban Design, Historic Structures and Built Form

Through subarea planning, Comprehensive Plan updates and amendments, and other similar actions, the community has identified the types of development that they feel are appropriate for Olympia. Community members have shown that they particularly value Olympia's waterfront, Downtown, the Capitol Campus, the older neighborhoods, and views of the Olympic Mountains and the Black Hills. They favor streets that provide an attractive, safe, and inviting place for walking, rolling, or biking.. Also important to the community are the portions of Downtown where buildings form a continuous edge along the street, where it is interesting to walk or roll, and where awnings protect people from the rain.

Much of our community is already built. Many of our neighborhoods are more than 50 years old and our Downtown is older still. These neighborhoods provide a 'sense of place' and contribute to the character of Olympia. To preserve this character, new buildings incorporated into our existing fabric must reflect both the contemporary time-period and what has come before. We will acknowledge the importance of historic preservation by protecting buildings and districts, and by celebrating the people and events that shaped our community. We will conserve natural resources by keeping historic buildings properly maintained and in continuous use to avoid decay and demolition, which would waste the resources used to create these structures.



The Bigelow House, Olympia's oldest residence.

However, our heritage extends beyond buildings and back in time before European settlement. Artifacts, photographs, structures, sites and stories of our collective past should be preserved for future generations. Tribes, such as the Squaxin Island Tribe, play a major role in this task. Private property owners shoulder much of the responsibility of protecting historic buildings and cultural resources. Olympia's Heritage Commission

advises the City Council on matters of historic preservation and assists owners of historic buildings in caring for their property.



A resident in a historic neighborhood taking a break from yard maintenance.

Studies of Olympia and other communities reveal that including open space and appropriate landscaping in site designs improve developments by providing places to relax and enjoy outdoor activities in general. In particular, trees provide a valuable public resource. They enhance the quality of the environment, provide visual buffers and natural beauty, preserve the natural character of an area, and soften the impact of buildings and streets. Trees and other landscaping help reduce air pollution, noise and glare, provide shade and cooling in summer and wind protection in winter, and in some cases provide materials and food for wildlife and humans. The goals and policies below encompass all of these elements of good design.

## Goals and Policies

**GL8 Historic resources are a key element in the overall design and establishment of a sense of place in Olympia.**

**PL8.1** Protect and evaluate historic and archaeological sites.

**PL8.2** Preserve those elements of the community which are unique to Olympia or exemplify its heritage.

**PL8.3** Protect historic vistas from the Capitol Campus to Budd Inlet and the Olympic Mountains, and from Budd Inlet to the Capitol Campus.

**PL8.4** Safeguard and promote sites, buildings, districts, structures and objects which reflect significant elements of the area's history.

**PL8.5** Encourage development that is compatible with historic buildings and neighborhood character, through the use of adaptive reuse of existing structures, as well as complementary design elements such as mass, scale, materials, setting, and setbacks when considering new development.

**PL8.6** Strive for the early identification and resolution of conflicts between the preservation of historic resources and competing land uses.

**PL8.7** Encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of historic trees and landscapes that have significance to the community or a neighborhood, including species or placement of trees and other plants.

**PL8.8** Encourage historic preservation best practices and consider alternative preservation tactics, such as adaptive reuse, to discourage demolitions or partial demolitions of intact historic structures.

**PL8.9** Develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan by working collaboratively with partners such as tribes and the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

### **GL9 Neighborhoods take pride in their historic identity.**

**PL9.1** Assist older neighborhoods and districts in discovering the social history and origins of their built environment to appreciate their historic features and context (also see Downtown section below).

**PL9.2** Facilitate the preservation of historic neighborhood identity and important historic resources while accommodating infill development that acknowledges the style of the neighborhood and is of an appropriate scale.

### **GL10 Historic preservation is achieved in cooperation with all members of the community and is integrated into City decision-making processes.**

**PL10.1** Work with the State archeologist and local tribes to protect archeological resources.

**PL10.2** Coordinate with adjacent governments including the Squaxin Island Tribe to provide public information about the area's history and development.

**PL10.3** Recognize the impact and contributions of diverse communities, including but not limited to marginalized groups, minorities, and people from various cultures, that have shaped Olympia's history and heritage.

**PL10.4** Continue programs such as the Heritage Commission, the Heritage Register and the historic marker program that effectively identify, recognize, and encourage the preservation and continued use of historic structures, districts, and sites which provide physical evidence of the community's heritage.

**PL10.5** Provide incentives and assistance for preserving, restoring, redeveloping and using historic buildings, districts, neighborhoods, streets, structures, objects and sites.

**PL10.6** Support government or non-profit acquisition of the most important historic resources to ensure their preservation.

**PL10.7** Recognize the value of historic preservation as part of the effort to maintain an affordable housing stock.

**PL10.8** Promote economic vitality through historic preservation.

**PL10.9** Promote collaboration among City departments, the Heritage Commission and other commissions, and City Council advisory committees when there are mutual goals involving historic sites, buildings, and other historic related issues.

## **GL11 Community beauty is combined with unique neighborhood identities.**

**PL11.1** Establish and periodically update a design review process and design criteria consistent with the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan for:

- Commercial and mixed-use developments adjacent to freeways and public streets.
- Other highly-visible, non-residential development, such as the Port of Olympia, and master planned developments.
- Multifamily residential development and manufactured housing parks

- Detached homes on smaller lots (less than 5,000 square feet) and in older neighborhoods (pre-1940).
- Properties listed on the Olympia Heritage Register or located within a locally designated historic district.
- Infill of multi-unit residences in urban density neighborhoods.

Affordable housing projects and small-scale residential projects, including middle housing projects, should be reviewed administratively when design review is applicable.

**PL11.2** Evaluate and update the design review process when necessary to ensure a streamlined approach that allows for housing production to meet housing needs sufficiently.

**PL11.3** Require commercial and residential buildings to face the street or a courtyard or other common area.

**PL11.4** Require multifamily housing to incorporate architectural elements and features common to nearby residential development such as porches, balconies, bay windows, and similar details; to have entries oriented to streets or a courtyard, and include accessible open space.

**PL11.5** Ensure that parking areas do not dominate street frontages or interrupt pedestrian routes, and that they are screened from housing.

**PL11.6** Prohibit fences and walls that inhibit pedestrians or isolate neighborhoods from streets, except to reduce noise, provide buffers, or create private rear yards.

**PL11.7** Create attractive entry corridors to the community and neighborhoods, especially Downtown and along urban corridors. Adopt design standards and installing significant special landscaping along community-entry corridors.

**PL11.8** Enhance neighborhood identity by encouraging interested groups to beautify open spaces and private property.

**PL11.9** Require that buildings complement and enhance their surroundings, appeal to and support pedestrian activities, and facilitate transit use.

**PL11.10** Preserve and enhance water vistas by retaining public rights-of-way that abut or are within one block of water bodies, and by not siting public buildings within associated view corridors.



Percival Landing is a popular place to take in the views

**PL11.11** Plant and protect trees that contribute to Olympia’s visual identity and sense of place.

**PL11.12** Separate incompatible land uses and activities with treed areas, including buffering residential areas from major streets and freeways.

**GL12 Urban green space is available to the public and located throughout the community. It incorporates natural environments into the urban setting that are nearby, easily accessible, and viewable so that people can experience nature daily.**

**PL12.1** Provide urban green spaces in which to spend time and experience the positive physical and mental health benefits associated with green spaces. Include such elements as trees, garden spaces, a variety of vegetation, water features, “green” walls and roofs, and seating. (Climate)

**PL12.2** Provide urban green spaces that are in people’s immediate vicinity and can be enjoyed or viewed from a variety of perspectives.

**PL12.3** Establish a maximum distance to urban green space for everyone in the community. (Climate)

**PL12.4** Increase the area of urban green space and tree canopy within neighborhoods, especially in areas of the City where community members do not have easily accessible urban green space and tree canopy. (Climate)

**PL12.5** Establish urban green space between transportation corridors and adjacent areas.

### **GL13 Community views are protected, preserved, and enhanced.**

**PL13.1** Implement public processes, including the use of digital simulation software, to identify important landmark views and observation points and update the list of views when necessary.

**PL13.2** Use visualization tools to identify view planes and sightline heights between the landmark view and observation point.

**PL13.3** Prevent blockage of landmark views by limiting the heights of buildings or structures on the west and east Olympia ridge lines.

**PL13.4** Avoid height bonuses and incentives that interfere with landmark views that have been identified through community planning processes.

**PL13.5** Set absolute maximum building heights to preserve publicly-identified observation points and landmark views.

**PL13.6** Protect views identified through community planning processes, such as the Downtown Strategy (see Appendix B), as well as views from West Bay Park to Mt. Rainier, East Bay Overlook to the Capitol Dome, and Deschutes Parkway to Mt. Rainier.



Looking across the water from Percival Landing with the Olympics in the distance.

## **GL14 Built and natural environmental designs discourage criminal behavior and make areas safer for community members.**

**PL14.1** Incorporate crime prevention principles in planning and development review and educate designers regarding those principles.

**PL14.2** Modify public facilities and properties to enhance crime prevention and to make them welcoming and safe.

## Industry

Industrial uses represent a relatively small but key component of Olympia's jobs. Olympia's waterfront has supported forest-related industries and maritime shipping for decades. The Olympia area also contains a few scattered, relatively small, light-industrial districts that support a variety of uses. Industrial districts in Tumwater, Lacey, and around the County will likely absorb most of the area's new, non-waterfront-dependent industrial uses. However, the industrial land along Budd Inlet provides the only sites in the area for water-dependent industrial uses. This Plan aims to focus industrial development along Budd Inlet (in industrial districts, at Mottman Industrial Park, and along Fones Road) while encouraging opportunities for small-scale industry integrated with other uses of land.

The Port of Olympia owns approximately two hundred acres and adjacent tidelands of what is known as the 'Port peninsula,' an area equivalent to about 80 city blocks. The Port peninsula includes a variety of industrial, commercial, retail, and recreational facilities. The centerpiece of the Port peninsula is its international marine shipping terminal. The East Bay waterfront is the home of the East Bay Marina, with moorage, a boat launch, and support facilities. On the northern end of the peninsula, the 17-acre [Cascade Pole](#) site is a contaminated area, used from 1940 to 1986 to treat wood poles with creosote and other chemicals. Although cleanup of that site is underway, future use will be restricted.

The industrial portion of the Port peninsula will continue to be the community's key industrial center. It has been a local source of family-wage jobs, handling inbound and outbound cargo by rail, truck and ship.

## Goals and Policies

### **GL15 Industry and related development with low environmental impact is well-located to help diversify the local economy.**

**PL15.1** Encourage industry that is compatible with surrounding land uses and diversifies and strengthens the local economy.

**PL15.2** Designate and preserve sufficient land for industrial uses consistent with the regional strategy for 'build out' of the community and competitive land prices.

**PL15.3** Encourage full, intensive use of industrial areas while safeguarding the environment. Ensure land-use compatibility by buffering, height limits, landscaping, truck routing, building design, and operation and maintenance standards.

**PL15.4** Limit non-industrial uses in industrial areas to those that do not conflict with industry. Eliminate or reduce the size of industrial areas only if not expected to be needed or not suitable for industry.

**PL15.5** Focus major industries in locations with good freeway access, adequate utilities, minimal environmental constraints, sufficient space, and minimal land-use conflicts. Specific areas identified for industrial use include the Port peninsula, the Mottman Industrial Park, and near Fones Road.

**PL15.6** Coordinate with the Port of Olympia on future sustainable economic development.

**PL15.7** Design industrial areas for convenient freight access.

**PL15.8** Provide opportunities for light industrial uses in commercial areas consistent with the commercial and multifamily uses of those areas, such as low-impact production within buildings with retail storefronts.

## Commercial Uses and Urban Corridors

More intensive development in commercial areas will increase their vitality and make better use of the City's transit and street systems. For this reason, major new commercial areas are not to be created. Any new commercial areas will be limited to allowing neighborhood-oriented businesses and services in the neighborhood centers of residential areas that reduce the need for residents to travel far to shop.

Over time, we envision our existing commercial areas becoming more attractive to pedestrians and customers, to the point where they can provide a more balanced and attractive mix of commercial, residential, and entertainment or recreational uses. Significant changes will need to occur for some of our commercial areas to increase their appeal as places to shop, live, work, and visit and to become more inviting higher-density, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use areas for pedestrian and transit users.

# Goals and Policies

## **GL16 Adequate commercial land conveniently serves local and regional trade areas.**

**PL16.1** Encourage increasing the intensity and diversity of development in existing commercial areas by mixing commercial and multifamily development along with entertainment and cultural centers in a way that will reduce reliance on cars and enable people to work, shop, recreate and reside in the same area.

**PL16.2** Encourage housing, including affordable and lower income housing, in commercial districts near transit stops.

**PL16.3** Work with developers to identify commercial areas for infill and redevelopment, to remove unnecessary barriers to this type of development, and to provide the infrastructure needed for intensive commercial and mixed use development.

**PL16.4** Locate and size commercial areas to decrease reliance on cars, improve community life, and maintain the tax base.

**PL16.5** Encourage the efficient use and design of commercial parking areas; reduce parking space requirements (but avoid significant overflow into residential areas); support parking structures, especially Downtown and in urban corridors; and designate streets for on-street parking where safe.

**PL16.6** Encourage new commercial uses adjacent to the arterial street edge and in mixed-use projects.

**PL16.7** Provide convenient and safe pedestrian access to and between businesses.

**PL16.8** Prohibit new and expanded commercial 'strips,' and allow conversion of such existing uses to a multi-use development with greater depth and integration of residential units.

**PL16.9** Outside urban corridors, provide for low-intensity commerce that depends on automobile access and allow wholesale businesses near major customers or where resulting traffic will not impact retail areas.

**PL16.10** Encourage adaptive reuse and commercial infill for existing vacant or underutilized buildings as a way to create economic opportunities for small local businesses while also promoting historic preservation for structures and neighborhoods and reducing the potential for the perception of blight that could be caused by vacant storefronts.

## **GL17 Commercial areas are attractive, functional, and appealing.**

**PL17.1** Work with businesses and residents to help make commercial areas functional, efficient, and attractive.

**PL17.2** Establish maximum building heights that are proportional to streets, informed by market analysis, retain scenic views, and result in compatibility with adjoining development.

**PL17.3** Seek opportunities to create or enhance town squares framed by commercial or civic buildings, pocket parks, plazas and other small public or private spaces in Downtown or other high-density areas.

**PL17.4** Ensure that commercial uses are compatible with adjoining residential districts. This might include prohibiting reflective surfaces, screening solid waste and parking areas, regulating emissions, reducing building sizes and increasing setbacks near residential districts, screening parking areas, and requiring facades with architectural features that reduce the appearance of a commercial building's size, such as stepbacks and tiering above three stories.

**PL17.5** Require site designs for commercial and public buildings that will complement nearby development and either maintain or improve the appearance of the area. This may include building designs with a defined bottom, middle, and top; appealing architectural elements such as windows, wall detailing; fountains; and the use of balconies, stepped back stories and pitched roofs that reduce the perceived size of the building.

**PL17.6** Create visual continuity along arterial streets through coordinated site planning, landscaping, building designs, signs and streetscapes.

**PL17.7** Require screening of unattractive site features such as mechanical equipment and large solid waste receptacles such as dumpsters, while maintaining good access for collection and maintenance.

**PL17.8** Use design standards to ensure pedestrians and bicyclists have safe, direct, convenient access to commercial and public buildings.

**PL17.9** Require a form of parking that retains aesthetics and minimizes pedestrian barriers and inconvenience by including screening along streets and residential areas; limit parking lots to one contiguous acre; and locates them at the rear of buildings, or, if the rear is not possible, then on the side, but with minimal street frontage.

**PL17.10** Ensure that business signs identify the business but do not create visual clutter or dominate the character of the area; require the use of low or façade-mounted signs where possible.

## Urban Corridors

Portions of our arterial streets are lined with lower density residential and office uses and typical strip-commercial development. Driveways to each business interrupt and slow the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; the pattern of buildings behind parking lots makes pedestrian access difficult and uninviting; and the disjointed signs, landscaping, and building designs are often unattractive. As a result, these areas have limited appeal as places to live, work, and shop.

Over time, thoughtful planning will change some of these sections of major streets into 'urban corridors' that will have a mix of high-density uses, and where people will enjoy walking or rolling, shopping, working, and living. See the [Transportation Corridors Map](#) and the [Transportation chapter](#) for further discussion.

Urban corridors like this are key to avoiding sprawl by providing an appealing mix of housing options for people who want to live in an attractive, urban environment close to transit, work, and shopping. Redevelopment along these corridors will be focused in areas with the greatest potential for mixed-use development, so that public and private investment will have maximum benefit.

These corridors, first described in the 1993 Thurston Regional Transportation Plan and contained in the current [Regional Transportation Plan](#), also should include land uses that support the community, such as community centers, day care centers, social services offices, educational functions, and parks.

In cooperation with Lacey, Tumwater Thurston County, Intercity Transit, and the Thurston Regional Planning Council, this Plan calls for gradually redeveloping these urban corridors with:

- Compatible housing, such as apartments and townhouses, within or near commercial uses
- Frequent transit service

- Housing and employment densities sufficient to support frequent transit service
- Wide continuous sidewalks with trees, attractive landscaping, and pedestrian-scale furniture, as appropriate
- Multi-story buildings oriented toward the street rather than parking lots
- Parking spaces located behind the buildings or in structures

The land use designations along these streets vary (see the Future Land Use Map at the end of this chapter) to promote a gradual increase in density and scale of uses that support and remain in context with the adjacent neighborhoods. Slightly less intensive land uses at the fringes of these corridors will create a gradual transition from the activity of the major street edge to less-dense areas in adjacent neighborhoods.

These outer reaches of the urban corridors will feature buildings and sidewalks with safe and easy pedestrian access. Sidewalks will link those walking and rolling to bus stops, stores, neighboring residences, free-standing businesses on corners, and perimeter sidewalks.

“Gateways” to Olympia are to be located at the entry/exit points of landscaped “civic boulevards,” at city boundaries, topographical changes, transition in land use, and shifts in transportation densities. Three of the eight gateways are located at the city limits and may include “Welcome to Olympia” signage. Gateways provide a grand entrance into the capital city of the State of Washington. Gateways are to be densely planted with trees and native understories; consideration will be given to the maximum landscaping and amenities feasible. Each civic boulevard will have a distinctive special environmental setting that is shaped by a public planning process that involves community members, neighborhoods, and City officials. Civic boulevards are to be densely planted with trees and native understory; consideration will be given to the maximum landscaping and amenities feasible.



Gateways Map

## Goals and Policies

### **GL18 Attractive urban corridors of mixed uses are established near specified major streets.**

**PL18.1** Establish urban corridors as shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#) with potential employment and residential density to support frequent transit service, encourage pedestrian traffic between businesses, provide a large customer base, and minimize auto use for local trips.

**PL18.2** Regionally coordinate urban corridor planning and improvements including public facilities and services in these areas to ensure redevelopment is continuous, consistent, and balanced.

**PL18.3** Transform urban corridors into areas with excellent transit service; multi-story buildings fronting major streets with trees, benches and landscaping; public art and public

spaces, parking lots behind buildings; and a compatible mix of residential uses close to commercial uses.

**PL18.4** Establish minimum housing densities in urban corridors to support frequent transit service and sustain area businesses.

**PL18.5** Ensure appropriate transitional land uses from high intensity land uses along the arterial streets of the urban corridors to the uses adjacent to the corridors; corridor redevelopment should enhance both the corridor and quality of life in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**PL18.6** Focus public intervention and incentives on encouraging housing in the portions of the urban corridors nearest Downtown and other areas with substantial potential for redevelopment consistent with this Plan. These include, for example, the area from the Fourth Avenue/Pacific Avenue intersection east to Pattison Avenue, and the area near the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Division Street, the Martin Way Corridor, and the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea. Corridor improvements should support increased housing capacity while coordinating with broader goals for pedestrian and multimodal infrastructure, consistent with the Transportation and Climate chapters.

**PL18.7** Utilize the Martin Way Corridor study as a guide for future planning efforts along the Martin Way Corridor.

**PL18.8** Include public art and public spaces in the urban landscape.

**PL18.9** Evaluate the application and size of the Urban Corridors designation. This should include, but not be limited to, consideration of the width of the Urban Corridor designation and the allowed densities and land uses. The evaluation should also address how to transition from the more intense land uses along these corridors to the lower intensity uses in adjacent neighborhoods.

**GL19 Olympia’s neighborhoods provide housing choices that fit the diversity of local income levels and lifestyles. They are shaped by thorough public planning processes that involve community members, neighborhoods, and City officials.**

**PL19.1** Establish eight gateways with civic boulevards that are entry/exit pathways along major streets to downtown Olympia and the Capitol.

**PL19.2** Concentrate multifamily housing into three high-density neighborhoods: Downtown Olympia, the Pacific/Martin/Lilly Triangle, and the area surrounding Capital Mall.

Encourage both market rate and affordable housing for varying income levels. Commercial uses directly serve high-density neighborhoods and allow people to meet their daily needs without traveling outside their neighborhood. High-density neighborhoods are highly walkable and accessible. At least one-quarter of the forecasted growth is planned for Downtown Olympia.

**PL19.3** Preserve and enhance the character of existing urban residential neighborhoods while allowing for residential infill with diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles. Disallow high-density development in existing urban residential neighborhood areas except for neighborhood centers.

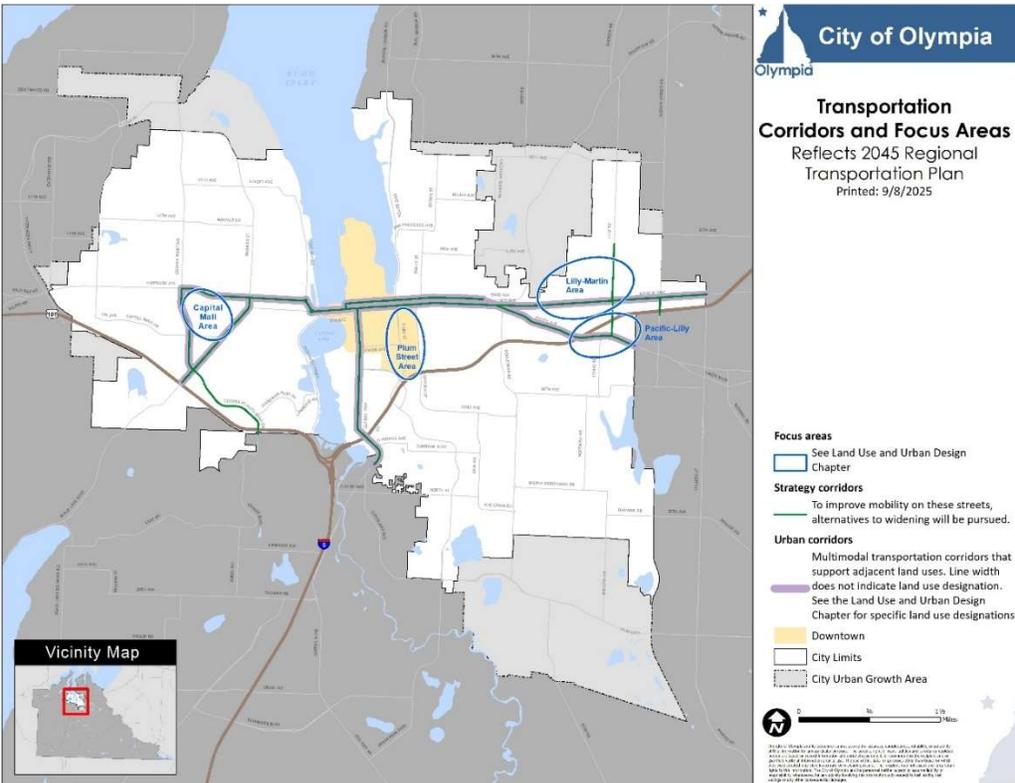
**PL19.4** In urban residential neighborhoods, allow medium-density Neighborhood Centers that include civic and commercial uses that serve the neighborhood. Design concepts for neighborhood centers can be done through a collaborative process with the community and neighborhoods.

## Focus Areas

The City prepares plans and studies to help guide the future of targeted areas within our community. Leadership for plan preparation will vary by location and purpose, and priorities depend on funding availability and the potential for appropriate development or redevelopment. Generally, these plans feature the location, size, and type of land uses; residential and employment density targets, and public improvements. A few specific areas have been identified, and more may be identified in the future.

Several of the city's commercial and industrial areas have distinct roles, opportunities, and limitations. This section provides further guidance for the future of some of these areas. The City envisions some areas, such as the area around the Capital Mall, as areas that will gradually convert into urban neighborhoods with a mix of land uses. Others, such as the Auto Mall area, will be reserved for one or two primary uses. In cooperation with landowners and others, the City will be focusing its planning efforts on three of these urban corridor 'focus areas,' possibly in the form of a master plan that addresses issues such as land use, infrastructure and design.

Already the City has completed two such plans: the [Downtown Strategy](#) and the [Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan](#).



See the Transportation Corridors and Focus Areas map in the Appendices.

In addition to the focus areas described below, the City works with the State of Washington in its preparation of the [Capitol Campus Master Plan](#) and with the Port of Olympia in its planning of its properties including the Port peninsula. Included in these efforts is the ongoing efforts to integrate these areas with downtown Olympia. The [Future Land Use Map](#) frames all of these planning efforts.

## Capital Mall Triangle Subarea

The Capital Mall area is a regional shopping destination, which also includes one of the area's best balances of jobs within walking or rolling distance of medium-density housing. This area should continue to be economically viable and contribute to the community's goals, as documented in the [Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan](#), with infill, redevelopment, and connections through the area and to adjacent areas for all modes of travel. It will evolve into a complete urban neighborhood with a mix of jobs, housing, and services.

Changes in development regulations and design standards, as recommended in the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan, will encourage continued infill and redevelopment in the area so that the potential of the mall and the surrounding properties can be fully realized. Recommendations in the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan address a wide range of subjects, including but not limited to, urban design, transportation and transit, community assets such as parks or public gathering spaces, public or public and private

investment in catalyst projects, changes to development regulations, and future work items such as a corridor study for Harrison Avenue and another for Black Lake Boulevard. The adopted Subarea Plan is to serve as a guide for future growth in the area and be referenced for additional and more detailed information.

## Lilly and Martin Way Area

The Medical Services district along Lilly Road near Martin Way is home to a regional hospital and numerous medical and dental clinics and offices. However, portions of Martin Way, once a rural highway, are little changed. These areas have the potential for additional health-care related uses, and housing, as well as retail and service businesses. This area is expected to continue to evolve into a medically-oriented neighborhood with jobs, housing, and supporting services. Future planning in this area should consider or coordinate with the [Martin Way Corridor Study](#).

## Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road Area

The area surrounding the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road, like the nearby Stoll Road area, has the potential to become a unique area within an urban corridor. It is located next to a regional trail, lies between two shopping centers, and includes a nearly complete street grid with many low-density homes. This location provides good access to retail services for daily and weekly shopping needs within easy walking, rolling, or biking distance for its residents, and is large enough for planned creative designs. Transit service on both Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road is excellent. But the area also has its challenges, such as substandard public improvements, no nearby parks, and surrounding traffic. City plans call for this area to be developed with a mix of retail, service, and high-density residential uses consistent with its location in an urban corridor.

## Plum Street Area

The area surrounding Plum Street from Interstate 5 to the vicinity of State Avenue, including the Eastside Street area, should be examined in a future planning effort. Plum Street is a Downtown entry street and provides direct access to the Port of Olympia from Interstate 5. The area where Plum Street intersects with Interstate 5 is described in the Urban Corridors section of this chapter as a “gateway” to Olympia. Future planning efforts for this area should evaluate a range of aspects of this area, including but not limited to, transportation, future land use designations, and its relation to Downtown.

## Auto Mall Area

The Olympia Auto Mall is where many of Thurston County’s new and used car dealers and auto-oriented businesses are located. It attracts customers from a regional trade area and is a significant employment center.



Landscaping enhances auto dealerships.

## West Bay Drive

The West Bay Drive area has a challenging mix of opportunities and constraints. Several sites along the shore are significant in Squaxin Island Tribal cultural history. Industrial use of this waterfront dates to the nineteenth century. The shallow waters along this shoreline continue to provide crucial habitat for young salmon leaving the Deschutes River basin. Birds, marine and upland mammals and other wildlife species are relatively common for an urban area. The area known as the Port Lagoon, which is subject to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conservation easement, serves as a fish and wildlife conservancy area. Nearby, the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project is underway and will eventually convert what was called Capitol Lake into an estuary called the Deschutes Estuary.

Most industry has left this area, and only fragments of waterborne commerce remain. The community foresees continued transition of the West Bay Drive area toward a mix of urban uses and habitat improvements, while also allowing existing industries and shipping facilities to remain economically viable. The resulting mix of uses should form the foundation for a vibrant mix of light-industrial, office, restaurant, commercial, recreational, and residential uses, that also provides improved habitat for fish and wildlife. Future development and street improvements in this corridor will be consistent with the [West Bay Drive Corridor Study](#).

## Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area

The Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan identifies a preferred alternative for a mixed-use, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly neighborhood. The area is intended to be accessible by pedestrians and transit, and to provide amenities such as gathering spaces and outdoor seating. The area has a distinct character with a lifestyle retail center that includes outdoor seating and gathering spaces. The lifestyle retail center will be a place that accommodates cars but is also designed for the safe and convenient enjoyment of bicyclists and

pedestrians. A multi-use trail and neighborhood park are planned. Future development and street improvements in this opportunity area will be consistent with the Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan.

## Goals and Policies

### **GL20 Focus areas are planned in cooperation with property owners and residents.**

**PL20.1** Maximize the potential of the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea as a regional shopping destination by encouraging development that caters to a regional market; by providing pedestrian sidewalks between businesses and areas; by increasing shopper convenience and reducing traffic by supporting transit service linked to Downtown; by encouraging redevelopment of parking areas with buildings and parking structures; and by encouraging multifamily housing. (Please see the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan for more detailed information and guidance for this area.)

**PL20.2** Maximize the potential of the Olympia Auto Mall as a regional auto sales and services center by encouraging its use for auto sales and services and limiting incompatible activities, and by imposing auto-oriented design guidelines along Cooper Point Road that ensure pleasing landscaping, minimal visual clutter, and easy pedestrian and vehicle access.

**PL20.3** Enhance the Lilly Road hospital area as a medical services center by encouraging healthcare supportive uses such as restaurants, florists, child care, convenience shops, upper floor and rear multifamily, senior housing, and nursing homes; and by prohibiting non-medical uses that would generate high traffic volumes or noise disruptive of recuperation.

**PL20.4** Plan for redevelopment of the Stoll Road area and the area bound by Lilly Road, Pacific Avenue, and I-5 as 'focus areas' adjacent to the Pacific Avenue and Martin Way urban corridors to include retail, office, personal and professional services and high-density housing. Planning for these areas should encompass consideration of redevelopment and improvement of nearby portions of the urban corridor.

**PL20.5** In the West Bay Drive area provide a mix of recreation and urban uses that enhance wildlife habitat and cultural resources; limit industrial uses to existing sites; minimize blockage of upland views of Budd Inlet; and connect the area to the south with an urban trail.



South Puget Sound Community College is a valued feature of Olympia.

**PL20.6** Work cooperatively with the State of Washington on planning for the Capitol Campus, and the Port of Olympia in planning for its properties. Provide opportunities for long-term master planning of other single-purpose properties of at least 20 acres, such as hospitals, colleges, and high school campuses.

## Downtown and Other Neighborhoods

Our community is composed of many neighborhoods. Some, like the Downtown area, are composed of commercial, cultural, and residential activities and land uses. Other neighborhoods are primarily residential, with nearby parks and schools. This section of the Plan addresses these varied and unique places that together form Olympia.

### Downtown Olympia

A community needs a "heart." For our community, the Downtown area performs this role, not just for our city, but for the larger region. For that reason, Downtown Olympia deserves and receives special attention. A city with a thriving downtown has more potential for bolstering community spirit and providing a healthy local economy.

Olympia's Downtown includes over 500 acres. It is generally bounded by the State Capitol Campus, the Deschutes Estuary, Budd Inlet, and Eastside Street. This area includes Olympia's retail core, State and other office uses, and access to the waterfront, and is the center of most major transportation links. It is the social, cultural, and economic center of the area.

Downtown will continue to be an attractive place to live, work and play, even as this community faces the challenges of sea level rise. Future office, retail and residential development will support Downtown's role as a regional center and home of state

government, commerce, and industry. Given its history, physical location, and identity, Downtown Olympia will continue to be the heart of Olympia and the region.

## **GL21 Regional urban activity is centered in Downtown Olympia.**

**PL21.1** Continue implementing the Downtown Strategy which addresses housing, public spaces, parking management, rehabilitation and redevelopment, architecture and cultural resources, building skyline and views, and relationships to the Port peninsula and Capitol Campus.

**PL21.2** Include public art and public spaces in the Downtown landscape.

**PL21.3** Through aggressive marketing and extra height, encourage intensive downtown residential and commercial development that is of sufficient density to support frequent transit service.

**PL21.4** Through interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, encourage commercial occupancy in existing underutilized or vacant buildings to increase the economic vitality of Downtown.

**PL21.5** Encourage development that caters to a regional market.

**PL21.6** Coordinate with the State of Washington and Port of Olympia to ensure that both the Capitol Campus plan and Port peninsula development are consistent with and support the community's vision for Downtown Olympia.



Community members enjoying Harbor Day activities in the Downtown.

**PL21.7** Landscape Downtown with trees (both for aesthetics and functions such as shade), planters and baskets, banners, community gardens and other decorative improvements.

**GL22 Downtown designs express Olympia’s heritage and future in a compact and pedestrian-oriented manner.**

**PL22.1** Regulate the design of Downtown development with specific but flexible guidelines that allow for creativity and innovation, enhance historic architecture and recognize the distinct areas of Downtown described in the Downtown Strategy, and do not discourage development.

**PL22.2** Require that Downtown development provide active spaces, adequate sunlight and air-flow and minimize 'blank' walls at street level.

**PL22.3** Require development designs that favor pedestrians over cars by including awnings and rain protection that blend with historic architecture, create interest, and minimize security and safety risks. Development designs should also foster cultural events, entertainment, and tourism.

**PL22.4** Provide for private use of public lands and rights-of-way when in the best interest of the community.

**PL22.5** Design streets with landscaping, wide sidewalks, underground utilities and a coordinated pattern of unifying details.

**PL22.6** Designate 'pedestrian-oriented streets' where most of the frontage will have 'people-oriented' activities and street-level buildings will have a high proportion of glass. Prohibit parking lots along these streets, except when preserving scenic views and instead provide surface parking along other streets.

**PL22.7** Plant, maintain, and protect Downtown trees for enjoyment and beauty and shade. Coordinate planting, with special attention to Legion Way and Sylvester Park, and a buffer from the Port’s marine terminal.

**PL22.8** Evaluate reducing the number of zone districts and land use designations within the Plum Street corridor from Interstate 5 to the State Avenue vicinity, including the Eastside Street area.

**PL22.9** Limit building heights to accentuate, and retain selected public views of the Capitol dome.

**PL22.10** Support the designation of 'shared streets,' and a network of 'shared streets,' through interdepartmental coordination and planning and community engagement. Evaluate development regulations to ensure they are consistent with the designs and goals of 'shared streets' as defined in State law.

### **GL23 Downtown's historic character and significant historic buildings, structures, and sites are preserved and enhanced.**

**PL23.1** Promote the Downtown Historic District to provide a focal point of historic interest, maintain the economic vitality of Downtown, and enhance the richness and diversity of Olympia.

**PL23.2** Minimize damage to significant historic features or character during rehabilitation projects.

**PL23.3** Design new development and renovations so they are compatible and harmonious with the established pattern, alignment, size and shape of the existing Downtown area.

**PL23.4** Create incentives to promote incorporating historic buildings into redevelopment projects and restoring historic facades.

**PL23.5** Implement and support continued work towards completing the recommendations of the [Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan](#).

## Neighborhoods

This section contains the goals and policies that will protect and improve the character and livability of our neighborhoods as they evolve and grow. We envision all of Olympia's neighborhoods as places that support a diverse community of people with different means and lifestyles. A variety of housing types located along pleasant, pedestrian-oriented streets will provide quality living opportunities with daily needs available nearby. Higher-density housing will be available near major streets and commercial areas to take advantage of transit, other services, and employment opportunities. Small-scale commercial uses in neighborhoods will provide goods and services to nearby residents and will be designed to limit impacts to surrounding properties.

Neighborhoods are the building blocks that help to make Olympia a unique, diverse, and vibrant city. Neighborhoods are like a quilt that brings together diverse blocks that

contribute to an interconnected, beautiful, and functional city. Together, they tell the story of Olympia’s past and present, and a warm and welcoming future for all community members. The City of Olympia invests in neighborhoods because they are the right location to foster activities that improve social well-being and engage residents in improving and maintaining their shared physical spaces.

Social connections are an important part of a community and a neighborhood. One way to strengthen social connections is through careful design of the built environment. Designs that allow people to share the same physical space of their neighborhood provides opportunities for social interactions. These designs (also referred to as ‘social infrastructure’) include sidewalks and appropriate bike facilities leading from residential areas to commercial and neighborhood-oriented businesses, other neighborhood amenities such as parks, plazas, and other small public or publicly accessible private spaces. Development designed with social connections in mind can often serve as activity hubs or small-scale town squares. Through neighborhood planning, land use design, transportation planning, and development regulations we can provide opportunities for needed social interaction and to foster a sense of community.



One of Olympia’s many attractive neighborhoods .

Neighborhood character is made up of a variety of elements that give a neighborhood its distinct identity. Neighborhood characteristics are not stagnant and will change over time. Consideration of neighborhood character will vary by the unique features of a neighborhood and includes the physical attributes that contribute to its sense of place and identity. These elements may include, but are not limited to, a neighborhood’s land use, urban design, visual resources, and historic resources. This includes design elements of buildings (mass, scale, materials, setting, and setbacks), parks and open space, land uses

and development designs that encourage social interaction, provision of City utilities, street grids and connections, and street trees.

Our community considers it essential that all neighborhoods become accessible, sustainable, and culturally inclusive.

- **Accessible:** Includes ADA compliance, multimodal mobility for all ways of getting around, whether walking, rolling, biking, taking transit or driving, and housing affordability.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes a healthy environment, a diverse and resilient local economy, and historic preservation, including reuse and adaptability of existing buildings.
- **Culturally inclusive:** Recognizes, supports and promotes diverse housing types, strong arts and historic preservation, and the various contributions of diverse Olympians, past and present.

Each neighborhood should have:

- Narrow, tree-lined streets that are easy and interesting to use for walking or rolling, bicycling, and travel by transit.
- A system of open space and trails with a neighborhood park.
- Diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles.
- Sufficient housing densities to support frequent transit service and sustain neighborhood businesses.
- Small-scale commercial uses that provide goods and services to nearby residents.
- A ‘neighborhood center’ with businesses serving area residents.



A small grocery store in the Wildwood neighborhood.

A large portion of Olympia’s residents will live within a quarter-mile of a neighborhood center. These centers will be focal points of neighborhoods. Although they will vary by location, they generally should contain small-scale convenience and service businesses, a transit stop, and a neighborhood park, and be bounded by moderate or high-density housing.

These neighborhood centers will serve as activity hubs or small-scale town squares that foster social interaction and a sense of community and accommodate nearby residents’ routine shopping needs.

Where possible, a network of walking or rolling and biking routes that provide both recreational and commuting opportunities will connect these neighborhood centers to parks, schools, and Downtown. To minimize traffic impacts and provide for transit service, these centers will be near major streets. Approximate locations for these centers are shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#).

Although neighborhoods will have some common features, each is unique. Recognizing this, the City envisions a public process where the needs of specific neighborhoods can be individually addressed. This neighborhood sub-area planning process is described in the Public Participation Chapter and will focus on [twelve planning areas \(including Downtown\)](#). And, as described below, The City will prepare site-specific plans for a few other select areas of the community. Managing these areas well will be critical to the success of this Comprehensive Plan and deserve attention.



A person walking on a neighborhood sidewalk.

## Goals and Policies

### **GL24 Development maintains or improves neighborhood livability.**

**PL24.1** Require development in neighborhoods to be of a type, scale, orientation, and design that allows for a sensible integration into the neighborhood; design requirements should be flexible to allow for a variety of housing types for different lifestyles and income levels.

**PL24.2** Unless necessary for historic preservation, prohibit conversion of housing in residential areas to commercial use not designed to serve local residents; instead, support redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods to bolster stability and allow home occupations that do not degrade neighborhood appearance or livability, nor create significant environmental impacts.

**PL24.3** Allow elder care homes and seniors-only housing and encourage child care services everywhere except industrial areas.

**PL24.4** Support development and public improvements consistent with healthy and active lifestyles.

**PL24.5** Prevent physical barriers from isolating and separating new developments from existing neighborhoods.

**PL24.6** Allow small-scale commercial uses within neighborhoods through conditional use permits until design standards are developed. Commercial uses in residential zones should be appropriately scaled and designed to serve nearby residents.

### **GL25 Neighborhood centers are the focal point of neighborhoods and villages.**

**PL25.1** Establish a neighborhood center at each **village** site (see Villages and Other Planned Developments section) and encourage development of the neighborhood centers shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#). Specific parcels should be identified through the rezone process, which provides for public engagement opportunities.

**PL25.2** Neighborhood centers should generally be located along collector or arterial streets and within about 600 feet of a transit stop.

**PL25.3** Support land uses such as housing, a food store, a café or bakery, and a neighborhood park or civic green at all neighborhood centers. Allow places of worship, schools, and convenience businesses and services that cater primarily to neighborhood residents. Allow, where appropriate, increased residential density for properties within and adjacent to neighborhood centers to sustain neighborhood businesses and to support transit. Prohibit auto-oriented uses. Vary the specific size and composition of such centers for balance with surrounding uses. Where practical, focus commercial uses on civic greens or parks. Limit the size of commercial uses. (Note: A larger urban center is permitted in the Briggs Urban Village.)

**PL25.4** Allow neighborhood center designs that are innovative and provide variety, but that ensure compatibility with adjoining uses. Encourage land use and building designs that provide opportunities for community members to build social connections. Consider appropriate phasing, scale, design and exterior materials, as well as glare, noise and traffic impacts when evaluating compatibility. To encourage social interactions require that primary access to buildings be directly from street sidewalks. Buildings should be oriented toward the neighborhood and any adjacent park or green. Require that signs be consistent with neighborhood character.

**PL25.5** Locate streets and trails for non-arterial access to the neighborhood center.

### **GL26 Trees help maintain strong and healthy neighborhoods.**

**PL26.1** Use trees to foster a sense of neighborhood identity.

**PL26.2** Encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of trees with historic significance or other value to the community or specific neighborhoods.

**PL26.3** Encourage the use of appropriate fruit and nut trees to increase local food self-sufficiency.

## Sub-area Planning

Much of this Plan applies to the entire Olympia community. However, this is a large area of over twenty-four square miles with tens of thousands of residents; this Plan cannot address all of the details of our community. [Twelve planning areas](#), including Downtown, are to be established to provide that opportunity. In general, planning areas will be comparable to the scale of an elementary school service area with five to ten thousand residents. As described in the Public Participation and Partners chapter, this scale will provide the opportunity for interested parties to focus on furthering the community's plan for these areas. These sub-area efforts must be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

## Goals and Policies

### **GL27 Each of the community's major neighborhoods has its own priorities.**

**PL27.1** In cooperation with residents, landowners, businesses, and other interested parties, establish priorities for the planning sub-areas. The specific area, content, and process for each sub-area is to be adapted to the needs and interests of each area. (See Goal 5 of [Public Participation and Partners](#) chapter.)

**PL27.2** Create sub-area strategies that address provisions and priorities for community health, neighborhood centers and places of assembly, cultural resources, forestry, utilities, open space and parks.

**PL27.3** Develop neighborhood and business community approaches to beautification that include activities in residential and commercial areas.

## 'Villages' and Other Planned Developments

Sites for 'neighborhood villages,' one 'urban village,' and the older Evergreen Park planned unit development, each with a compatible mixture of single and multifamily housing and businesses, are designated within the urban area. These mixed-use projects are to provide for a coordinated, compatible mixture of single and multifamily housing arranged around a readily-accessible neighborhood center. The locations and mix of land uses and the design of the street and trail system in these areas are to create an environment that encourages walking and rolling, biking and transit use. These 'villages' will foster efficient land use through compact, higher-density development with residential uses near bus stops and basic retail and services.

The smaller 'neighborhood villages' will typically consist of single-family detached homes, townhouses and multifamily units, surrounding a small neighborhood center. The 'urban village' will be more diverse and intensely developed. The businesses of the urban village will serve a larger area and may include a supermarket, offices, and a broad array of predominantly neighborhood-oriented businesses and services. Both the neighborhood villages and urban villages will be designed as coordinated, integrated projects with a compatible mix of land uses. Development phasing requirements will ensure that each project component and amenity is developed at the appropriate time. While these villages and the Evergreen Park PUD will have many characteristics in common, the design and composition of each project will vary in response to site conditions, location, market demand, available street and utility capacity, and the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and will evolve over time.

## Goals and Policies

**GL28 Mixed-use developments, also known as 'villages,' are planned with a pedestrian orientation and a coordinated and balanced mix of land uses.**

**PL28.1** Require planned development sites shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#) to develop as coordinated, mixed-use projects.

**PL28.2** Provide for any redevelopment or redesign of planned developments including the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development to be consistent with the 'village vision' of this Plan.

**PL28.3** Require 'master plans' for villages that encompass the entire site and specify the project phasing, street layout and design, lot arrangement, land uses, parks and open space, building orientation, environmental protection and neighborhood compatibility measures.

**PL28.4** Provide for a compatible mix of housing in each village with pleasant living, shopping and working environment, pedestrian-oriented character, well-located and sized open spaces, attractive, well-connected streets, and a balance of retail stores, offices, housing, and public uses.

**PL28.5** Require a neighborhood center, a variety of housing, connected trails, prominent open spaces, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas in each village.

**PL28.6** Require that villages retain the natural topography and major environmental features of the site and incorporate water bodies and stormwater ponds into the design to minimize environmental degradation.



Landscaping enhances a stormwater pond in a City Park.

**PL28.7** Locate parking lots at the rear or side of buildings, to avoid pedestrian interference and to minimize street frontage. Landscape any parking adjacent to streets and minimize parking within villages by reducing requirements and providing incentives for shared parking.

**PL28.8** Require village integrity but provide flexibility for developers to respond to market conditions.

**GL29 In collaboration with community partners, local Thurston County food production is encouraged and supported to increase self-sufficiency, reduce environmental impact, adapt to future climate conditions, promote health and the humane treatment of animals and support the local economy.**

**PL29.1** Actively partner with community organizations to provide education and information about the importance of local food systems.

**PL29.2** Encourage residential landscapes to include pollinator gardens, drought-tolerant plants, food gardens, and biodiverse plants as an alternative to maintaining a lawn.  
(Climate)

**PL29.3** Collaborate with community partners to ensure that everyone, including but not limited to young and beginning farmers, persons of color, and veterans, within Olympia is within walking, rolling, or biking distance of a place to grow food.

**PL29.4** Encourage for-profit gardening and farming in the community.

**PL29.5** Purchase locally grown food when possible.

**PL29.6** Allow food-producing gardens on rooftops, and offer incentives to include greenhouses for year-round food production.

**PL29.7** Recognize the value of open space and other green spaces as areas of potential food production.

**PL29.8** Work with community organizations to develop strategies, measure, and set goals for increasing local food production.

**PL29.9** Work with local governments throughout the region to help protect existing agricultural lands and develop and promote a vibrant local food economy.

**PL29.10** Partner with community organizations to help educate community members who are interested in raising animals for food in the city. This might include information about protecting animals from predators, maintaining sanitary conditions, and treating animals humanely.

**PL29.11** Educate and encourage community members to purchase from local farms and small producers as an alternative to factory farms that may engage in inhumane treatment of animals.

**PL29.12** Partner with community organizations to help educate community members who are interested in urban agriculture on how to address and plan for climate impacts such as drought and extreme heat and encourage the production of climate-friendly foods. (Climate)

**PL29.13** Consistent with PL1.17, evaluate expansion of the Transfer of Development Rights Program into additional zone districts where it would be appropriate and compatible as a way to preserve agriculture in the rural portions of Thurston County.

**PL29.14** Explore needs and interest for new community gardens in underserved areas, identify potential sites on public and private land, and solicit community partners.

**PL29.15** Explore the use of Soil and Vegetation Protection areas for community gardens and urban agriculture.

**PL29.16** Develop a Food System Plan for the Olympia community.

## Annexation

### **GL30 Logical boundaries and reasonable service areas are created when areas within the Urban Growth Area are annexed.**

**PL30.1** All property within the Urban Growth Boundary may be annexed into the City.

**PL30.2** Evaluate the potential removal of properties within the Urban Growth Boundary that are unlikely to develop at urban densities in the future.

**PL30.3** Before annexing areas, evaluate the City's capacity to provide services efficiently and effectively.

**PL30.4** Encourage and assist property owners in existing unincorporated "islands" to annex into the City. Do not allow annexations that create "islands" of unincorporated land within city limits.

**PL30.5** Evaluate all proposed annexations based on their short- and long-term community impacts, including financial and equity impacts, and how they adhere to the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies. If a proposed annexation includes proposed development, analyze its short- and long-term impacts on the neighborhood and city,

including all required water, sewer, streets, sidewalks, schools, open spaces, police and fire protection, garbage collection and other services.

**PL30.6** Confer and assess the potential impacts and boundary issues of proposed annexations with special purpose districts and other jurisdictions. Work to resolve boundary issues with affected jurisdictions before taking any final action on a formal annexation petition.

**PL30.7** Use readily identifiable boundaries, such as lakes, rivers, streams, railroads, and highways, for annexation boundaries wherever practical. In special situations where those features are not present or appropriate, consider other features such as streets, generally accepted neighborhood and subdivision/plat boundaries, or other types of boundaries such as special districts.

**PL30.8** Work with the County to make sure the standards for utilities, roads, and services in the Urban Growth Areas are compatible.

**PL30.9** Provide that applicants for annexation pay their fair share for any utility and service extension and development, as well as for capital facilities needed to provide these services.

**PL30.10** Require that all fees and charges be paid or payment arrangements be made prior to annexation. Property owners within an annexing area should be required to assume a share of the city's bonded indebtedness.

**PL30.11** Discourage annexations for the sole purpose of obtaining approval of uses not allowed by County regulations unless the proposal is consistent with an adopted [joint plan](#) and with City standards and policies.

**PL30.12** Decisions on modifying the boundaries of a proposed annexation should be evaluated based on the annexation policies in this section, City plans and policies, the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies, and other applicable agreements, and State laws.

## For More Information

- The [Buildable Lands Report](#) prepared for Thurston County by the staff of the [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#) helps Olympia to determine the quantity of land to provide for population and employment growth
- The [Capitol Master Plan](#) prepared by the Department of Enterprise Services describes the State's plans for certain lands within and adjacent to Downtown

- The [Port of Olympia's Planning documents](#) describe the Port's vision for the future of its lands within Olympia, as well as its role within Thurston County in general
- The [Downtown Strategy](#) focuses on the City center and was formerly a part of this Comprehensive Plan. It is now a separate document adopted by the City Council
- The [Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan](#) describes a mixed-use pedestrian and bicycle-friendly subarea plan with a lifestyle retail center, multi-use trail, and a neighborhood park.
- [Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan](#)
- [Martin Way Corridor Study](#)
- [Neighborhood Sub-area Plans](#)
- [Olympia Urban Agriculture Analysis](#)
- [Thurston County's Olympia Joint Plan](#), the Comprehensive Plan for the unincorporated portions of the Olympia Urban Growth Areas

# Appendix A - Future Land Use Map Designations

The land use designations of the [Future Land Use Map](#) are described below and summarized in the Future Land Use Designations Table.

**Urban Residential.** This designation provides for residential development, including single-family detached housing, townhouses, accessory dwelling units, and low-rise multifamily housing. Where environmental constraints are significant, extraordinary clustering may be allowed to achieve minimum densities while protecting the environment. Supportive land uses, including small-scale neighborhood commercial uses and other types of housing, including small apartment buildings, may be permitted. Specific zoning and densities will be based on the unique characteristics of each area, with special attention to stormwater drainage and aquatic habitat, proximity of bus routes and major streets to ensure efficient use of developable land and to ensure provision of an adequate variety of types of housing to serve the community. Clustered development to provide future urbanization opportunities will be required where urban utilities are not readily available. Developers must include plans showing that early or partial development won't limit future urban-density growth once utilities are in place. Some zoning districts will require a mixture of single and multifamily housing at densities ranging from seven to eighteen units per acre. Specific density ranges and mandatory mixes should be based on land use compatibility and proximity to bus routes and major streets, while also ensuring the availability of a variety and blending of housing types and choices.

**Neighborhood Centers.** This designation provides for neighborhood-oriented convenience businesses and a small park or other public space. Although the locations shown on the [Future Land Use Map](#) are approximate, these centers should generally be along major streets and near areas of higher residential densities, or areas that have the capacity for higher residential development in the future. These centers may be up to three acres in size. Siting of neighborhood centers should be accomplished through a collaborative process with the community and neighborhoods. In general, they should be focused on serving nearby residents, be well integrated with adjacent land uses, and have excellent pedestrian and bicyclist access with minimal car parking.

**Residential Mixed Use.** To provide opportunities for people to live close to work, shopping, and services, this designation provides for high-density multifamily housing in multistory structures combined with limited commercial uses in parts of Downtown, near the State Capitol Campus, and near urban corridors and other activity centers. This designation supports community density goals and helps create a desirable urban living environment. It also encourages new residential buildings to include features that make walking or rolling easier and add interest to the urban environment.

The commercial uses are intended to help support the residential use of the area by providing retail and personal services within walking or rolling distance of the housing. Housing in these high-amenity areas will contribute to community vitality, include well-designed buildings on continuous street edges, link one area with another, encourage pedestrian activity, and include visible public spaces that increase safety and decrease vandalism.

**Planned Developments.** This designation includes areas of mixed uses where specific 'master plans' are required prior to development. These master plans are prepared and proposed by one or a few parties and are subject to review and confirmation by the City. This designation is intended to achieve more innovative designs than in conventional developments while ensuring compatibility with existing uses in the area. Innovative designs may include offering a wider variety of compatible housing types and densities, neighborhood convenience businesses, recreational uses, open space, trails and other amenities. Generally, residential densities should range from seven to 13 units per acre, but the specific mix of land uses will vary with the zoning, environment, and master plan of each site. In addition to a variety of housing types, these areas may include neighborhood centers as described above. Each of the two planned developments along Yelm Highway may include a larger neighborhood-oriented shopping center with a supermarket. The planned development designation also includes retaining certain existing, and potentially new, manufactured housing parks in locations suitable for such developments. Two unique planned developments include substantial government office buildings and related uses - these are the Capitol Campus; and Evergreen Park, which includes the site of the Thurston County courthouse.

**Professional Offices & Multifamily Housing.** This designation accommodates a wide range of offices, services, limited retail uses specifically authorized by the applicable zoning district, and moderate- to high-density multifamily housing in structures as large as four stories.

**Urban Corridors.** This designation applies to certain areas in the vicinity of arterial streets. Generally, more intense commercial uses and larger structures should be located near the street edge with less intensive uses and smaller structures farther from the street to transition to adjacent designations. Particular 'nodes' or intersections may be more intensely developed. Opportunities to live, work, shop and recreate will be located within walking and rolling distance of these areas.

**Urban Waterfront.** Consistent with the State's Shoreline Management Act, this designation provides for a compatible mix of commercial, light industrial, limited heavy industrial, and multifamily residential uses along the waterfront.

**Central Business District.** This designation provides for a wide range of activities that make Downtown Olympia the cultural, civic, commercial and employment heart of the

community. A dense mix of housing, pedestrian-oriented land uses and proximity to transit make a convenient link between Downtown, the State Capitol, the waterfront, and other activity centers in the region. The scale, height and bulk of development reinforce Downtown Olympia's historic character, buildings, places and street layout.

**General Commerce.** This designation provides for commercial uses and activities that are heavily dependent on convenient vehicle access but which minimize adverse impact on the community, especially on adjacent properties having more restrictive development characteristics. The area should have safe and efficient access to major transportation routes. Additional "strip" development should be limited by filling in available space in a way that accommodates and encourages pedestrian activity.

**Auto Services.** This designation conserves areas for concentrating land uses associated with automobile and other motor vehicle sales and services. Alternative uses, such as professional offices, may be permitted if compatible with the primary purpose of the designation.

**Medical Services.** This designation conserves areas in the vicinity of hospitals for concentrating medical services and facilities, associated uses, and moderate to high-density housing.

**Light Industry.** This designation provides for light industrial uses, such as assembly of products and warehousing, and compatible, complementary commercial uses.

**Industry.** This designation provides for heavy industrial development, such as manufacturing, transportation terminals, and bulk storage, and complementary commercial uses in locations with few land use conflicts, minimal environmental constraints, and adequate freight access.

**High-Density Neighborhoods Overlay:** This designation provides for multifamily residential, commercial and mixed-use neighborhoods with densities of at least 25 dwelling units per acre for residential uses that are not re-using or redeveloping existing structures. New mixed-use developments include a combination of commercial floor area ratios and residential densities that are compatible with a high-density residential neighborhood. The height in these neighborhoods will be determined by zoning and based on the "Height and View Protection Goals and Policies."

## Table: Future Land Use Designations

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION	PRIMARY USE <sup>1</sup>	RESIDENTIAL DENSITY <sup>2</sup>	BUILDING HEIGHTS <sup>3</sup>	ESTIMATED ACREAGE <sup>4</sup>	PERCENTAGE OF UGA <sup>5</sup>
Urban Residential Neighborhoods (UDN)	Single & Multi-family Residential	Up to 24 units per acre	2 to 4 stories	11,750 ac.	76%
Neighborhood Centers	Commercial	Variable	2 to 3 stories	Variable	N/A
Residential Mixed Use	Multi-family Residential	Not limited	3 to 5 stories	100 ac.	1%
Planned Developments	Mixed Use	Residential areas: 7 to 13 units per acre	Varies by site and land use	725 ac.	5%
Professional Offices & Multifamily Housing	Mixed Use	Minimum 7 units per acre	3 to 4 stories	375 ac.	2%
Urban Corridors	Commercial	Minimum 15 units per acre	3 to 6 stories	1,500 ac.	10%
Urban Waterfront	Mixed Uses	Minimum 15 units per acre	3 to 7 stories	200 ac.	1%
Central Business District	Commercial	Minimum 15 units per acre	Up to 8 stories	200 ac.	1%
General Commerce	Commercial	Minimum 7 units per acre	3 to 6 stories	75ac.	<1%
Auto Services	Commercial	Not applicable	Up to 3 stories	125 ac.	1%
Medical Services	Commercial	Minimum 7 units per acre	Up to 6 stories; plus taller hospitals	250 ac.	2%
Light Industry	Industry & Wholesaling	Not applicable	5 stories	100 ac.	1%
Industry	Industrial	Not applicable	3 to 6 stories	75ac.	<1%

<sup>1</sup> Primary Use is the anticipated use of the majority of building floor area in each category. Substantial other uses are likely.

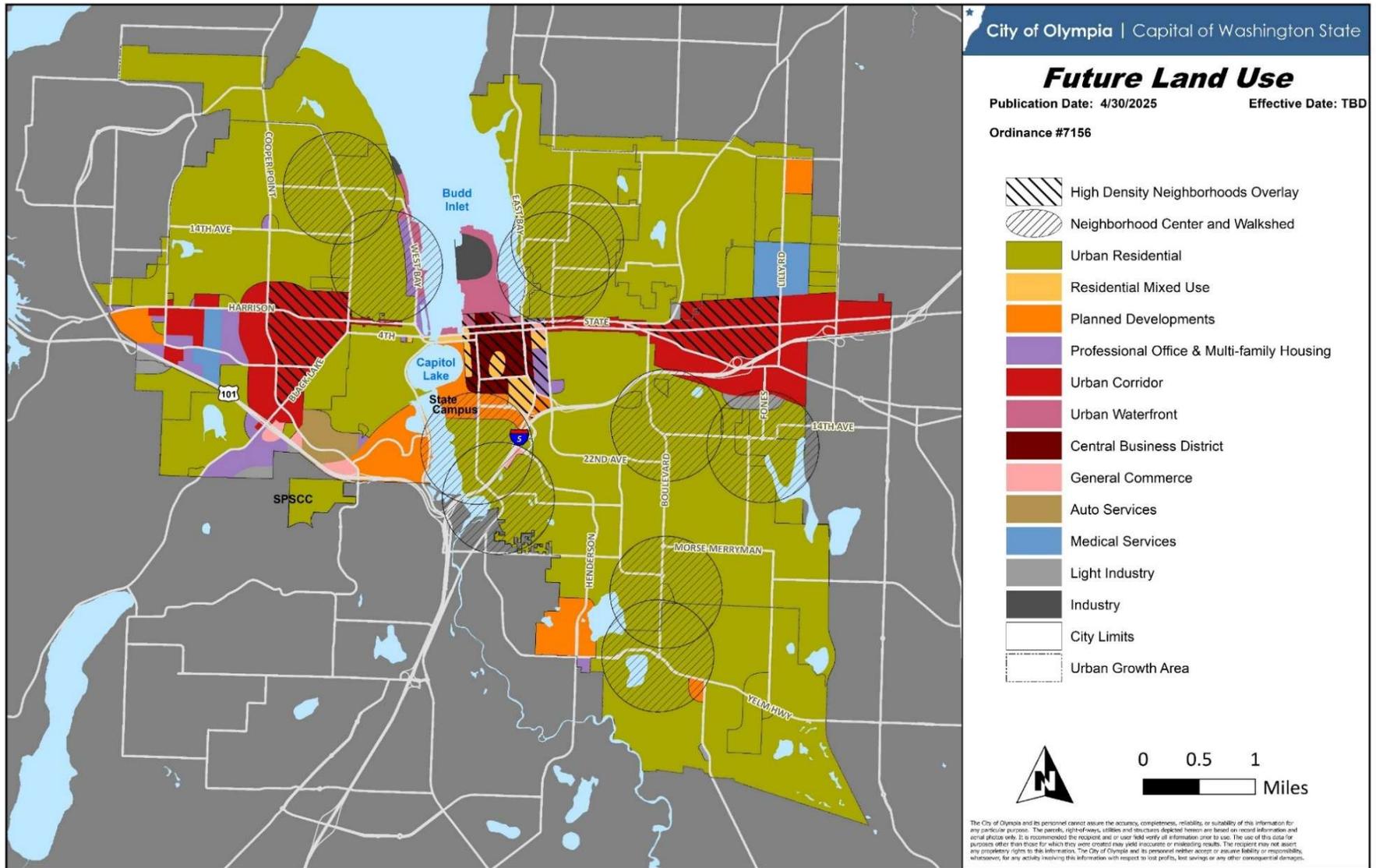
<sup>2</sup> Residential Density is a general range for planning purposes and subject to variation based on site suitability. Specific allowed ranges should be established by development regulations.

<sup>3</sup> Building Heights is the approximate size of the taller buildings anticipated in each category. Specific height or story limits should be established by development regulations.

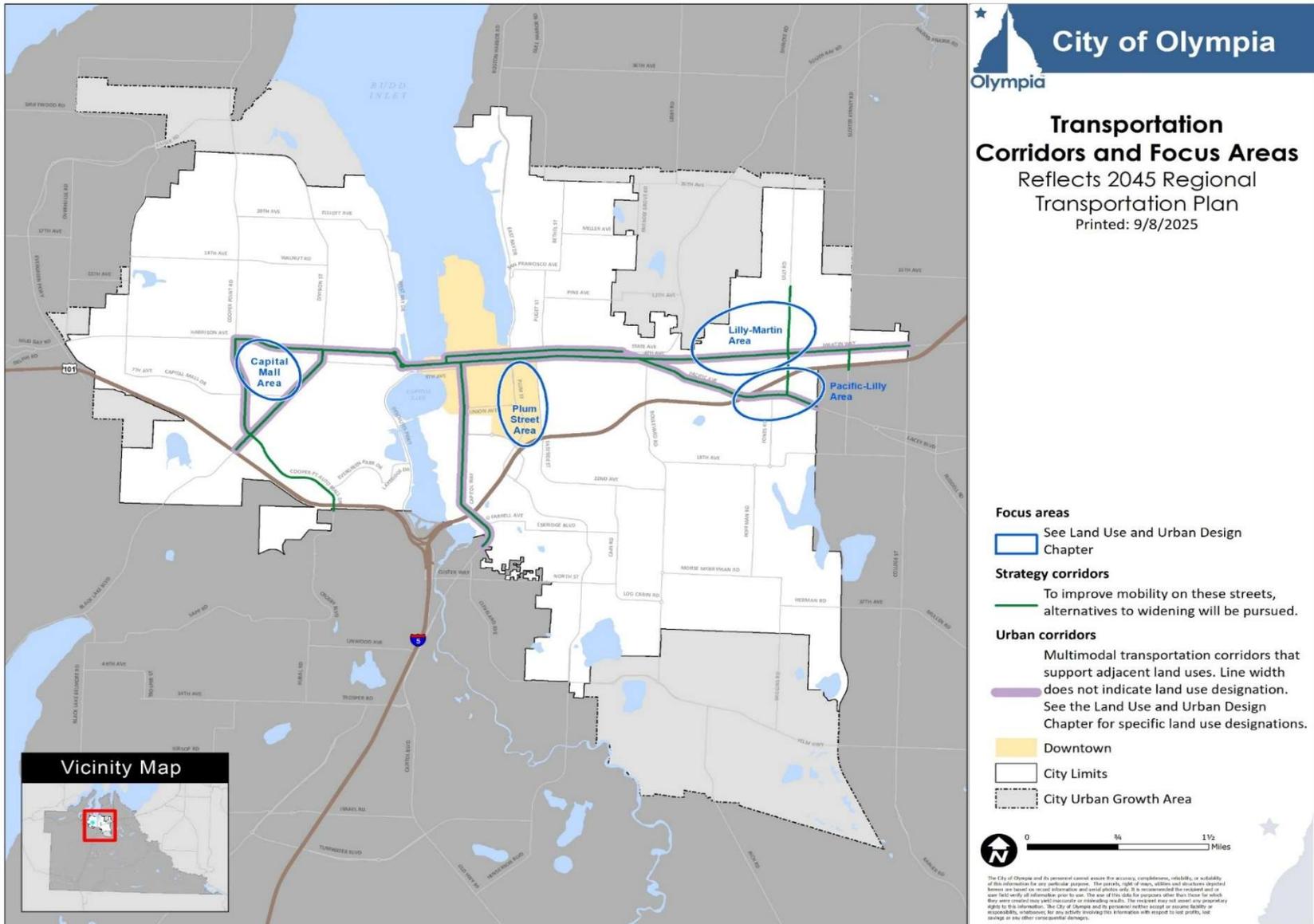
<sup>4</sup> Estimated Acreage is a rough approximation based on the [Future Land Use Map](#) with recognition of the indistinct nature of the category boundaries.

<sup>5</sup> Percentage of UGA is a rounded number provided for convenience based on the 'estimated acreage' and an assumption of approximately 24 square miles of land in the Urban Growth Area.

# Future Land Use Map



# Transportation Corridors and Focus Areas Map



## Appendix B - Important Downtown Views

In accordance with Land Use Goal number 8 and associated policies, as part of the Downtown Strategy (adopted April 2017), the City conducted a public process to identify important Downtown views. Existing views within the following locations were identified.

	Public Observation Area FROM	Landmark View TO
1	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge	Deschutes Estuary
2	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge	Olympic Mountains
3	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge	Mt. Rainier
4	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge	Capitol Dome
5	4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge	Budd Inlet
6	Capitol Way & 11th	Budd Inlet (looking north)
7	Capitol Way & Talcott Ave	Deschutes Estuary
8	Capitol Way & Amanda Smith Way	Deschutes Estuary
9	Chestnut & 4th	Budd Inlet (looking north)
10	Deschutes Parkway	Budd Inlet
11	Deschutes Parkway	Deschutes Estuary
12	Deschutes Parkway	Capitol Dome
13	East Bay Dr. Lookout (ROW about 400' from intersection of Olympia Ave and East Bay Dr.)	Budd Inlet
14	East Bay Dr. Lookout (ROW about 400' from intersection of Olympia Ave and East Bay Dr.)	Olympic Mountains
15	East Bay Dr. Overlook (pocket park about 2,200' from intersection of East Bay Dr. and State Ave.)	Capitol Dome
16	Henry & State Street	Capitol Dome (looks through downtown)
17	Madison Scenic Park	Capitol Dome
18	Madison Scenic Park	Black Hills
19	Northpoint	Budd Inlet
20	Northpoint	Olympic Mountains
21	Park of the Seven Oars	Mt. Rainier
22	Percival Landing	Capitol Dome
23	Percival Landing	Olympic Mountains
24	Percival Landing	Budd Inlet
25	Port Plaza	Capitol Dome
26	Squaxin Park	Capitol Dome
27	Puget Sound Navigation Channel	Capitol Dome
28	Puget Sound Navigation Channel	Mt. Rainier
29	Quince & Bigelow (Park)	Capitol Dome
30	Simmons St	Capitol Dome

31	Simmons St	Deschutes Estuary
32	State Capitol Campus Promontory	Budd Inlet
33	West Bay Park Rotary Circle	Mt. Rainier
34	West Bay Park Rotary Circle	Budd Inlet
35	West Bay Park Rotary Circle	Capitol Dome

# Transportation



A bicyclist waits in the bike box on Legion Way as an Intercity Transit bus rolls past on Capitol Way.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians want an inclusive transportation system that supports the economy, everyone's well-being, and limits impacts on the environment. We want to use the system to connect to our homes, businesses and gathering spaces and promote a healthy city.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A sustainable, equitable, and resilient transportation system that prioritizes walking, rolling, biking, and public transit over single-occupancy vehicles. We aim to create vibrant, connected neighborhoods where people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can move safely and efficiently, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions and building a stronger, more inclusive community.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Introduction

Olympia's future transportation system will focus on moving people, not just vehicles. It will feel safe and inviting to people of all abilities, whether they are walking, using a walking

aid to roll, riding a bicycle, taking transit, or driving. This will create vibrant urban areas, reduce our environmental impact, cost less and use fewer resources.

Our future streets will work for all modes of transportation, and we will build off-street connections for pedestrians and bicyclists. We will build streets that are “human scale,” or designed for people first and vehicles second. A more connected grid of smaller streets will shorten trips for people walking, rolling, and biking, and it will allow cars, trucks, buses and emergency vehicles to have direct and efficient routes.

As Olympia grows, we will use our transportation system more efficiently by adding roundabouts, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, and by making improvements so transit can move through the system more easily. By prioritizing pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users over single-occupancy vehicles, we will ensure that more people will be able to safely get around using the best mode of transportation for them.



The lower roundabout that links the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridges to the westside.

This Transportation chapter describes the vision, goals, and policies that guide decision-making about Olympia’s future transportation system. The [Transportation Master Plan](#) shows the projects we will build to realize the vision outlined here, and it offers greater detail about:

- Funding
- Future policy considerations
- Future areas of study
- Concurrency and impact fee projects, or how we’ll ensure the transportation system keeps pace with new growth

# Equity

Building a transportation system in which everyone can move around and meet their needs means considering the injustices built into the transportation system by previous generations. Those injustices reflect assumptions that often only considered the needs of dominant social groups.

For example, there have always been people who cannot drive: children, some people with disabilities, those who cannot afford a vehicle, and some elders, to name a few. Previous generations invested in building streets that had no sidewalks, curb ramps, bike lanes, or marked crosswalks, and we have inherited those streets. This means it is harder and less safe for people to get around if they don't drive.

To make our streets more equitable, we will rebuild them to include the infrastructure that supports walking, rolling, biking, and transit.

These changes will be complemented by land use that encourages a greater mix of activities closer together. High frequency transit on direct routes will allow people to get to places that are farther than they can walk, roll, or bike.

Policies to effect these changes are woven throughout this plan. In many places we specifically mention people rolling or using walking aids. In others, we refer to pedestrians and bicyclists. When we do, we always include pedestrians and bicyclists with disabilities in those definitions.

For more information about the City's approach to equity in this plan, please see the equity statement in the Community Values and Vision chapter.

## **GT1 Everyone has a safe and inviting way to get around Olympia, regardless of their age, income, or ability.**

**PT1.1** New infrastructure is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and reflects the priorities shown in the City's [ADA Transition Plan](#).

**PT1.2** Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure investments are prioritized so that people can get to parks, schools, medical facilities, grocery stores, public buildings, dense employment centers, dense residential areas, and connect to transit.

**PT1.3** New infrastructure is built where it is most needed based on access to key services, connections to transit, and other criteria described in the Transportation Master Plan.

**PT1.4** The City has proactive maintenance and asset management programs for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

## Climate Change

The [Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan](#) identifies the transportation sector as the second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Thurston County. As the power grid transitions to more sustainable sources, transportation is likely to become the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Thurston County and the City of Olympia.

This was confirmed by Olympia’s [2021 Inventory of Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) and [2021 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis](#). The latter establishes greenhouse gas reduction targets that will help us reach the goal of net-zero emissions by 2040. For the transportation sector to do its part, we will need to significantly reduce Olympia’s “vehicle miles traveled.” This refers to the number of miles people travel in Olympia in vehicles in a year.

The most effective way to reduce vehicle miles traveled is to make it easier to walk or roll, ride a bike, or take transit than it is to drive. It will take time to reshape our city to support that, not only by adding pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-supportive infrastructure to the streets, but also by changing our land use patterns so the distances people must go are shorter. With more Olympians living closer to the places we need to go, it will be easier to walk, roll, or ride a bike to get there. Concentrating housing and key services along frequent transit routes will make it easier for us to take the bus to places beyond an easy walk, roll, or bike ride.

In the mid-term, as that transition takes place, electric vehicles are one strategy that will help reduce emissions. Widespread adoption of electric vehicles will not reduce the number of traffic collisions on Olympia’s streets and may, in fact, worsen their severity, as they are comparatively heavier vehicles. EVs will still take up the same amount of space in the transportation system as gas-powered vehicles, which will lead to more traffic congestion as our population increases. Their widespread adoption will also continue to support the car-centric land use patterns that make it difficult to transition to a more compact city. Olympia needs to make that transition if we are going to have a sustainable city in which it is easier to not drive at all.

Nearly every goal and policy in this chapter is designed to create that future sustainable city’s transportation system. From building vital street connections to adding sidewalks, bike lanes, curb ramps, and crosswalks, the transportation system we build in the next 20 years will be one that addresses climate change head on.

For more information about the City’s overall climate change approach, please see the Climate Change chapter. The Land Use & Urban Design chapter describes how we will change our land use patterns to complement the future transportation system.

## Goals and Policies

### **GT2 The transportation system will support meeting the target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.**

**PT2.1** Reshape the transportation system so that it’s easier to walk or roll, bike, or take transit than to drive. (Climate)

### **GT3 Vehicle miles traveled will be 25% lower than 2021 levels by 2040.**

**PT3.1** Build and retrofit streets to support walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit. (Climate)

### **GT4 100% of light-duty vehicles within Olympia will be electric by 2040. 75% of heavy-duty vehicles will be either electric or use zero-emission fuels by 2040.**

**PT4.1** Support the state of Washington’s law that all new light-duty passenger vehicles sold, purchased, or registered will be electric starting with the model year 2030. (Climate)

**PT4.2** Convert City fleet vehicles to zero-emission vehicles. (Climate)

**PT4.3** Develop supporting infrastructure and programs to support zero-emission vehicles. (Climate)

**PT4.4** Seek ways to encourage people to replace gas-powered vehicles with electric vehicles and e-bikes by helping them access financing, rebates, grants, or other resources. (Climate)

**PT4.5** Encourage Intercity Transit’s transition to zero-emission fuel buses. (Climate)

**PT4.6** Encourage the Port of Olympia to transition diesel-powered freight vehicles serving the Port to zero-emission fuels. (Climate)

**PT4.7** Encourage the school district to transition diesel-powered school buses to zero-emission fuels. (Climate)

**PT4.8** Convert City fleet to zero-emission vehicles and develop supporting infrastructure and programs. (Climate)

### **GT5 Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is sufficient to support the transition to electric vehicles.**

**PT5.1** Require EV charging infrastructure and EV-ready parking wherever parking is provided for new and renovated buildings and parking lots. (Climate)

**PT5.2** Evaluate barriers to equitable access to EV charging and develop a strategy to ensure all community members can access low-cost EV charging regardless of where they live or work. (Climate)

**PT5.3** Provide public EV charging at city-owned facilities and parking lots. (Climate)

**PT5.4** Encourage and incentivize the provision of low-cost EV charging for multifamily housing. (Climate)

### **GT6 Seek ways to reduce the urban heat island effect in street design.**

**PT6.1** Include trees in street design to shade sidewalks, protect asphalt from heat, and buffer pedestrians. Proper selection, care, and placement are critical to long-term maintenance of trees along streets, pavement, and sidewalks. (Climate)

**PT6.2** Include vegetation in street designs to reduce heat island and stormwater impacts and to improve the visual appeal of streets. (Climate)

**PT6.3** Where feasible, use pavement and sidewalk materials that reduce heat island and stormwater impacts. (Climate)

**GT7 The local transportation system — including infrastructure, routes, and travel modes — can withstand and recover quickly from the impacts of extreme weather events and other hazards worsened by climate change.**

**PT7.1** Use the most up-to-date hazard data to map transportation infrastructure that is vulnerable to repeated floods, sea level rise, and other physical hazards. Designate alternative travel routes for critical transportation corridors when streets must be closed. Align with regional planning efforts. (Climate)

**PT7.2** Facilitate quick recovery of the whole multimodal transportation system after disruption from disasters or extreme weather events. (Climate)

**PT7.3** Continue to collaborate with WSDOT on bridge monitoring, maintenance, and impacts from extreme heat and extreme weather. (Climate)

**PT7.4** Factor climate impacts into project prioritization, design, management and maintenance of streets and transportation assets. (Climate)



A bicycle-only crossing on 7th Avenue at Jefferson Street, which also includes a marked crosswalk for pedestrians with ADA compliant curb ramps.

## Complete Streets

Streets with wide sidewalks, trees, and curb ramps invite us to walk or roll. Bike lanes with buffers or separation from vehicle lanes or routes on quiet streets make biking more appealing and convenient, and they reduce conflicts with drivers. The way we design our

streets will create new opportunities for how we travel within our city and how we interact with one another.

”Complete streets” are built for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as cars, trucks, and buses. They increase the number of people walking and rolling, biking, and using transit, and they are also safer for drivers. Complete street policies complement other goals, such as boosting our economy, reducing congestion, increasing land-use density, minimizing environmental impacts, and giving people more opportunities to be physically active.

Olympia’s [complete streets ordinance](#), passed in 2016, is one example of the City’s commitment to building complete streets.



The area around the State Avenue and East Bay Drive intersection has narrow travel lanes, a transit boarding island, a bike lane between the boarding island and travel lane to reduce conflicts between bicyclists and drivers, and bulb-outs to shorten the distance pedestrians need to cross.

**GT8 All streets are safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists. Streets are designed to be human-scale and encourage safe driving.**

**PT8.1** Retrofit major streets to be human scale and include features to make walking, rolling, biking, and transit use safe and inviting. (Climate)

**PT8.2** Build streets with individual lanes that are as narrow as safely possible to discourage speeding while making sure service vehicles can enter areas where they are needed.

**PT8.3** Establish speed limits to create a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in school zones.

**PT8.4** Reduce the impact of traffic on pedestrians by creating buffers such as on-street parking, trees, planter strips, wide sidewalks, and creating interest along the street with amenities and building design.

**PT8.5** Create attractive streetscapes with sidewalks, trees, planter strips, and pedestrian-scale streetlights. In denser areas, provide benches, building awnings, and attractive and functional transit stops and shelters. (Climate)

**PT8.6** Build intersections that are safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Use minimum dimensions (narrow lanes and crossings) for a human-scale environment while maintaining vehicle access and safety.

**PT8.7** Add compact roundabouts and other traffic calming features where appropriate for speed management and safety.

**PT8.8** Use medians for access control that minimizes the number of vehicle lanes, to add pedestrian crossing islands, and to add vegetation.

**PT8.9** Build streets in a grid pattern of small blocks to allow streets to be narrow and low-volume, encourage walking and rolling, and provide a choice of routes.

**PT8.10** Minimize driveways along major streets to reduce conflicts between drivers and bicyclists and pedestrians. Encourage shared driveways or provide access off side streets and alleys.

**PT8.11** Require consolidation of driveways and parking lot connectivity for adjacent commercial areas to facilitate access from one site to another without having to access the street.

**PT8.12** Study converting 4th and State Avenues to two-way streets. If feasible, do a pilot project to study the impacts. Prioritize the study relative to other projects during the next update of the Transportation Master Plan.

**PT8.13** Consider modified street design to enhance the function of a street for a particular mode, such as bicycling, or to support the unique identity of a street, such as a historic district.

**PT8.14** Study the impacts of closing some neighborhood and downtown streets to vehicle traffic. As feasible, use pilot projects with low-cost materials to test this idea. Prioritize the study relative to other projects during the next update of the Transportation Master Plan. (Climate)

**PT8.15** Provide adequate and safe street and pathway lighting in a way that reduces light pollution.

**PT8.16** Consider ways to reduce vehicle noise through street design so that residents, pedestrians, and bicyclists are less impacted by it.

**PT8.17** Regularly analyze collision data and prioritize safety projects for pedestrians and bicyclists in the City’s systemic safety plan, the [Street Safety Plan](#).

**PT8.18** Automate traffic enforcement in key locations, such as near schools, to encourage safe driver behavior.



A bicyclist on State Avenue.

**GT9** As new streets are built and existing streets are reconstructed, add multimodal features consistent with the policies in this plan and specified in the City of Olympia Engineering Design and Development Standards.

**PT9.1** Build arterial streets to serve as primary routes connecting urban centers and the regional transportation network. Include enhanced bike lanes, sidewalks, planter strips,

enhanced crosswalks, and other infrastructure that support pedestrian and bicyclist comfort and safety.

**PT9.2** Build major collector streets to connect arterials to residential and commercial areas. Include enhanced bike lanes, sidewalks, planter strips, and enhanced crosswalks.

**PT9.3** Build neighborhood collectors to provide circulation within and between residential and commercial areas. These streets should include sidewalks, and planter strips, and they may include marked or enhanced crosswalks. Some neighborhood collectors form part of the low-stress bike network shown in the [Transportation Master Plan](#) and should be built to include the appropriate bike infrastructure.

**PT9.4** Build local access streets to provide direct connections to properties within neighborhoods. All new local access streets should include sidewalks and planter strips, and some local access streets form part of the low-stress bike network shown in the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

**PT9.5** Provide transit stops and service accommodations, in consultation with Intercity Transit. Encourage sidewalk access to all designated stops and consider crosswalk improvements to facilitate access, including mid-block crossing islands on high-volume streets.

**PT9.6** Install or allow traffic-calming devices on local access, neighborhood collector, and some major collector streets where speeds, volumes, and other conditions indicate a need. Consider the safety and access of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit buses when installing traffic-calming devices.

**PT9.7** Allow on-street vehicle or bicycle parking to support adjacent businesses, buffer pedestrians and bicyclists, and slow traffic.

**PT9.8** Add bulb-outs for shorter pedestrian crossings and to slow traffic on existing arterials and major collectors with on-street parking. Consider building bulb-outs on neighborhood collector streets with on-street parking where overall narrowing of the street is not possible.

**PT9.9** Allow the City to modify street standards in environmentally sensitive areas based on planning work and to specify these changes in the code.

**PT9.10** Use innovative designs to reduce or eliminate stormwater run-off. (Climate)

**PT9.11** Help pedestrians safely cross major streets by building features such as bulb-outs, crossing islands, and beacon or signal systems.

**PT9.12** Regularly update Olympia’s [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#) to ensure they reflect the Comprehensive Plan and that transportation facilities constructed in Olympia and its Growth Area are safe, well-constructed, durable, and can be maintained.

## **GT10 Streets allow the efficient delivery of goods and services.**

**PT10.1** Design streets so that goods and services can be delivered safely and efficiently. This means buses, commercial trucks, emergency, and other public service vehicles have an appropriate level of access.

**PT10.2** Designate and enforce appropriate linear curb space so that commercial vehicles can load and unload in urban areas.

**PT10.3** As the viability of cargo delivery by bicycle approaches, ensure that street design supports it.

**PT10.4** Consider large-vehicle movement in the design of arterial and major collector streets, particularly at intersections, and on streets in industrial- and mixed-use areas while prioritizing pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

**PT10.5** Require alleys where feasible and practical, and retain alleys as public rights-of-way.

**PT10.6** Require alleys where feasible and practical behind lots fronting on arterials and collectors, so that houses or businesses can face the street, sidewalks are continuous, and vehicles can access properties from behind.

**PT10.7** Maintain alleys for delivery and service vehicles by ensuring they are not blocked by trash receptacles, cars, or other obstructions.

## **Connectivity**

A well-connected network of smaller streets helps create a better city for walking and rolling, biking, riding the bus, and driving. This connectivity creates a human-scale environment by making routes shorter and more direct, which is one of the most effective ways we can re-shape Olympia to be easier to walk, roll, and bike in. This is reinforced by the way we build streets now: all new streets have sidewalks with planter strips on both sides, and we require major streets to have enhanced bike lanes.

A well-connected street grid is also crucial for transit service, as it offers more route options and turnaround points for buses. It provides direct and efficient access for service vehicles, such as waste resources trucks, delivery trucks, and emergency vehicles. During emergencies and major construction, the grid provides options: if one route is blocked, other direct routes are available. And because well-connected streets create more direct routes, fewer miles are driven, which reduces emissions.

The City's commitment to building a well-connected street grid dates back to 1994, when we did a study that determined that instead of widening our streets, we should build a connected grid of smaller streets. This study led to the street connections shown on the maps in Appendix A and specific development requirements found in the Engineering Design and Development Standards. In the next few years, the City is planning to update that study.



Downtown has a well-connected street grid.

## Goals and Policies

**GT11 The street network is a well-connected system of small blocks, allowing short, direct trips for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, drivers, and service vehicles.**

- PT11.1** Connect streets in a grid-like pattern of smaller blocks as specified in the [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#).
- PT11.2** Build new street connections to reduce travel time and distances for all users of the street system.
- PT11.3** Build new street connections so that people walking, rolling, biking, or accessing bus stops have direct route options, making these modes more inviting.
- PT11.4** Build new street connections so that motor vehicle trips are shorter to save fuel, cut travel time, and reduce pollution.
- PT11.5** Build new street connections so the grid provides other routes if an emergency or major construction blocks travel.
- PT11.6** Build new street connections so that emergency vehicles, transit, and other service vehicles have direct and efficient access. (Climate)
- PT11.7** Build a human-scale street grid of small blocks. To keep blocks small, use street spacing criteria to define the frequency and block sizes of different types of streets.
- PT11.8** Build new arterials, major collectors, and neighborhood collectors based on the general location defined on the Transportation Maps in Appendix A. Require the use of the [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#).
- PT11.9** Examine alternative street alignments or street designs when connecting streets through wetlands or other critical areas. Fully mitigate impacts when a street connection in an environmentally sensitive area is determined to be the best option.
- P11.10** Seek public and private funding to construct street connections in the network.
- PT11.11** Require new developments to connect to the existing street network and provide for future street connections to ensure the gridded street system is built concurrent with development.
- PT11.12** Retrofit existing development into a pattern of short blocks.
- PT11.13** Build an adequate network of arterials and collectors to discourage heavy traffic volumes on local access streets. (See maps and lists in Appendix A.)
- PT11.14** Build a dense grid of local access and collector streets to provide multiple ways to enter and exit neighborhoods instead of using arterial streets for trips within the neighborhood.

**PT11.15** Allow cul-de-sacs only when topographic and environmental constraints permit no other option. Cul-de-sacs that are built will have a maximum length of 300 feet and be built with pedestrian and bike connections to adjacent streets or to destinations such as schools, parks, and trails, unless infeasible.

**PT11.16** Planned but still unbuilt street connections, or "stub outs," will be identified by signs at the location and in formal documentation, including plans and maps of newly platted areas.

**PT11.17** Plan and identify street connections throughout the city to ensure they are eventually connected.

**PT11.18** Plan for adequate rights-of-way for future streets.

**PT11.19** Use traffic-calming devices to slow vehicles where necessary, especially when new streets are connected to existing neighborhoods.

**PT11.20** If the City decides that a street connection will not be built, build bike and pedestrian pathways for safe and direct non-motorized access. Minimum spacing should be based on block sizes defined in the [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#).

**PT11.21** If stub-outs exist for a future street connection, bicycle and pedestrian access should be provided in the public right-of-way as an interim measure.

**PT 11.22** Study the additional street connections Olympia needs in order to build a complete street network that serves everyone, whether walking, rolling, biking, taking transit, or driving. As part of the study, consider the impacts of building only pedestrian and bicycle connections rather than full streets.



The Fairview Pathway connects Fairview Street to the Karen Fraser Woodland Trail.

**GT12 Pathways enhance the transportation network by providing direct and formal off-street routes for bicyclists and pedestrians.**

**PT12.1** Establish and improve pathways in existing built areas.

**PT12.2** Require new developments to provide direct bicycle and pedestrian pathways that connect to adjacent developed properties. These will be at the same interval spacing as street spacing requirements or at closer intervals.

**PT12.3** Use pathways to connect new development to adjacent schools, parks, trails, and shopping areas.

**PT12.4** Install signs at pathways to indicate they are open to the public and an official part of the transportation network.

**PT12.5** Coordinate with the state of Washington to increase bicycle and pedestrian access through the Capitol Campus.

**GT13 A network of regional and local trails enhances mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians.**

**PT13.1** Work with regional jurisdictions to develop the on- and off-street trails network, as identified in the [Thurston Regional Trails Plan](#).

**PT13.2** Increase access to trails by requiring or acquiring pathways, easements, or dedicated rights-of-way from new developments adjacent to current and future trails.

**PT13.3** Install signs that identify the trails network, public destinations, nearby streets, and transit routes consistent with regional policy.

**PT 13.4** Encourage retail businesses next to trails to include entrances that face the trail.

## System Completeness and Concurrency

One of the ways we gauge the quality of a community is how easily we get around. Due to the investments made by previous generations, it is relatively easy to get around by car in Olympia. We will maintain that system and seek ways to keep traffic flowing while also building a complete system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

As our population increases, so too will the demand for space on our streets. In addition to building roundabouts, which increase the efficiency of intersections, we will also make it more feasible for people to get around without driving. This includes building new street connections, sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, enhanced bike lanes, bike corridors, and collaborating with Intercity Transit to support robust transit service.

All of these investments will increase the capacity of our transportation system. To keep the capacity in balance with new development, we will ensure that new transportation infrastructure is built “concurrently,” or at the same time, with new growth.

Olympia’s concurrency program is “plan-based,” meaning that we have defined the projects needed to keep the system’s capacity at pace with new development in the [Transportation Master Plan](#). We also track our transportation system’s capacity for “person trips,” or all trips that people make, whether walking, rolling, riding a bike, taking transit, or driving.

When new development occurs, we measure the number of person trips the development is expected to generate. We add capacity for that new development by building the projects defined in the Transportation Master Plan as concurrency projects. Those projects include sidewalks, bike corridors, street reconstruction, enhanced crosswalks, and roundabouts. Specific concurrency projects are shown in the City’s [Capital Facilities Plan](#).



The roundabouts on Boulevard Road have kept traffic moving as the area has grown, allowing Boulevard to remain a two-lane street.

# Goals and Policies

**GT14 In response to new growth, build new transportation infrastructure to address new person trips on the system.**

**PT14.1** Implement a system completeness framework for transportation concurrency in which the supply of new transportation infrastructure that supports growth shall exceed the travel demand of new growth:

- Supply is defined by the concurrency project list identified in the [Transportation Master Plan](#) and reflected each year in the [Capital Facilities Plan](#).
- Demand is measured by PM peak hour person trip generation.
- Supply and demand are equated using “mobility units” as defined in [OMC 15.20.020](#).
- Mobility units of supply are considered available to support new development when the transportation improvement is fully funded, as identified in the Capital Facilities Plan New development will not be allowed if there is no supply of mobility units.

**PT14.2** No street will exceed the width of five general-purpose auto lanes (such as two in each direction and a center turn lane) mid-block.

**PT14.3** Seek ways to retrofit existing major streets to be more human scale, including studying the implications of reducing five-lane streets to three lanes. Test this with pilot projects where appropriate. Prioritize the study relative to other projects during the next update of the Transportation Master Plan.

**PT14.4** Prioritize roundabouts over signals at intersections to maintain traffic flow.

**PT14.5** Seek ways to connect parking lots to allow internal trips without needing to use adjacent public streets.

**PT14.6** Exempt transportation facilities and services of statewide significance from concurrency requirements per RCW [36.70A.070](#) (6). Proposed improvements to state-owned facilities will be consistent with the Thurston Regional Transportation Plan, the State Highway System Plan, and the State Active Transportation Plan.

**GT15 The impacts of new land-use development on the transportation system are mitigated appropriately.**

**PT15.1** Require mitigation for the transportation impacts of new developments, which will be consistent with the [Transportation Master Plan](#) and [Street Safety Plan](#).

**PT15.2** Require new development to build improvements or contribute funds to improve the function and safety of the streets, such as installing bike and pedestrian infrastructure, roundabouts, special lanes for buses, or modifying traffic signals.



Bulb-out and streetscape built with new development in north downtown.

**PT15.3** Ensure a fair distribution of new transportation-related costs to new developments through imposition of impact fees.

**PT15.4** Use the [State Environmental Policy Act](#) to determine mitigation requirements for the impacts of new development on the transportation system.

**PT15.5** As the street system is improved with new development, construct complete streets and maintain an urban form that is human-scale.

**GT16 On designated strategy corridors (see map in Appendix G), facilitate increased land use density. Prioritize improvements to transit service and the safety and comfort of walking, rolling, and biking.**

**PT16.1** Along strategy corridors, add bike lanes, sidewalks, and curb ramps. Also improve transit service along strategy corridors and use demand management measures, such as parking management. This is to ensure that transit, walking and rolling, and biking are safe, attractive, and easy to use.

**PT16.2** Expand the city's network of street connections, pathways and trails to improve mobility.

# Land Use

The land use and transportation goals and policies of this plan are interconnected. When housing is close to jobs, services, and stores, trips are short and easy to make without a car. Transit stops can be close by and convenient for longer trips outside the neighborhood. In compact, mixed-use areas, it is easier for people to walk or roll, bike, and ride the bus than it is to drive, reducing our dependency on our cars.

The dense, mixed areas we are trying to achieve are made more attractive, comfortable, and functional when streets have wide sidewalks, safe crosswalks, curb ramps, enhanced bike lanes, and the bus is convenient. We can optimize our investments in the transit system by locating a mixture of dense land uses near our major bus routes. Without the coordination of land use and transportation, we will see worsening congestion and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.



An attractive sidewalk along a bus route downtown that has bike racks and street furniture.

# Goals and Policies

**GT17 The transportation system provides attractive walking, rolling, biking, and transit options, so that land use densities can increase without creating more traffic congestion.**

**PT17.1** Build a system that encourages walking, rolling, biking, and transit to reduce car trips and help achieve our land use density goals.

**GT18 A mix of strategies is used to encourage infill development in the city, which both supports and is supported by walking, rolling, biking, and transit.**

**PT18.1** Increase allowed densities in the downtown core and along parts of the urban corridors, where walking, rolling, biking, and transit are more viable for the majority of trips people need to make. (Climate)

**PT18.2** Continue to encourage redevelopment in downtown, along urban corridors, and in focus areas such as the Capital Mall Triangle, the Lilly-Pacific area, the Lilly-Martin area, and the Plum Street area.

**PT18.3** Promote infill in close-in neighborhoods and increased land-use density in activity centers and downtown to reduce sprawl, car trips, and to make the best use of the existing transportation network.

**PT18.4** Allow housing in commercial and employment areas to reduce how far people have to travel to meet their needs.

**PT18.5** Allow neighborhood centers and small scale commercial uses in residential areas to reduce how far people have to travel to meet their needs.

**GT19 The urban corridors of Martin Way, Pacific Avenue, East 4th and State Avenues, Capitol Way/Boulevard, portions of Harrison Avenue, Black Lake Boulevard and Cooper Point Road are areas where a large portion of trips are made by walking, rolling, biking and transit. (See Appendix G Corridor Map for urban corridors. See Land Use and Urban Design chapter for specific land use designations.)**

**PT19.1** Retrofit streets in urban corridors to [City Street Standards](#) to attract new development and increase densities.

**PT19.2** Enhance the gridded street network of small blocks adjacent to urban corridors.

**PT19.3** Encourage increased density and land-use patterns along urban corridors through zoning and other regulatory tools.

**PT19.4** Encourage public services, major employers, and senior and multi-family housing to locate along urban corridors.

**PT19.5** Encourage public agencies to build in the urban corridors, so community members and employees can easily walk, roll, bike, or take public transit to these buildings. Work with the state of Washington to include urban corridors in the state’s preferred leasing area.

**PT19.6** Partner with the cities of Lacey and Tumwater to pursue the coordinated transportation and land use objectives identified for the urban corridors.



A person walks on the tree-lined sidewalks of Briggs Drive.

**GT20 Streets are safe and inviting public spaces where people want to be.**

**PT20.1** Design streets to enhance the unique qualities and “sense of place” of a neighborhood or district.

**PT20.2** Design streets as gathering spaces and destinations and highlight their cultural and natural features.

**PT20.3** Look for opportunities to create multi-use, public spaces along streets and encourage public and private efforts to make these places unique and memorable.

**PT20.4** Seek ways to make low-cost, short-term safety fixes that comply with relevant design standards to make streets more inviting places for people to be.



An Intercity Transit bus leaving the Olympia Transit Center.

## Transit

We can use bus service for many of the routine trips we make, which reduces congestion and emissions. As traffic increases, transit will be an efficient way to move more people on the same streets.

Intercity Transit is the primary public transit operator for Thurston County, and its strong partnership with the City will be critical to meeting community transportation needs.

Olympia envisions a service frequency of at least 15 minutes along urban corridors (see GT 17), allowing people to use transit more spontaneously. Bus service will also be vital for maintaining mobility along strategy corridors, shown on the map in Appendix G. If congestion on these corridors impacts bus scheduling, we will prioritize transit's mobility.

Supporting high-frequency service is a commitment in which the City and Intercity Transit will jointly invest. Intercity Transit will provide fast, frequent, and reliable bus service along these corridors, and the City will provide operational improvements to prevent bus delays in congestion. Attractive streetscapes, enhanced crosswalks, and sidewalks will improve people's access to transit. The City will also encourage a mix of land uses and increased densities along these corridors to increase ridership.

These corridors will also serve as regional connectors between Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater. To sustain the level of service for transit in these corridors, increased residential and commercial density of development is needed. Ideally, they will connect with similar corridors in Lacey and Tumwater.

Over the long term, Intercity Transit and the communities it serves will carry out the most current [long-range transit plan](#) and the [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) together.



A bus on Franklin Street.

## Goals and Policies

**GT21 Urban corridors have high-quality transit service, allowing people to ride the bus spontaneously and easily replace car trips with trips by bus.**

**PT21.1** Develop a system with fast, frequent, and predictable service on urban corridors. Transit service should operate at least every 15 minutes on weekdays where the surrounding land uses support it. (Climate)

**PT21.2** Coordinate with Intercity Transit to give traffic signal priority to buses, build bypass or exclusive transit lanes, and take other measures designed to speed bus service.

**PT21.3** Ensure street, site, and building designs are well-planned for pedestrian use along urban corridors.

**PT21.4** Continue implementing policies to eliminate minimum parking requirements along urban corridors.

## **GT22 Intercity Transit’s short- and long-range plans are supported.**

**PT22.1** Support Intercity Transit’s existing and planned services and facilities by ensuring that street standards, system operational efficiencies, land uses, and site design support transit along current and future routes.

**PT22.2** Coordinate with Intercity Transit on bus stop locations so they are safe, accessible, and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**PT22.3** Build in-lane bus stops instead of bus pullouts to help keep transit on time.

**PT22.4** Consult with Intercity Transit when new developments are being reviewed so that current and future bus routes can be accessed by transit vehicles. (Climate)

**PT22.5** Make transit more inviting by designing transit access at major destinations such as worksites, schools, medical facilities, and shopping complexes in a manner that allows efficient access for buses. Put bus stops in locations that are more convenient than parking areas.

**PT22.6** Coordinate with Intercity Transit in requiring developers to provide facilities that help transit riders easily walk, roll, or bike to and from stops, such as shelters, awnings, cooling features, bike parking, walkways, benches, and lighting. (Climate)

**PT22.7** Encourage Intercity Transit to provide service to passenger rail stations or other intermodal facilities. (Climate)

**PT22.8** Explore opportunities for circulator transit routes to enhance connectivity between urban corridors, their adjacent neighborhoods, and the city center.

**PT22.9** Encourage Intercity Transit to maintain a fare-free system. (Climate)

## **GT23 The region is prepared to advance high-capacity transportation.**

**PT23.1** Work with Intercity Transit and the [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#) to plan for long-range, high-capacity transportation in Thurston County.

**PT23.2** Support connections beyond Thurston County by coordinating with Grays Harbor Transit, Mason Transit, and Lewis Transit when appropriate.

**PT23.3** Preserve significant rail corridors threatened with abandonment as identified in the [Regional Transportation Plan](#).

**PT23.4** Integrate and regionally coordinate land use and high-capacity transportation planning so that dense urban centers are developed around multi-modal transit stations.

**PT23.5** Encourage the Washington State Department of Transportation and the [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#) to identify and address deficiencies in regional transit services.

**PT23.6** Achieve the land-use densities and mixed uses necessary to build ridership needed for high-capacity transportation.

### **GT24 The rail system can move materials over long distances efficiently and inexpensively.**

**PT24.1** Work with regional partners and the Washington State Department of Transportation to support and expand freight rail in the region.

## Walking and Rolling

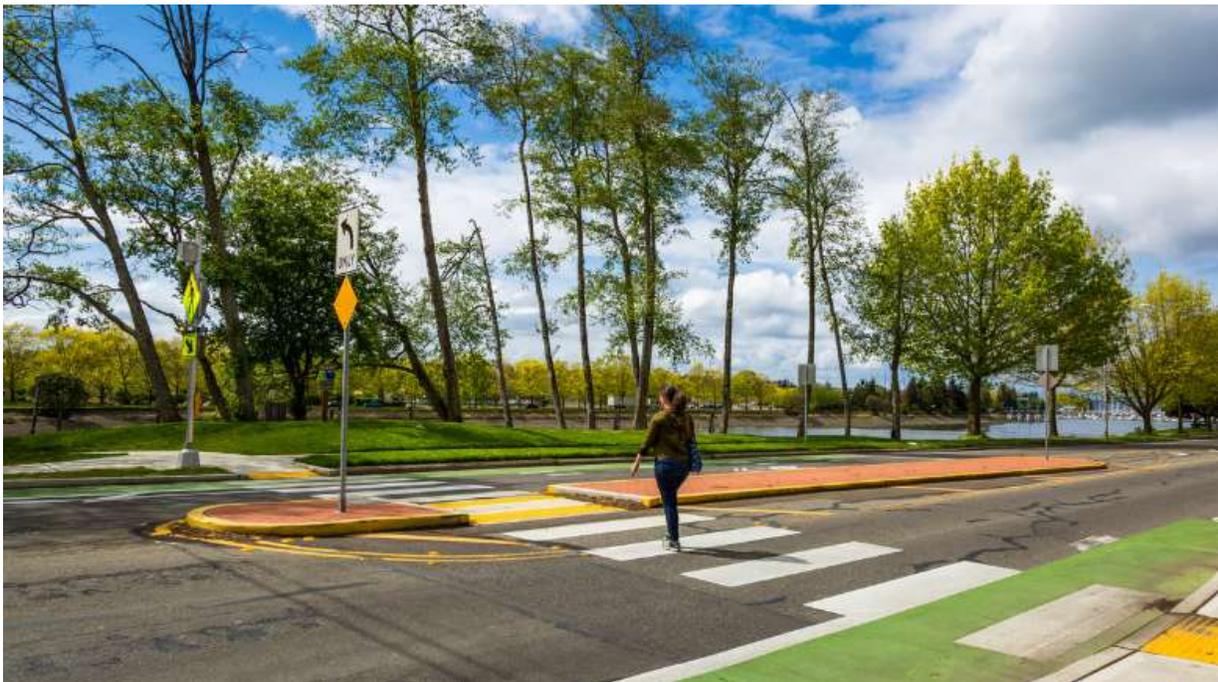
This Plan aims to make streets safe and inviting for more people walking or rolling. The City can accomplish this over time by designing streets that are “human scale,” or places where people can enjoy walking or rolling, sitting, or interacting with others. Building and retrofitting streets by planting trees, creating landscaped strips, and installing decorative lighting can encourage people to walk or roll and create an active street life.

When streets are designed for people, rather than dominated by cars, neighbors interact, businesses thrive, and people feel more engaged in their community. All of this can stimulate activity, attract development, and improve people’s quality of life even as the population increases.



The rebuilt sidewalk on Franklin Street includes some public art elements to make walking more inviting.

Well-designed sidewalks are integral to a community's transportation network because they separate pedestrians from motor vehicles and provide a flat, predictable surface for walking or rolling. For those using walking aids, sidewalks and curb ramps significantly improve their ability to get around.



The flashing beacons, island, and crosswalk marking make crossing East Bay Drive at Olympia Avenue safer and more inviting.

Another important safety factor for pedestrians is to ensure that streets are easy to cross. Enhanced crosswalks shorten the crossing distance, make pedestrians more visible to drivers, and offer other safety features to make crossing the street more comfortable.

The sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks we plan to build are outlined in the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

## Goals and Policies

### **GT25 Walking and rolling are safe and inviting, and more people walk or roll for transportation.**

**PT25.1** Support education and encouragement programs to promote and improve the safety of walking.

**PT25.2** Ensure [City Street Standards](#) reflect the importance of walking and rolling for transportation and recreation.

**PT25.3** Build new streets and retrofit existing streets to be more inviting for walking and rolling with sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, and streetscape improvements.

**PT25.4** Keep streets and lanes as narrow as possible, including at intersections, and seek additional ways to slow vehicles and encourage safe driving.

**PT25.5** Consider the needs of people walking and rolling in all aspects of street operations and maintenance.

**PT25.6** Use construction practices that provide safe access for pedestrians. When roadway closures are necessary for construction, provide a reasonably direct route through or around the construction area for people walking or rolling.

**PT25.7** Require direct, safe, and convenient pedestrian access to commercial and public buildings from sidewalks, parking lots, bus stops, and adjacent buildings.

**PT25.8** Explore the expanded use of alleys for pedestrian travel.

### **GT26 Sidewalks and curb ramps make streets safe and inviting for walking and rolling.**

**PT26.1** Build all new streets with inviting sidewalks on both sides of the street and curb ramps at intersections.

**PT26.2** Focus City sidewalk construction on major streets, where heavy traffic volumes and speeds make it difficult for pedestrians to share space with vehicles.

**GT27 Enhanced crosswalks remove barriers for pedestrians on major streets, especially large streets with high vehicle volumes. Enhanced crosswalks have features such as islands, flashing beacons, or bulb-outs that either raise driver awareness or shorten the distance people need to cross.**

**PT27.1** Build new major streets to include enhanced crosswalks mid-block between signals and roundabouts.

**PT27.2** Retrofit existing streets with the enhanced crosswalks identified in the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

**PT27.3** Add bulb-outs on new streets with on-street parking to increase pedestrian safety.

**PT27.4** Design intersections to make pedestrian crossing safety a priority: minimize the crossing width, make pedestrians more visible to drivers, improve lighting, make signal changes, and minimize “curb radii” (sharper corners instead of sweeping curves). Prioritize pedestrian safety over adding turn lanes.

**PT27.5** Consider the needs of people with limited mobility in all crosswalk design and signal timing.



Streetscape enhancements include awnings, trees, and wide sidewalks.

**GT28 Streetscapes buffer pedestrians from motor vehicle traffic, enhance the experience of walking and rolling, and increase the attractiveness of an area.**

**PT28.1** Separate sidewalks from motor vehicle traffic with buffers of trees and landscaping. Consider integrating green stormwater infrastructure into buffers as appropriate.

**PT28.2** Allow on-street parking as a buffer, where appropriate, between pedestrians and motor vehicle traffic.

**PT28.3** Provide sidewalks wide enough to include the “streetscape” elements and space needed to support active street life. In busy pedestrian areas, install benches, artwork, café seating, and other features to make streets interesting and inviting, while maintaining safe walking surfaces and adequate space for those using walking aids such as scooters or wheelchairs.

**PT28.4** Require continuous awnings over the sidewalk along building frontages in densely-developed areas to protect pedestrians from weather; encourage them everywhere else.

**PT28.5** Use pedestrian-scale lighting to make sidewalks feel safe and inviting at night.

**PT28.6** Consider City investments to retrofit streets and add wide sidewalks and streetscape improvements as a method of drawing development to targeted areas.

**PT28.7** Integrate inviting bus stops and shelters into streetscape design.

# Bicycling

Bicycling is an efficient, inexpensive, and emissions-free way of getting around our community. E-bikes allow more people to bicycle even in our hilly terrain. Building a complete network of safe and inviting infrastructure that minimizes interactions between bicyclists and drivers will allow more people to ride their bikes instead of driving.



A family bikes on the 11th Avenue Pathway.

The [Transportation Master Plan](#) outlines a low-stress bike network with routes that are spaced about every half mile. When the network is built out, no one will ever be more than a quarter mile from one of the routes. The network is made up of enhanced bike lanes, bike corridors on quiet neighborhood streets, and trails. Enhanced bike lanes offer greater separation from vehicles than traditional bike lanes.

This network will also be supported by maintenance and operations practices that remove barriers to bicycling.



A bicyclist rides in the separated bike lane on Martin Way, which is one kind of enhanced bike lane.

## Goals and Policies

### **GT29 Bicycling is safe and inviting, and more people bike for transportation.**

**PT29.1** Build a network of low-stress bike routes on half-mile spacing, so no one is ever more than a quarter mile from one. Low stress bike facilities will include enhanced bike lanes on major streets, standard bike lanes or bike corridors on smaller streets, trails, pathways, and special treatments to help a wider range of people feel comfortable riding bicycles. (Climate)

**PT29.2** Develop a strategy to support bicycling to and through the downtown core with the next update to the Transportation Master Plan.

**PT29.3** Ensure new streets are built with appropriate bicycle facilities for their classification, which are defined in the [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#).

**PT29.4** Consider the needs of bicyclists in all aspects of street operations and maintenance, including signal system operations.

**PT29.5** Use construction and maintenance practices that provide safe access for bicycle travel. When roadway closures are necessary, provide for a reasonably direct bicycle route through or around the construction area.

**PT29.6** Require new commercial developments, public facilities, schools, and multi-family housing to provide appropriate bike parking, including covered bike racks and lockers.

**PT29.7** Consider public bicycle lockers or other secure bike parking downtown, particularly in City-owned parking lots or on-street vehicle parking spots.

**PT29.8** Support education and encouragement programs to promote and improve the safety of bicycling. (Climate)

**PT29.9** Educate the public about street safety and behaviors that ensure the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians. (Climate)

**PT29.10** Seek ways to encourage people to replace vehicles with e-bikes by helping them access financing, rebates, grants, or other resources.

## Transportation and Demand Management

When people drive less, there are fewer greenhouse gas emissions, less demand for space on the streets, and less traffic congestion. In recent years, people appear to be driving less than they used to. Several factors influence this, including online shopping and increased remote work in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategies to reduce driving are called “demand management,” and they have long been a goal of the state’s [Commuter Trip Reduction Law](#). They range from managing the costs of parking to make them more visible to drivers, or incentivizing people to car- or van-pool, ride the bus, bicycle, walk, or roll to their destinations.

In the past, many demand management policies focused on commute trips because they were predictable and made by large numbers of people. Fewer commute trips are made in our community now, so we will focus on making it easier for people to not drive for all types of trips.

In addition to supporting fare-free transit and building better infrastructure to support walking, rolling, and biking, we will also encourage school programs to help students walk, roll, bike, carpool, or take the bus to school. Large numbers of students and parents driving to and from school can create congestion and safety issues for students.

By reducing driving trips overall, we can increase density, both for housing and employment, without increasing traffic.



Teenagers getting on an Intercity Transit bus.

## Goals and Policies

**GT30 Walking and rolling, biking, riding the bus, carpooling, and vanpooling are convenient for all trips, including to work or school. Fewer drive-alone trips will reduce pollution and traffic congestion.**

**PT30.1** Help affected employers in the region meet the goals of the state’s [Commuter Trip Reduction Law](#).

**PT30.2** Support the state’s [Commuter Trip Reduction Law](#) with City policies and programs that encourage ridesharing, transit, walking, rolling, and biking.

**PT30.3** Work with the state to locate new worksites in the City’s dense urban area, in locations where frequent transit is possible, and where employees can easily walk, roll, and bike.

**PT30.4** Work with community partners that provide programs, services, and incentives that promote transit, ridesharing, walking, rolling, and biking.

**PT30.5** Encourage employers to allow flexible work schedules for on-site workers, so they can more easily ride transit or use rideshare.

**PT30.6** Encourage employers to support telework and compressed work weeks.

**PT30.7** Give City employees high-quality commuter services and incentives, while limiting parking availability, to discourage drive-alone commuting.



A family rides bikes home from school.

**PT30.8** Encourage students to walk, roll, bike, or rideshare to reduce congestion near schools, to introduce them to transportation options, to encourage more exercise, and, at high schools, reduce the need for parking.

**PT30.9** Coordinate City and school district policies to site new schools in locations where students can easily walk or bike to school, and where school employees and students can commute on public transit.

**PT30.10** Provide sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, pathways, and crossing facilities near schools to encourage students to walk and bike.

**GT31** Parking is provided in a way that makes its costs clearer to the driver, so people can make better-informed choices about whether to drive.

**PT31.1** Manage the cost and supply of parking to prioritize on-street parking for customers over commuters. (Climate)

**PT31.2** Where paid parking exists, develop policies to ensure that people pay for parking the day or hour they use it. Avoid the sale of weekly, monthly, or yearly parking permits, so that people make the decision to drive on a daily basis. This may make them more inclined to walk, roll, bike, or take transit. (Climate)

**PT31.3** Work with the state of Washington on consistent parking strategies to help meet the commute trip and vehicle miles reduction goals of the region. (Climate)

**PT31.4** Allocate curb space strategically. Repurpose some vehicle parking stalls for active uses that complement adjacent land uses. (Climate)

**PT31.5** Limit parking spaces near transit-oriented development to encourage use of transit and decrease single-occupancy vehicle travel. (Climate)

## Funding

Olympia’s transportation funding comes from local, state, and federal sources. Many projects need funds from multiple sources, which requires being nimble to match funding opportunities to projects. Each year, the City updates its [Capital Facilities Plan](#) to show our best estimate for how new projects will be funded.

Funding for maintenance of streets, signals, and other aspects of the transportation system can be found in each year’s [operating budget](#), which is primarily funded through the City’s General Fund.

### **GT32 The transportation system is maintained at the lowest life-cycle cost to maximize the City’s investment in its infrastructure.**

**PT32.1** Schedule regular maintenance of the City’s transportation system for efficiency, greater predictability, and to reduce long-term costs.

**PT32.2** As we improve our streets with new features such as sidewalks and enhanced bike lanes, develop a long-term strategy to fund the maintenance of these facilities.

# Regional Planning and Corridors

Many long-term transportation issues require regional coordination to be resolved. Regional issues that will require Olympia's attention include trails, transit, street connections, regional corridors, highway access, rail, and the use of the marine terminal. In some cases, funding strategies will also require regional coordination.

The [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) is the blueprint for the region's transportation system, and it identifies projects and issues for regional attention. It is based on land use forecasts and regionally-established priorities, and it places heavy emphasis on the relationship between land use and transportation planning. The City is responsible for addressing the individual projects that emerge from the Regional Transportation Plan.

A longstanding policy in both the Regional Transportation Plan and Olympia's Comprehensive Plan has been to support urban corridors and strategy corridors, which are shown on the map in Appendix G.

**Urban corridors:** These are an integrated land use and transportation concept aimed at reducing sprawl and car dependence. The goal of urban corridors is to create attractive urban neighborhoods where people can walk, roll or use transit to meet their daily needs. The land use designations along these streets vary (see Future Land Use Map in the Land Use Chapter), to promote a gradual increase in density. As the land use densifies, we will build a multimodal transportation system that minimizes new vehicle trips.

**Strategy corridors:** Most strategy corridors are also within urban corridors. These are streets where vehicle congestion may be heavy, but we will look to options other than widening to improve mobility. Some of those options might include adding roundabouts or making improvements to prioritize transit, such as adding queue jump lanes, business access, and transit-only lanes or extended green times for buses. Others might include adding sidewalks, crosswalks, or bike lanes.



An Intercity Transit bus enters the lower roundabout on its way to the westside.

## Goals and Policies

### **GT33 Olympia engages with neighboring jurisdictions to advance common goals and solve regional problems.**

**PT33.1** Use this Comprehensive Plan and the [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) to guide regional transportation decisions.

**PT33.2** Establish and maintain compatible street standards with Thurston County and the cities of Lacey and Tumwater while still prioritizing safety and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

**PT33.3** Work with the cities of Lacey and Tumwater and Thurston County to develop urban corridors.

**PT33.4** Work with neighboring jurisdictions to develop trails and their supportive infrastructure, such as signs, bathrooms, and pathways to connect trails to neighborhoods, schools, parks, shopping, and other essential places people need to go to.

**PT33.5** Work with neighboring jurisdictions to improve freight, rail, and truck mobility.

**PT33.6** Coordinate with the Port of Olympia on truck access routes, freight rail, and, as needed, on air and water transportation needs.

**PT33.7** Work with regional jurisdictions to develop a funding strategy for the regional transportation network.

**PT33.8** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions, the [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#), WSDOT, and the school districts on regional transportation and land-use goals.

**PT33.9** Work with Lacey and Tumwater to promote dense commercial and residential development in urban centers and along urban corridors.

**PT33.10** Work with the region to support the infrastructure needs of electric vehicles or other alternative fuel vehicles.

## For More Information

- The City of Olympia [Transportation Master Plan](#) outlines prioritized projects for the next 20 years for all modes of transportation: walking and rolling, bicycling, riding transit, and driving.
- The City of Olympia [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#) implements Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. These technical standards govern all new construction and modification of transportation and utilities infrastructure.
- The [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) describes how the region will work together to resolve regional problems and establish regional priorities.
- The Washington State [Growth Management Act](#) requires communities to develop comprehensive plans and development regulations that guide growth for the 20-year horizon.
- The [Commute Trip Reduction Law](#) calls on all state employers and large employers in urban areas to reduce drive-alone commute trips made by employees.
- The [Thurston Regional Trails Plan](#) defines off-street trail network priorities and issues throughout Thurston County.

# Appendix A: Transportation 2045 Street Classification and Connectivity Maps

These maps illustrate street classifications and planned street connections for arterials, major collectors, and neighborhood collectors. After this Plan is adopted, the City plans to study street connection needs throughout the city and may update these maps to reflect the results. Any update will include an opportunity for the public to share feedback.

## **Note on the Log Cabin Road Extension**

The Log Cabin Road extension was proposed in previous comprehensive plans to connect Boulevard Road to Wiggins Road. This street connection was identified as needed for both the local and regional transportation system. It would serve motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and potentially transit.

A 2016 evaluation indicated that the Log Cabin Road Extension is likely not needed until about 2040. In 2021, the City Council removed it and other smaller street connections in the vicinity from this plan.

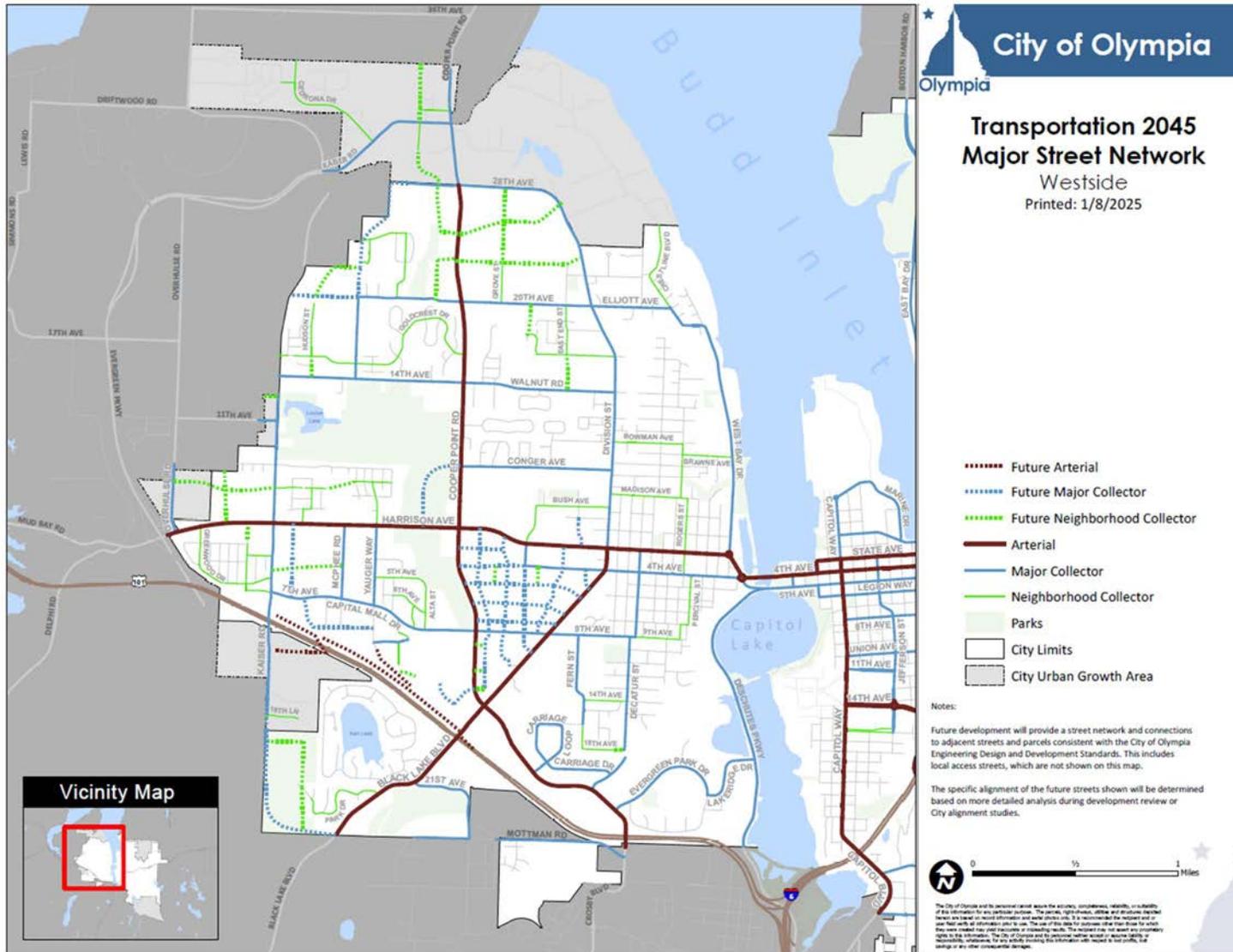
Instead, in approximately 2030, the multimodal transportation needs in southeast Olympia will be studied. Because the Log Cabin Road Extension was identified as having regional significance, neighboring jurisdictions will also be involved in this evaluation. A public involvement process will be part of the evaluation.

## **Note on the Lakewood Drive Connection**

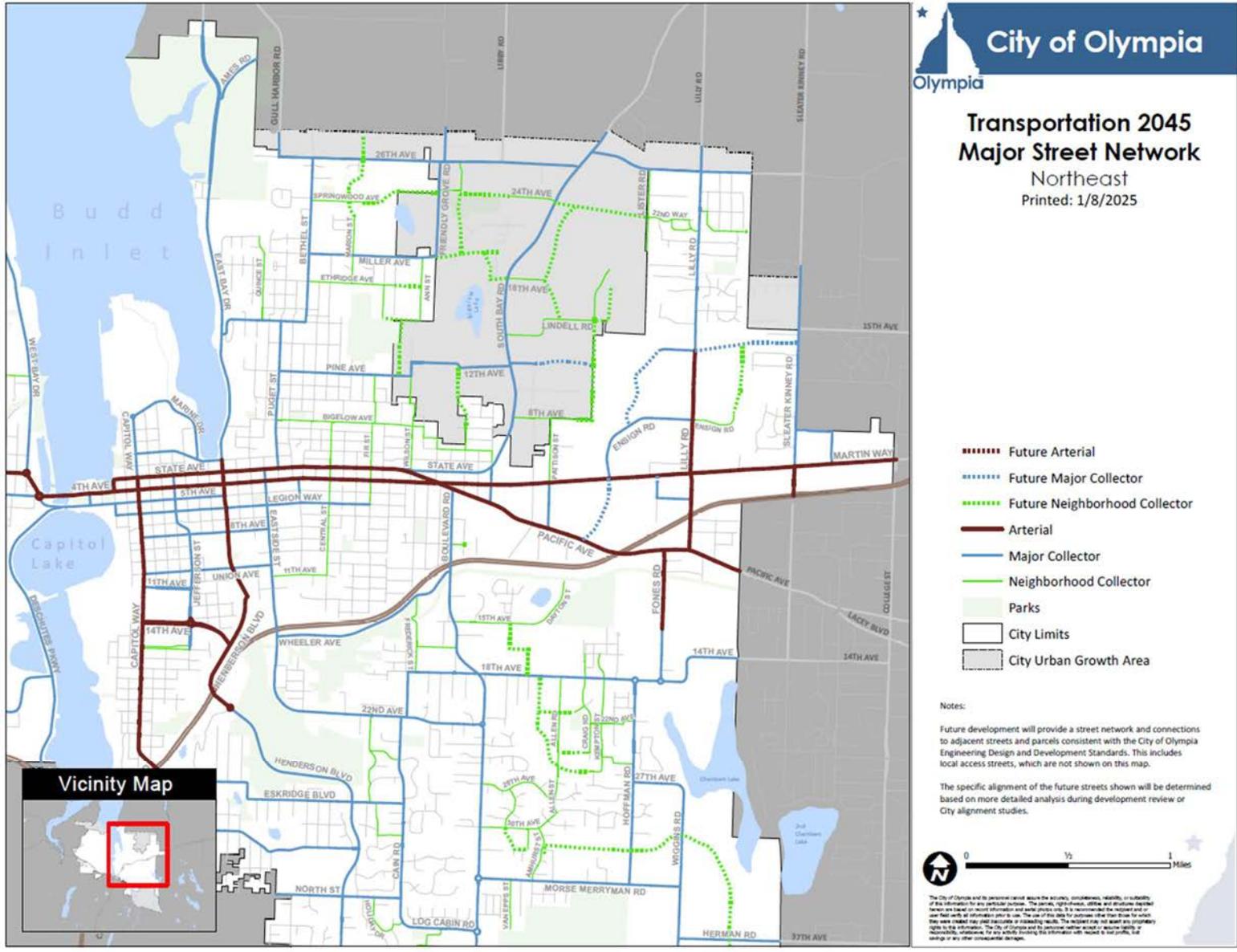
In 1997, the City Council decided not to make a street connection on Lakewood Drive between the Cove and Holiday Hills subdivisions, though it preserved this as a future option. Signs were installed here, and at the east end of Lakewood Drive, to indicate a possible future connection.

If the street connection is eventually constructed, specific traffic-calming devices, signing, crosswalks, and a sidewalk will be installed. The existing bicycle/pedestrian connection will be maintained between these two subdivisions until a full-street connection is made. (Ordinance #5757, 12/16/97)

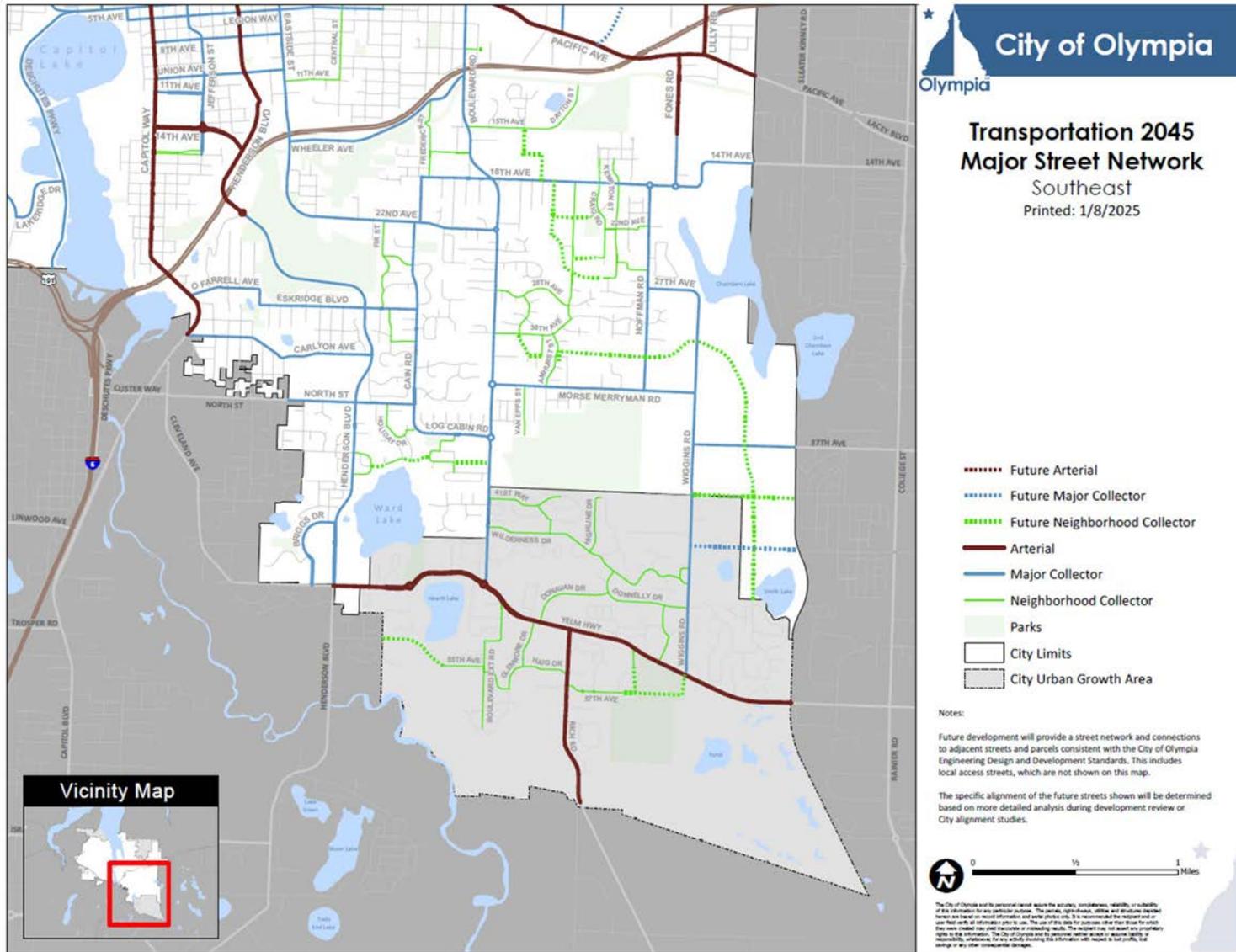
Transportation 2045 Major Street Network – Westside



# Transportation 2045 Major Street Network – Northeast



# Transportation 2045 Major Street Network – Southeast



# Appendix B: Pedestrian Network

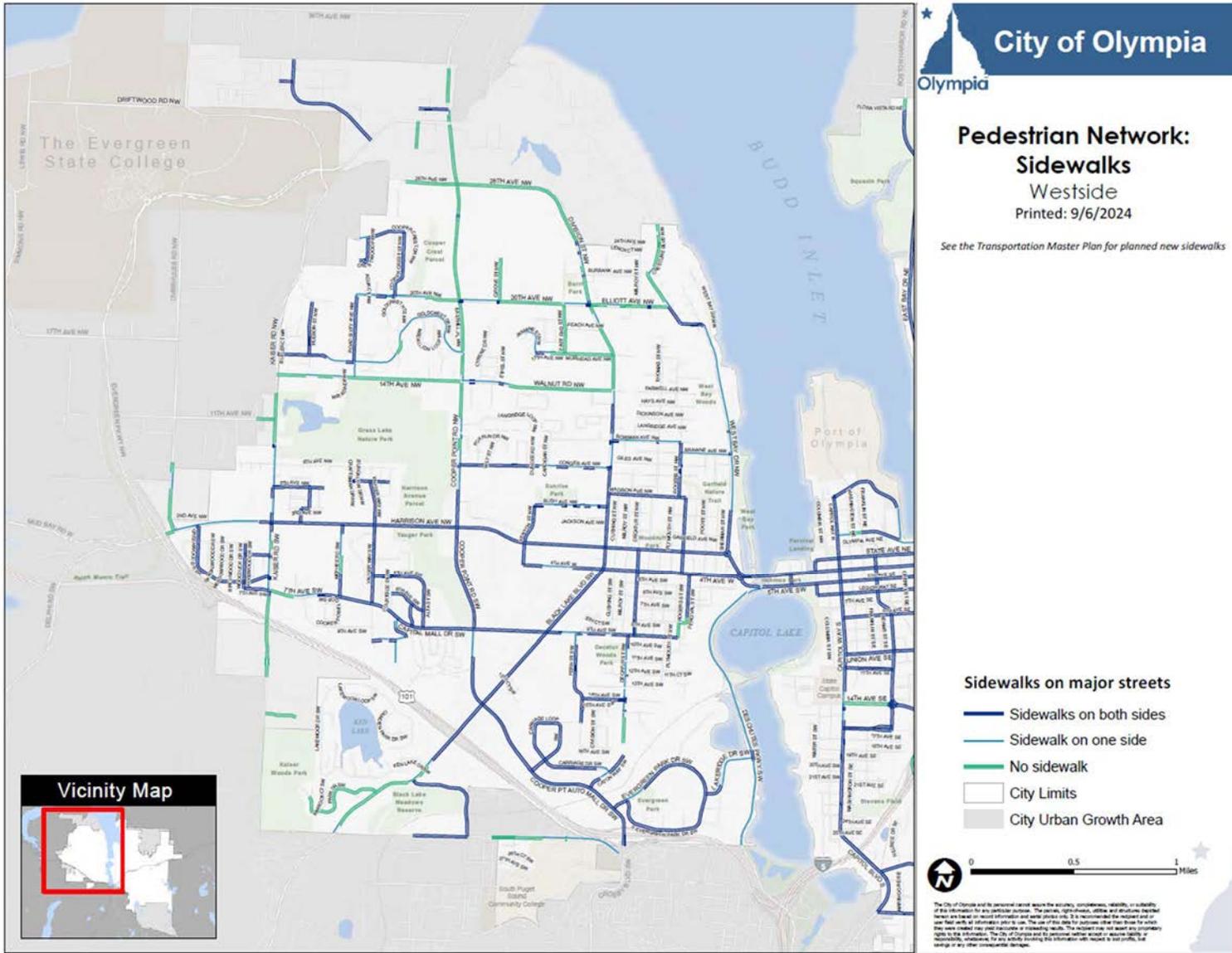
There are three elements to a pedestrian network:

- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Curb ramps

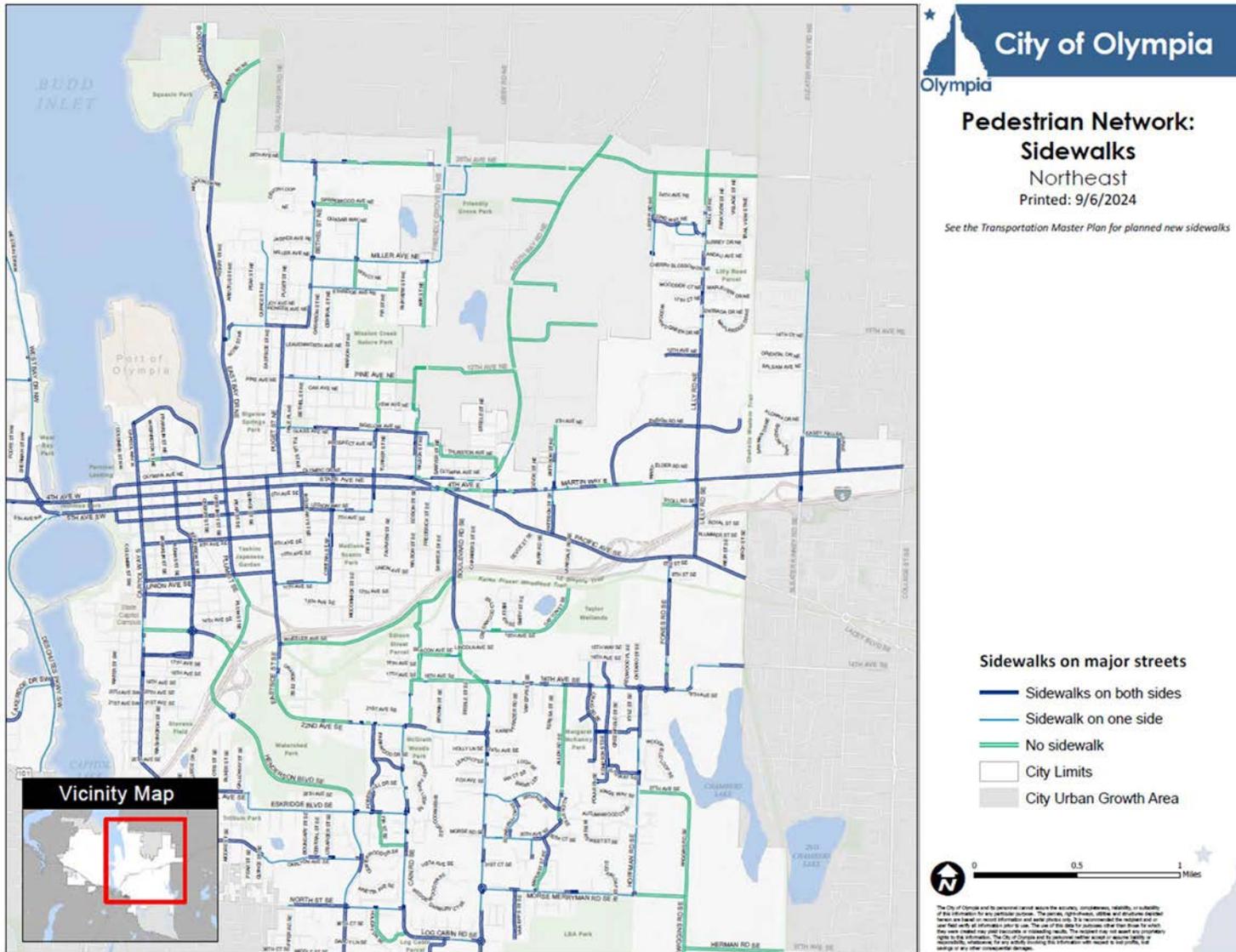
The [Transportation Master Plan](#) outlines and prioritizes the sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, and curb ramps we need to build to have a complete network. The [Capital Facilities Plan](#) shows how we plan to fund and build those projects.

The existing network is shown in the maps that follow.

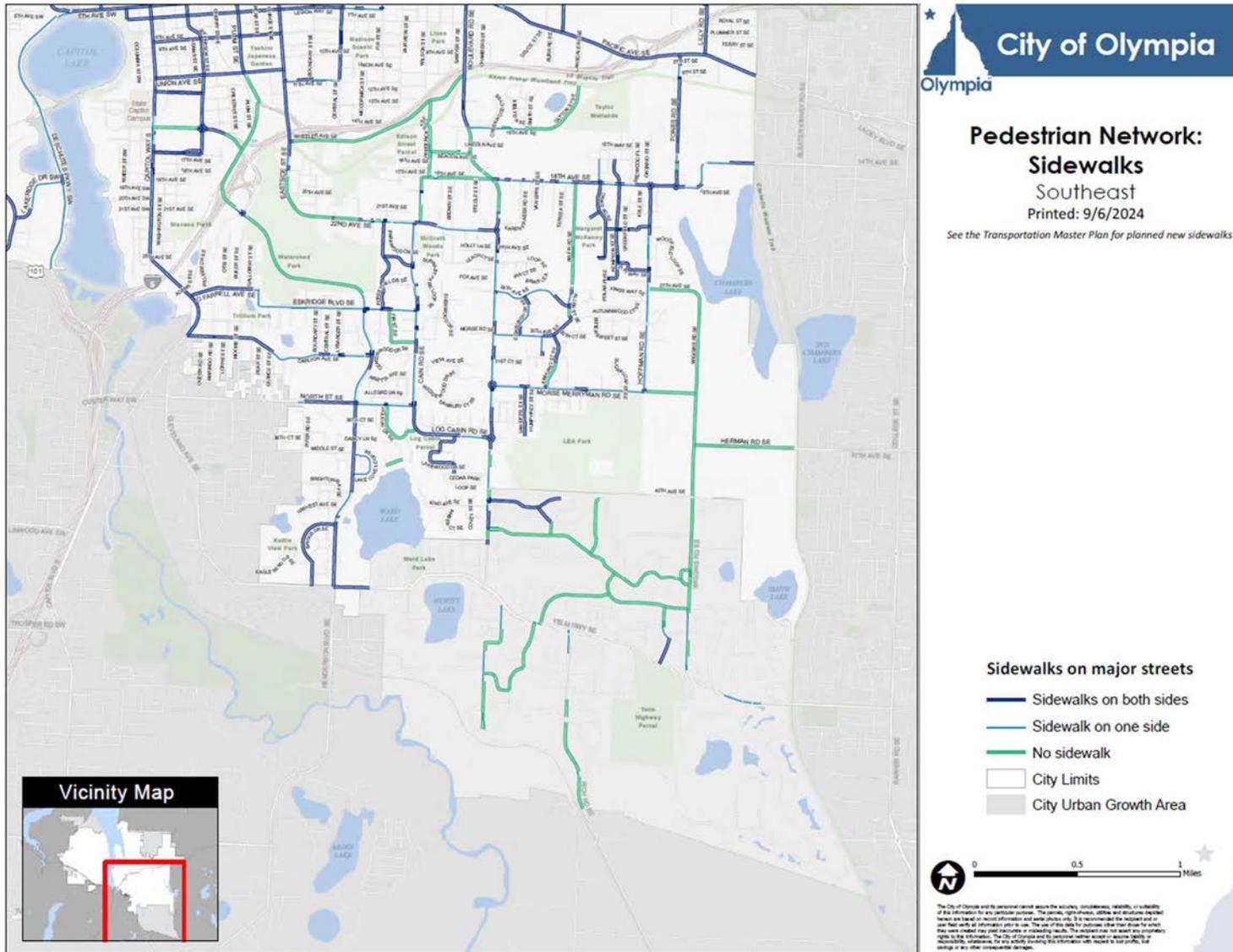
Pedestrian Network: Sidewalks  
Westside



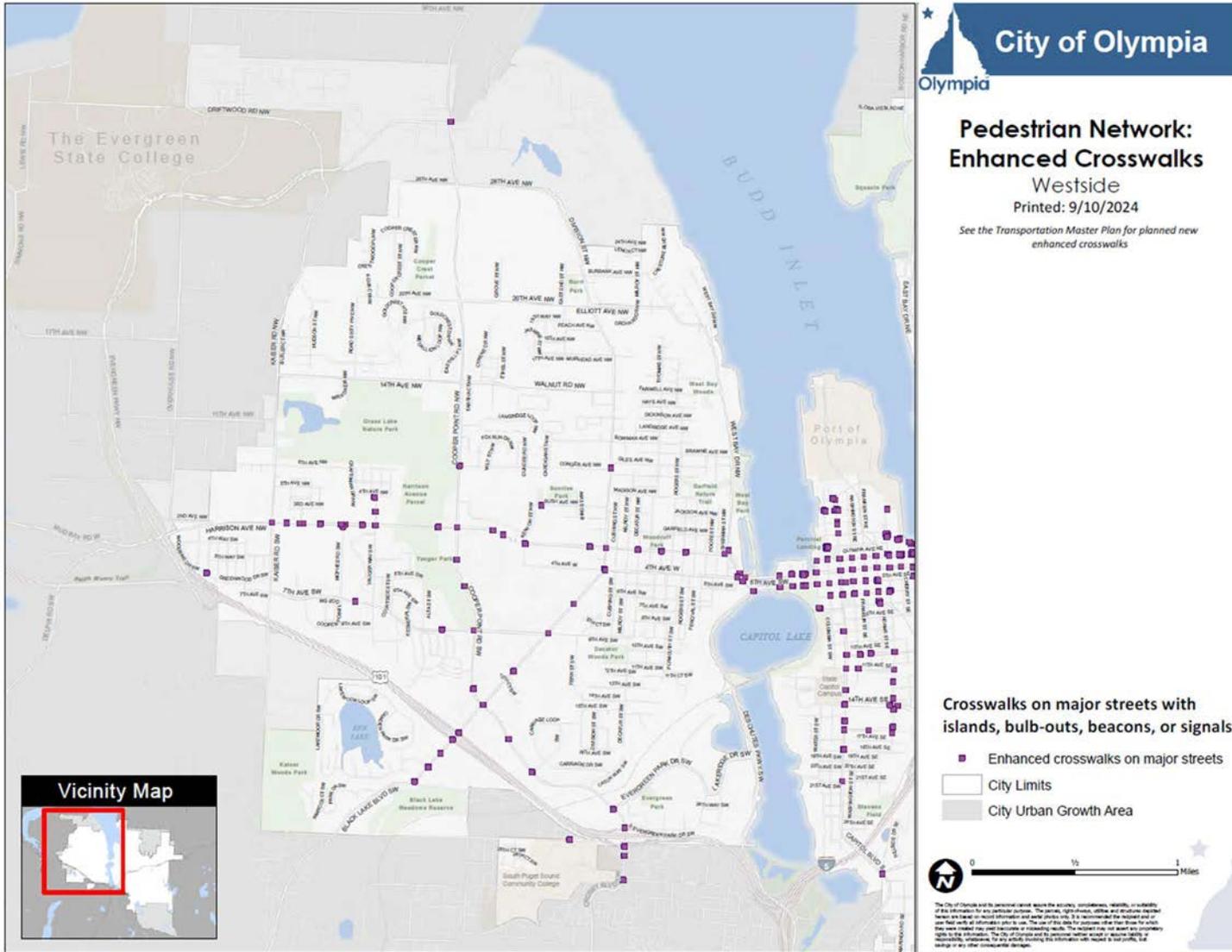
Pedestrian Network: Sidewalks  
Northeast



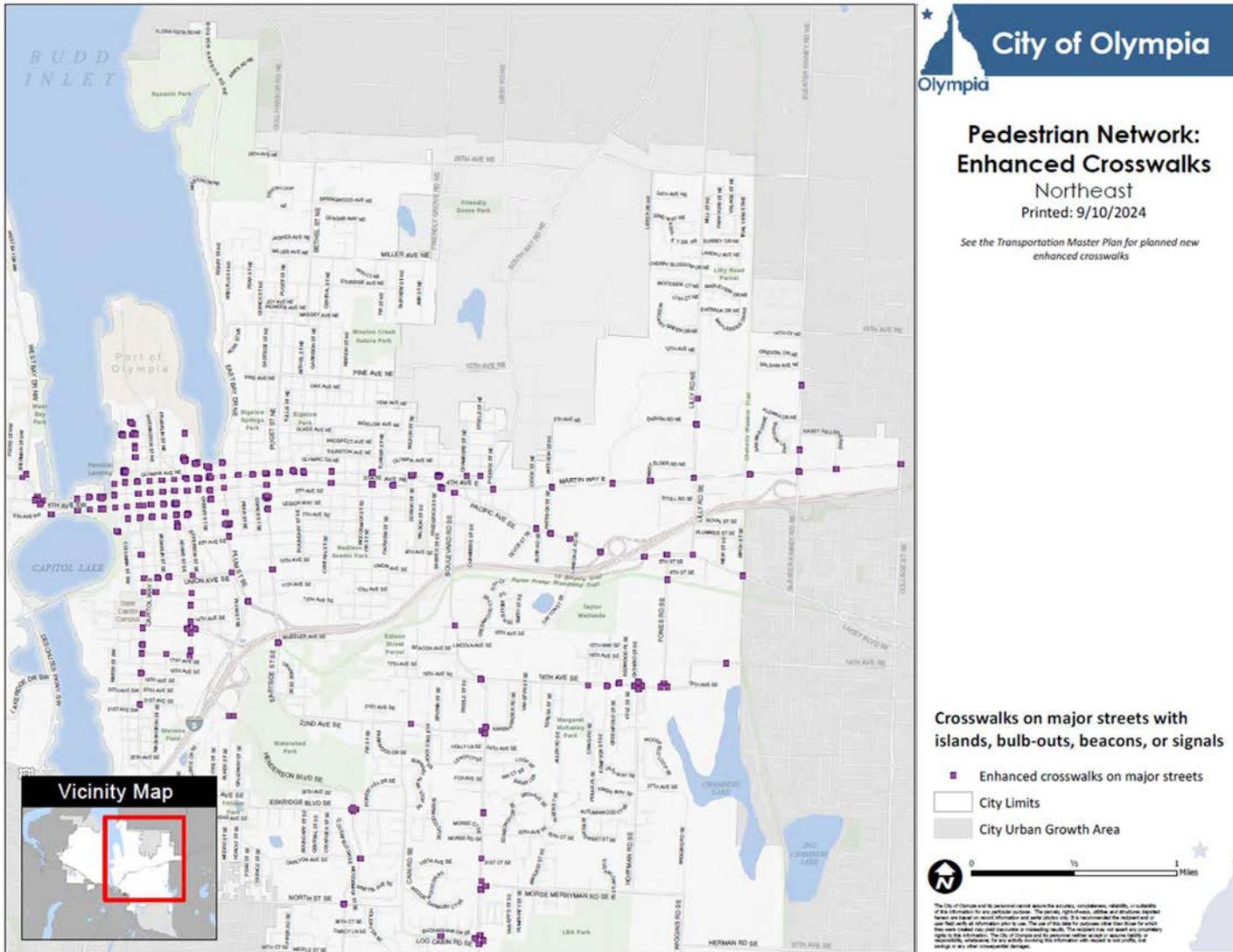
Pedestrian Network: Sidewalks  
Southeast



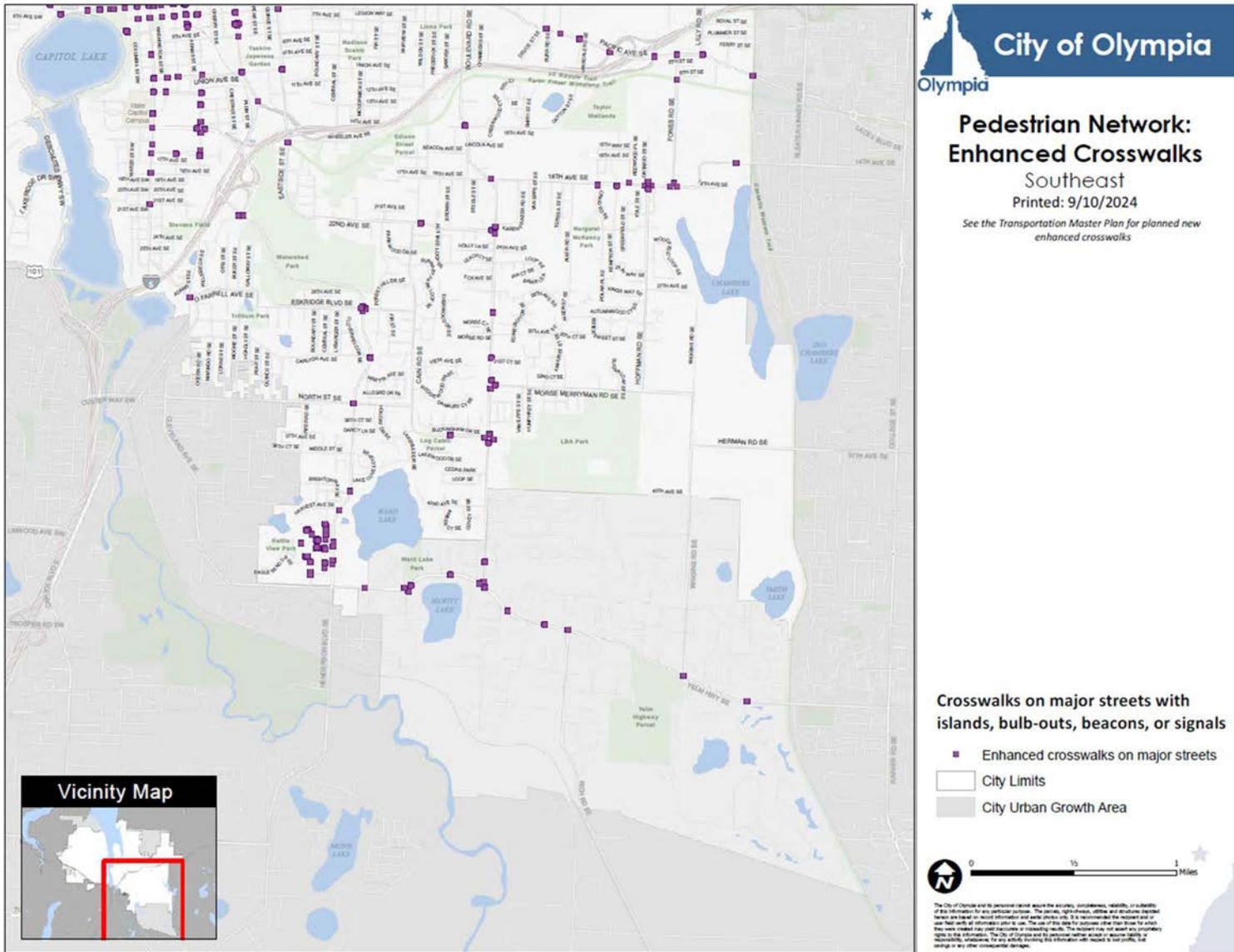
Pedestrian Network: Enhanced Crosswalks  
Westside



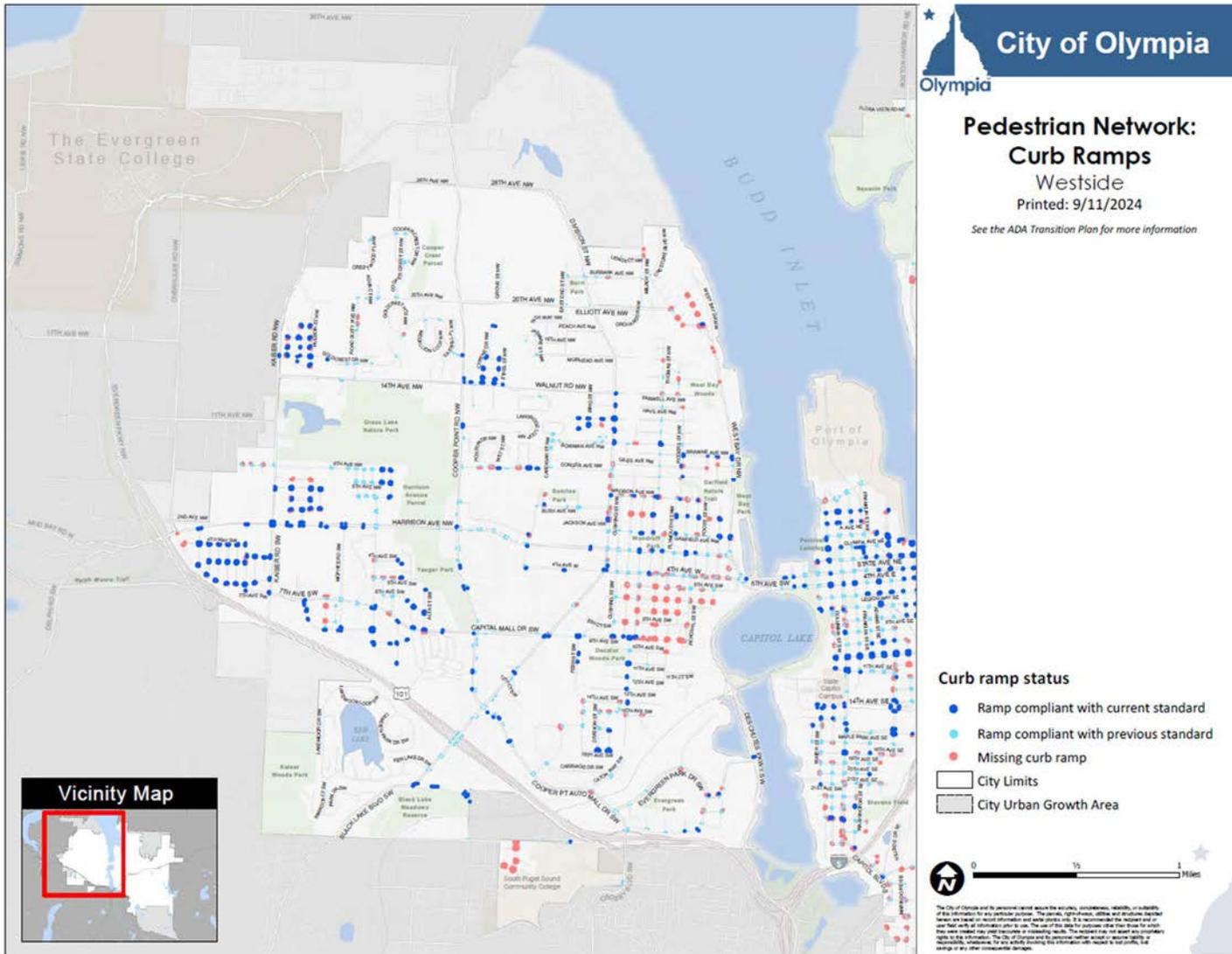
Pedestrian Network: Enhanced Crosswalks  
Northeast



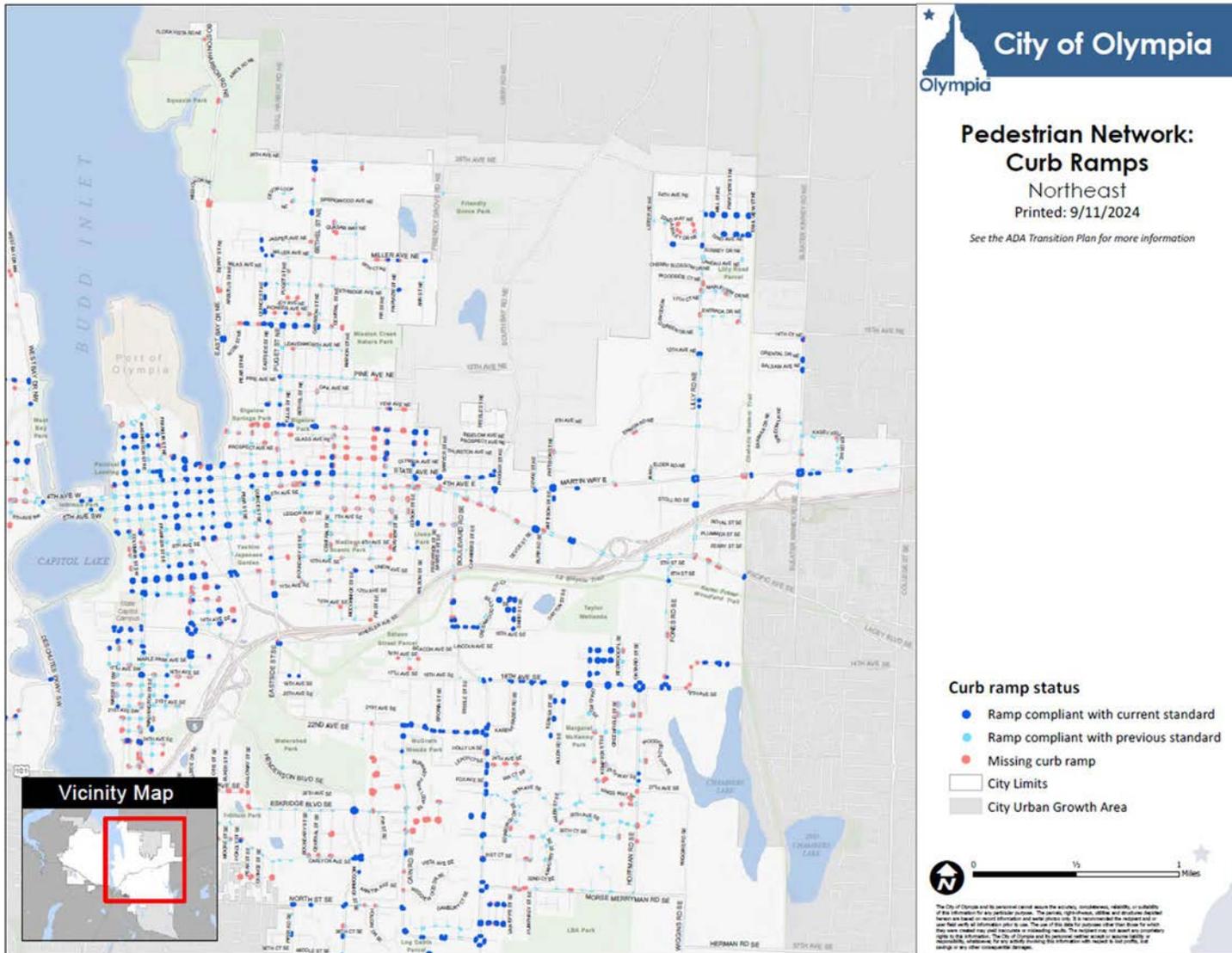
# Pedestrian Network: Enhanced Crosswalks Southeast



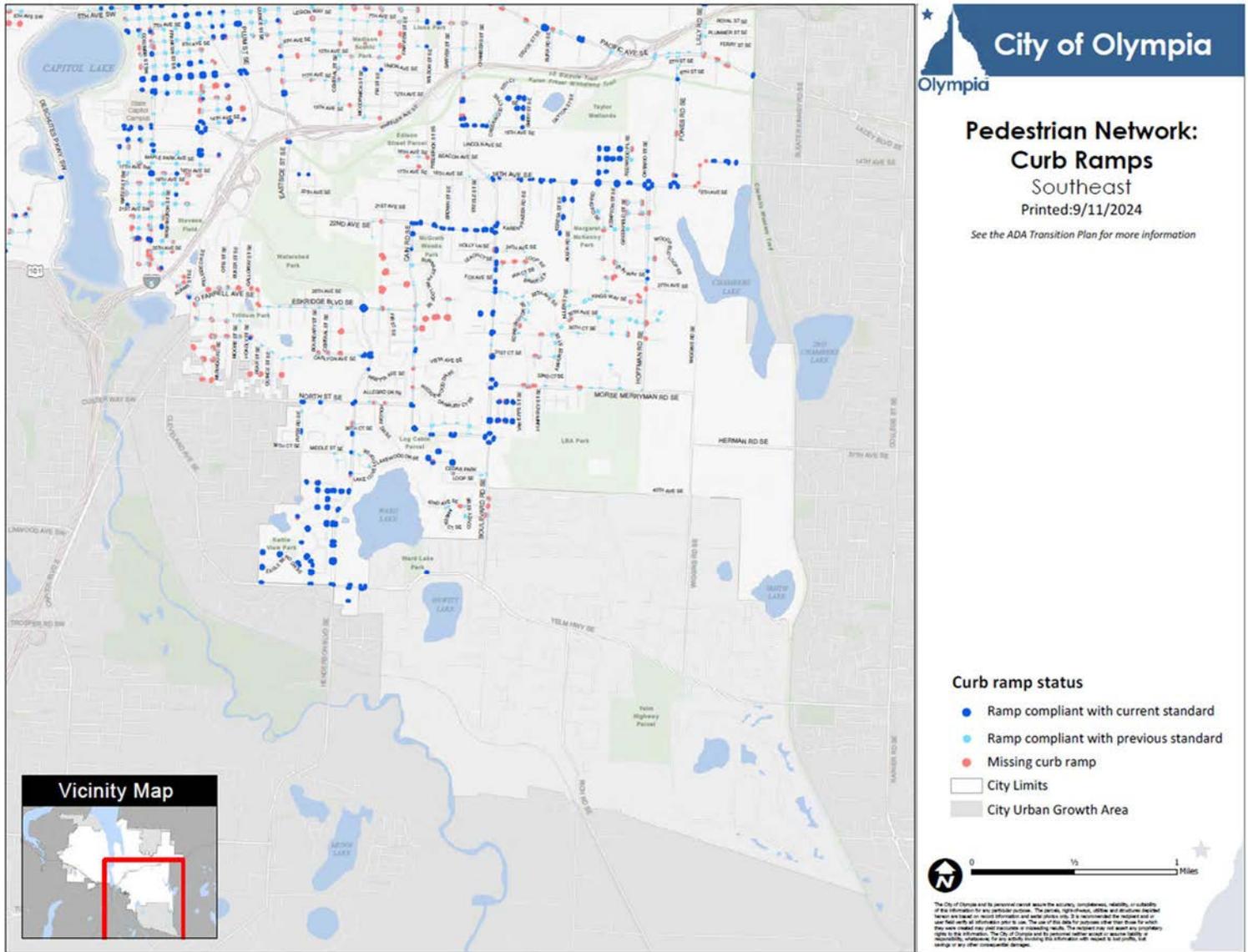
Pedestrian Network: Curb Ramps  
Westside



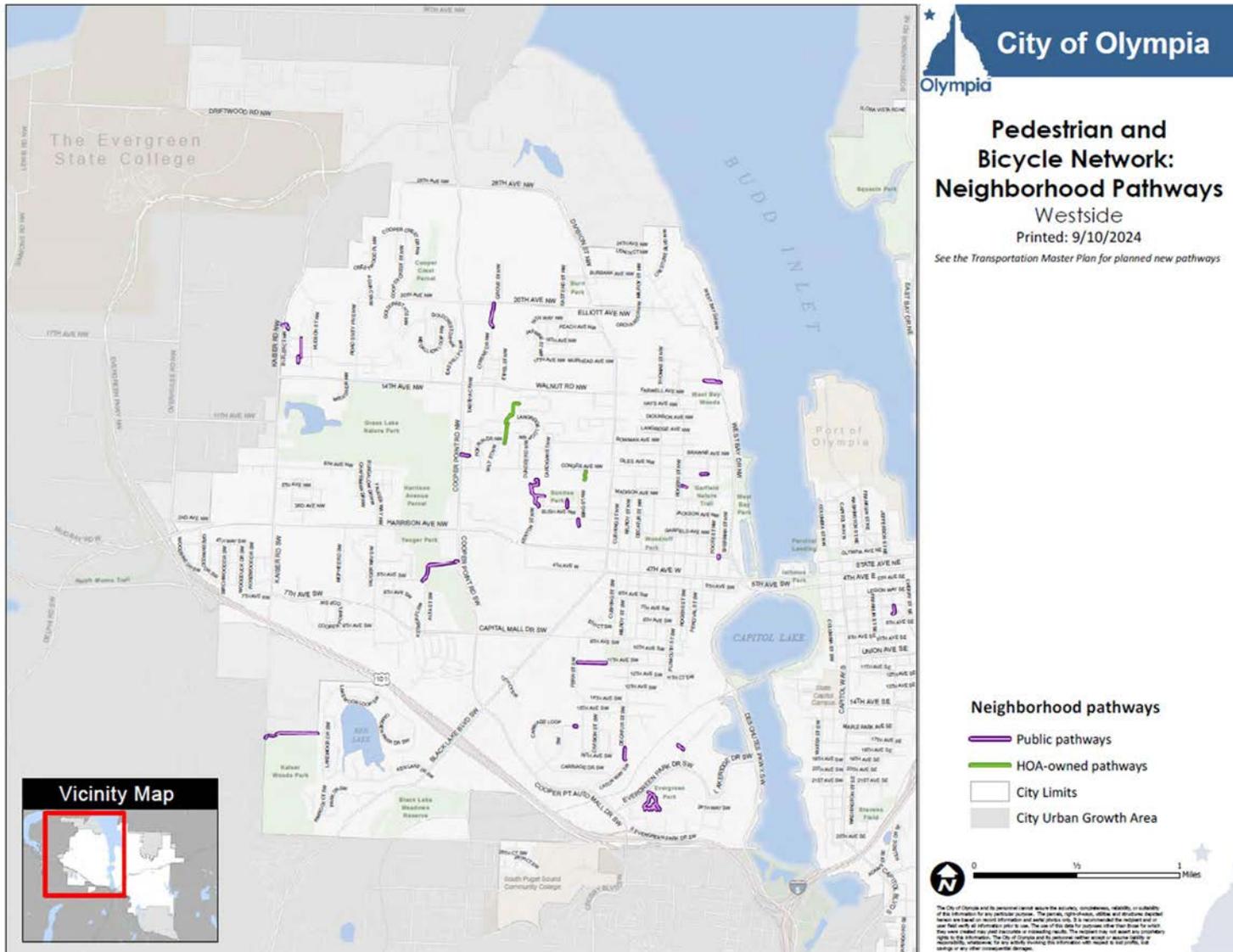
Pedestrian Network: Curb Ramps  
 Northeast



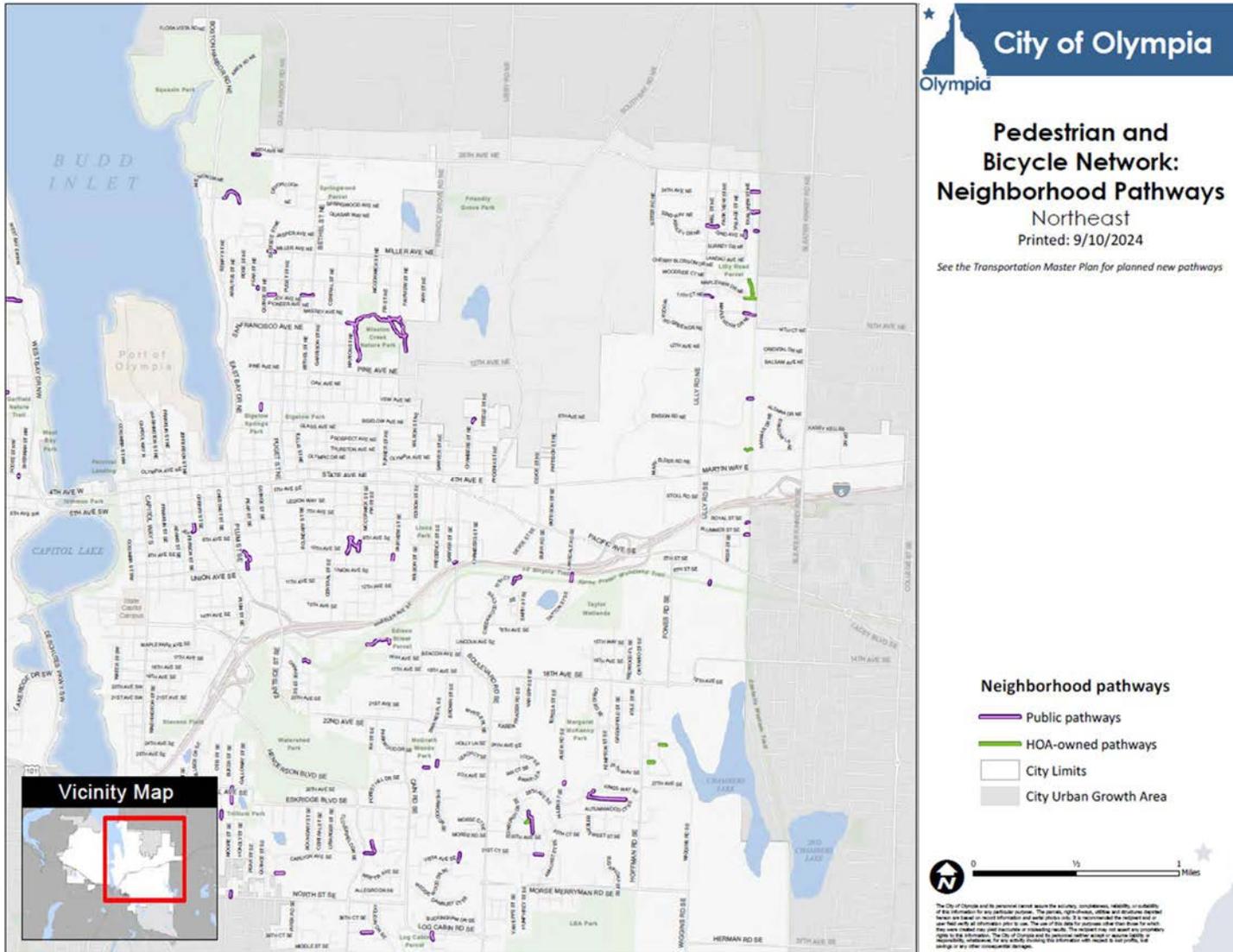
Pedestrian Network: Curb Ramps  
Southeast



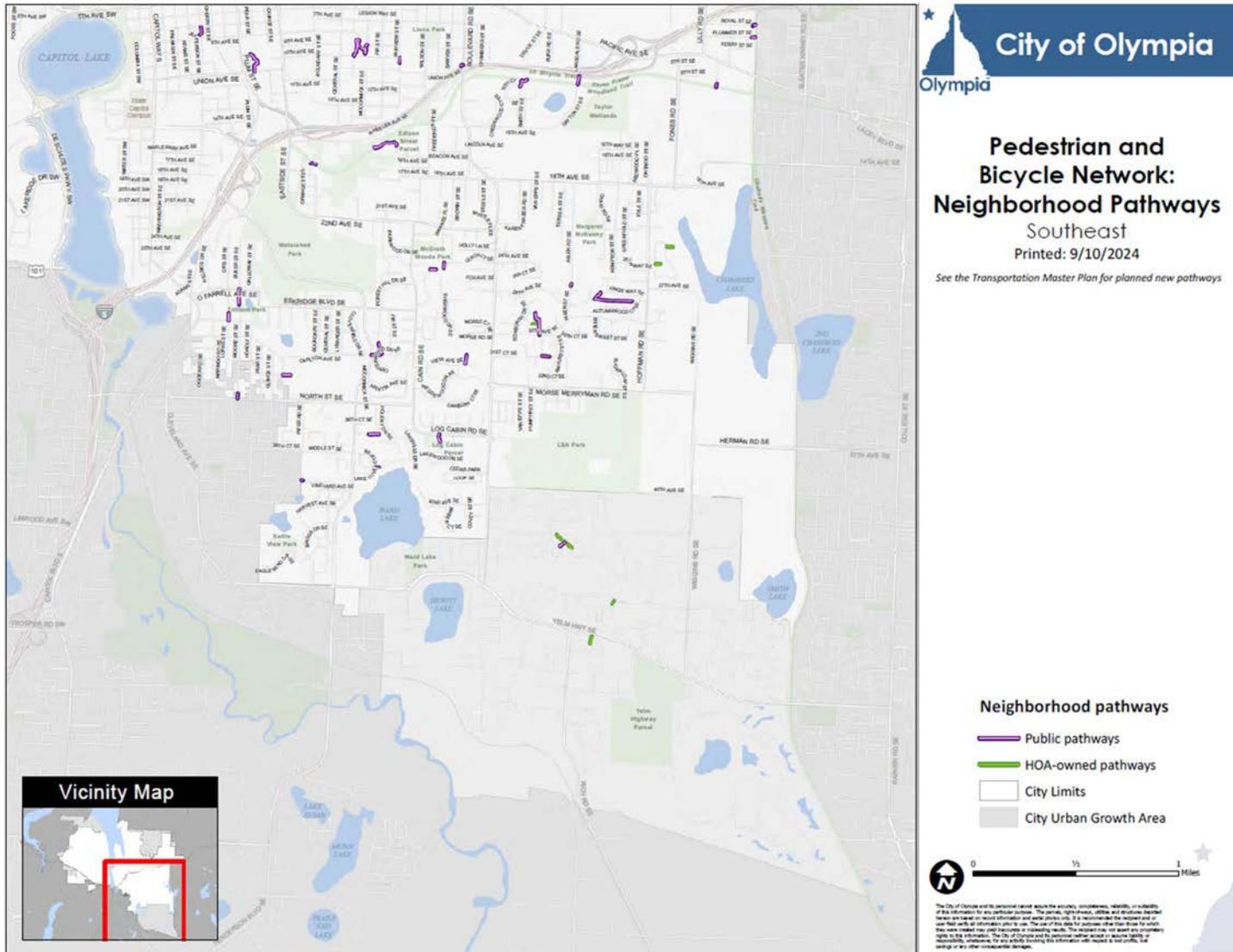
# Pedestrian and Bicycle Network: Neighborhood Pathways Westside



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Network: Neighborhood Pathways Northeast



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Network: Neighborhood Pathways Southeast

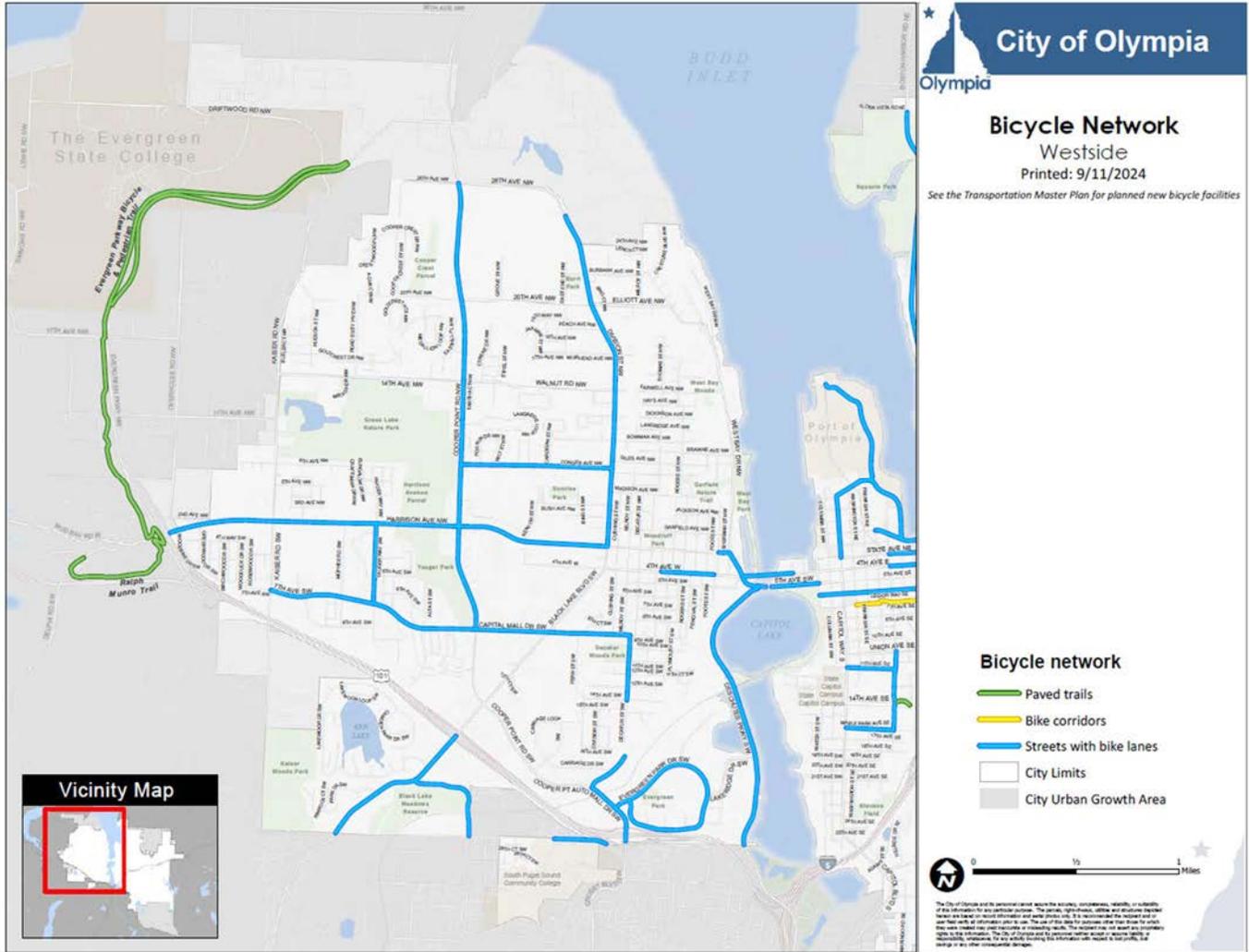


## Appendix C: Bike Network Maps

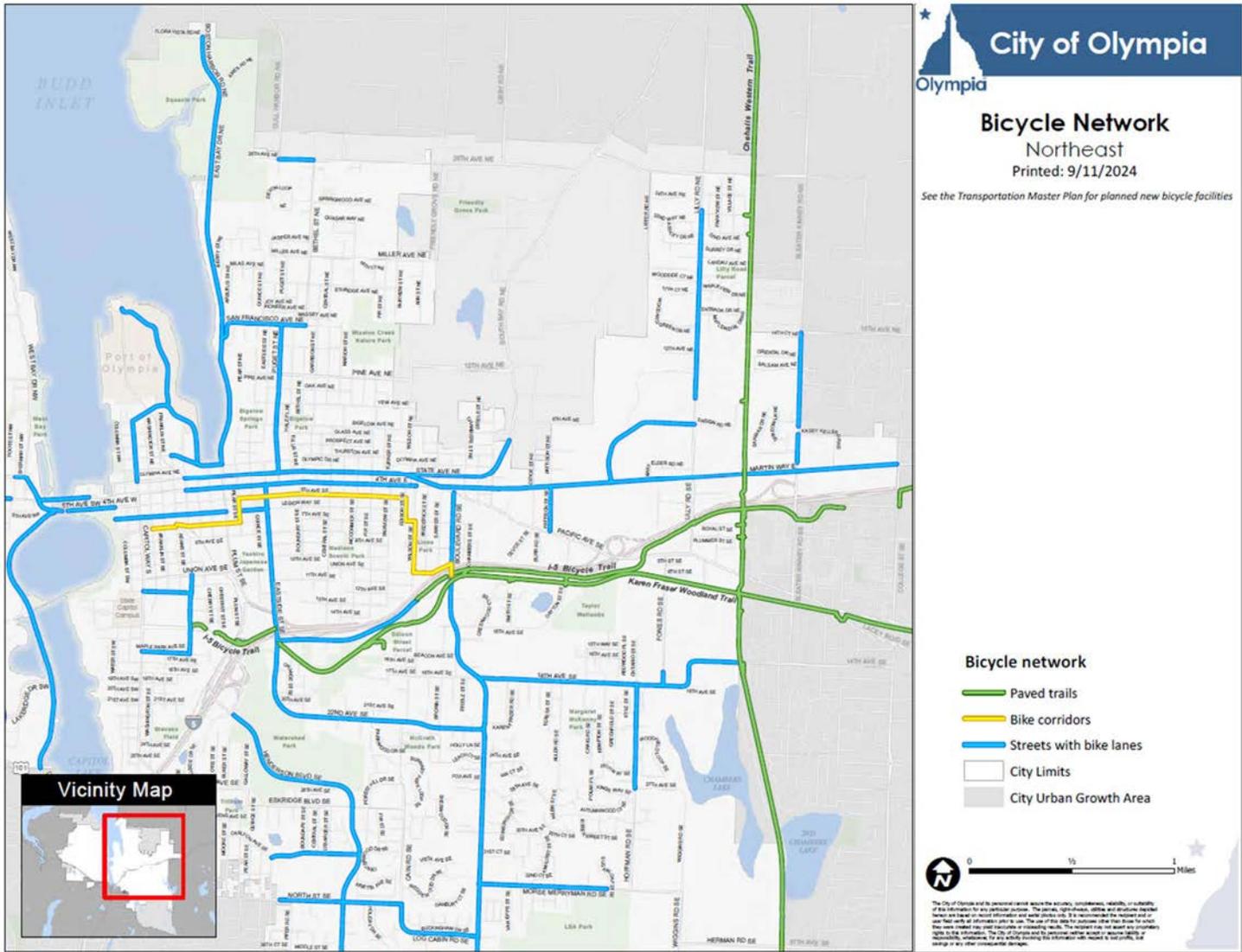
Please see the [Transportation Master Plan](#) for the planned low-stress bike network. The network will include enhanced bike lanes, bike corridors (called bike boulevards or neighborhood greenways in other cities), trails, and pathways. The [Capital Facilities Plan](#) shows how we plan to fund and build those projects.

The existing bike network of standard bike lanes, bike corridors, and trails is shown on the following maps.

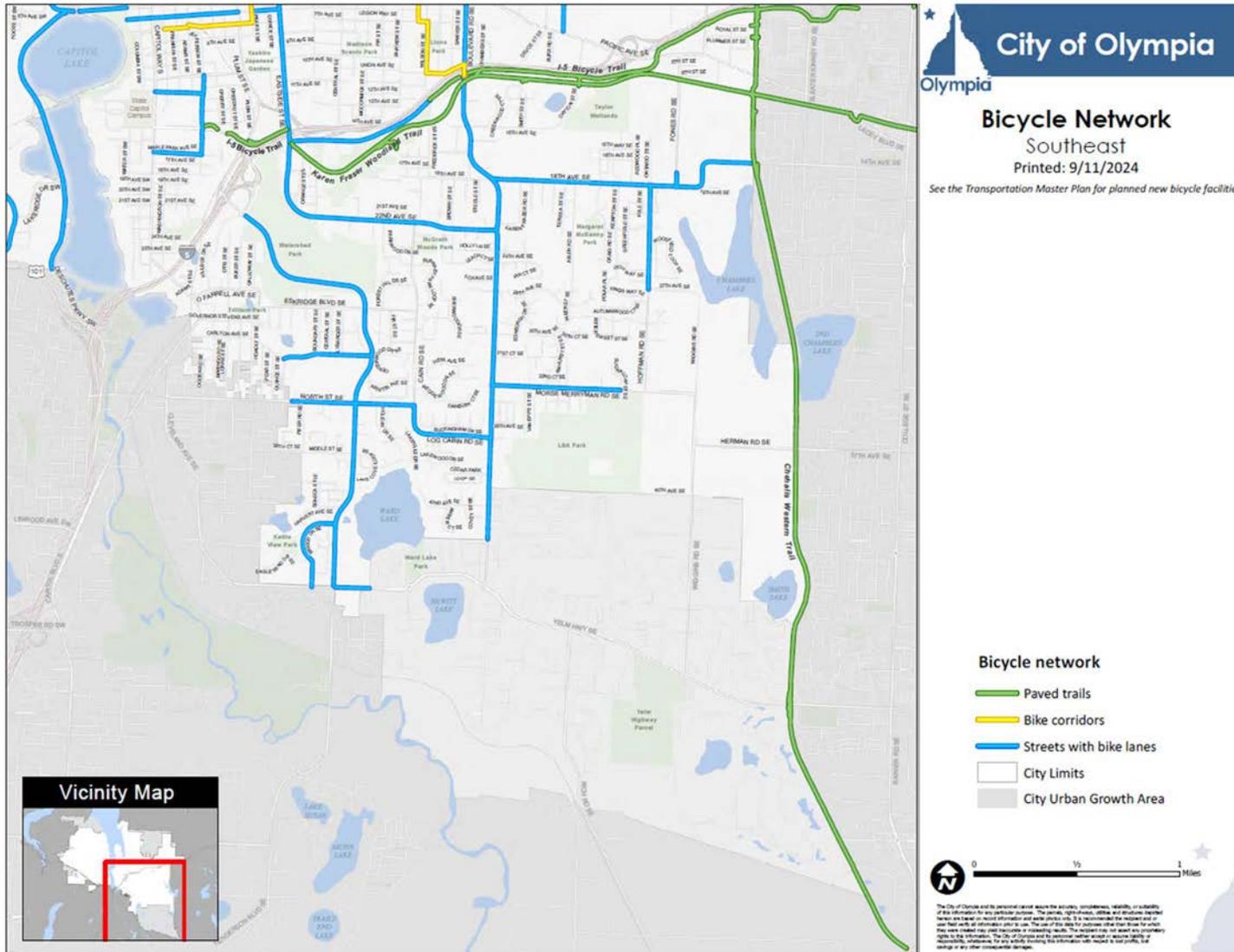
# Bicycle Network Westside



# Bicycle Network Northeast



Bicycle Network  
Southeast



## Appendix D: Highways of Statewide Significance (Thurston County)

- 
- State Route 5, 276.62 miles, Oregon to Canada
- State Route 8, 20.67 miles, US 12/Elma to US 101/Olympia (entire route)
- United States Highway 12, 324.51 miles, US 101/Aberdeen to Idaho (entire route)
- United States Highway 101, 336.66 miles, SR 4 to I-5/Olympia (0.01 miles of physical gap not included)

# Appendix E: Transportation Facilities and Services of Statewide Significance

- The Interstate Highway System: See Highways of Statewide Significance
- Interregional State Principal Arterials: See Highways of Statewide Significance
- Intercity Passenger Rail Services:
  - Olympia to Seattle, with stops in Tacoma and Tukwila (7 trips per day)
  - Olympia to Portland, with stops in Centralia, Kelso and Vancouver (7 trips per day)
- Intercity High-speed Ground Transportation: none
- Major Passenger Intermodal Facilities: none
- Ferry Terminals: none
- Intercity Bus Depot: Olympia Greyhound Station
- Olympia Transit Center (Intercity Transit, Mason Transit and Grays Harbor Transit, Twin Transit)
- Park and Ride Facilities: Martin Way (Lacey)
- Park and Ride Facilities: Mud Bay (Thurston County)
- Park and Ride Facilities: Hawks Prairie (Lacey)
- Park and Ride Facilities: Centennial Station (Thurston County)
- Rail Facilities: Centennial Station (Thurston County)
- The Freight Railroad System: none
- Switching and Terminal Companies: none
- The Columbia/Snake Navigable River System: none
- Marine Port Facilities and Services: Port of Olympia
- High Capacity Transportation System serving regions as defined in RCW [81.104.015](#): none
- Airport: Hoskins Field Airport
- Airport: Olympia Regional Airport

# Appendix F: Facilities of Statewide Significance

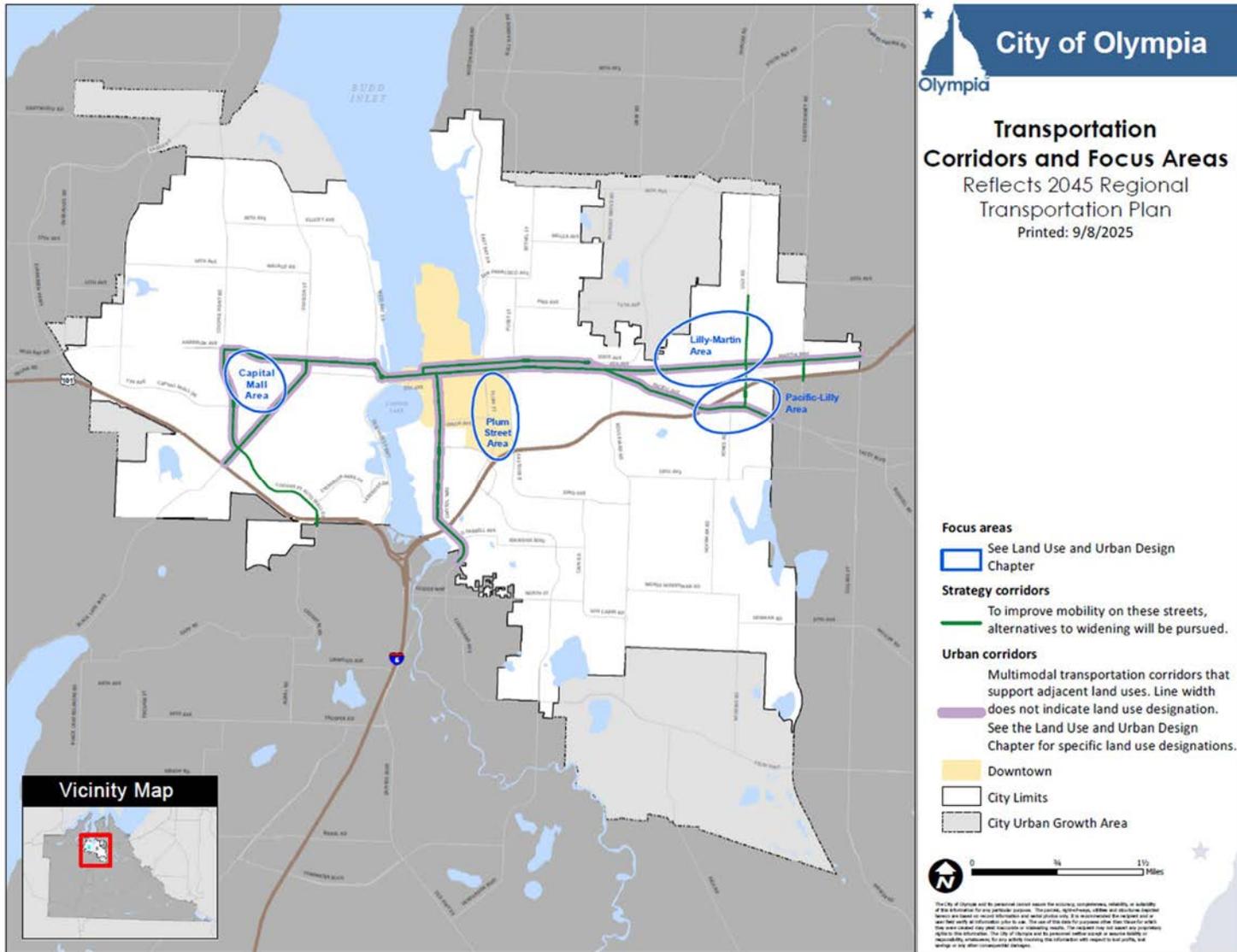
The following Facilities of Statewide Significance are located in the Washington State Department of Transportation's Olympic Region, in Olympia:

- Interstate 5, from Mile Post 104.56 to 108.13, Limited Access Fully Controlled, Urban Interstate, National Highway System
- United States Highway 101, from Mile Post 364.91 5 to 366.91, Limited Access Fully Controlled, Urban Principal Arterial, National Highway System, State Scenic and Recreational Highway

# Appendix G: Transportation Corridor Map

This map shows where urban corridors, strategy corridors, and focus areas are in Olympia.

# Transportation Corridors and Focus Areas Map



## Appendix H: 2045 Travel Demand

With increased population and employment, we expect more demand for space on Olympia’s streets by 2045. As Olympia’s land use patterns become more dense, this plan’s policies will support an increase in people walking and rolling, riding bicycles, and taking transit to get where they need to go.

The [Transportation Master Plan](#) outlines the projects we plan to build to meet this demand. Briefly, it includes for:

**Pedestrians:** the enhanced crosswalks, new sidewalks, and curb ramps needed to have a complete network on major streets. These were prioritized based on several criteria, including how close they were to public buildings, bus stops, schools, parks, grocery stores, medical centers, and whether they were in areas of dense employment or housing.

**Bicyclists:** a low-stress bike network of routes planned about every half mile, so no one will ever be more than a quarter mile from one. These routes include a series of bike corridors, enhanced bike lanes, trails, and pathways.

**Transit users:** support for transit improvements, such as signal prioritization, queue jump lanes, business access, and transit-only lanes, in-lane bus stops, and other infrastructure. Because most people walk or roll to or from a bus stop, we also prioritized pedestrian infrastructure near bus stops.

**Multimodal users:** roundabouts improve traffic flow at intersections, add enhanced crosswalks, and make it easier for transit buses to turn around. In some parts of Olympia, adding roundabouts will allow the City to reallocate space on the street to pedestrians or bicyclists.

Estimating the demand for most of these facilities is difficult for several reasons, one of which is that we suspect there is a lot of “latent demand.” This means that many people would walk, roll, bike, or ride transit if our land use patterns and transportation system made it more feasible. This was a common thing people told us during the public outreach process for the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

Additionally, estimating demand for sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and transit is a very new idea, and the tools to do that have not yet been built. Forecasting future vehicle traffic using travel demand models has been a standard practice for decades, because vehicles take up so much space on the street relative to the number of people they typically carry, which leads to traffic congestion. Walking or rolling, riding a bike, or taking transit allow many more people to use a street, making congestion less likely. This is why there is not a standard practice of modeling future demand for walking, rolling, biking, or transit use.

For example, one estimate for the maximum number of people a street can carry is:

Sidewalk	9,000 people per hour
Bike lanes	7,500 people per hour
Dedicated bus lane, frequent service	10,000 – 20,000 people per hour
Mixed traffic with frequent buses	1,000 – 2,800 people per hour
Vehicle lane, no transit	600 – 1,600 people per hour

Source: NACTO, Transit Street Design Guide, <https://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/introduction/why/designing-move-people/>

Given our 2045 population estimate of 87,650 residents, when compared to the capacities of sidewalks and bike lanes in the table above, we do not expect to see untenable pedestrian or bicycle congestion between now and 2045.

However, that does not address the demand that people have for pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure that does not exist. People have told us in many public outreach processes that they want sidewalks on every street, frequent safe and inviting crosswalks, and low-stress bike infrastructure nearby. The [Transportation Master Plan](#) shows how we aim to provide that amid our financial constraints. For example, we are prioritizing sidewalks on major streets over residential streets because the need for sidewalks is so great, and we have limited resources to build them.

[Intercity Transit’s long range plan](#) includes policies to improve transit frequency and routing, and several policies within this plan and the [Transportation Master Plan](#) support it. As part of the creation of its long range plan, Intercity Transit reviewed several demographic characteristics common to transit riders, creating a “[Transit Propensity Index](#),” which helped guide the development of the plan. While it is not a blueprint of future demand, it is a useful indicator that Intercity Transit can use to guide future route development.

Additionally, Intercity Transit’s plans to improve service on several of Olympia’s urban corridors complements our future land use and transportation vision outlined both in this plan and the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

## Level of service

Olympia defines its level of service for all modes of transportation to be a complete system. Complete systems for each mode are outlined in the [Transportation Master Plan](#).

For more information about how this interfaces with Olympia’s transportation concurrency program, please see Goal 12 and its supporting policies.

## State-owned streets and highways

Within Olympia, the state of Washington owns some streets and highways, which are:

- Deschutes Parkway
- Washington Street between 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Legion Way
- Several streets on the Capitol Campus
- Interstate 5
- US 101

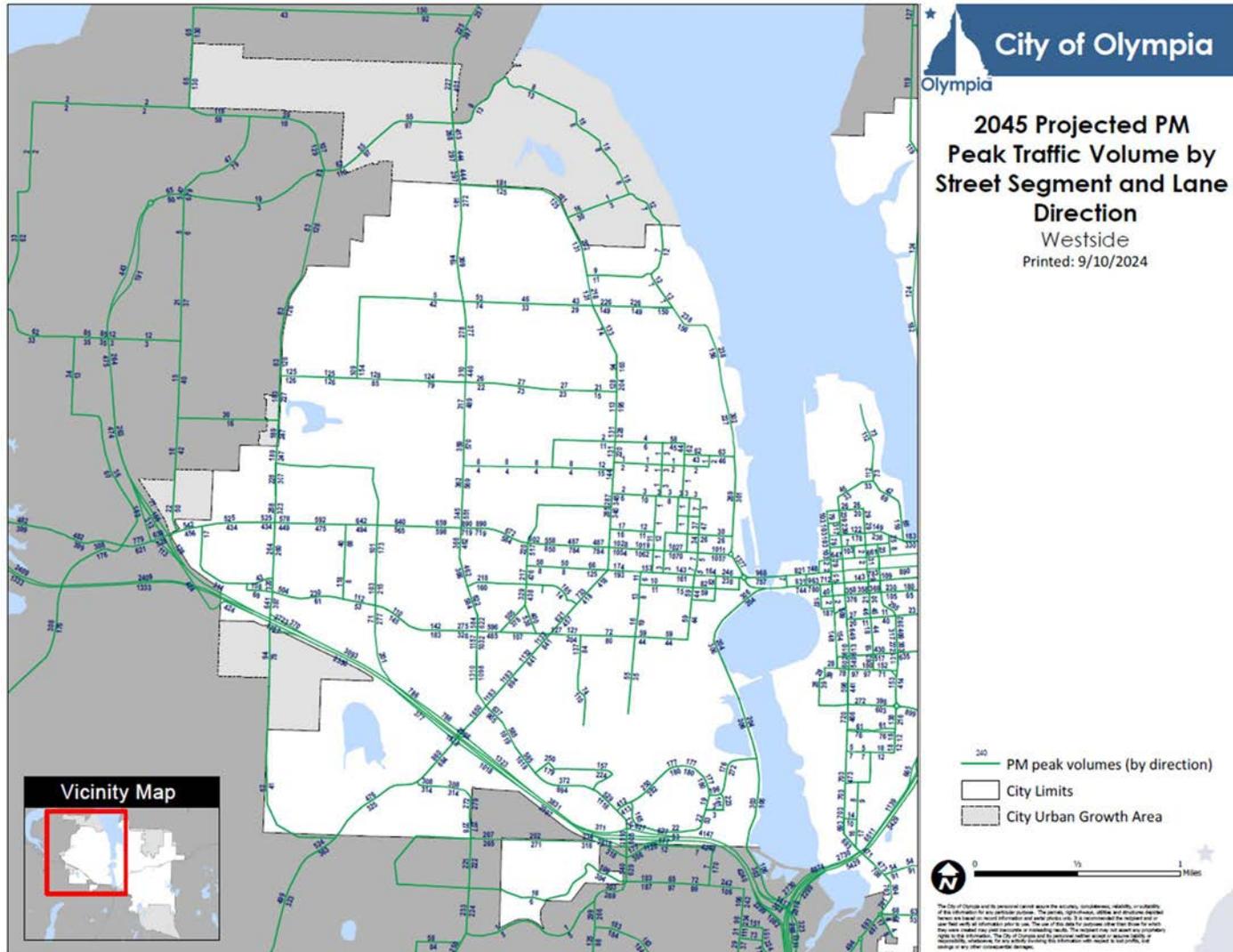
The [Transportation Master Plan](#) defines the multimodal needs on state-owned streets. For Interstate 5 and US 101, we expect that pedestrians and bicyclists will use Olympia’s streets instead of the highways.

## Future vehicle demand model

The [Thurston Regional Planning Council](#) maintains a [model](#) that estimates vehicle demand on major streets throughout our region. The following maps show the estimated vehicle demand for 2045 in Olympia and the urban growth area, and they include estimated demand on state-owned streets and highways.

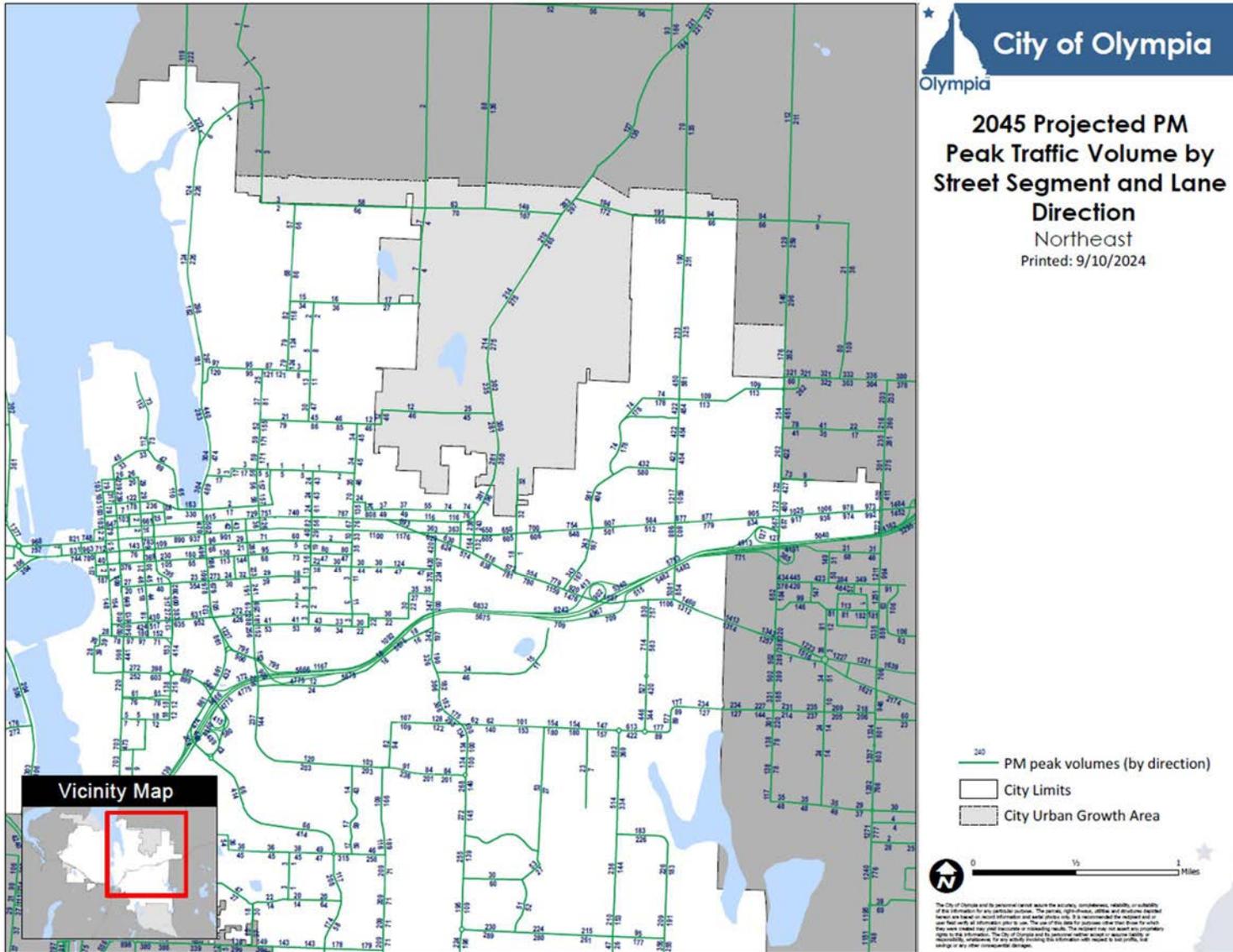
All models contain assumptions. This one assumes a reasonable rate of continued telework, that some street connections get made, and that future land use aligns with the Future Land Use Map shown in the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter. It also includes projected population and employment forecasts for the Thurston region.

2045 Projected PM Peak Traffic Volume by Street Segment and Lane Direction  
Westside

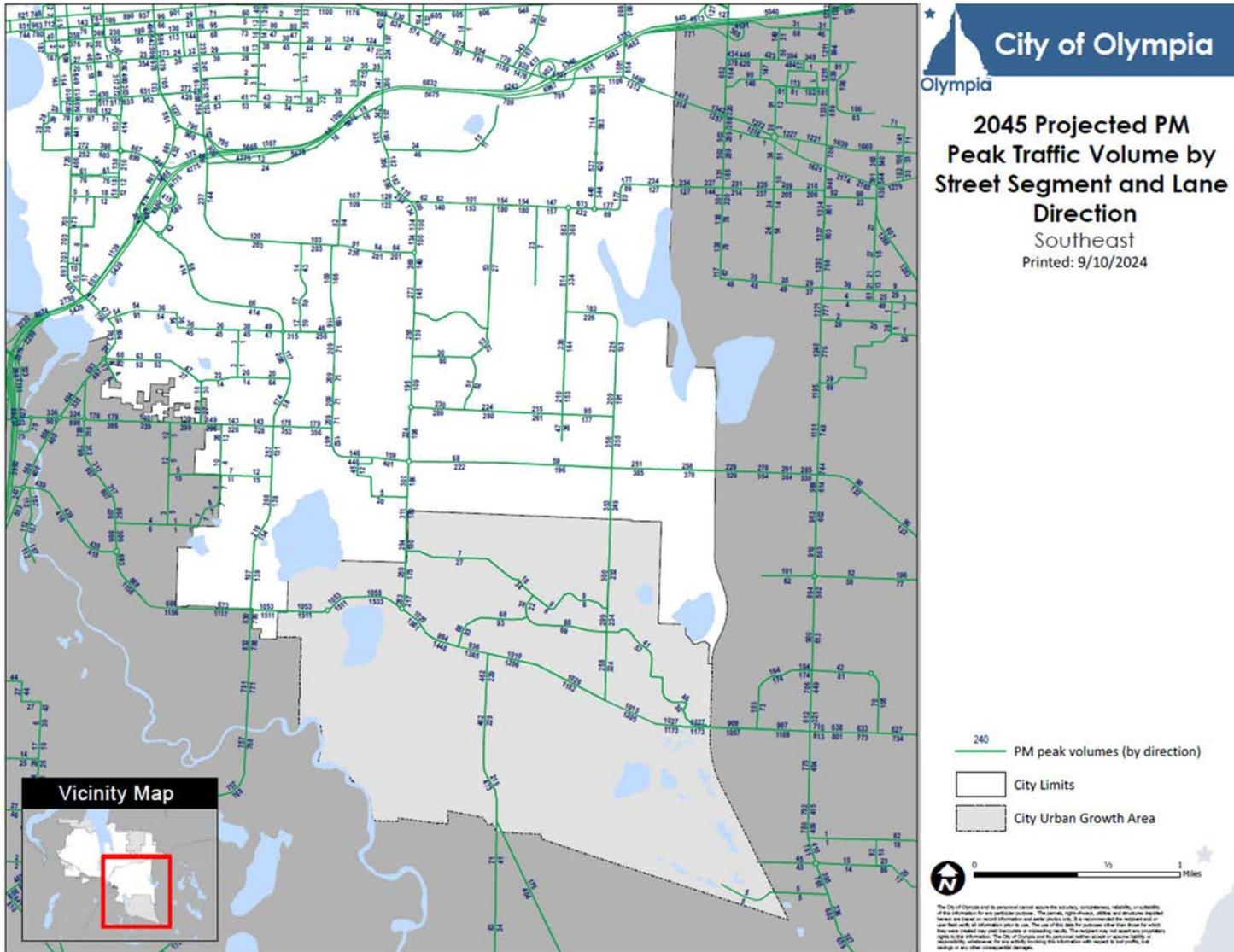




2045 Projected PM Peak Traffic Volume by Street Segment and Lane Direction  
 Northeast



2045 Projected PM Peak Traffic Volume by Street Segment and Lane Direction  
Southeast



# Appendix I: ADA Transition Plan

The City of Olympia adopted an ADA Transition Plan in 2021, which includes provisions for removing barriers to access in the public right-of-way for people with disabilities. It can be found at [olympiawa.gov/ada](https://olympiawa.gov/ada).

# Housing



Brick townhouses in Olympia.

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A diverse, inclusive, and sustainable community where everyone has access to high-quality housing that is safe, stable, and affordable.*

## What Olympia Values:

*Our city is committed to fostering well-planned neighborhoods that reflect our heritage while embracing innovation and ensuring that housing options are available for all income levels and life stages.*

**Affordability & Accessibility** – We strive to provide housing options that meet the needs of all residents, across every level of affordability, ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Sustainability & Smart Growth** – We embrace responsible development practices that preserve our environment, promote efficient land use, and encourage diverse housing types within vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that include access to transit services.

**Equity & Inclusion** – We work to eliminate barriers to housing, prevent displacement, and create a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels feel welcome and can thrive.

**Collaboration & Innovation** – We partner with regional stakeholders, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations to develop creative solutions that expand housing opportunities.

**Community & Livability** – We prioritize the quality of our neighborhoods by promoting well-designed housing that supports diverse communities, public transportation access, and local economic growth.

Through these commitments, we will ensure that our community remains a welcoming and thriving place for generations to come.

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Provide a Variety of Housing Types to Meet All Needs

Olympia is fortunate to have a variety of residential and mixed-use neighborhoods, offering single-family detached and attached homes, condominiums, small-scale multiple-unit buildings, and apartments. However, we are in a housing crisis. Demand for housing is greater than supply, and costs are increasing. The ability to own a home is out of reach for many who live here or may want to someday call Olympia “home”.

Stable housing is a cornerstone to our quality of life. As a community, we want to have a variety of housing types that are accessible and affordable to all current and future residents.

The City of Olympia has been working on a number of actions to reduce homelessness, increase affordable housing, and collaborate with other jurisdictions and agencies to explore regional solutions to these issues. Examples include a voter-approved Home Fund to create permanent supportive housing, reducing code barriers, providing development incentives, preapproved building plans to encourage accessory dwelling units, adopting a declaration of emergency concerning the lack of affordable housing, and championing the formation of an interjurisdictional Regional Housing Council that sets funding priorities to advance equitable access to safe and affordable housing in Thurston County. Additionally, the City has taken action including less than market value sale of land and providing funding for low income housing development, increasing the types of housing

allowed in low density neighborhoods, reducing setbacks and allowing deferral of impact fees. Some of these actions are ongoing, while others can be strengthened or extended to new areas.

Adequate and affordable housing is critical to a healthy community. The Growth Management Act directs each community to plan for it by:

- Promoting a variety of residential densities and housing types.
- Encouraging preservation of existing housing stock.
- Identifying sufficient land for housing, including government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multi-family housing, group homes, and foster-care facilities.
- Planning for and accommodating housing for all income levels by updating goals, policies, zoning, and land capacity to include moderate-density housing, emergency and supportive housing, and future housing needs by income bracket.
- Addressing equity and displacement by identifying and mitigating racially disparate impacts, engaging vulnerable communities, and adopting anti-displacement and affordability-preservation policies.

The strategies of this chapter depend on well-formulated design standards to promote flexibility and innovation while enhancing the character of neighborhoods. We seek to establish and encourage diversity in housing opportunities and link diverse neighborhoods. With a strong foundation in preserving our heritage, our community can incorporate new housing and other developments in a manner that continues our legacy of well-planned neighborhoods. The housing goals and policies below provide a framework for residential land uses in Olympia and its urban growth area (UGA) as well as support for affordable housing.

While Olympia offers a diverse range of housing types, the city faces a significant risk of physical displacement\*, particularly due to the loss of existing low-income homeownership and inadequate supply of affordable rental units for very-low-income households (households that make 30–50% of our area median income). Our housing strategy must prioritize preserving and maintaining existing affordable units to prevent displacement and keep people in their homes.

The Housing Displacement Analysis evaluated Olympia’s existing housing policies and identified that certain policies focused on preserving neighborhood character may have contributed to exclusionary outcomes by limiting the development of diverse and affordable housing types. These policies — often in single-family residential zones — can have racially disparate impacts by restricting access to high-opportunity neighborhoods for lower-income and black, indigenous, and other

people of color (BIPOC) households. In response, Olympia is committed to revising land use policies to promote equitable access and prevent displacement.

Olympia has not been exempt from acts of racial housing discrimination. Historic plats throughout the City of Olympia have included racial covenants that explicitly prohibited persons who are “other than the Caucasian race.” Olympia’s urban core has been identified as having the highest density of racial and ethnic minorities, most likely due to this area historically being one of the few within the City limits to allow apartments and affordable rental properties. Downzoning in the 1980’s and 1990’s further limited most of Olympia’s residential areas to single family homes and townhomes – typical homeownership options. Whether intentional or not, this had the effect of excluding most renters - disproportionately people of lower income and people of color – from finding residency in these neighborhoods.

The City of Olympia unanimously adopted a City Council resolution requesting the Washington State Government and the Federal Government to create a commission to study reparations for the descendants of enslaved African people and to implement recommendations of that commission. Meanwhile, connecting our own Olympia Strong initiatives, Comprehensive Plan, Fair Housing Assessment, Capital Facilities, and non-government and governmental partnerships to our plans, and research cities that have taken similar actions. These actions will continue to help the City remove remaining systemic racial barriers.

\*Displacement is due to eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent or income-restricted housing.



An Olympia neighborhood with a mix of apartments and town homes.

Many factors contribute to the need for more and varied housing:

- Olympia’s growing residential population.
- Varying household incomes.
- The capitol’s legislative session, which creates a demand for short-term housing.
- College students seeking affordable housing near transportation corridors and services.
- Households are getting smaller, yet new housing often remains focused on larger and more expensive builds.
- There is a lack of housing that is both affordable and accessible for low-income disabled and senior households.
- An increasing proportion of seniors.

Olympia is part of a larger housing market extending throughout Thurston County and beyond. Thus, planning for housing is done based on anticipated shares of this larger area. The 2020 Census indicated that Olympia and its urban growth area included approximately 30,735 housing units. According to the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) [2024 Population and Housing Data](#), about 52% were single-family homes, 45% were multi-family (shared-wall) units, and 3% were manufactured housing. The 2024 housing needs analysis projects that Olympia and its urban growth area will require approximately 14,295 new housing units by 2045 to accommodate population growth.

Based on existing zoning and development patterns, Olympia and its urban growth area have a combined capacity of approximately 18,941 housing units, ensuring adequate space for anticipated growth. Nearly 3,468 units can be accommodated in mid-rise multifamily zones, 7,352 units in low-rise multifamily zones, and 1,152 units in moderate-density zones. Additionally, Olympia's accessory dwelling unit (ADU) capacity is projected to be approximately 310 units over the planning period.

Because Olympia generally allows small group homes and manufactured housing wherever single-family homes are permitted, allows larger group homes by special approval, and does not discriminate with regard to government-assisted housing, foster-care, or low-income housing, the area is expected to adequately accommodate all types of housing. Furthermore, Olympia is actively working to ensure that zoning regulations do not act as a barrier to the development of affordable housing.

A key finding in the [2024 housing needs assessment](#) is that while land availability is not a constraint in Olympia, affordability remains a critical issue. To meet all housing needs, it is necessary to allocate enough land that will be suitable for a variety of housing types and costs, including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings. This approach will help provide both variety and affordability in housing options.

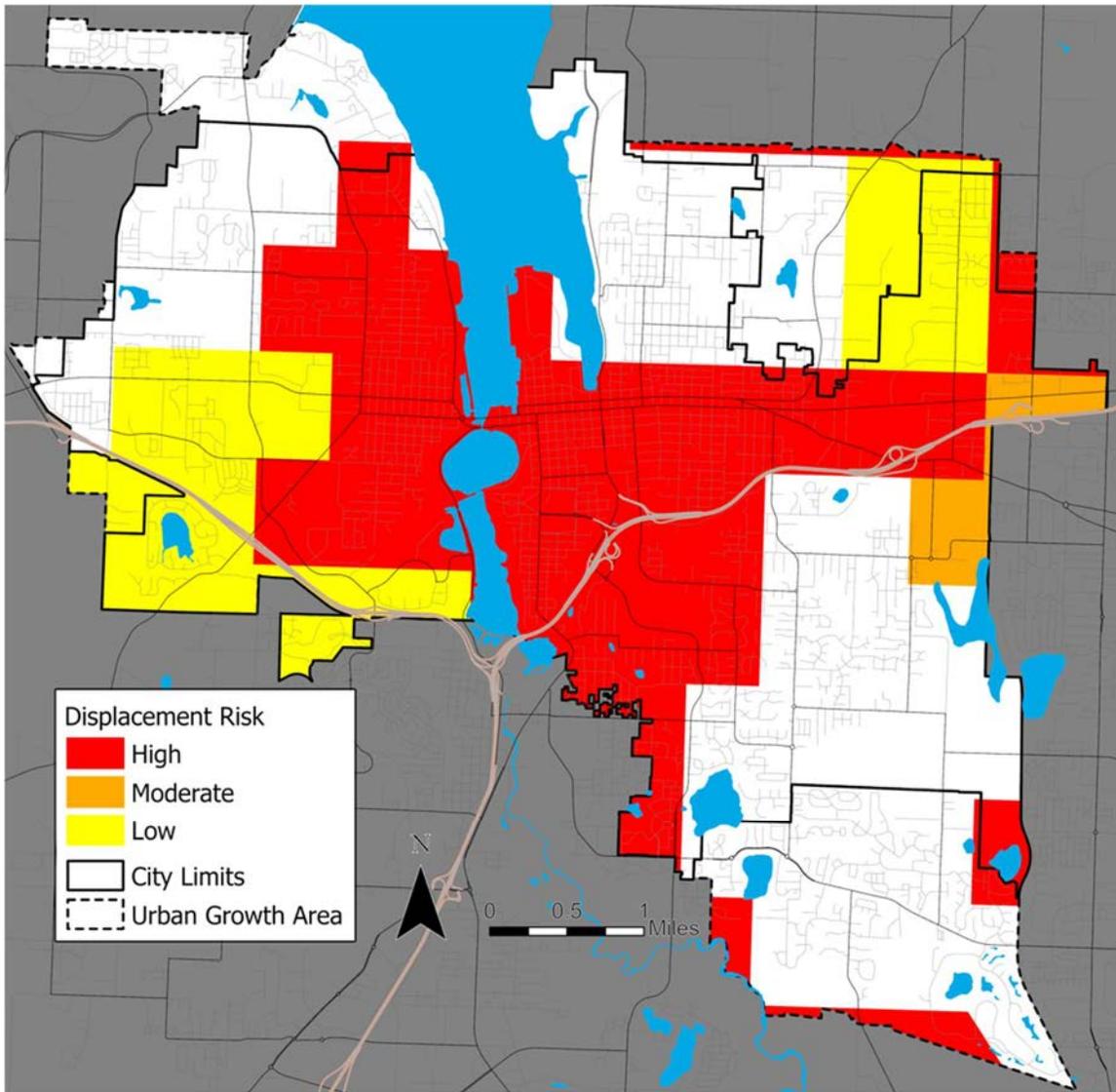
The 2024 analysis indicates that of the 14,295 new housing units needed by 2045, Olympia will need approximately 7,616 additional housing units affordable to low-income households (0-80% area median income). To meet these needs, Olympia will need to implement policies that promote affordability, prevent displacement, and encourage the construction of a diverse range of housing types.

# Olympia Housing Needs by 2045 (City and UGA)

Income Level		Zone Categories Serving These Needs	Housing Need	Aggregate Need	Total Capacity	Surplus
Extremely Low-Income	0-30% PSH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-rise Multifamily</li> <li>• Mid-rise Multifamily</li> <li>• ADUs</li> </ul>	1,098	7,616	12,282	4,666
	0-30% Other		2,617			
Very Low-Income	30-50%		3,312			
Low-Income	50-80%		590			
Moderate Income	80-100%	• Moderate Density	2,328	3,623	5,404	1,781
	100-120%		1,296			
High Income	120%+	• All Zones	3,054			
Emergency Housing (Beds) – Not calculated in total			286	286	2,223	1,937
<b>Total</b>			<b>14,295</b>			

Olympia Housing Needs by 2045 for the City and its Urban Growth Area. Note: State law does not require jurisdictions to plan for housing affordable to households earning more than 120% of the area median income. This is included so the number of units can be summed up to the total projected housing units necessary based on population projections.

In addition to the housing needs assessment, the Housing Displacement Analysis identified increased risks to physical displacement. Since 2015, Olympia has experienced several housing trends that highlight growing risks of physical displacement. Notably, there was a decrease in both low-income and extremely low-income homeownership, despite an overall increase in homeowner households. At the same time, the number of cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened homeowners rose, indicating that many residents are struggling to afford the costs associated with remaining in their homes. While there was a modest increase in affordable rental units for extremely low-income households, the city saw a significant decline in units affordable to very-low-income renters (30–50% of area median income). These combined trends suggest that Olympia must focus not only on building new housing but also on preserving existing affordable units and supporting vulnerable homeowners and renters who are at risk of displacement.



Displacement risk in Olympia and the Urban Growth Area.

## Goals and Policies

**GH1 The range of housing types and densities is consistent with the community’s changing population needs and preferences.**

**PH1.1** Support increasing housing densities through the well-designed, efficient, and cost-effective use of buildable land, consistent with environmental constraints

and affordability. Use both incentives and regulations, such as minimum and maximum density limits, to achieve such efficient use.

**PH1.2** Adopt zoning that allows a wide variety of housing types and densities.

**PH1.3** Allow 'clustering' of housing with the adjacent neighborhood to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

**PH1.4** Disperse low- and moderate-income and special needs housing throughout the urban area.

**PH1.5** Promote affordable housing across the community by streamlining regulatory reviews, reducing delays and costs, eliminating barriers to development, permitting accessory dwelling units, and allowing a wide range of housing types.

**PH1.6** Allow manufactured homes on individual lots, promote preservation of existing manufactured home parks, and enable these parks in multi-family and commercial areas, all subject to design standards ensuring that the units are appropriately scaled and designed to integrate with surrounding housing and land uses.

**PH1.7** Encourage and provide incentives for residences above businesses.

**PH1.8** In all residential areas, allow small cottages, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units.

**PH1.9** Encourage multi-family structures to be located near collector streets with transit service, arterial streets, or neighborhood centers to support accessibility and connectivity. (Climate)

**PH1.10** Ensure that multi-family structures are designed to be compatible with adjacent housing and are 'stepped' to follow the natural topography of the site.

**PH1.11** Require a mix of single-family and multi-family structures in villages, mixed residential density districts, and apartment projects when these exceed five acres; and use a variety of housing types and setbacks to transition to adjacent low-density areas.

**PH1.12** Encourage adaptive reuse of non-residential buildings for housing. (Climate)

**PH1.13** Consider energy and transportation affordability alongside other fixed housing costs in affordable housing policies and programs. (Climate)

**PH1.14** Ensure future climate-exacerbated hazards and their impacts are mitigated in new and existing construction. (Climate)

**GH2 Eliminate racially disparate impacts in housing access, affordability, displacement, and neighborhood opportunity by addressing the legacy of exclusionary practices and promoting equitable development.**

**PH2.1** Regularly evaluate local housing policies, zoning, and development regulations for disproportionate impacts on BIPOC residents, low-income households, and historically excluded communities.

**PH2.2** Partner with organizations, especially those organizations led by members of the BIPOC community, to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate affordable homes in areas vulnerable to gentrification.

**PH2.3** Partner with community organizations and initiatives (such as the Black Home Initiative) to increase access to homeownership for BIPOC residents.

**PH2.4** Incentivize development of affordable homeownership housing to address the racial wealth gap for low- to moderate-income BIPOC residents.

**PH2.5** Promote equitable development by identifying opportunities for affordable housing development, lot splitting, and infill in high-opportunity and historically redlined or deed-restricted areas where BIPOC residents were previously excluded from renting or buying homes.

**PH2.6** Evaluate zoning and availability of affordable housing development incentives in high-opportunity areas and areas where racially restrictive covenants were prevalent to ensure medium and high-density residential development is allowable and encouraged.

**PH2.7** Identify properties with expiring tax credits and partner with the Housing Authority of Thurston County or other entities to preserve affordable housing units and prevent resident displacement if units are converted to market rate.

**PH2.8** Prioritize work in reparative justice, as directed by City Council in Resolution M-2576, to increase Black homeownership with particular focus as part of the City's housing strategy following the City's Affordable Homeownership Research Study.

## Affordable Housing for All

Adequate and affordable housing is critical to a healthy community. It must be located near jobs and services or on bus routes. It also must be safe and well-maintained.

The City addresses housing needs for our most vulnerable community members through its [Consolidated Plan](#), which is updated every five years. The Consolidated Plan identifies Olympia's priority housing, shelter, social services, economic development, and public facility needs. The City works with other jurisdictions, private industry, and nonprofit organizations to find solutions to low-income housing needs.

## One Community Plan

In March 2019, the City of Olympia launched a yearlong planning effort aimed at finding community agreement around how to best respond to the homeless crisis. At the time, homelessness in Olympia appeared to be growing dramatically. In the summer of 2018, tents started to appear in Downtown parking lots, growing from 75 in August to over 300 by early October. In January of 2019, Thurston County's annual homeless census counted 394 unsheltered persons, up from 124 in 2017. Many of these individuals were sleeping in Olympia, in the woods, under bridges, in vehicles, and on Downtown streets.

The City of Olympia responded by creating a Community Work Group made up of 11 volunteers with different life experiences and perspectives. Their role was to deeply listen to the voices of the community to identify the strategic direction. This process included hearing from over 1,200 people through 20 different community conversations and two online surveys. Community members engaged in important civic dialogue, face-to-face with one another and across significant differences. The Community Work Group heard from a wide and diverse cross-section of stakeholders, including people experiencing homelessness, neighborhood residents, faith leaders, business and property owners, Downtown visitors and employees, and people representing social services, emergency services, hospitals, and school organizations.

The result was the One Community Plan that outlined strategies for responding to the immediate crisis, as well as long-term prevention strategies; it aims to help people experiencing homelessness as well as the broader community.

## Housing Action Plan

The City of Olympia Housing Action Plan, adopted in 2021, began as a collaborative effort between the Cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater. Together with help from

Thurston Regional Planning Council, the Cities developed a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Gap Analysis, a Landlord Survey, and a draft set of actions to address identified housing gaps. Grounded in data and strategies common across all three Cities, Olympia’s Housing Action Plan identifies specific actions the City of Olympia will take to address housing needs. This plan is also intended to inform the City’s Comprehensive Plan policies and guide implementation of actions that help the City meet its housing needs and strategic objectives.

**GH3 Affordable housing is available for all income levels throughout the community.**

**PH3.1** Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types so that housing is available in a broad range of costs.

**PH3.2** Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing homes to remain affordable and habitable for lower-income households. (Climate)

**PH3.3** Take steps to ensure housing is available to all income levels based on projected community needs. (Climate)

**GH4 Deteriorating residential areas within the City are revitalized.**

**PH4.1** Support efforts to preserve the historic features or character of historic properties in City housing rehabilitation programs.

**PH4.2** Provide assistance and incentives to help low-income residents rehabilitate properties they cannot afford to maintain.

**GH5 Special needs populations, such as people with developmental disabilities, the homeless, the elderly, and others who have difficulty securing housing, have adequate, safe, and affordable housing.**

**PH5.1** Disperse housing for low-income, moderate-income, and special-needs residents throughout Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, and discourage concentration of such housing in any one geographic area.

**PH5.2** Provide density bonuses to builders who provide low-income housing in market-rate developments, and tie the bonus to affordability.

**PH5.3** Encourage new housing on transportation arterials and in areas near public transportation hubs. (Climate)

**PH5.4** Encourage self-help housing efforts in which people earn home equity in exchange for renovation or construction work, such as "sweat equity" volunteer programs.

**PH5.5** Require a percentage of new housing units, especially in publicly funded or incentivized developments, to meet universal design or accessibility standards.

**PH5.6** Promote and support modifications to existing housing to improve accessibility for people with disabilities or mobility challenges.

**PH5.7** Retain existing subsidized housing.



Unity Commons opened in Olympia as a collaboration of multiple regional housing partners to provide emergency and permanent supportive housing.

## **GH6 Prevent displacement and increase housing stability through tenant protections.**

**PH6.1** Establish and enforce tenant protection policies that make it easier for tenants to access housing and stay housed. Ensure policies consider additional barriers faced by marginalized renters to increase access to housing and housing stability.

**PH6.2** Establish and enforce tenant protection policies that reduce upfront and ongoing housing costs to reduce housing cost burden.

**PH6.3** Require adequate advance notice for rent increases above a certain threshold to allow tenants to adjust or find alternative housing.

**PH6.4** Develop and maintain a formal relocation assistance program for tenants who are displaced (due to redevelopment, substantial rent increases, or eviction without cause, or other reasons). Consider supportive program elements such as financial assistance, moving cost coverage, and connections to alternative housing.

**PH6.5** Take steps to improve environmental health, habitability, and energy efficiency in rental housing.

**PH6.6** Consider adoption of policies to help renters access homeownership opportunities. Consider a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinance (TOPO) to give renters the first right to purchase their rental unit if the landlord decides to sell.

**PH6.7** Encourage and support community land trusts, tenant cooperatives, or nonprofit ownership models to protect residents from displacement due to redevelopment or corporate acquisition.

**PH6.8** Increase transparency in rental housing market practices and transactions to ensure housing consumers are protected and informed.

## Social Services Fulfill a Vital Need

People in our community may face challenges at different times in their lives, such as job loss, health issues, or other unexpected events that make it difficult to meet basic needs. Our community responds through a network of religious, charitable, and local government organizations working together to ensure everyone has access to the support and resources they need.



Community volunteers help build tiny homes for Quince Street Village.

**GH7 Our community is safe and welcoming, and social services are accessible to all who need them.**

**PH7.1** Support nonprofit and faith-based charitable organizations that provide funding or oversight for social service funding. (Climate)

**PH7.2** Work with other local governments to provide financial support and oversight of social service funding.

**PH7.3** Support programs and projects that assist low-income people and those at risk of homelessness with public funding. (Climate)

**PH7.4** Identify barriers to social service, shelter, and housing resources for low-income people and those at risk of becoming homeless.

**GH8 There is enough emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent housing with supportive services, and independent affordable housing.**

**PH8.1** Encourage a strong network of emergency shelter resources for homeless and at-risk families with children, childless adults, unaccompanied youth, and victims of sexual and domestic violence.

**PH8.2** Take a regional approach with other jurisdictions so that support for a broad range of social services and resources, including shelter and housing, can be maximized.

**PH8.3** Encourage businesses, charitable non-profit organizations, and faith-based community organizations to provide shelter and housing services.

**PH8.4** Support coordinated service delivery models to maximize the best use of public, charitable, and privately-funded shelter and housing resources.

**PH8.5** Support best practices that reflect current standards of care and incorporate emerging models that optimize the use of public and charitable resources.

**PH8.6** Encourage shelter and housing providers and programs to locate in the greater Olympia area, or near transportation arterial hubs, so residents can easily access them.

**PH8.7** Work toward making the community more aware of homelessness in Olympia and how it can be prevented as a way to encourage charitable support and involve community members to help reach positive outcomes.

**PH8.8** Use data to continually assess the community's need for shelter and housing and who it is serving. Use this data to continually improve these services.

**PH8.9** Revise policies that limit or prevent the community from providing shelter and housing resources.

**PH8.10** Coordinate land use, housing, transportation, and capital facility planning to support all aspects of shelter and housing resources, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing with supportive services, and low-income housing.

**PH8.11** Integrate group homes into all residential areas of the community. Set zoning standards to ensure group home sizes (number of residents and staff) are compatible with allowed densities and that transportation and other services are available.

**PH8.12** Evaluate regulations so the City can be more flexible in locating shelters and increasing capacity. (Climate)

## **GH9 The existing low-income housing stock is preserved.**

**PH9.1** Continue to fund the repair and rehabilitation of housing using federal, state, and local funding sources. (Climate)

**PH9.2** Support applications by the Housing Authority of Thurston County and other nonprofit housing developers to construct or purchase existing units that are affordable to low-income households.

**PH9.3** Support applications from eligible affordable housing developers to federal and state funding sources to build new, or rehabilitate existing, housing to meet low-income housing needs.

**PH9.4** Encourage and provide technical assistance to private developers and non-profits applying for below-market-rate state or federal loans to construct or rehabilitate low-income, multifamily rental housing.

**PH9.5** When Community Development Block Grant, Home Fund, or Housing and Urban Development-funded buildings are at risk of being converted to market-rate status, inform the tenants of any purchase and relocation options available. When possible, help the Housing Authority of Thurston County and nonprofit organizations buy such housing.

**PH9.6** Enforce policies\* that provide financial and relocation assistance to people who are displaced from their homes as a result of construction and development projects using federal funds.

\*Per section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, requiring the replacement of low- and moderate-income housing units that are demolished or converted to another use, in connection with a Community Development Block Grant project.

## **GH10 New low-income housing is created to meet demand.**

**PH10.1** Continue to support projects funded by low-income tax credits and revenue bonds.

**PH10.2** Investigate and support appropriate multi-jurisdictional support for the Housing Authority of Thurston County bond sales.

**PH10.3** Promote partnerships between public and private nonprofit organizations to increase housing and home ownership opportunities for people with special needs, and for low- and moderate-income households.

**PH10.4** Continue to encourage development of co-living housing (also known as single-room occupancy) units downtown, along urban corridors, and in other areas. This could include encouraging alliances between public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

**PH10.5** Evaluate the possibility of supporting a program that would allow low-income tenants of manufactured home parks to jointly purchase and renovate permanent sites for their manufactured homes. Consider funding programs to subsidize the interest rates, loan origination fees, or other costs of acquiring the land.

**PH10.6** Help low-income and special needs residents find ways to purchase housing, such as shared or limited-equity housing, lease-purchase options, co-housing, land trusts, and cooperatives.

**PH10.7** Work with jurisdictional partners through the county-wide Home Consortium, to fund affordable housing projects that serve low- and very low-income residents.

**PH10.8** Continue to administer the Housing Tax Credit program to develop both market-rate and low-income housing.

**PH10.9** Support nonprofit and faith-based organizations in their efforts to provide emergency homeless shelters. (Climate)

**PH10.10** Donate, lease, or sell surplus City-owned land to developers for low-income housing.

**PH10.11** Continue developing incentives to decrease the costs of development and increase the production of affordable housing units.

**PH10.12** Explore new and creative financing sources available to support the development of affordable housing units.

## For More Information:

- [Thurston Regional Planning Council Housing Affordability](#)
- [Planning for and Accommodating Housing Needs in Thurston County](#)

- [Housing Displacement Analysis and Comprehensive Plan Recommendations for the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm](#)
- [One Community Plan](#)
- [Housing Action Plan](#)
- [Thuston County/City of Olympia 2023-2027 Consolidated Plan](#)
- [Washington State Department of Commerce Displacement Risk Map](#)

# Utilities



A Public Works Utility employee enjoys a day on the job.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the community decision making and control, and cost-effective, locally-provided service delivery through its city-owned utilities; its high quality drinking water supply which exceeds all drinking water regulatory standards; protecting Puget Sound and local waterways by preventing pollution and effectively treating stormwater and wastewater before it is discharged into Puget Sound and local waterways; and a clean, sanitary city where waste products are disposed of properly and a reduction in use occurs to conserve energy and resources.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*Clean, plentiful water and significant reduction of pollution and waste.*

Through careful planning, improved efficiency of our drinking water use, and voluntary conservation, Olympia will be able to meet the water needs of its future population. Improved wastewater and stormwater treatment and management will support a healthy community of native aquatic life in Budd Inlet and our local waterways.

We will place less pressure on landfills through our recycling and composting programs, our efforts to support state packaging and product life-cycle initiatives, our local solid waste incentives, and the voluntary actions of our community members. Olympia households no longer use harmful products that could contaminate local water bodies.

To use community resources wisely, city-owned utility assets are maintained or replaced at the ideal time so that future ratepayers inherit reliable water, wastewater, stormwater, and garbage services. Additionally, Olympians benefit from the early and ongoing collaboration with private utilities by City staff.

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Introduction - Utilities Shape the Future

Olympia's future ability to achieve long-term environmental, economic, and social balance is influenced by how we deliver utility services to the community. To achieve this, we'll need to shift from a short-term to a long-term focus that considers how today's actions will affect future generations. The long-term view will emphasize reducing waste, preventing pollution, engaging the community, and managing our fiscal and environmental resources conservatively.

City utilities include Drinking Water, Wastewater, Storm and Surface Water, and Waste ReSources (garbage, organics, and recycling). Privately-owned utilities such as natural gas and electric, cable service, and telecommunications facilities are regulated locally, especially within city-owned rights-of-way. Olympia's future will be shaped, in part, by where and when these facilities are provided.

Olympia's utilities also provide services that protect nature and conserve resources by reducing pollution and waste, restoring habitat, and conserving water. The City is also partnering with private utilities to provide its Olympia customers with more opportunities to use renewable energy.

All the City's utilities discussed in this chapter have adopted and periodically updated their own detailed master plans to guide the design and daily administration of their services. This chapter is intended to serve as a bridge between those specific plans and the broader vision of this Comprehensive Plan.

Olympia's utilities are responsible for funding all of their related costs through user fees; they do not depend on tax revenues or Olympia's General Fund resources. Additionally, Olympia's utilities are subject to a municipal utility tax, which serves as a source of operating revenue for the City. Because Olympia's utilities are user-funded, the cost of the municipal utility tax is paid by utility customers as part of their rates.

## City-Owned Utilities Working Together

City-owned and operated utilities provide the community with essential services and can help shape Olympia's future in meaningful ways. We take a coordinated, cost-effective approach to managing our utilities and fully consider the economic, social and environmental implications of all our actions.



A young customer enjoys a sip of Olympia's drinking water.

Community engagement and involvement are important components of City utility management. Customers and users help with environmental restoration projects and efforts to reduce pollution and waste. They can also participate in utility management and rate setting. A Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) appointed by the City Council also reviews and provides advice and direction on programs, policies, and rates, and evaluates operations to ensure the utilities are carried out in a sustainable manner.

The four City-owned and operated utilities include:

**Drinking Water.** This utility's mission is to provide and protect healthy drinking water for the community. This involves protecting groundwater and promoting water conservation, as well as ensuring that our drinking water meets federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

**Wastewater.** This utility collects and conveys wastewater to treatment facilities to protect public and environmental health. It also works to reduce the number of septic systems in the City.

**Storm and Surface Water.** The mission of this utility is to minimize flooding, improve water quality, and protect or enhance aquatic habitat.

**Waste ReSources.** This utility provides collection services for residential and commercial garbage, residential recyclables, and residential and commercial organics (yard debris, food waste, and soiled paper), and encourages waste reduction through educational programs. Its mission is to lead our community toward a waste-free future.



The City collects organics for composting through its Waste ReSources Utility.

Over the next 20 years, there will be a growing need for us to manage our utility resources efficiently. Our challenges will include:

- **Repairing and replacing aging systems.** Operation and maintenance needs will continue to expand as the pipes, pumps, valves, treatment facilities, reservoirs, and wells that make up our utility system age. These needs must be met while keeping rates affordable.
- **Protecting the natural environment.** Water quality deterioration and habitat loss will continue to be a concern as development and utilities expand to new areas.

- **Reacting to and mitigating against climate change.** The changing climate in the Pacific Northwest is expected to result in more frequent and intensive winter rainfall events, drier summers, and rising sea levels. Increased rainfall and associated flooding could result in increased flows in the combined stormwater/sewer system, while sea level rise could impact utility infrastructure located in our downtown. Efforts taken by the City’s utilities, such as reducing energy use, protecting and enhancing habitat areas, promoting water conservation and recycling, and reducing inflow and infiltration, could assist the community in mitigating the impacts from climate change.
- **Advancing Olympia’s social equity goals.** While keeping utility rates as low as possible and structured in a way that helps advance the City’s social equity goals, city-owned utilities must also balance establishment of rates that address ongoing utility maintenance needs and the increasing need to replace aging infrastructure.
- **Adapting to growth and density.** City-owned utilities will need to be prepared to provide utility services to greater urban densities. Fast or slow, the rate of growth will determine how, for example, new water sources are developed and when they come online. Higher densities result in less available space for solid waste containers and collection truck access, thereby reducing collection efficiency and safety.

Our utility programs will need to find partnerships and outside resources to help the City face these new challenges.

## Goals and Policies

**GU1 Utility and land use plans are coordinated so that utility services can be provided and maintained for proposed future land uses.**

**PU1.1** Require annexation of all properties for which new City wastewater or drinking water services are requested if the property is outside the City, but inside the Urban Growth Area. Or require property owners to sign a Binding Agreement to Annex when requested by the City.

**PU1.2** Require new developments to construct drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities and provide space for solid waste collection in ways that meet

the community development, environmental protection, and resource protection goals of this Plan, and that are consistent with adopted utility plans and extension policies.

**PU1.3** Evaluate land use plans and utility goals periodically to ensure growth is guided by our knowledge of current environmental constraints. This includes risks from climate change and the latest available utility technology and up-to-date growth and development projections, including those that incorporate climate migration considerations. (Climate)

**PU1.4** Make necessary improvements to utility facilities that do not currently meet minimum standards. Prioritize capital improvements to existing systems based on age, condition, risk of failure, and capacity to support infill development and increase climate adaptation, while also balancing the fair distribution of services and benefits to the entire community. (Climate)

**PU1.5** Ensure that public utility and transportation-related facilities constructed in Olympia and its Urban Growth Area meet City standards for safety, constructability, durability, and maintainability. (See City of Olympia [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#).)

**PU1.6** Annually update the utility portions of the [Capital Facilities Plan](#) to reevaluate infrastructure priorities.

**GU2 Reliable utility service is provided at the lowest reasonable cost, consistent with the City’s aims of environmental stewardship, social equity, economic development, and the protection of public health.**

**PU2.1** Ensure that new development projects pay for their own utility infrastructure based on their expected needs for the next 20 years. This also includes balancing the City’s social equity and affordable housing goals and requires development projects to contribute to their portion of existing infrastructure. Routinely review new-development charges (such as general facility charges) when updating utility master plans or do so more frequently as needed.

**PU2.2** Ensure that utility fees, such as rates and general facility charges, are structured to reasonably reflect the actual cost of providing services to each customer rate-service class. Fees must also encourage customers to conserve water, reduce their demand on our wastewater treatment system, reduce waste generation, and maximize waste diversion. (Climate)

**PU2.3** Provide special rates for low-income senior and low-income disabled utility customers and consider expanding established or creating new special rate programs over time to further the City's social equity goals.

**PU2.4** Ensure that adequate funds are generated by the City's utilities to maintain utility services and capital improvement programs.

**PU2.5** Use fiscally responsible management practices in order to maintain favorable bond ratings for the City's utilities.

**PU2.6** Provide service to existing and new customers consistent with the legal obligation of City utilities to provide service.

**PU2.7** Use pricing and incentives to encourage utility customers to reduce waste, recycle, conserve water, and help protect our surface water quality.

**PU2.8** Use debt financing responsibly to support needed capital facility investments and "smooth" rate impacts.

**PU2.9** Use Developer Reimbursement Agreements that include "latecomer fees" and similar tools to enable property owners to recover some of the initial costs of extending infrastructure to serve their developments when others connect to such extensions at a later date.

**PU2.10** Consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of utility repairs, replacements, and upgrades while balancing the fair distribution of services and benefits to the entire community.

**PU2.11** Pursue grant funding (e.g., state, federal) opportunities to enhance utility services.

**PU2.12** City-owned utilities will use long-range financial planning, policies and transparent processes to guide rate, capital project and operational decisions.

### **GU3 Utilities are developed and managed efficiently and effectively.**

**PU3.1** Coordinate public utility functions (such as operations and maintenance, public education and outreach, and Capital Facilities planning) for drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water, and waste resources.

**PU3.2** Regularly review and where needed, revise the [Olympia Municipal Code](#) and Engineering Development and Design Standards to give detailed guidance on how utility services should be delivered and paid for, in accordance with the principles established in this Comprehensive Plan.

**PU3.3** Update all utility master plans regularly and in accordance with state law. When updating utility master plans, ensure the City’s climate and social equity goals are considered.

**PU3.4** Coordinate long-term planning and scheduling of utility capital improvements with neighboring jurisdictions and other local agencies, such as LOTT.

**PU3.5** Work with neighboring jurisdictions to provide regionally coordinated utility systems for urban services that benefit from a regional approach.

**PU3.6** Locate public and private utilities in public rights-of-way or easements on private property in a manner to facilitate safe and efficient operation, maintenance and repair, and to minimize conflicts. Provide guidance within the Engineering Design and Development Standards that shows how and where public and private utilities should be located, including opportunities for co-location.

**PU3.7** Evaluate programs for effectiveness and efficiency on a regular basis.

**PU3.8** Contribute a portion of utility revenue each year to provide outreach and engagement programs that are inclusive, accessible and representative of the entire community and result in the fair distribution of services and benefits to help meet utility goals.

**PU3.9** Ensure consistent maintenance, asset management, and emergency management practices for all utilities.

**GU4 Use Olympia’s water resources efficiently to meet the needs of the community, reduce demand on facilities, and protect the natural environment.**

**PU4.1** Encourage and allow re-use techniques, including rainwater collection, gray water systems, and the use of Class A reclaimed water as alternatives to potable water. This can enhance stream flows or recharge aquifers while also protecting water quality consistent with local and State regulations. (Climate)

**PU4.2** Develop specific targets for reducing potable water use.

**PU4.3** Raise community awareness about why and how to conserve water.

**PU4.4** Reduce water system leakage as much as possible, at a minimum below the Washington State limit of 10% of total water production on a three-year rolling average.

**PU4.5** Model best practices in our City operations and the [Olympia Municipal Code](#).

**PU4.6** Advance the use of reclaimed water as defined in Council-adopted policies and as outlined in the Drinking Water Utility’s Water System Plan.

**PU4.7** Support conservation programs and resources that provide incentives to urban farmers to implement best management practices that address impacts of climate change and invest in solutions to adapt to future climate conditions.  
(Climate)

## Drinking Water on Tap

Olympians recognize that the water they use comes from groundwater supplies that need to remain plentiful and unpolluted by our “above-ground” activities. The City’s Drinking Water Utility aims not only to preserve the supply of this resource, but to keep it clean—both for us and for the plants, fish, and wildlife that also depend on it.



A young Olympian drinks from a water fountain at Percival Landing.

Every day, the City of Olympia delivers high-quality drinking water to nearly 55,000 people through about 19,000 connections. This water consistently meets 100% of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for safe drinking water, and it is pumped to our homes at a fraction of the cost some will pay for unregulated bottled water.

The City also provides transmission and distribution of Class A reclaimed water to customers in a limited area of downtown Olympia and provides the community with a free, untreated source of water in downtown Olympia known as Olympia's Artesian Well.

Olympia's Drinking Water Utility operates under a permit granted by the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water. Information about the City's Drinking Water Utility can be found in [Olympia's Water System Plan](#).

In the next 20 years, the Utility will face these challenges and issues:

**Changing water quality regulations.** The Utility must be ready to respond to any changes in water quality regulations and treatment requirements imposed by state and federal agencies.

**Keeping pace with development.** Fast or slow, the rate of growth will determine how new water sources are developed and when they come online.

**Protecting groundwater from contamination.** Risks to groundwater will increase as the population increases, and will require the City to regularly evaluate, monitor and take action to control sources of pollution. The City's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual—a requirement of the Clean Water Act—and the Critical Areas Ordinance help to protect groundwater from contamination. The City's only drinking water sources considered at risk of saltwater intrusion from rising sea levels are the Allison Springs sources. However, these wells are considered to be at low risk of saltwater intrusion and are regularly monitored for changes in conductivity and chloride concentration that may indicate an influence of saltwater.

## Goals and Policies

**GU5 Adequate supplies of clean drinking water are available for current and future generations, and instream flows and aquifer capacity are protected.**

**PU5.1** Reserve water supply rights for at least 50 years in advance of need, so that supplies can be protected from contamination.

**PU5.2** Develop and maintain multiple geographically-dispersed sources of water supply to increase the reliability of the system. (Climate)

**PU5.3** Monitor water levels in aquifers and maintain numerical groundwater models. (Climate)

**PU5.4** Coordinate with Lacey, Tumwater, Thurston County Public Utility District #1 and tribal interests to ensure adequate water supplies throughout the City's Water Service Area, following the provisions of the [Growth Management Act](#), the Public Water System Coordination Act, and the Municipal Water Law.

**PU5.5** When practical, develop regionally consistent Critical Areas Ordinance regulations, Drainage Manual requirements, and other policies to ensure we are protecting groundwater quantity and quality across jurisdictional boundaries.

**PU5.6** Maintain and implement a comprehensive drought resilience strategy that factors in projected climate impacts and sets action levels for different drought stages. (Climate)

**PU5.7** Assess and mitigate the risk wildfire poses to drinking water utility systems. (Climate)

**GU6 Groundwater in the City's Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Areas is protected from contamination so that it does not require additional treatment.**

**PU6.1** Monitor groundwater quality to detect contamination, evaluate pollution reduction efforts, and to understand risks to groundwater.

**PU6.2** Implement programs to change behaviors that threaten groundwater quality, and that raise awareness about aquifers and the need for groundwater protection. Such programs should be designed to be inclusive, accessible, and representative of the entire community and to provide opportunities for cross-utility messaging.

**PU6.3** Prevent groundwater contamination in Drinking Water Protection Areas by developing and implementing spill prevention and response plans.

**PU6.4** Maintain the City’s Critical Areas Ordinance, policies, development review process, and program management to ensure we protect groundwater quality and quantity.

**PU6.5** Maintain a contaminant-source inventory that identifies priority pollutants for each water source within Drinking Water (wellhead) Protection Areas, and update it regularly.

**GU7 The drinking water system is reliable and is operated and maintained so that high-quality drinking water is delivered to customers.**

**PU7.1** Maintain and update the [Water System Plan](#), [Engineering Design and Development Standards](#) and [Olympia Municipal Code](#) to ensure drinking water utility facilities meet the requirements of the [Growth Management Act](#), North Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan, Washington Department of Health, and Olympia Fire Code.

**PU7.2** Maintain 100% compliance with all state and federal requirements, and continually improve our water quality management program.

**PU7.3** Design Olympia’s water supply system to achieve the most favorable and practical fire insurance rating, consistent with adopted service levels.

**PU7.4** Continue and improve maintenance management, including preventive maintenance, repairs, and replacements consistent with American Water Works Association best management practices.

**PU7.5** Prepare for and respond to emergencies and maintain secure facilities in a manner commensurate with the critical nature of the infrastructure.

**PU7.6** Continue to improve operations and maintenance program management, including safety, asset management, and meter replacement in a manner that is consistent with the City’s social equity goals.

**PU7.7** Develop and maintain adequate storage, transmission, and distribution facilities.

**PU7.8** Require private water purveyors that build new systems within Olympia’s Water Service Area to build to Olympia’s standards so the systems can be integrated in the future.

**PU7.9** Allow telecommunications companies to locate antennas and associated equipment on Drinking Water Utility-owned property, including on storage tanks, only when the security of the facility as critical infrastructure is ensured and a lease or other appropriate agreement with Olympia is in place.

## Managing Wastewater Effectively

The purpose of Olympia’s Wastewater Utility is to protect public and environmental health by ensuring that wastewater is collected and conveyed to treatment and disposal facilities with minimal risk.

Olympia provides wastewater collection service to 17.5 square miles of the City, and about eight square miles of Urban Growth Area in unincorporated Thurston County. However, many neighborhoods and individual lots within the City are still using septic systems. By 2045, Olympia expects public sewers will be extended to serve most of the Urban Growth Area. City Wastewater Utility activities are guided by the City of Olympia Wastewater Management Plan.



Olympia crew members maintain the sewer system to ensure proper functioning.

All wastewater collected by Olympia is conveyed to the LOTT Clean Water Alliance, a regional partnership of the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County. LOTT provides wastewater treatment at its main Budd Inlet Treatment Plant in downtown Olympia, treating the water to the highest level of any plant in the Puget Sound region. Most of the treated water is discharged to Budd Inlet, although some is treated to an even higher standard to become Class A reclaimed water, safe for non-drinking uses such as landscape irrigation.

In the late 1990s, the LOTT Water Alliance developed its long-range management plan, known as the Wastewater Resource Management Plan. LOTT completed an update to the plan in 2023. The 2050 Master Plan identifies infrastructure needs to maintain the Budd Inlet Treatment Plant and other critical assets, as well as long-term strategies to meet system-wide capacity needs through 2050. The Plan addresses wastewater treatment and reclaimed water needs for all of its partners. The Wastewater Utility coordinates a number of activities with the [LOTT Clean Water Alliance](#), including maintenance, condition assessments, and pre-treatment program efforts. These activities are all required under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, which covers both the City's wastewater collection system and LOTT-owned facilities. This shared responsibility requires continuous communication between the two entities, at both the operational and planning levels.



Installing a deep sewer maintenance hole on Henderson Boulevard as part of a planned capital improvement project.

The Wastewater Utility faces the following key challenges over the next 20 years:

- **Maintaining existing infrastructure.** More than half of the City's wastewater infrastructure has passed its design life or is susceptible to corrosion. Given the need to protect public health, repair and replacement of failing sewer systems typically cannot be deferred.
- **Reducing septic systems.** Many septic systems, especially in older parts of the City, are beyond or approaching their design life. This presents the potential for failure and a risk to public and environmental health. The Washington State Department of Ecology's Dissolved Oxygen Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan for Budd

Inlet includes Priority Implementation Actions related to converting septic systems to sewer.

- **STEP Systems.** The use of Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) systems presents ongoing challenges, including high lifecycle costs, odor control, and corrosion damage to other sewer infrastructure.
- **Fats, Oils, and Grease.** Significant staff time is spent on tasks associated with Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG), including educating customers on proper disposal methods, responding to wastewater system blockages, and coordinating with LOTT.

## Goals and Policies

**GU8 The wastewater collection system is designed and operated to minimize long-term costs, provide sufficient capacity for projected demand, promote equity, and protect the natural environment.**

**PU8.1** Extend the wastewater gravity collection system through both public and private development projects.

**PU8.2** Prohibit new community and individual septic systems within City limits, except when specifically allowed by the [Olympia Municipal Code](#).

**PU8.3** Encourage septic system owners to connect to the City wastewater system by offering incentives, cost-recovery mechanisms, pipe extensions, and other tools.

**PU8.4** Prioritize future septic to sewer conversion projects in coordination with Thurston County in support of the Priority Implementation Actions in the Budd Inlet Dissolved Oxygen Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan.

**PU8.5** Limit and ultimately phase out the use of individual STEP systems for development.

**PU8.6** Prohibit new individual STEP systems, except when specially allowed by the Olympia Municipal Code.

**PU8.7** Require the conversion of septic systems to the City-owned wastewater collection system upon septic system failure or building use change, whenever feasible.

**PU8.8** Separate combined wastewater/stormwater pipes in conjunction with stormwater and road improvements or residential repairs, when economically feasible. (Climate)

**PU8.9** Evaluate the capacity and structural integrity of aging wastewater facilities and maintain, repair, or replace as needed.

## Rainfall, Runoff, and Surface Water

The mission of the Storm and Surface Water Utility is to provide services that minimize flooding, maintain or improve water quality, and protect or enhance aquatic habitat. Goals and policies that protect water quality and aquatic habitat on a Citywide scale are located in the [Natural Environment](#) chapter. This Utility leverages opportunities to protect our ‘built’ landscape from flooding while enhancing water quality and aquatic habitat.



Porous pavement, bioretention, and constructed wetlands demonstrate stormwater options for low-impact development at Yauger Park.

The Storm and Surface Water Utility maintains more than 166 miles of underground pipe, more than 7,600 storm drains, and 98 stormwater ponds that filter stormwater runoff from roads and rooftops before it reaches our streams and Budd Inlet. The "surface water" for which Olympia’s Storm and Surface Water Utility shares responsibility includes nine streams within the City, four lakes, four large wetlands, and about six miles of marine shoreline.

The Stormwater Utility is guided by the [Storm and Surface Water Plan](#), which outlines its challenges, goals, implementation tools and financial implications. Increasingly, this Utility is affected by state and federal regulatory requirements such as the [Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit](#).

Additionally, the Stormwater Utility is a participant in Olympia's efforts to address sea level rise and implement the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan. (See the Climate chapter for sea level rise goals and policies.)



Kayakers in Budd Inlet seen from Percival Landing.

Olympia's growth and urbanization continue to place increasing demands on our natural systems. Major challenges facing the Storm and Surface Water Utility in the coming years include:

- **Managing the impact of increasing stormwater runoff.** The cumulative impacts of additional paving, development, and non-point pollution sources will increase pollutants in streams and Puget Sound, decrease infiltration to groundwater, and reduce habitat. Impacts from increased rainfall intensity as a result of climate change will exacerbate the difficulty of managing stormwater.
- **Preparing for sea level rise.** We will need to continue to support the coordinated effort to protect our downtown from the flooding that resulted from the completion of the 2019 Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan, including responding to tidal flooding events.
- **Keeping up with new technology.** As innovative approaches to treating and controlling stormwater rapidly evolve, the Storm and Surface Water Utility must evaluate the effectiveness and long-term implications of new technologies, while also managing risks associated with potential failures.

- **All water has value.** A City-wide approach (including the development community) will be required for the integrated management of all water systems, including stormwater. Taking such an approach will have positive implications for Olympia’s long-term sustainability.
- **Increasing regulatory requirements.** To discharge stormwater into “waters of the United States,” the City must obtain and meet the requirements of its current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Stormwater Discharge Permit . With each NPDES permit reissuance, the permit requirements are expanded, resulting in new policy, programs, reporting, documentation, and training responsibilities. This has resulted in significantly less discretionary staff time and budget available for other aspects of the Utility’s work. Meeting growing permit requirements is a shared City-wide responsibility that requires substantial Utility staff time to coordinate with a limited number of resources.

## Goals and Policies

### **GU9 The frequency and severity of flooding are managed and hazards are eliminated, except during major storm events.**

**PU9.1** Prioritize City upgrades and retrofits to improve stormwater systems in areas that are vulnerable to overland flooding and sea level rise. (Climate)

**PU9.2** Emphasize the importance of emergency preparedness. (Climate)

**PU9.3** Evaluate the structural integrity of aging stormwater pipes and repair as needed.

**PU9.4** Inventory and inspect other City-owned stormwater infrastructure and perform maintenance as needed.

**PU9.5** Provide technical assistance to private stormwater system owners and ensure they maintain their private stormwater systems.

**PU9.6** Prioritize solutions to flooding that serve overburdened neighborhoods. (Climate)

**PU9.7** Support knowledge sharing with private stormwater system owners about ways to upgrade or retrofit systems for increased precipitation intensity expected under future climate conditions. (Climate)

**PU9.8** Prioritize solutions that reduce flooding from sea level rise to the transportation system, especially for transportation corridors used in emergency management. (Climate)

**PU9.9** Reduce the volume of sewer overflows annually. (Climate)

**PU9.10** Evaluate and assess approaches to appropriately size stormwater facilities for increased precipitation intensity expected under future climate conditions. (Climate)

**PU9.11** Adapt wastewater infrastructure to accommodate anticipated precipitation trends. (Climate)

**GU10 The Utility considers the interrelationship and complexity of its three missions to manage flooding, improve water quality, and protect and enhance aquatic habitat in its decisions and involves other City departments in this effort.**

**PU10.1** Develop a priority ranking system for capital projects that balances the Utility's three missions: flooding, water quality, and habitat. Equity will be part of the ranking criteria.

**PU10.2** Plan and implement programs and actions that can effectively achieve equitable stormwater management, urban forestry, open space, and water quality objectives.

**PU10.3** Complete and maintain watershed or basin plans for all areas of the City to guide management and prioritization. Address water quality, habitat, stormwater runoff, flooding issues, and service equity.

**PU10.4** Where feasible, retrofit existing streetscape with water quality and quantity stormwater system improvements to minimize pollution from roadway runoff to natural drainage systems and the waters of Puget Sound. (Climate)

**PU10.5** Effectively manage the City's existing municipal separate storm sewer system in a manner that manages flooding, improves water quality, and protects the natural environment.

**PU10.6** Implement a Capital Improvement Program that maintains and improves the municipal separate storm sewer system in a manner that enhances and protects the City’s natural environment, mitigates flooding problems, improves water quality, adapts to future climate conditions, promotes a reliable and safe transportation network and provides the community a safe and healthy place for living, working, and recreating. (Climate)

**PU10.7** Foster City partnerships with public, private, and non-profit agencies and groups, and encourage them to help identify and evaluate new low-impact development and green infrastructure approaches.

**PU10.8** Increase the use of low-impact and green infrastructure methods through education, technical assistance, incentives, regulations, and grants.

**PU10.9** Prioritize Utility land purchases when there are opportunities to make connections between healthy systems; for example, land parcels in a stream corridor; those that facilitate future water quality retrofits or protect existing aquatic ecological function.

**PU10.10** Improve programs and management strategies designed to prevent and reduce contamination of roadway runoff and other sources of stormwater.

**PU10.11** Investigate the role Community-Based Public-Private Partnerships could play to incentivize investments in stormwater solutions that ensure community co-benefits including, but not limited to, water quality and habitat improvements.

**PU10.12** Investigate the feasibility of developing an in-lieu mitigation program that involves the restoration, establishment, enhancement and/ preservation of aquatic resources and results in stormwater management.

**PU10.13** Use green stormwater infrastructure to facilitate the City’s climate goals.

**GU11 The stormwater and wastewater systems are resilient to the impacts of sea level rise and increased precipitation intensity.**

**PU11.1** Continue to implement sea level rise adaptation measures, such as flood gates and stormwater pumps, to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding to infrastructure systems and operations. (Climate)

**PU11.2** Continue to support and partner with the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative members to implement the long-term adaptation strategies identified in the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan. (Climate)

**PU11.3** Establish new partnerships to design, plan, and adapt Olympia’s infrastructure systems to prepare for sea level rise. (Climate)

**PU11.4** Continue to implement flow reduction programs through partnership with LOTT Clean Water Alliance and Cities of Lacey and Tumwater for single family, multi family, and industry and commercial customers who receive LOTT services. (Climate)

**GU12 City Departments work collaboratively to maintain and document compliance with the Municipal Stormwater Permit.**

**PU12.1** The Utility effectively communicates and coordinates the complex City-wide responsibilities of the Municipal Stormwater Permit to other City departments.

**PU12.2** The Utility reviews development plans to ensure compliance with the Municipal Stormwater Permit.

**PU12.3** The Utility manages the compilation of essential City-wide documentation required for Municipal Stormwater Permit report submissions.

## Managing Waste ReSources – Garbage, Recycle, Organics

Olympia’s Waste ReSources Utility provides municipally operated solid waste collection, disposal, and diversion services, including education and outreach. The Utility is responsible for ensuring that all of the City’s waste is properly managed.

Waste materials are generated as part of our daily life and activities through the purchase, use, and discard of goods and food scraps. These discards are collected, disposed of, and managed to protect public and environmental health, and preserve natural resources through recycling and composting.

The consumption of goods helps support a national economy based on extraction of resources and the manufacture and distribution of products. This system

encourages excessive waste and does not consider the full environmental and social costs of this activity. The result is an increasing depletion of natural resources, increasing greenhouse gas emissions, and deteriorating air and water pollution— all of which are environmentally unsustainable and costly to society.

Olympians can help solve these problems through a variety of regional and local actions that seek to reduce the amount of waste we generate, and increase the amount recycled, composted, and recovered for reuse.

In June 2006, the Olympia City Council adopted a Zero Waste Resolution, which gave rise to a new strategic and operational six-year plan— [Olympia’s Waste ReSources Plan](#). The Plan provides a road map for the Utility’s collection and waste prevention programs. It is updated every six to seven years.



Waste ReSources residential collection.

In the next 20 years, the utility will face the following challenges and opportunities:

- **Reducing sources of waste.** The whole life cycle of a product must be considered as we find ways to reduce waste in both "upstream" production and distribution processes and "downstream" consumer choices and waste management practices.
- **Responding to an ever-evolving waste stream.** Continue adapting to changes in packaging, markets, materials, product recyclability, and composability.

- **Optimizing the diversion and collection system.** Continue to increase the portion of waste that is recycled or composted, while maintaining quality and efficient operations.
- **Adapting to greater population density.** Continue to provide efficient and effective collection services to a greater number of higher-density single-family, multi-family, and mixed-use type properties.

## Goals and Policies

### **GU13 Solid waste is managed as a resource to provide environmental, economic, and social benefits.**

**PU13.1** Support the goals and policies of the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan.

**PU13.2** Support state legislation that is designed to improve and increase recycling and composting, increase reuse and repair, reduce natural resource consumption, and reduce household hazardous waste and harmful chemicals. (Climate)

**PU13.3** Maintain and update the Waste ReSources Management Plan, Engineering Design and Development Standards, and Olympia Municipal Code to ensure sanitary conditions are realized, solid waste collection operations are safe and efficient, and waste prevention and diversion are optimized, and programs and services support a circular system where all waste is diverted from landfills. (Climate)

**PU13.4** Consider the use of material bans to address problem materials when education and voluntary measures are not successful.

### **GU14 Solid waste disposed of in landfills is 75% lower than 2021 levels by 2040.**

**PU14.1** Reduce waste and encourage recycling through the City's purchasing, recycling and disposal policies. (Climate)

**PU14.2** Follow the solid waste management hierarchy established in federal and state legislation, which sets waste reduction as the highest priority management option, followed by reuse, recycling and composting, and responsible disposal. (Climate)

**PU14.3** Expand, when practical and feasible, the City’s recycling, composting, and waste reduction programs to maximize the diversion of material from disposal into remanufacture and reuse. (Climate)

**PU14.4** Work toward evaluating and implementing mandatory recycling and composting for residential and commercial customers or banning these materials from garbage/landfill. (Climate)

**GU15 Solid waste is managed in a responsible and cost-effective manner.**

**PU15.1** Encourage and promote waste reduction and recycling, including exploring new methods and technologies.

**PU15.2** Use technology to create and maintain efficient and effective routing and collection programs.

**GU16 Environmental impacts caused by solid waste management are minimal.**

**PU16.1** Handle and dispose of solid waste in ways that minimize land, air, and water pollution and protect public health.

**PU16.2** Continue to work toward reducing the Utility’s carbon footprint as technology becomes available and is financially viable.

**PU16.3** Work cooperatively with Thurston County to ensure that the operations of the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) comply with state and federal regulations and are responsibly managed.

## **GU17 Olympia reduces waste associated with construction, renovation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure.**

**PU17.1** Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to minimize waste associated with all phases of building construction, including demolition. (Climate)

**PU17.2** Collaborate with local businesses and public agencies to develop local facilities and programs to enable reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris. (Climate)

**PU17.3** Develop incentives and technical assistance programs to encourage reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris. (Climate)

## **Coordination with Private Utilities**

Most private utilities are regulated at the state level by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), which ensures that customers receive safe and reliable service at reasonable rates. The Commission regulates the rates and charges, services, facilities, and practices of most of Washington’s investor-owned gas, electric, and telecommunication utilities. Additionally, Olympia’s Engineering Design and Development Standards apply to utility work conducted within city limits. Depending upon the level of disturbance of city roads happening as a result of utility work and the age of pavement that will be disturbed, utilities may be required to replace up to a full lane as a result of a project.

Growth in residential, commercial, or industrial development often requires expanded utility services. Because of this, City land use decisions that affect both density and the location of new development will drive new private utility needs.

In Olympia, private utilities provide these services:

- **Electricity:** Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is the only privately operated provider of electricity to Olympia and its Urban Growth Area (UGA). PSE is an investor-owned utility providing electricity to nine western and central Washington counties.
- **Natural Gas:** PSE is also the only natural gas provider to Olympia and its Urban Growth Area. PSE serves natural gas customers in six western and central Washington counties.

- **Standard Telephone Service:** The only provider of standard telephone service in Olympia and its Urban Growth Area is Lumen Technologies (Lumen). Lumen is a global communications services provider and is an investor-owned corporation offering local telecommunication services to customers in 14 states. It also provides broadband data and voice (including long-distance) communications services outside its local service area, as well as globally.
- **Telecommunications and Cellular Telephone Service:** Many new telecommunications providers have entered the market and offer options that have created a very competitive environment. These factors make it difficult to accurately assess how future telecommunications will be provided.
- **Cable Services and Programming:** Comcast is the only cable provider serving Olympia. Properties that lie within the UGA are covered under Thurston County’s franchise. Currently, cable and fiber companies are not regulated by the state, but by local governments and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Comcast has a non-exclusive franchise agreement to use public rights-of-way to provide cable services within the Olympia city limits. Zply Fiber provides streaming services for programming through its fiber optic network. Fiber internet uses ultra-thin strands of glass to transmit data via pulses of light. Zply Fiber has a franchise agreement to use public rights-of-way to provide fiber optic services within the Olympia city limits.

## Goals and Policies

### **GU18 Cooperation and coordination exist among jurisdictions and private utility providers.**

**PU18.1** Coordinate utility planning activities with the private utility providers. The City will work with the private utilities to achieve consistency between their facility plans and the City’s regulations and long-range plans.

**PU18.2** Share information, when requested, with private utilities on current and projected figures for population, employment, development, and utility service demand.

**PU18.3** Process permits and approvals for private utility facilities in a fair and timely manner, and in accordance with development regulations that foster predictability.

**PU18.4** Ask for input from the private utilities when developing policies that will affect their service and activities, such as street excavation, street obstructions, and fees.

**PU18.5** Maintain agreements, where appropriate, with private utilities, updating them as needed to adapt to changing needs and plans.

**PU18.6** Olympia and Thurston County will coordinate with each other and with the cities of Lacey and Tumwater to create consistent utility regulations and long-range plans that promote efficient and effective utility services.

**PU18.7** Olympia and Thurston County will coordinate with each other and with the cities of Lacey and Tumwater when private, multijurisdictional utility additions and improvements are being planned.

**PU18.8** Regarding private utility facilities, make decisions that are consistent and complementary to regional demand and resources and that reinforce an interconnected regional distribution network.

**PU18.9** Olympia and Thurston County will coordinate with each other and the cities of Lacey and Tumwater on emergency management related to utility services by following the [Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region](#). (Climate)

**PU18.10** Collaborate with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to ensure continuity of operations and service provision during climate-exacerbated emergencies, including extreme heat and wildfire events. (Climate)

**PU18.11** Support the transition of utility energy fuel mixes to renewable sources. (Climate)

**PU18.12** Effectively meet rapidly increasing electrical demand as the City and the region work to achieve a clean energy transition by adopting codes that support the timely siting of existing and new technologies. (Climate)

**PU18.13** Expedite the local permitting and approval process of electric infrastructure projects in order to maintain grid capacity and reliability. (Climate)

**GU19 Private utilities are located underground whenever possible and beneficial to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and to create a more reliable utility system.**

**PU19.1** Place new private utility distribution lines underground wherever practicable. This should be based on sound engineering judgment, on consideration of health and safety, and in accordance with the regulations and tariffs of the Washington Utilities Transportation Commission and the City’s Engineering Development and Design Standards.

**PU19.2** Encourage placing existing private utility distribution lines underground, in accordance with the regulations and tariffs of the Washington Utilities Transportation Commission and the City’s Engineering Development and Design Standards.

**PU19.3** Coordinate the undergrounding of both new and existing private utility lines consistent with policies PU3.1 and PU3.2. (Climate)

**PU19.4** Apply utility undergrounding requirements to all private development projects.

**PU19.5** Develop and maintain a management plan, consistent with the [Olympia Municipal Code](#) (OMC) and the Engineering Development and Design Standards, for underground and overhead utilities as part of the City’s franchise agreements. The management plan also must address the undergrounding of the City’s aerial facilities, as well as other franchise utilities. (See OMC telecommunications [Chapter 11](#) regarding permitting and leasing.)

**GU20 Private utility facilities will be located in the same area.**

**PU20.1** Promote the co-location of new utility distribution and communication facilities when doing so is consistent with utility industry practices and national electrical and other codes. (See policy PU3.6 for a guidance drawing of recommended utility locations.)

**PU20.2** Give private utilities timely notice when road construction is planned to coordinate utility trenching work.

**GU21 Adverse impacts of above-ground utility facilities, such as substations and cellular towers, on surrounding land uses are minimized.**

**PU21.1** Locate private utility facilities near compatible adjacent land uses. City regulations will specify that approval of new private utility facilities shall be reasonably compatible with the development of the surrounding properties. The appropriate treatment may vary based on the type of utility facility, but compatibility will consider things such as noise, odor, and visual impacts. Treatments may include things like landscape screening, fencing, walls, or enclosures of equipment.

**PU21.2** The City's zoning code should include standards that ensure that new private utility facilities are coordinated and integrated with surrounding land uses, so they are reasonably compatible with the natural and built environment. These regulatory standards should also support facility design which minimizes the visual intrusion of facilities in all areas.

**PU21.3** Encourage telecommunication utilities to use existing structures, such as existing towers and buildings, where a new installation will not conflict with height restrictions.

**GU22 Every resident and business in Olympia has access to affordable cable television and Internet services.**

**PU22.1** Encourage cable services to incorporate their latest features and improvements for their Olympia-area customers as they become technologically and economically feasible.

**PU22.2** Seek to ensure that any cable franchisee serving the Olympia area provides a high quality of customer service, signal transmission, and programming variety.

**GU23 Communications between public buildings reflect advances in cable technology.**

**PU23.1** Ensure cable service to major public buildings allows programs to originate there, as well as to be received there.

**GU24 Public educational institutions and governments can air programming on designated channels on the cable system.**

**PU24.1** Ensure that cable service includes no fewer than four local access channels, which are responsibly and fairly administered in the public interest.

**GU25 The City should make provisions in its policies, regulations, and Engineering Development and Design Standards for a fiber optic conduit system as part of its municipal infrastructure.**

## For More Information

- [1996 North Thurston Coordinated Water System Plan](#). This document outlines the policies and procedures for providing coordinated drinking water services to the North Thurston urban area.
- [1990 General Sewerage Plan for Thurston County](#). This document outlines the plan for providing sewer services to the unincorporated Urban Growth Areas within Thurston County.
- Thurston County's [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) is a cooperative local government effort to identify and prioritize ways the region can protect itself from its natural vulnerability to hazards such as storms, landslides, earthquakes, and flooding.
- Current and past technical analyses and reports regarding sea level rise in Olympia can be reviewed on the City's Sea Level Rise webpage.

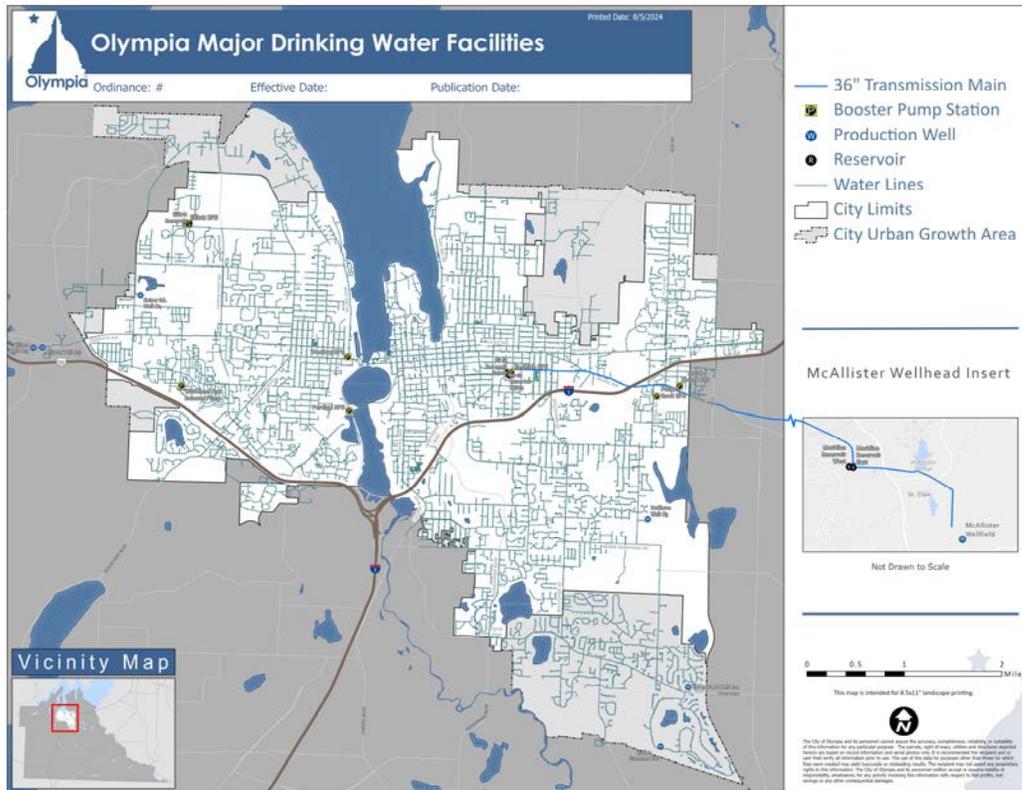
# Appendix A: Utilities Inventory and Future Needs

## City-Owned Utilities

### Drinking Water

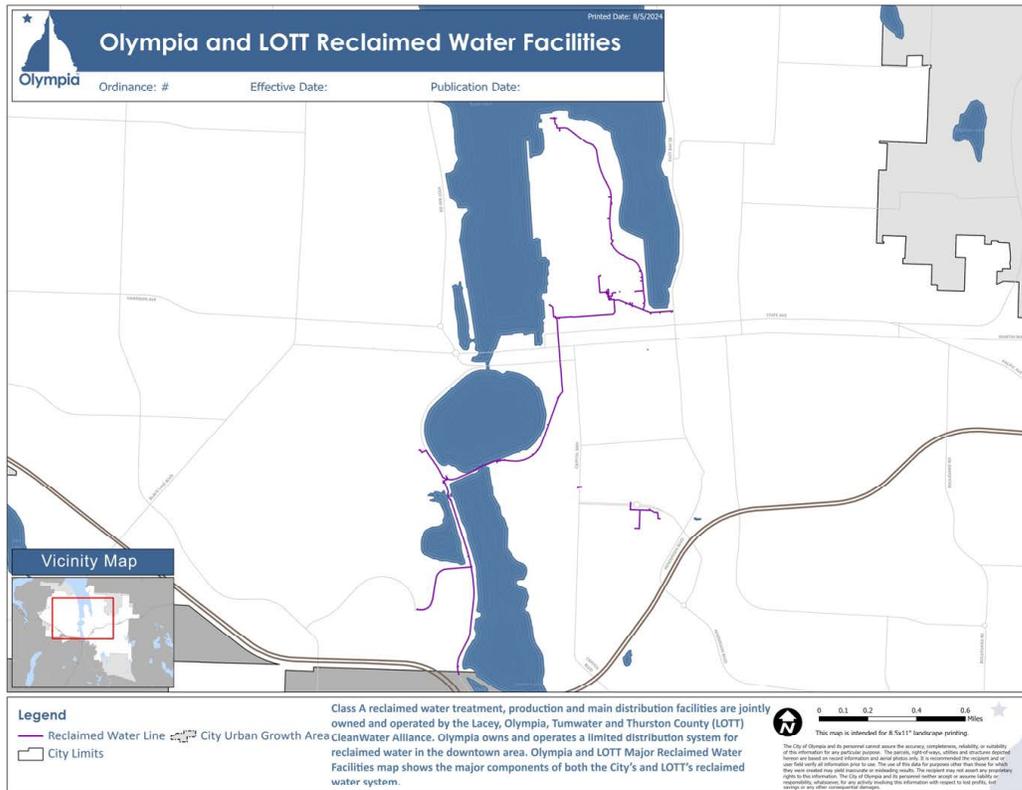
#### Inventory

A network of wells, pumps, reservoirs, and transmission lines supplies water to Olympia's customers. The McAllister Wellfield's three deep wells provide the majority of drinking water for the City. A 36-inch transmission main moves water from the McAllister Wellfield to the Meridian reservoirs, and then on a nine-mile journey into reservoirs at Fir Street. From there, it is pumped and piped throughout the City. The rest of the City's drinking water is provided by five wells (two wells at Allison Springs, and one each at Indian Summer, Shana Park, and Hoffman). Additionally, the City has one emergency well (Kaiser). The map below shows the major components of Olympia's water system.



Olympia Major Drinking Water Facilities.

Class A reclaimed water treatment, production, and main distribution facilities are jointly owned and operated by the LOTT Clean Water Alliance. Olympia owns and operates a limited distribution system for reclaimed water in the downtown area. The Olympia and LOTT Major Reclaimed Water Facilities map shows the major components of both the City’s and LOTT’s reclaimed water system.



Olympia and LOTT Major Reclaimed Water Facilities.

## Existing Capacity

Olympia’s water service area boundary map generally follows the Urban Growth Area. Policies related to providing service to this area are defined in Washington’s Municipal Water Law, the North Thurston County Coordinated [Water System Plan](#), and [Olympia’s Water System Plan](#) and municipal code. Olympia has adequate water rights reserved to supply customers within the service area for a minimum of 50 years. The Utility’s Conservation program will also help extend Olympia’s water supply.

Every six years, the Utility must update its Water System Plan for approval by the Washington State Department of Health. Water system planning regulations require the Utility to conduct a detailed analysis of its water rights, water source, water storage, and water distribution system capacity against current and future growth projections. The Water System Plan must also include a six and 20-year capital

improvement program that includes any needed projects to address current and projected future capacity limitations. The Utility then seeks budget authority for required projects through the annual capital facility plan development and budget approval process. Through the development of the latest Water System Plan, no capacity limitations requiring immediate action were identified. See the Water System Plan for additional detailed capacity information.

### **Future Facilities**

Future needs for drinking water will be met by:

- Developing new water sources.
- Repairing and replacing deteriorating pipes, pumps, and reservoirs.
- Developing new transmission, distribution, and storage facilities to serve the growing community.

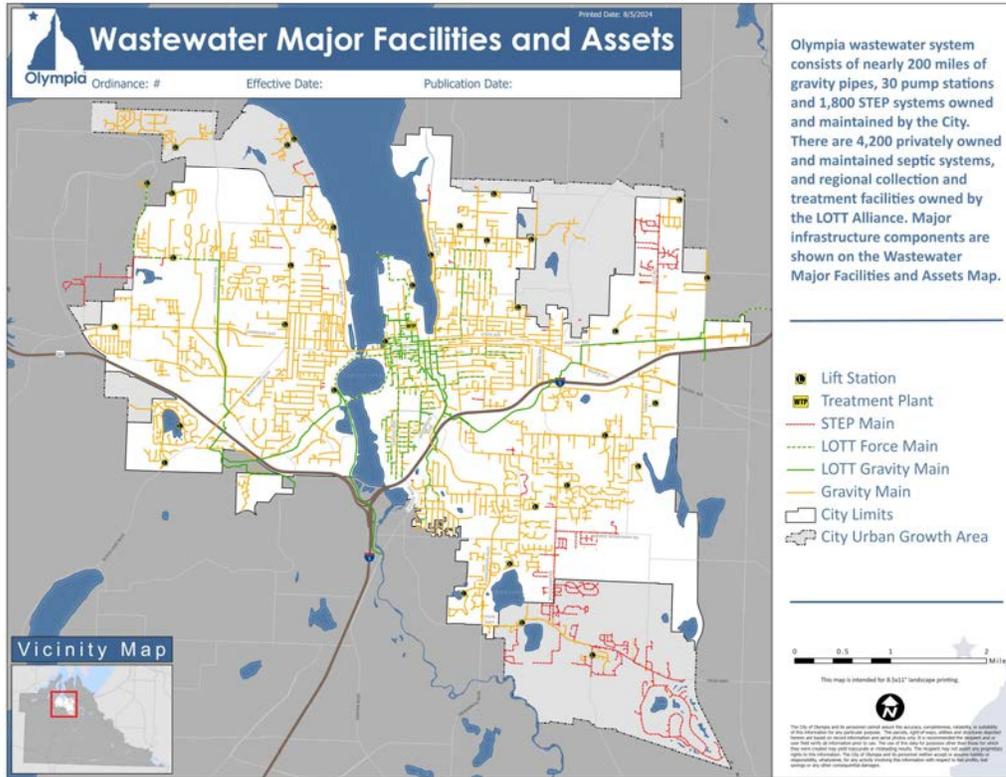
General facilities charges, which are paid by developers, will fund growth-related improvements. Other improvements will be financed through utility rates, often using bonds and low-interest loans.

The Capital Improvement Program to meet forecasted 6-to-20-year needs is included in the Water System Plan, and revised and updated as might be needed in the City's most recently adopted Capital Facilities Plan.

## **Wastewater**

### **Inventory**

Within Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, the wastewater system consists of nearly 200 miles of gravity pipes, 31 pump stations, and 1,800 Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) systems owned and maintained by the City. There are 4,200 privately owned and maintained septic systems, and regional collection and treatment facilities owned by the LOTT Clean Water Alliance. Major infrastructure components are shown on the [Wastewater Major Facilities and Assets map](#) below. The way the wastewater system is planned and managed has a major impact on the City's ability to accomplish its land use, environmental, economic development, and growth-management goals.



Wastewater Major Facilities and Assets map.

### Existing Capacity

Utility staff, with the assistance of consulting engineers, analyze the capacity of the wastewater infrastructure, principally pipes and pumps, using a computer model as a component of the development of the Utility’s management plan, last updated in 2019. The circa 2019 model was designed to simulate a 10-year peak hour storm event and estimated wastewater flows based on the current and projected population, land use and inflow and infiltration entering the sewer system.

### Future Facilities

Computer analysis completed with the 2019 Wastewater Management indicates that the City’s wastewater system has seven areas with anticipated risk of flooding, prioritized into four tiers based upon risk of flooding and confidence in the projections. The tiers range from “high risk of flooding and high confidence in projections (plan for action within 10 years)” to “moderate risk of flooding, low confidence in data (long-range monitoring).” The high risk of flooding capacity limitations identified in the 2019 Wastewater Management Plan include a section of pipe along the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave bridge and along Jefferson Street SE, and have been incorporated into the Utility’s short-term capital facilities plan. Additionally, Wastewater Utility staff monitor and manage existing and future flows, tracks the need for long-term improvements, and plans for future construction projects before

reaching capacity, including those areas identified in the 2019 Wastewater Management Plan as potential areas of risk.

The [LOTT Clean Water Alliance Wastewater Resource Management Plan](#) address future capacity and treatment upgrades to the regional system.

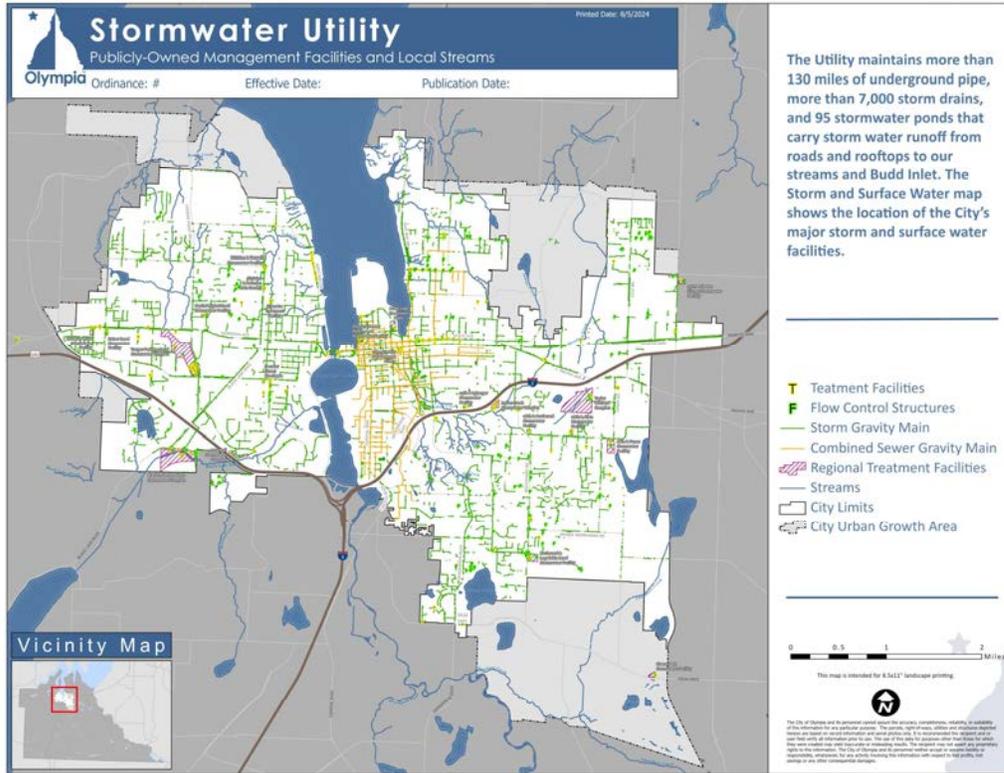
When infrastructure improvements are needed due to new development, future users of the new facilities repay the City through general facilities charges, latecomer fees, or other potential cost recovery tools.

The Capital Improvement Program to meet forecasted six- to 20-year needs is included in the [Wastewater Management Plan](#), and revised and updated as may be needed in the City's most recently adopted [Capital Facilities Plan](#).

## Storm and Surface Water Utility

### **Inventory**

The Utility maintains more than 160 miles of underground pipe, more than 7,600 storm drains, and 98 stormwater ponds that carry stormwater runoff from roads and rooftops to our streams and Budd Inlet. The [Storm and Surface Water map](#) shows the location of the City's major storm and surface water facilities. In addition to Olympia's public stormwater infrastructure, the Utility provides technical assistance and performs maintenance inspections on privately-owned stormwater systems throughout the City. A variety of small areas are still served by a combined sanitary and stormwater sewer, which routes flows to the LOTT treatment plant.



Publicly-Owned Stormwater Management Facilities and Local Streams map.

### Existing Capacity

For the most part, historical flooding problems have been corrected over the past couple of decades. Now, flooding problems are typically smaller in scale and easier to address than in the past. The Utility manages a pipe televising program to assess the condition of underground infrastructure and to schedule maintenance and repairs before serious problems develop.

Many of the older areas of the City were built before stormwater treatment was required. The Utility looks for opportunities to retrofit stormwater treatment in these areas when feasible.

### Future Facilities

Olympia’s Stormwater Drainage Manual requires new development to infiltrate stormwater onsite whenever possible. The need for existing stormwater facility upgrades or repairs is assessed by the Utility annually as part of the [Capital Facilities Plan](#) update process.

# Waste Resources

## **Inventory**

The Waste ReSources Utility provides solid waste collection service to single and multi-family households, commercial and industrial customers, and all other customers within the city limits. The Waste ReSources Utility also maintains and services litter receptacles in the downtown core, operates a Saturday Drop-off site for yard waste, scrap metal, and recycling, in addition to providing cardboard and glass drop-off 24/7 at the same location. Two other glass-only drop-off sites are located at Yauger Park and Concrete Recyclers.

Olympia does not own or operate any solid waste handling facilities outside of the customer convenience locations mentioned above. Olympia relies on its public and private partners for waste disposal, recycling, and composting facilities.

All solid waste container inventory (carts, dumpsters, drop-boxes, and litter receptacles) is city-owned. New and replacement containers are paid for through the utility's operating budget. The Waste ReSources Utility owns and maintains nearly 44,000 containers, with the vast majority in service and only a small portion, roughly 3 to 5% in reserve.

The Waste ReSources Utility has two core programs—Collections and Waste Prevention.

1. The Collections program provides solid waste collection services inside the city limits, designs routes, and manages equipment and container needs.
- 
2. The Waste Prevention and Reduction program is responsible for updating its waste management plan, development review, and developing and implementing waste prevention and recycling programs.

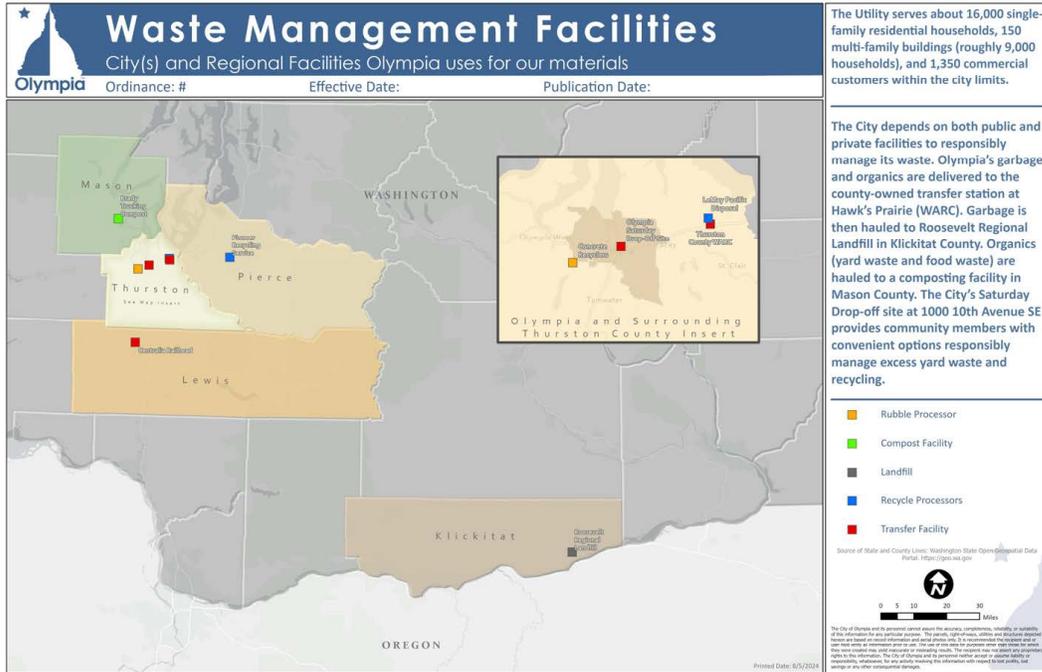
## **Existing Capacity**

The Waste ReSources Utility serves about 16,000 single-family residential households, 150 multi-family buildings (roughly 9,000 households), and 1,350 commercial customers within the city limits. The Utility manages and adapts to growth through its budgeting process, its complement of staff, its equipment, containers, and route design, its solid waste management plan, and its operational policies and procedures.

If the City annexes the southeast area Urban Growth Area (UGA), which has over 3,000 households, the Waste ReSources Utility will need to immediately begin

planning to assume collection from the private hauler in 10 years, which is the transition period. Planning will include setting funding aside for additional containers and trucks.

The map below shows the City’s and regional facilities the City uses for our materials.



Waste Management Facilities.

**Future Facilities**

The City depends on both public and private facilities to responsibly manage its waste; Olympia’s garbage and organics are delivered to the county-owned transfer station at Hawk’s Prairie. Garbage is then hauled to Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County. Organics (yard waste and food waste) are hauled to a composting facility in Mason County. The Waste ReSources Utility’s Saturday Drop-off site at 1000 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE provides community members with convenient options to responsibly manage excess yard waste and recycling.

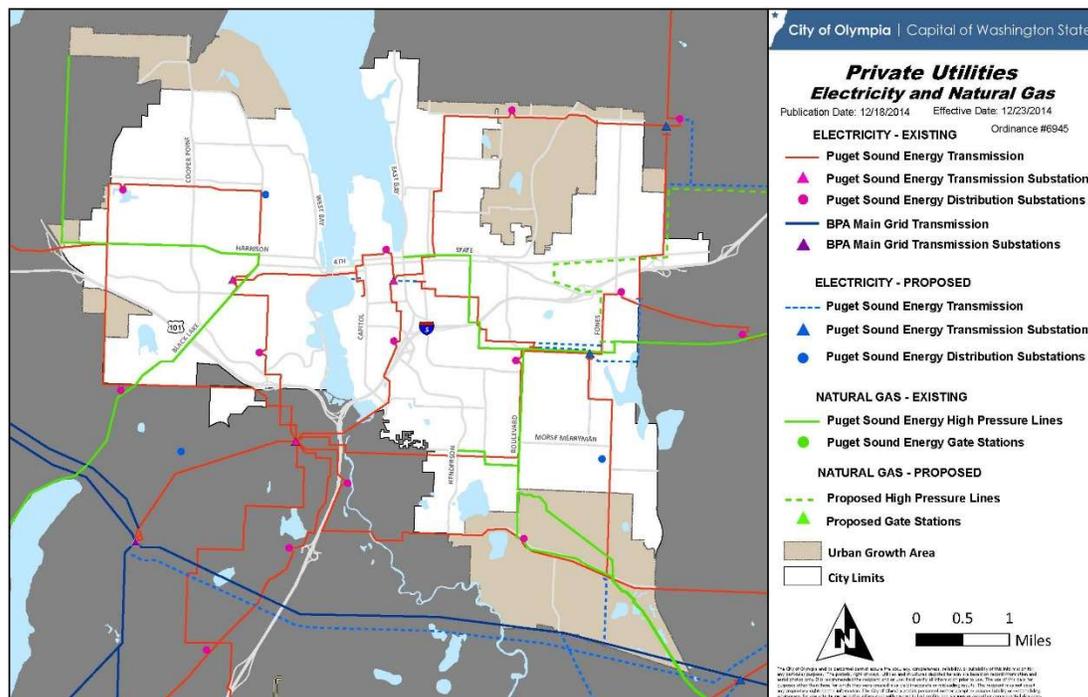
The City is in the process of developing a new Operations Center for the Waste ReSources Utility, which will include a shop for maintaining the City’s heavy-duty fleet. The site is located off Carpenter Road NE in Lacey’s Urban Growth Area on City-owned land. As the project progresses to the 30% and 90% design phases, the Utility will continue to evaluate whether the site can support a recycling transfer operation, which would greatly improve the City’s position in working with recycling sorting facilities and composting operations. The Carpenter Road project is included in the most recent update of the Capital Facilities Plan.

# Description & Inventory of Private Utilities Serving Olympia

## Electricity and Natural Gas

Unlike some other private utilities, providers of electricity such as Puget Sound Energy (PSE) must provide electricity on demand and in accordance with the Revised Code of Washington; Washington Administrative Code; and the "tariffs" on file with the Washington Utilities and Trade Commission (WUTC). To comply with its public service obligations, PSE must plan to extend or add to its electric facilities when needed. PSE owns, operates, and maintains all electric transmission and distribution substations, as well as the electrical transmission and distribution lines within the City of Olympia.

This obligation does not apply to the delivery of natural gas, as it is considered an alternative fuel, rather than a necessity, as electricity is. In accordance with the laws and tariffs, PSE's natural gas service is a demand-driven utility. PSE installs natural gas service for those customers requesting service for new construction, as well as when customers convert from propane or oil to natural gas. PSE owns and operates all natural gas transmission and distribution mains, including gate stations, within the City of Olympia. The map below shows existing and proposed major PSE electric and natural gas facilities, but does not show distribution lines.



Puget Sound Energy Electric and Natural Gas Facilities.

## Telecommunications and Cellular Telephone Service

The volatility and competitiveness of the telecommunications market make it difficult to accurately assess the way future telecommunications will be provided. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates cellular providers in each cellular geographic service area, and in Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, there are several FCC-licensed providers. In April 2006, the City adopted the [Olympia Wireless Telecommunications Master Plan](#), which includes information about future expansion needs and probable facility locations. The [Olympia Municipal Code](#) provides guidance on telecommunications permitting and leasing (see Titles 11 and 18).

At the state level, cellular telecommunications companies are regulated by the WUTC. Although the technology is increasingly used as a reliable backup communication system during times of emergency, the WUTC defines cellular technology as a utility of convenience, not necessity. Therefore, cellular phone providers are not required to provide service upon demand.

There are several dozen antennas for cellular phone service located in Olympia, including on City-owned property such as Drinking Water sites. The cellular phone system depends on a series of these low-powered antennas in a honeycomb pattern of "cells" that invisibly blanket the service area. Each cell site has a signal radius ranging from a few blocks to a few miles, depending on terrain and capacity.

## Standard Telephone Service

As regulated by the WUTC, standard telephone service is considered a necessity. Therefore, Lumen Technologies (Lumen, formerly CenturyLink, Quest, and AT&T) must provide phone facilities on demand. As communities grow, their facilities are upgraded to ensure adequate service levels and to offer new services.

Standard telephone service has four primary components: central switching offices (two are located in Olympia), main cable routes, branch feeder routes, and local loops. All these components work together to provide a dial tone to every subscriber.

Lumen also maintains a broadband telecommunications network over a mix of optical fiber, coaxial cable, and copper wire. Lumen has said that it plans to continue serving the Olympia area.

## Cable and Fiber Optic Services

Comcast, Inc. is Olympia’s sole cable service provider, and its receiver site also serves surrounding communities. The two key components of the cable system are a receiver site—a tower that picks up air and satellite signals— and a fiber-to-the-node cable system. The cable television system is fed directly by coaxial and fiber-optic cable from the receiver site to Comcast’s Olympia subscribers.

Cities and counties may grant franchises to cable companies that allow them to locate their lines in public rights-of-way. In exchange, local governments may require cable companies to provide certain services. Olympia’s franchise agreement requires Comcast to:

- Provide service throughout the City and install the cable underground for all new construction.
- Meet minimum standards for the number of channels provided, variety of programming, quality of customer service, and technical quality of signal transmission.
- Provide a public access studio and facilities that allow programming to originate from a number of public facilities identified by the City.
- Provide free cable service to City buildings.
- Provide financial support for local access television equipment.

Federal law allows local government to charge a franchise fee for use of the right-of-way, currently no more than 5% of gross revenue.

In the Olympia area, the “public access studio and facilities” requirement in the franchise is administered by Thurston Community Television (TCTV), a non-profit organization, on behalf of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Thurston County. The City of Olympia offers viewing of its council meetings and podcast (Actually Olympia) through OlyTV3. It can be accessed via Comcast cable channel 3 or viewed on demand at OLYTV3.com

Each year, Comcast engineers assess whether it needs to expand its Olympia system so it can continue to provide cable hook-ups to customers as demand rises. At this time, the City is adequately served and expects that service to continue for at least the next 20 years.

Zipty Fiber is a local internet service provider (ISP) dedicated to bringing ultra-fast, reliable fiber internet to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Zipty Fiber provides fiber optic in parts of Olympia. Its services include Wi-Fi, television streaming, and telephone for residents and businesses.

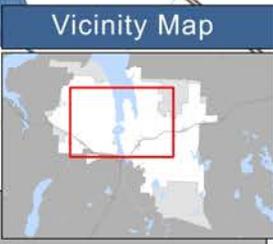


# Olympia and LOTT Reclaimed Water Facilities

Ordinance: #

Effective Date:

Publication Date:



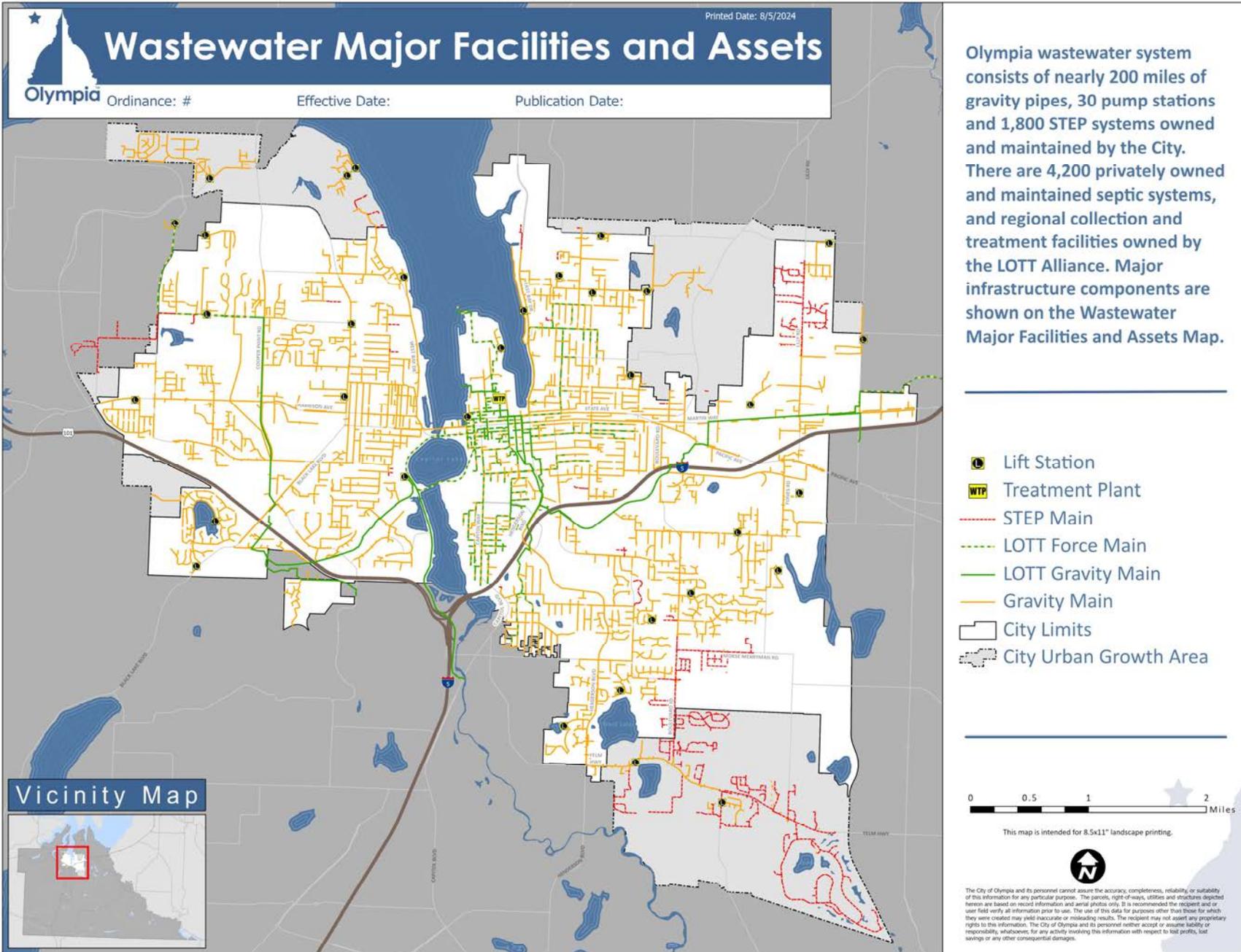
- Legend**
- Reclaimed Water Line
  - City Urban Growth Area
  - City Limits

Class A reclaimed water treatment, production and main distribution facilities are jointly owned and operated by the Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County (LOTT) CleanWater Alliance. Olympia owns and operates a limited distribution system for reclaimed water in the downtown area. Olympia and LOTT Major Reclaimed Water Facilities map shows the major components of both the City's and LOTT's reclaimed water system.

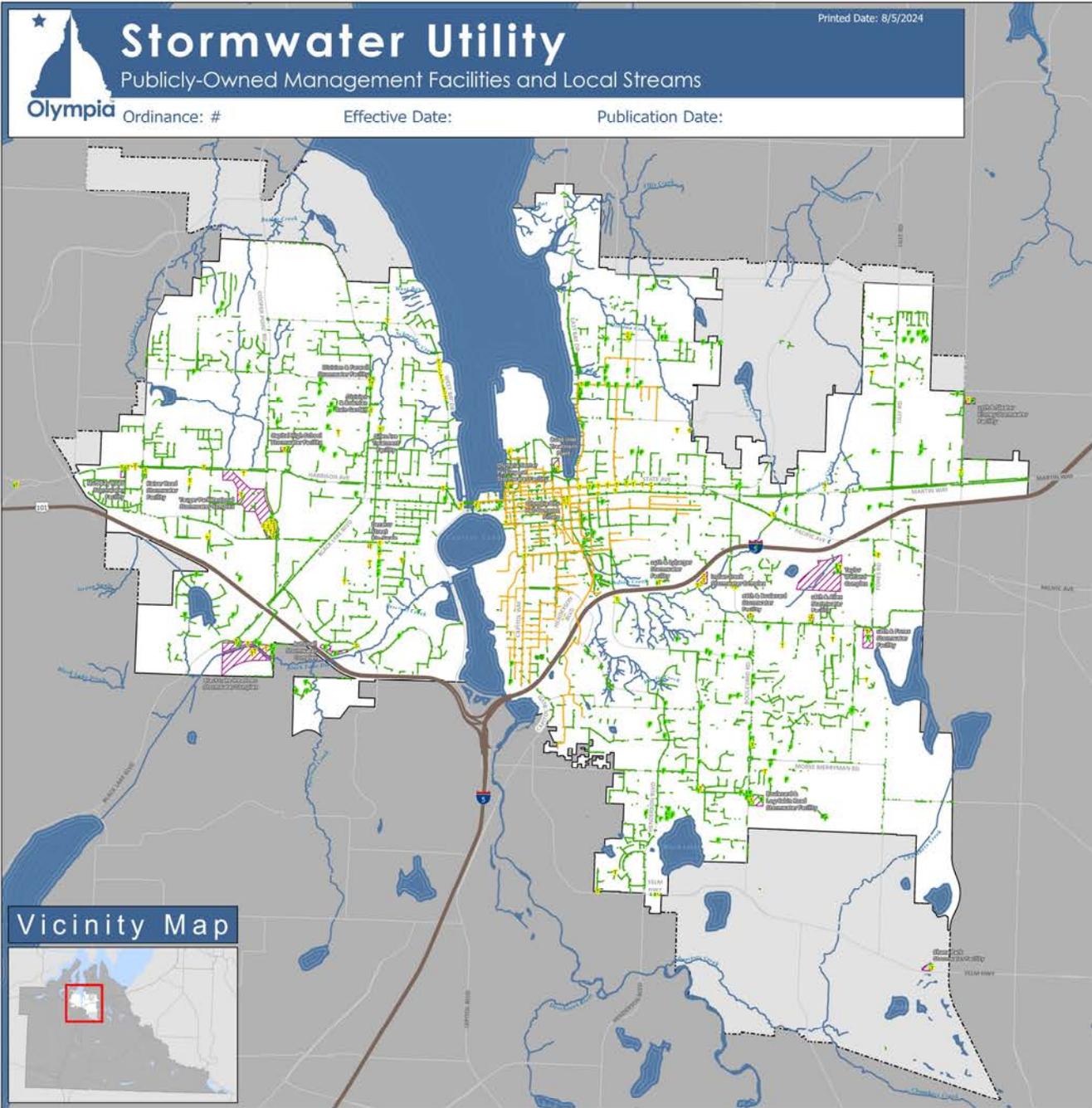
0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 Miles

This map is intended for 8.5x11" landscape printing.

The City of Olympia and its personnel cannot assure the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of this information for any particular purpose. The parcels, right-of-ways, utilities and structures depicted herein are based on record information and aerial photos only. It is recommended the recipient and/or user field verify all information prior to use. The use of this data for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The recipient may not assert any proprietary rights to this information. The City of Olympia and its personnel neither accept or assume liability or responsibility, whatsoever, for any activity involving this information with respect to lost profits, lost savings or any other consequential damages.



Olympia wastewater system consists of nearly 200 miles of gravity pipes, 30 pump stations and 1,800 STEP systems owned and maintained by the City. There are 4,200 privately owned and maintained septic systems, and regional collection and treatment facilities owned by the LOTT Alliance. Major infrastructure components are shown on the Wastewater Major Facilities and Assets Map.



The Utility maintains more than 130 miles of underground pipe, more than 7,000 storm drains, and 95 stormwater ponds that carry storm water runoff from roads and rooftops to our streams and Budd Inlet. The Storm and Surface Water map shows the location of the City's major storm and surface water facilities.

- T** Treatment Facilities
- F** Flow Control Structures
- Storm Gravity Main
- Combined Sewer Gravity Main
- ▨ Regional Treatment Facilities
- Streams
- ⊔ City Limits
- ⋯ City Urban Growth Area



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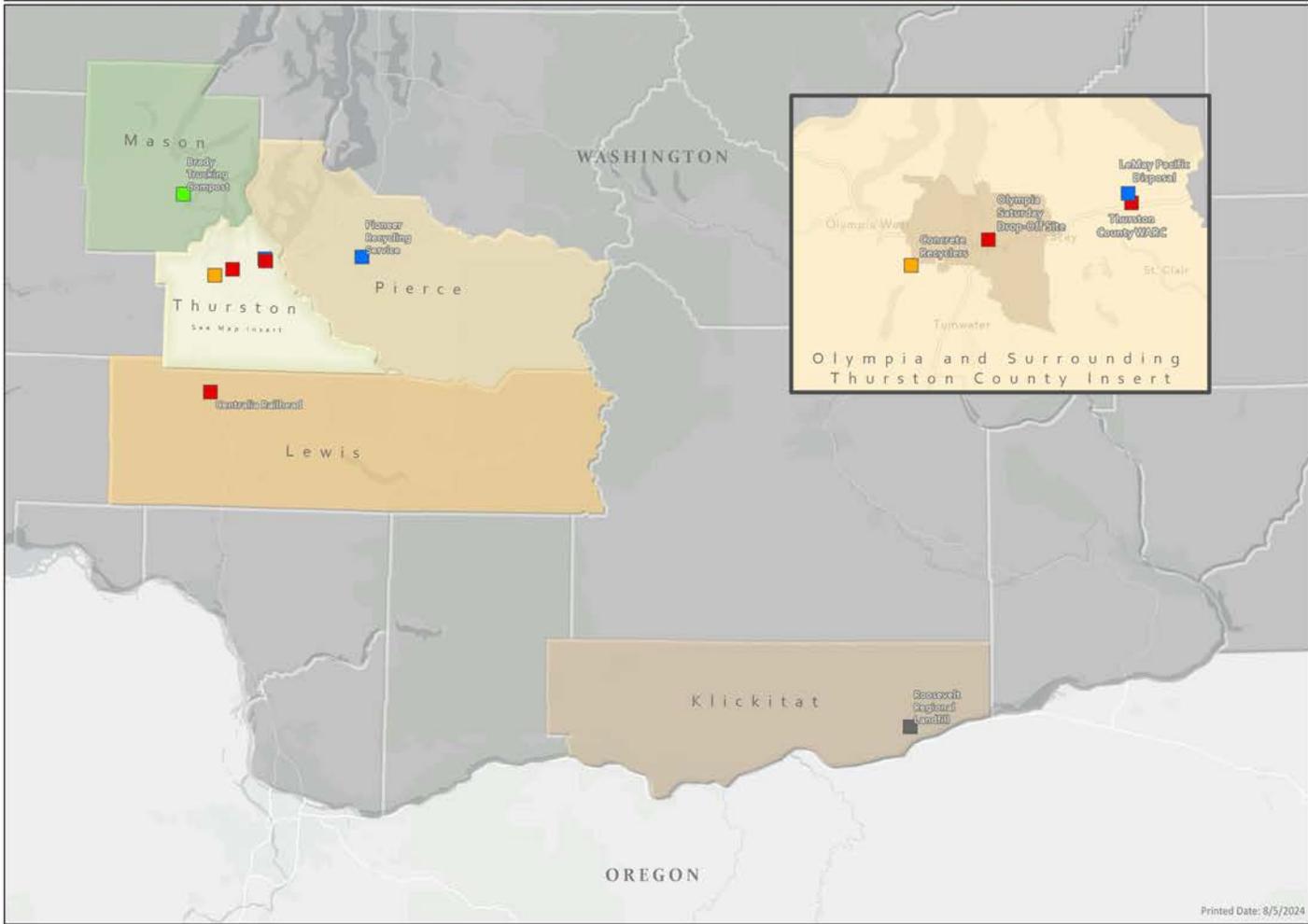
# Waste Management Facilities

City(s) and Regional Facilities Olympia uses for our materials

Ordinance: #

Effective Date:

Publication Date:

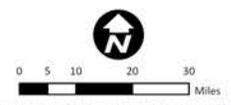


The Utility serves about 16,000 single-family residential households, 150 multi-family buildings (roughly 9,000 households), and 1,350 commercial customers within the city limits.

The City depends on both public and private facilities to responsibly manage its waste. Olympia's garbage and organics are delivered to the county-owned transfer station at Hawk's Prairie (WARC). Garbage is then hauled to Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County. Organics (yard waste and food waste) are hauled to a composting facility in Mason County. The City's Saturday Drop-off site at 1000 10th Avenue SE provides community members with convenient options responsibly manage excess yard waste and recycling.

- Rubble Processor
- Compost Facility
- Landfill
- Recycle Processors
- Transfer Facility

Source of State and County Lines: Washington State Open Geospatial Data Portal. <https://gps.wa.gov>



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Printed Date: 8/5/2024

## Private Utilities Electricity and Natural Gas

Publication Date: 12/18/2014 Effective Date: 12/23/2014

Ordinance #6945

### ELECTRICITY - EXISTING

- Puget Sound Energy Transmission
- ▲ Puget Sound Energy Transmission Substations
- Puget Sound Energy Distribution Substations
- BPA Main Grid Transmission
- ▲ BPA Main Grid Transmission Substations

### ELECTRICITY - PROPOSED

- - - Puget Sound Energy Transmission
- ▲ Puget Sound Energy Transmission Substations
- Puget Sound Energy Distribution Substations

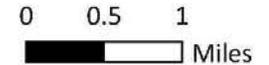
### NATURAL GAS - EXISTING

- Puget Sound Energy High Pressure Lines
- Puget Sound Energy Gate Stations

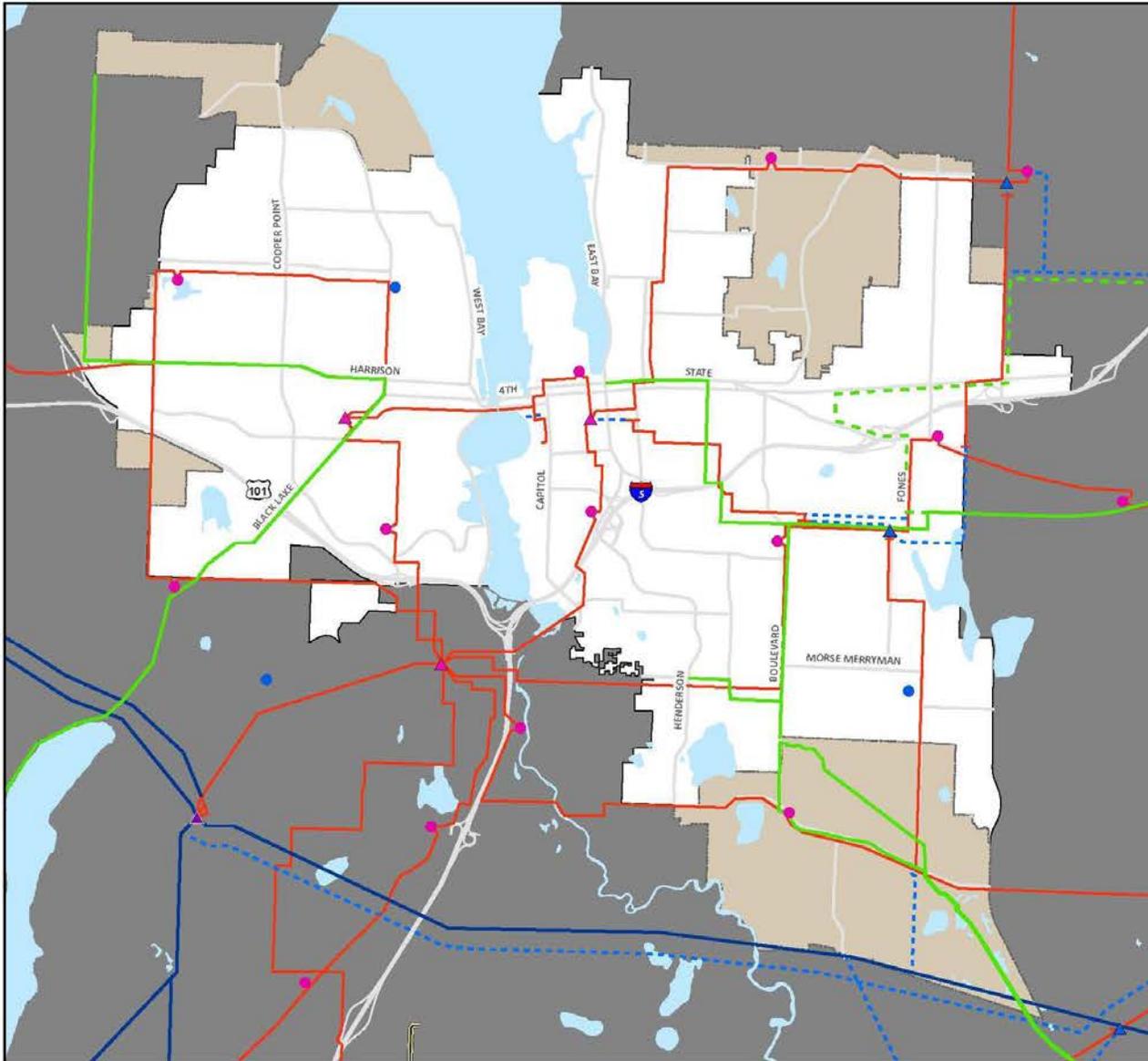
### NATURAL GAS - PROPOSED

- - - Proposed High Pressure Lines
- ▲ Proposed Gate Stations

- Urban Growth Area
- City Limits



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# Parks, Arts, and Recreation



Extraordinary parks, arts, and recreation provide opportunities for meaningful life experiences.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the role parks, open space, recreation, and art play in our lives. They contribute to our sense of community and our physical, emotional, environmental, and economic well-being.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A healthy, fun, welcoming, safe, and enriching place to live for all Olympians.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

## Collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the [Accord](#) between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

## Introduction

Olympia’s great parks, vibrant arts community, and many recreation and enrichment programs enhance our lives and strengthen our connection to the community. Public gathering places, whether a small pocket park or a large playfield, satisfy our need to join with others in the community. One only has to walk to a neighborhood park, search for a new skill to learn, or catch the latest downtown event, such as Arts Walk, to experience our welcoming community. The City, community groups, volunteers, and businesses all play a vital role in shaping parks, arts, and recreation. These facilities, events, and programs improve people’s quality of life, promote active lifestyles, create a sense of place, and contribute to the local economy. The City of Olympia takes an active role, when appropriate, in influencing regional health policy where it relates to Olympians and their access to parks, art, and recreation.

## Parks, Arts, and Recreation Programs and Facilities

Parks, arts, and recreation programs enrich the community by supporting a healthy, well-balanced community. City programs offer opportunities to exercise, learn new skills, connect with nature, reduce stress, and support personal growth and emotional well-being.

Some recreational amenities are regional in nature, and a regional approach to their implementation can be effective. The City looks at opportunities for coordinating with other local and regional governments to develop more parks and recreation facilities. For example, community parks lend themselves to a regional approach, particularly if a potential site is located near a border with Lacey, Tumwater, or Thurston County. Other regional efforts could include expanding the regional trail network, recreational programming, an aquatics center, or even an urban agriculture park. The City will continue to explore these opportunities.

Over the next 20 years, Olympia’s parks, arts and recreation will face the following challenges

- Maintaining public safety and security in parks and facilities. Since the last plan, the City has enacted strategies that effectively reduced unsafe behavior in parks, facilities, and services. However, staff must continue working to create a welcoming environment where all visitors feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

- Preparing for climate change. Climate change is impacting Olympia’s parks and recreation activities. We must take action to mitigate the impact of sea level rise and more frequent extreme weather events to build a climate-resilient system that will serve generations to come. As the City updates the Percival Landing Master Plan, it will address design considerations for sea level rise. In 2022, the City’s Urban Forestry Program hired a consultant to do an [evaluation and report](#) of tree canopy coverage for the entire City. Parks staff will use this information to strategically and equitably maintain and enhance tree canopy coverage throughout the City’s parks.
- The Immediate Need to Undo Institutional Injustice in Parks, Arts and Recreation Services. The City will center equity, inclusion and belonging in parks, arts, and recreation to undo institutional injustices in these services. We recognize our equity journey will present challenges. It is our responsibility to face these challenges while building capacity and accountability resources that embed equity, inclusion and belonging in our daily decision-making practices. We will continually analyze the political, economic, sociodemographic, technological, legal, and environmental challenges facing our work. This requires continually developing solutions and strategies for the challenges. A staff committee focused on equity, inclusion, and belonging work meets regularly to analyze the challenges and develop solutions.

Olympia and its community members have changed since 2014 when the last Comprehensive Plan was updated. Our population has increased, we’re taking new climate actions, and we’ve renewed our focus on and commitment to building equity. These changes are highly significant to the programs and facilities that we will provide during this planning period.

The following goals and policies will apply to all parks, arts, and recreation programs as well as the facilities that support them. They will help Olympia enact its vision for the next 20 years.

## Goals and Policies

**GR1 Unique facilities, public art, events, and recreational programming encourage social interaction, foster inclusive and collaborative community building, and enhance the visual character and livability of Olympia.**

**PR1.1** Continue to provide extraordinary parks and community activities that contribute to our high quality of life and attract tourism and private investment to Olympia. (Climate)

**PR1.2** Design City parks, arts, and recreation activities and facilities so they are used and enjoyed by as many residents as possible with equal access to improvements by all.

**PR1.3** Be responsive to emerging needs for activities, facilities, and community events.

## **GR2 The City leverages its investments in parks, arts and recreation programs and facilities.**

**PR2.1** Seek non-profit organization and community member partnerships, sponsorships, grants, and private donations for park and facility acquisition, development, operation, programming, and events.

**PR2.2** Use creative problem-solving and cost-effective approaches to development, operations, and programming.

**PR2.3** Continue the Joint Use Agreement, and other mutually beneficial partnerships, between the City and the Olympia School District to provide recreation facilities and programming for the community.

**PR2.4** Pursue opportunities to increase revenues generated by users of park facilities and concessions.

**PR2.5** Search for opportunities for mixed-use facilities and public-private partnerships.

**PR2.6** Identify and plan for climate impacts, including extreme precipitation, drought, and sea level rise, to valued community assets such as parks, trails, and recreation facilities. These strategies may include relocation, replacement, or adaptive design. (Climate)

**PR2.7** Consider climate-exacerbated hazards in all siting, planning, and life cycle assessments of new and redeveloped capital Park assets. (Climate)

**PR2.8** Consider how acquisition and management of new and existing Parks properties can contribute to community-wide resilience and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. (Climate)



Cultural events, such as Indigenous Peoples' Day, celebrate and honor the people and traditions of our community.

## Equity

As part of our commitment to equity, it is essential that park features, public art, and the naming or renaming of parks reflect the diverse histories, identities, and experiences of our community. By doing so, we foster a culture of belonging, honor underrepresented groups, and ensure that our public spaces are welcoming to all. Thoughtfully designed and inclusive parks strengthen community connections, reflect shared values, and reinforce our dedication to inclusivity in every space we create.

The equity goals and policies in this plan are designed to cultivate a culture of belonging and guide the equitable delivery of services across our community. These policies shape our commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and representation—both within our department and in the services and facilities we provide to the public.

The first three policies focus on internal departmental efforts, outlining the actions needed to build a more equitable and inclusive organizational culture. These policies address systemic barriers, enhance staff training, and ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of the community we serve.

Policies 3.4 through 3.6 focus on external services, ensuring that our programs, facilities, and offerings are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of community members.

The final two policies bridge both internal operations and community-facing services, reinforcing our commitment to equity while holding us accountable for creating welcoming, accessible, and inclusive opportunities for all.

Together, these policies provide a comprehensive framework to guide our efforts in making parks, arts, and recreation spaces truly equitable for every resident.

**GR3 Olympia Parks, Arts, and Recreation creates and manages places and programs where ALL people feel safe and are provided with equitable access to engage in parks, arts, and recreation services.**

**PR3.1** Develop an Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Plan for the Department.

**PR3.2** Identify and address procedural, distributional, structural, and cultural inequities in the Department and the work that we do.

**PR3.3** Apply an equity analysis to the Department's demographic make-up and strategize proactive approaches to recruit a more diverse candidate pool when hiring. This will result in a team that is representative at all levels and reflects the community's demographics at a minimum. If it's not representative of the community at large, strategize proactive approaches to recruit a more diverse candidate pool when hiring.

**PR3.4** Conduct an equity analysis and utilize equity measures when prioritizing park development projects to target areas of highest need that lack accessible green spaces.

**PR3.5** Seek to reduce barriers to access and participation whenever possible.

**PR3.6** Provide equitable distribution of parks, arts, and recreation services.

**PR3.7** Apply an equity analysis to all budget development and management decisions.

**PR3.8** Set performance metrics to hold us accountable toward reaching our goals.

## **GR4 Olympia’s park system is resilient and provides climate mitigation and adaptation benefits. (Climate)**

**PR4.1** Restore and plant climate resilient vegetation and trees utilizing scientific best practices. Maintain and support Olympia’s street trees to help cool streets and neighborhoods. (Climate)

**PR4.2** Implement tree selection, care and maintenance best practices that account for drier and hotter future climate conditions. (Climate)

**PR4.3** Enhance protection of parks from wildfire by periodically updating wildfire protection standard operating procedures based on evolving climate conditions and best practices for proper mitigation of wildfire risk. (Climate)

**PR4.4** Identify opportunities for using existing and new parks and open space for stormwater management to the extent possible while providing recreational opportunities. (Climate)

**PR4.5** Protect habitat, restore natural areas, manage shorelines, and plan for climate change impacts. (Climate)

**PR4.6** Practice water conservation measures and implement water-smart designs in park properties and operations. (Climate)

**PR4.7** Seek opportunities for installing constructed and natural cooling features in parks, such as park shelters and splash pads. (Climate)

**PR4.8** Continue to support urban agriculture such as community gardens and pollinator gardens on Parks owned properties. (Climate)

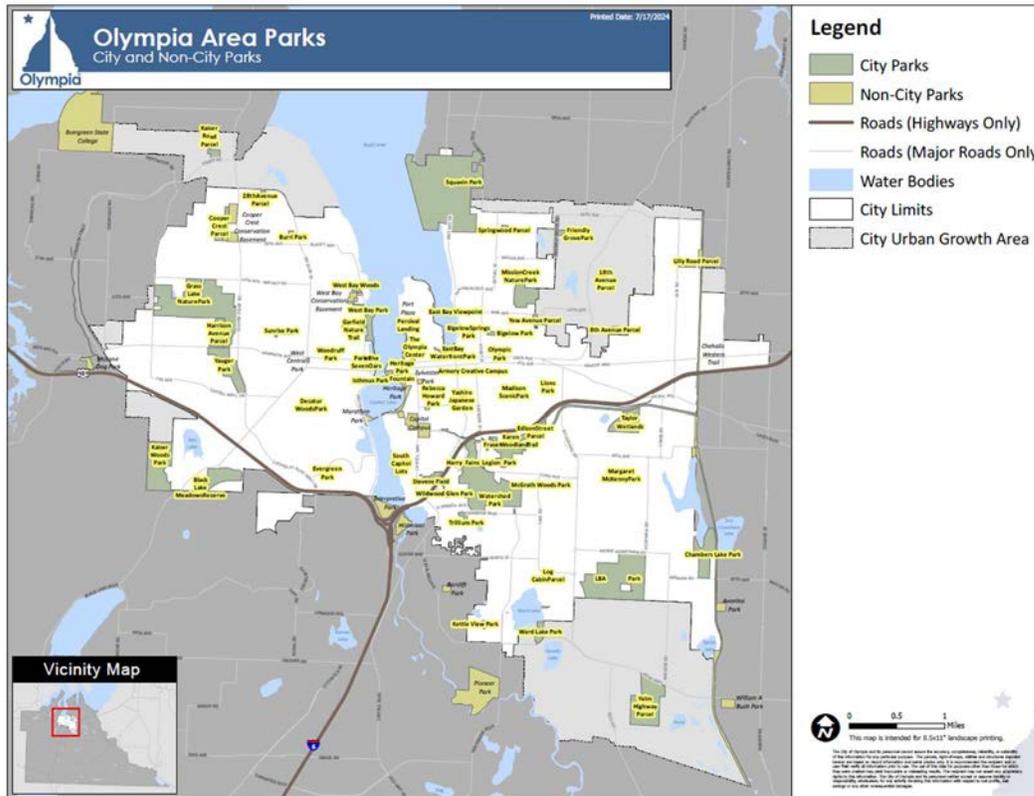
## **GR5 Olympia’s park and public art support environmental stewardship and awareness of climate change. (Climate)**

**PR5.1** Educate parks visitors and the community about environmental stewardship, conservation, and climate change impacts and solutions. (Climate)

**PR5.2** Inspire community members to act by leading through example in environmental stewardship, visible changes in the way we do business and how we plan for the future. (Climate)

## Parks

Fifty-three parks and open spaces in the City of Olympia give the community a variety of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. We can hike in Watershed Park, keep cool in the sprayground at Woodruff Park, stroll along Percival Landing, and enjoy reunions in the Rose Garden at Squaxin Park. Despite the number of parks we have, there are still unmet needs, such as soccer fields, neighborhood parks within a 10-minute walk of each resident, community parks, community gardens, bike and nature trails, and open space. For a complete inventory of all existing park, recreation, and open space lands in Olympia, see the [Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan](#).



View Map – Olympia Area Parks and Trails.

Over the next 20 years, Olympia will face several challenges and opportunities as we work to meet the demand for parks and open space:

- Demand for New Parks and Arts Exceeds Resources. Many new park projects in Olympia will each cost tens of millions of dollars. These “mega projects”

include Percival Landing reconstruction, completing the final two phases of the Karen Fraser Woodland Trail, developing West Bay Park and Trail, developing the Armory Creative Campus, and developing the Yelm Highway Community Park site. To help address funding gaps, the City will look for creative opportunities in grant funding, partnerships, and phased development as well as debt servicing options.

- Meeting the increased need for parks and open space. As our population increases, we will need more parks and open space to meet current service standards, yet less land and fewer large parcels are available. Staff will explore innovative solutions and continue to pursue land acquisition opportunities to meet future needs.

## Maintaining the Quality of Olympia's Parks and Recreation System

### The Parks and Recreation Plan:

Every six years, the City undertakes an extensive public outreach effort to update its Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan. During this time, community members have an opportunity to share what they want from our park system as well as our arts and recreation programs. We use this community input to update level of service standards for Olympia's parks, arts, and recreation. These standards, along with an equity analysis, are used to evaluate and prioritize the need to acquire more park land or build more recreation facilities. The Parks and Recreation Plan periodic updates considers projected growth and availability of suitable park land.

(Note that the term "Level of Service" is a quantifiable measure of the amount of public facility that is provided. Typically, expressed as ratios such as acres of parkland to population.)

### The Capital Facilities Plan:

The [Capital Facilities Plan](#) describes how the City finances new park acquisition and development, which is funded by a variety of sources, including the Metropolitan Parks District, the two percent private utility tax, park impact fees, Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) mitigation fees, grants, and donations. While most of the park projects proposed in the [Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan](#) already have identified funding sources, some significant regional and large projects do not.

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are typically small and are designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. Facilities found in neighborhood parks might include items such as playgrounds (for children ages two to 12), picnic areas, restrooms, and open grass areas for passive and active use. Amenities may also include items such as trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, skate courts, public art and community gardens. While it is our goal to have a park within a half-mile (10-minute walk) of all residences, this does not mean that the service area of neighborhood parks is limited to this radius. Since each park has unique amenities, residents will often travel throughout the City to experience the park that meets their needs or desires on a given day. The service area for neighborhood parks is the entire City and its Urban Growth Area.



Neighborhood parks such as Margaret McKenny Park provide nearby places to be active.

There are currently 30 neighborhood parks in Olympia totaling 89 acres. For there to be a park within a half-mile (10-minute walking distance) of most Olympia residents, four new combination neighborhood park and open spaces will need to be acquired, and seven neighborhood parks will need to be developed over the next 20-year planning horizon. This is consistent with the goal expressed in the [Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan](#) of having a neighborhood park within walking distance of most residences.

For more information on the neighborhood park standard see the [Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan](#).

# Community Parks

Community parks are designed to serve the larger community and are often athletic fields, sites that have a special focus, or small urban parks. Examples of special-use-oriented community parks include Rebecca Howard Park and Percival Landing. Olympia has not developed an athletic community park in the last 40 years.

Athletic field complexes are designed for organized activities and sports, although individual and family activities are also encouraged. They can vary in size but ideally are large enough to accommodate at least four fields and supporting facilities (such as restrooms and parking), which allows for tournament play. Olympia’s three existing developed athletic field complexes are LBA Park, Yauger Park, and Stevens Field. In 2018, the City purchased the 83-acre Yelm Highway Community Park site and is currently in the process of developing a site plan for the park with hopes of developing the first phase in 2026.



Community parks add to Olympia’s vitality (Percival Landing).

Community parks can also have special features such as off-leash dog areas, bicycle courses, freshwater swim beaches, waterfront access, and community gardens. Based on community needs, Olympia will also need to add additional community park acreage to provide for these desired recreational amenities.

For organized sports, it matters less where the player lives, but rather where a game is scheduled. The service area for community parks is defined as being all of Olympia and all of Olympia’s urban growth area.

To meet both existing and future community park needs, the Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan calls for the acquisition of 20 acres of community park land, the development of 52 acres of existing community parkland, and upgrades and major maintenance to existing athletic fields. For more information on the community park standard see the [Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan](#).

## Open Space

Open space parks consist of primarily undeveloped land set aside to protect Olympia’s natural landscape. These areas allow the community to experience and connect with local flora, fauna, and habitats. They also serve as natural infrastructure, improving water and air quality while providing climate benefits such as carbon sequestration and cooling. Open space includes wetlands, wetland buffers, creek, stream, and river corridors, aquatic habitats, marine shorelines, forested or upland wildlife areas, ravines, bluffs, other geologically hazardous areas, prairies, meadows, and undeveloped areas within existing parks.

The City evaluates public use based on potential resource impacts. Trails are commonly developed, and some sites support more active recreation, such as running and biking. Parking, trailheads, restrooms, information kiosks, and environmental education facilities also enhance public access.

(Note that the term “open space” as used in this chapter has a more specific meaning than in the [Natural Environment](#) Chapter pursuant to RCW [36.70A.160](#)).



Open spaces such as Mission Creek Nature Park provide opportunities to experience nature in the city.

Residents often travel across town to visit open spaces with unique features. For example, Watershed Park offers walking trails through a stream and wetland

complex, while Squaxin Park provides saltwater beach access and mature forests. The City defines the service area for open space as all of Olympia and its urban growth area.

Olympia residents place a high value on open space and its amenities. Surveys conducted for the Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan update revealed strong public interest in nature access, conservation areas, hiking trails, and multi-use paved trails.

Over the next 20 years, the City plans to acquire 15 acres of open space to meet service standards and address the impact of population growth on the open space system. More details on open space standards are available in the [Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan](#).

The service standards, goals, and policies outlined here will guide Olympia’s park system toward its vision for the next two decades.

## Goals and Policies

### **GR6 A vibrant park system that meets current and future community needs.**

**PR6.1** Provide parks with gathering spaces in close proximity (within a half-mile or 10-minute walk) for all residents. The distance should be measured by following an accessible travel route suitable for walking or moving with a small mobility device. (Climate)

**PR6.2** Ensure that Olympia’s park system includes opportunities for its residents to experience nature. (Climate)

**PR6.3** Preserve and enhance scenic views and significant historic sites within Olympia’s park system.

**PR6.4** Identify and acquire future park and open space sites that will serve residents in Olympia and its urban growth area. (Climate)

**PR6.5** Beautify entry corridors to our City and our neighborhoods through art installations, giving priority to street beautification downtown and along Urban Corridors.

**PR6.6** Continue to collect park impact fees within the Olympia City Limits and SEPA-based mitigation fees in the Olympia Urban Growth Areas so new development pays its fair share to the park and open space system based on its proportionate share of impact. Work with Thurston County to devise an alternative system for funding parks and open space in the unincorporated Urban Growth Area.

**PR6.7** During development review, if consistent with park level of service standards or other needs, encourage developers to dedicate land for future parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

**PR6.8** Develop parks or plazas near urban corridors. (Climate)

**GR7 An urban trails system interconnects parks, schools, neighborhoods, open spaces, historical settings, neighboring jurisdictions' trails systems, important public facilities, and employment centers via both on- and off-street trails.**

**PR7.1** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and State agencies to build a regional trail network and trail signage program that is consistent with the [Thurston Regional Trails Plan](#).

**PR7.2** Use existing rail, utility, and unopened street rights-of-way, alleys, streams (where environmentally sound), and other corridors for urban trails.

**PR7.3** Preserve unimproved public rights-of-way for important open space, greenway linkages, and trails.

**PR7.4** Encourage walking, bicycling, and other non-vehicular access for recreation and transportation purposes by linking parks to multi-modal routes, streets and trails in coordination with the [Transportation Master Plan](#). Where appropriate, add facilities that support people traveling by various modes, such as a bicycle repair facility or additional bicycle parking facilities. (Climate)

**PR7.5** When located in areas where future trails are shown on the adopted map, ensure that new development provides appropriate pieces of the trail system using impact fees, the SEPA process, trail right-of-way dedication, or other means.

## **GR8 A lively public waterfront contributes to a vibrant Olympia.**

**PR8.1** Pursue a phased approach to Percival Landing reconstruction and West Bay Park construction.

**PR8.2** Encourage creation of a public shoreline trail as property north of West Bay Park is developed.

**PR8.3** Develop a West Bay trail alignment that follows the shoreline and connects to Deschutes Parkway to the south.

**PR8.4** Designate waterfront trails and important waterfront destinations as the “Olympia Waterfront Route” as outlined in the [Thurston Regional Trails Plan](#) and in this plan.

**PR8.5** Encourage the acquisition of saltwater shoreline property and easements to create more public access to the waterfront while restoring and enhancing shoreline ecosystems. (Climate)

**PR8.6** Preserve street rights-of-way when they extend to shorelands and install signs that indicate public access.

**PR8.7** Incorporate the [Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan](#) strategies into future design, maintenance and operations of Percival Landing and West Bay Park. (Climate)

## **GR9 Olympia’s parks, arts, and recreation system investments are protected.**

**PR9.1** Continue to improve the Parks Asset Management Program, utilizing measurable data to ensure park infrastructure remains functional and safe.

**PR9.2** Design, maintain, and operate facilities to prevent damage by misuse and encourage the intended use.

**PR9.3** Consider regional approaches to funding major recreational facilities, such as swimming pools, regional trails, art centers, and tournament-level athletic fields.

**PR9.4** Establish a strategy for funding the maintenance and operation of new park facilities before they are developed.

## Arts and Events

Olympia is home to an engaged population of artists and arts organizations active in music, literary, performance, media, and visual arts. Olympia offers award-winning theater, music performances from indie to symphonies, the Procession of the Species, and a strong visual, literary and performing arts community that ranges from emerging artists to those with nationwide representation. Both the Olympia Arts and Events program and the Olympia Arts Commission, a nine-member advisory board appointed by the City Council, have worked on behalf of the arts in our community for over 30 years. With no other municipal Arts Commissions nearby, Olympia’s programs support the arts regionally, while serving as a model for communities throughout Washington State.

With the recent voter-approved initiative, [Inspire Olympia](#), the City collects and allocates a portion of Olympia’s sales tax to contract with local nonprofit organizations offering arts, sciences, heritage, and cultural programs and experiences for the public in the City. Inspire Olympia provides a reliable source of public funding that sustains a healthy, visible, welcoming, and inclusive nonprofit cultural and science sector, making creative cultural experiences accessible for everyone in Olympia.



Arts Walk is a beloved community event in Olympia.

Over the next 20 years, Olympia will face two challenges:

- **Developing an Arts Center.** In 1989, the City first identified a need for a regional arts center with exhibition space, working studios, and rehearsal space for regional artists. In 2021, the City of Olympia took ownership of the Olympia Armory building for the purpose of creating a community arts center. The City has identified funds to support the initial visioning. We will likely need to finance and fundraise a significant portion of the first phase of construction to ensure the building meets safety and accessibility standards for the public.
- **Retaining Artists.** Social and economic factors such as cost of living, affordable housing, and an unstable economy may make it harder for Olympia to retain its artists.



The Armory building will soon be an arts center that supports diverse artists equitably.

## Goals and Policies

**GR10 Permanent and temporary public art is located in parks, sidewalks, streets, roundabouts, public buildings, alleys, and other public spaces and facilities.**

**PR10.1** Include diverse works of art.

**PR10.2** Ensure opportunities and participation by local, regional and national artists.

**PR10.3** Use public art to create unique community places and visible landmarks.

**PR10.4** Encourage community participation at all levels of the public art process.

**PR10.5** Ensure our public art collection is regularly maintained so it retains its beauty and value.

**PR10.6** Encourage art in vacant storefronts.

**PR10.7** Encourage neighborhood art studios.

**PR10.8** Support art installations that produce solar or wind-generated energy.

**PR10.9** Help artists, organizations, and businesses identify possible locations in commercial areas for studios and exhibition space.

**PR10.10** Encourage interactive and experiential art.

**PR10.11** Consider opportunities for public art projects in response to current community issues.

### **GR11 Arts in Olympia are supported.**

**PR11.1** Pursue a community arts center at the historic Olympia Armory building.

**PR11.2** Pursue affordable housing and studio and rehearsal space for artists, including support for, or participation in, establishing or constructing buildings or sections of buildings that provide living, working, and gallery space exclusively for artists.

**PR11.3** Encourage broad arts participation in the community.

**PR11.4** Provide affordable and inclusive opportunities for the public to learn about and engage in the art-making process.

**PR11.5** Provide opportunities that highlight the talent of visual, literary, and performing artists.

**PR11.6** Provide technical support and grant opportunities to arts and culture organizations.

**PR11.7** Support the Creative District in downtown and Olympia's art economy in general.

**PR11.8** Create a range of opportunities for the public to interact with art, from small workshops to large community events.

**PR11.9** Encourage early arts education opportunities.

## Recreation

The City's recreation programs promote physical and mental well-being, bring community members together in a positive, supportive, and fun atmosphere while creating memorable experiences for individuals and families. The City offers traditional programs such as sports leagues, youth camps and clinics, and special interest classes. The City adapts to emerging recreational needs, and other providers must supplement recreational opportunities as one department cannot realistically or sustainably meet the entire community demand.

Each year, approximately 400 teams participate in City sports leagues, more than 4,500 community members take a leisure recreation class, and more than 4,000 youth participate in camp programs. In addition to enhancing participants' wellness, people who participate in these programs also gain a sense of belonging, make great contributions, and invest in their community.



Recreation Programs foster community health and wellness ("Kids Love Soccer" Program).

Olympia's recreation programs face the following challenges:

- Activating our Community. Sedentary lifestyles are contributing to health problems. The City must support places and programs that improve

residents' access to physical activity, connection with fellow community members, and encourage healthy lifestyles.

- Connecting with Nature. Today's culture makes it hard to connect with nature. When residents lose that connection, they struggle to understand and embrace the importance of environmental stewardship.
- Serving an active aging population: Experts project that Olympia's senior population will nearly double by 2045. Seniors of the future are likely to be more active and adventurous than in prior generations. Olympia's recreation programs need to embrace this possibility.



Oly on Ice is our seasonal ice rink.

## Goals and Policies

### **GR12 Olympians enjoy lifelong happiness and wellness.**

**PR12.1** Provide opportunities that promote a mentally and physically active lifestyle.

**PR12.2** Provide programs and facilities that stimulate creative and competitive play for all ages.

**PR12.3** Provide programs, facilities, and community events that support diverse self-expression.

**PR12.4** Provide opportunities for bringing balance, relaxation, and lifelong learning into one's life.

**PR12.5** Support recreation opportunities for people with physical and mental disabilities.

**PR12.6** Provide opportunities for community youth to access healthy food options and for community households to grow their own produce.

**PR12.7** Provide opportunities for people to enjoy and connect with nature in Olympia's parks.

### **GR13 Community members gather and recreate together.**

**PR13.1** Provide recreational opportunities for all residents.

**PR13.2** Work towards providing recreation programs that are affordable and available to all Olympians.

**PR13.3** Provide parks and programs to serve people of all ages, and with many different abilities and interests.

**PR13.4** Develop programs and design park facilities that encourage activities people can do together regardless of their age or abilities.

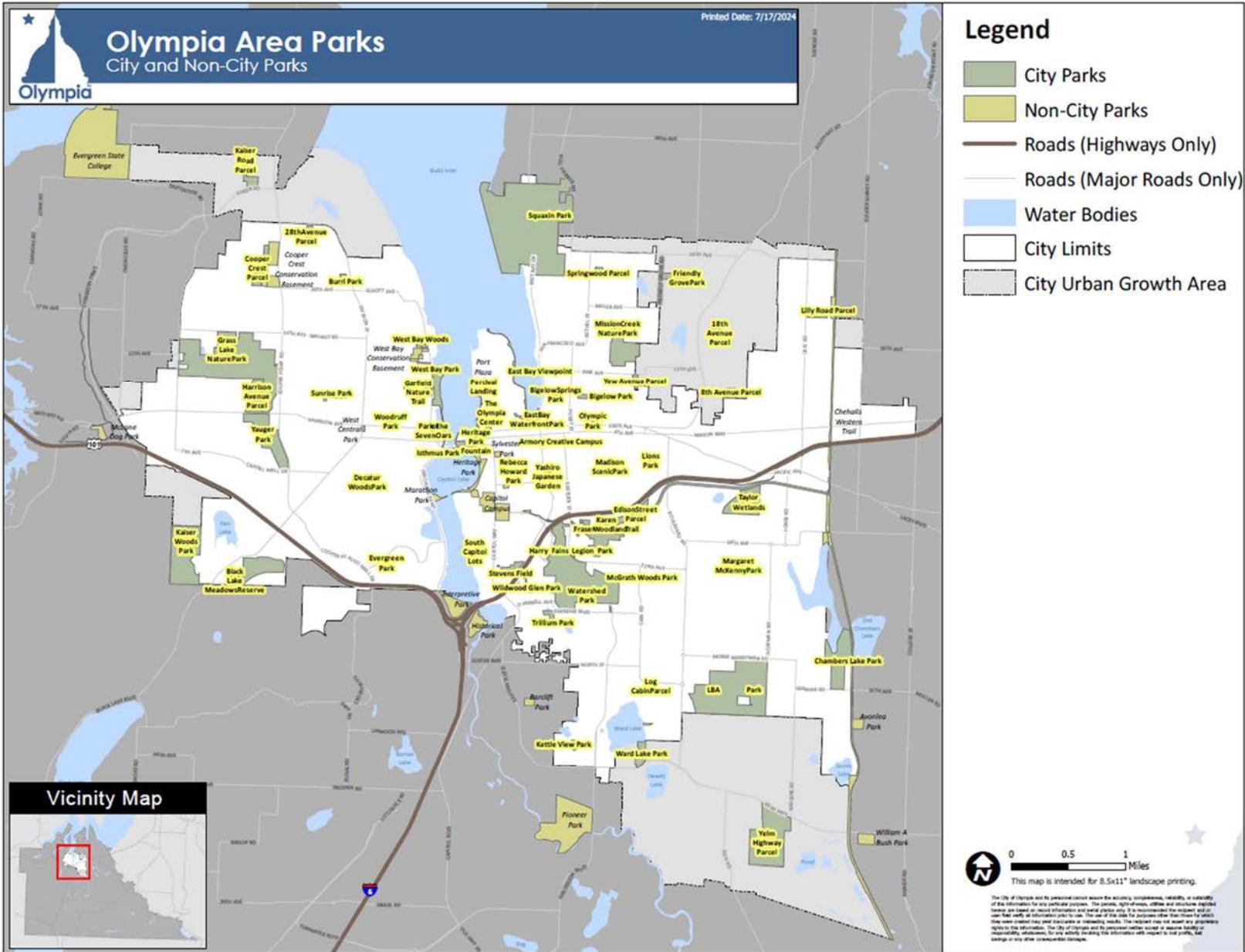
**PR13.5** Provide convenient, safe, active outdoor recreation experiences suited for families.

**PR13.6** Support contingency planning for outdoor events, programming, and recreation potentially disrupted by climate exacerbated hazards. (Climate)

**PR13.7** Encourage timely recovery, reopening, and reconstruction of damaged park assets after a natural disaster to ensure continuity of high-quality services. (Climate)

## For More Information

- [Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan](#).
- Olympia's [Capital Facilities Plan](#) shows how park projects will be funded during a six-year period.
- For a complete list of all of Olympia's parks and trails, see [Parks and Trails](#).
- For a comprehensive look at regional trail planning, see the [Thurston Regional Trails Plan](#).
- Information on the City's Public Art Collection can be found at [Public Art](#).
- In 2017, the Arts Commission helped develop [Olympia Crossings](#), an art plan for the City's gateways.
- To learn more about the City of Olympia's recreational programs and classes, see [Recreation](#).



# Economy



A person and their dog shop in a local pet store.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value a diverse and inclusive economy that offers a variety of education, employment, and business opportunities accessible to all. We take pride in our status as Washington State’s Capital, our local businesses, unique places and spaces, and the creative spirit of our community.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*Every Olympian is afforded a living wage, with quality lifelong opportunities that build pathways to upward mobility and financial stability. Olympia is a safe, resilient, and welcoming city where affordability supports a high quality of life. The city’s abundant community character makes Olympia a choice place to live and a destination for visitors.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

# Collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe

Early in the planning process, the Squaxin Island Tribe indicated to the City which chapters are of most interest to the Tribe. This chapter represents specific priorities for the Tribe, and as such we sought their consultation and collaboration on its content, as envisioned in the [Accord](#) between both governmental entities. Any future amendments to this chapter should include continued collaboration with the Tribe.

## Introduction

Olympians value an inclusive economy where all people have access to resources and opportunities for upward mobility and financial stability. While most residents have incomes sufficient to meet basic needs and then invest in other life pursuits, a growing number of households are falling behind and vulnerable to economic or financial disruption. For this reason, an essential focus for Olympia’s economic development efforts is to create pathways that elevate more residents of all backgrounds and abilities into economic security.

The [Olympia Strong](#) Plan identifies challenges and opportunities for our community. It identifies major pathways and initiatives for building a thriving and diversified economy. It’s built on the foundation of a 2022-2023 communitywide conversation on economic opportunity, following a multi-year pandemic disruption. We learned there are existing and profound challenges facing many people who are living here today. In Olympia, there is considerable economic disparity between renters and homeowners. Those who rent a home spend more of their income on housing, feel more economically insecure, experience more financial hardship, and are less likely to have emergency savings. There is also a confirmed link in our community between education and economic security. Diving deeper, we learn that those who are low-income, within certain minorities, or describe themselves as male or nonbinary, are less likely to attain essential continuing education.

The City of Olympia collaborates on economic development with regional entities from a variety of fields and sectors, including government, business, education, workforce, nonprofits, and others.

Our efforts fall into four main themes:

**Education and Workforce Pathways:** Fostering a variety of education and career training opportunities to ensure individuals have the skills necessary to access in demand and well-paying jobs.

**Housing and Sense of Security:** Facilitating affordable housing initiatives to alleviate the burden on low- and moderate-income families and provide them with stable living conditions. (See the Housing Chapter for more on this.)

**Business Enterprise Resources and Support:** Fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses to create inclusive avenues for wealth creation, reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community, and bolster the tax base we rely on to fund community goals and needs.

**Community Lovability, Pride, and Resiliency:** Investing in programs and projects that make Olympia a desirable destination to work, live, and play; and bolster our ability to respond effectively to physical and financial challenges.

Olympia’s economy has become more diverse over the previous decade, moving from a significant reliance on government employment to growth in other sectors, such as info-tech, healthcare, and professional services.



Long-term trends bring challenges and opportunities.

As we plan for the future, we need to keep these long-term trends in mind.

## Employment Growth

Olympia is an employment center for Thurston County. During the work week, our population doubles in size as people enter Olympia for work. Based on Thurston Regional Planning Council data, we can expect a nearly 35% increase in the number of jobs located in Olympia between 2025 and 2045 (20,370 new jobs projected).

Top employment industries include public administration (state and local government), health care, professional services, retail trade, and accommodation and food service. Olympia’s status as the State capital means we can expect a large, stable base of government employment.

While stable government growth serves a good economic foundation, employment in Olympia’s private sector is growing with potential to boost economic gains, as the fastest growing sector. Healthcare industry expansion reflects regional and national trends. Olympia benefits from a strong healthcare presence anchored by providers like Providence St. Peter and Multicare Capital Medical Center, as well as numerous specialty and outpatient care facilities. The healthcare sector offers market stability while providing a wide range of employment opportunities across skill and education levels.

A growing and diverse private sector broadens the City’s tax base, which is essential for maintaining high-quality public services for residents. Olympia aims to attract and retain businesses that offer living wage jobs and align with community values to support continued diversification. A strategic priority within this effort is the growth of company headquarters, ideally focused on green products and jobs. Headquarters not only bring living wage jobs but also attract supply chains related to the industry.

In addition to public and private employers, nonprofit organizations represent a significant share of Olympia’s workforce, contributing to both the economy and community well-being. Nonprofits provide essential services such as housing assistance, food access, healthcare, education, and workforce training that support residents’ stability and opportunity. They also create local jobs, attract outside funding, and build community partnerships.

Building on this diverse economic base, the City aims to encourage the growth of new businesses that offer high paying jobs that could lift more Olympians into economic security. In Washington, about two-thirds of all jobs will require a certificate, associate degree, or higher.

Olympia possesses very little industrial zoning to accommodate advanced manufacturing or other large employers. As a result, high wage employment within City limits will likely be focused within info-tech, healthcare, and professional services in addition to government. However, many high paying jobs, particularly in the manufacturing sector, do not require a college degree and could help broaden economic opportunities for Olympia residents. These jobs could serve the proportion of skilled workers without higher education.

The City will assess land use policies that could better support the creation of such jobs, including exploring opportunities to strengthen industrial capacity in ways that align with community values and environmental goals.

Olympia values the mix of job types available here and supports all workers, including those without a college or technical degree. Wages across all job fields, regardless of career choice, should provide living wages and allow those in the service sector the ability to live and work in the community.

## Housing Instability

Renters and homeowners experience economic challenges in vastly different ways. Homeowners, even if they are still paying a mortgage, have seen incredible growth in home value over time. Additionally, mortgage payments are typically steady over time, so monthly housing costs are less likely to increase year to year. In times of financial stress, some homeowners may be able to access the equity that has been built in their homes. However, homeowners also face growing affordability pressures, including rising property taxes, increased maintenance expenses such as sidewalk repairs, tree removal, and drainage improvements, as well as higher costs for essential home repairs and insurance.

Conversely, renters are challenged by rapidly increasing costs, fewer available units, and home purchase market competition from non-local buyers and corporations. To many Olympians, home ownership feels, or is, completely out of reach. The costs of housing, utilities, and food are increasing at a faster pace than wages. This means it is increasingly difficult to meet our own needs and sustain financial security. Through the Olympia Strong research process, we learned that roughly one-third of Olympians struggle to make ends meet and are living paycheck to paycheck.

## Challenges to Upward Mobility

Social service and education partners stress the importance of reaching children earlier to ensure they know what career options and resources are available to them. Many disadvantaged youth are not able to imagine what is possible and families may be unaware of the systems in place to support them. Many workers have limited options for upward mobility. There is also some risk that automation and artificial intelligence may lead to the displacement of even more traditional jobs. These technological advances may compound systemic barriers that make it difficult to prosper for those facing generational poverty, racism, or discrimination. Some individuals may not choose to pursue a different career path, valuing their current work, even if it provides minimum or low wage. All people in our community deserve to have secure housing and economic security. As such, we strive for living wages for all Olympians.

## City Expenses Growing Faster Than City Revenues

Although the City's tax base remained relatively strong through the pandemic, expenditures are now exceeding revenues and are projected to continue doing so without policy or administrative adjustments. Stable revenue is critical to ensure essential services. New revenue sources will need to be identified or levels of service reduced.

# Industry Change, Supply Chain, and Labor Challenges

Resilience is being tested not only by the increasing cost of goods, but also through labor challenges and disruptions to supply chains. Supply chains remain vulnerable to disruptions from geopolitical conflicts, pandemics, and climate related events. A more localized supply chain also helps minimize exposure to national and international bottlenecks and transportation delays. Through strengthening local supply chains, Olympia can reduce its reliance on external systems, improve the availability of goods, materials, and services during disruptions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with long-distance transportation. For example, Crown Beverage Packaging, located in Olympia, manufactures cans used by numerous local and regional beverage producers. In addition to localization, promoting supplier diversity will help strengthen economic resilience through reducing dependency on a narrow supply base.



A participant in the Scale Up program.

As Olympia works to strengthen local and regional supply chains, it must also respond to industry change and labor challenges. Shifts in consumer behavior and workforce expectations are affecting key sectors like retail, food service, and professional services. Examples include more households ordering food delivery, more consumers purchasing electric vehicles, youth are less likely to drive or own a personal vehicle, and more workers are migrating to employers who offer work from home options. These shifts have implications for employment patterns, infrastructure needs, and economic development priorities. It is imperative that the private and public sectors engage one another to ensure the workforce is prepared for evolving industries, and so the City can align infrastructure and economic development strategies with future needs.

## Advance equity and help people overcome hardship

Olympia is committed to advancing a community that is just and equitable for all. Our economic policies aim to reduce economic barriers and expand opportunities for all community members, with emphasis on Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, disabled, and low-income communities.

We recognize there are fundamental inequities in our economy. Low-income and renter households, disproportionately Black, Hispanic, immigrant, and those including at least one person with a disability, face persistent economic challenges, which for some is compounded by systemic racism and discrimination. Data also shows us that single-parent households, immigrants, and people with disabilities especially have a harder time accessing the labor force.

Our economic development actions seek to advance equity in our economy so a wider range of people can achieve financial stability. Our policies and actions will help achieve this by leveraging community partner resources, directly engaging youth and dislocated workers to broaden career pathway options, continuing to facilitate greater housing security, and investing in diverse small business startups and local enterprise growth.

## Advance climate solutions

Climate change will affect our local and broader economy in several ways, creating both risk and opportunity.

Climate studies indicate we can expect to see more frequent heat waves, storms, and flooding, which will heighten the potential for property damage, personal and business financial stress, and global resource scarcity. These factors may cause greater demands on the City's budget for sea level rise adaptation and other climate related investments, increased costs for scarce goods, and a decline in tax revenues during major local events. Vulnerable communities such as those who are in poverty, have low incomes, or lack a financial safety net, are likely to suffer the most. The City will develop a climate preparedness and adaptation plan that considers equitable approaches.

Public response to climate change also presents opportunities for Olympia. The shift to a low carbon economy is underway, spurring advancement in technologies and growth of the green job sector. Fueled by strong State and local climate goals, we anticipate the need for hundreds of skilled workers, such as solar installers and electric vehicle technicians, to help us transition to net zero carbon.

Additionally, Olympia's climate adaptation values are likely to make us more successful at attracting and retaining younger workers. Affordability, access to quality job opportunities,

and a strong sense of community are also major factors influencing where younger workers choose to live and work. By working with partners, the City can influence the accessibility of such job training programs for Olympia residents.

Creating a unique and welcoming environment in Olympia with ongoing focus on high density neighborhoods will benefit climate mitigation by increasing urban density and reducing sprawl, supporting the use of public transit, and increasing walking and biking.



A bicyclist riding in a bike lane while being passed by a transit bus.

## Advance a healthy community

Economic development and community health have a symbiotic relationship. Our efforts to increase equitable access to education, workforce, and business opportunities aim to improve household financial stability and reduce poverty rates. These factors directly impact public health by enabling community members to access better healthcare services, nutritious food, and adequate affordable housing, thereby reducing stress and improving overall mental health and well-being. In turn, a healthy community fosters a productive and engaged workforce, attracts businesses and investment, and contributes to overall economic prosperity.

Social cohesion and community engagement are also important for the health of a community. Third places, places for community beyond work and home, are key to public health and well-being. Third places should exist as places for all Olympians to gather and thrive. First places (home), Second places (work), and Third places (community) need to be located around neighborhoods across the city with easy access. The global pandemic disrupted many traditional community gatherings and social conventions. It separated people from their workplaces, social organizations, and schools. These disruptions limited access to education, employment, and training opportunities for many young people, creating new barriers to participation in education and in the workforce. The City and

community partners must support youth through investing in mental health resources, and broaden access to education and workforce development, such as climate related job training programs.

## Goals and Policies

### **GE1 Olympia has a thriving and diversified economy with pathways to prosperity available to everyone.**

**PE1.1** Develop and support partner programs and strategies that stimulate living wage job creation.

**PE1.2** Invest in inclusive programs that reduce barriers and inequities so that all people can more easily access education and career training opportunities.

**PE1.3** Invest in programs that provide youth with mentorship, opportunities to grow soft skills and leadership abilities, and introduce them to college and career pathways.

**PE1.4** Engage with workforce development partners to ensure an adequate supply of workers for in-demand occupations.

**PE1.5** Support initiatives that help diversify the local economy to supplement our stable public sector base and reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community. (Climate)

**PE1.6** Seek sustainable funding sources and opportunities to implement the Olympia Strong plan.

**PE1.7** Establish a regular schedule to review the Social Determinants of Health using local data from sources such as the Thurston County Health Department and the United Way of Thurston County ALICE data, to understand impacts to our community and to inform City policies and programs.

### **GE2 Businesses and entrepreneurs thrive in Olympia and contribute to Olympia's economic diversity.**

**PE2.1** Foster a desirable setting for business investment and activity.

**PE2.2** Diversify the local economy in a way that builds on our stable public sector base, addresses systemic barriers, and supports businesses that can reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community.

**PE2.3** Support efforts that improve access to locally produced goods and services by reducing cost barriers for residents.

**PE2.4** Whenever possible, buy from local businesses to strengthen the local economy.

**PE2.5** Support equitable business training and other programs and resources that create avenues for a broad cross section of diverse community members to access business ownership opportunities.

**PE2.6** Partner and collaborate with West Olympia Business Association (WOBA), Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA), and other small business districts and champions to create and maintain viable small business centers throughout Olympia.

**PE2.7** Support the economic role of neighborhood centers by encouraging small-scale commercial activity, local business development, and complementary programs and partnerships as described in the Olympia Neighborhood Centers Strategy.

**PE2.8** Support, recruit and celebrate Olympia businesses pursuing climate resiliency, greenhouse gas reductions, and environmental justice. (Climate)

**PE2.9** Foster entrepreneurship through business assistance programs such as incubators, access to capital, mentorship opportunities, and other resources that help startups and small businesses succeed.

### **GE3 Olympia collaborates with partners to maximize economic opportunity.**

**PE3.1** Collaborate with regional economic development partners and neighboring jurisdictions to develop and implement a regional strategy for creating a sustainable and inclusive economy.

**PE3.2** Work closely with state and county governments to ensure their offices and facilities are in the City of Olympia, which is both the state's capitol and the county seat.

**PE3.3** Collaborate with The Evergreen State College, Saint Martin's University, and South Puget Sound Community College on their efforts to educate students in skills that will be

needed in the future, to contribute to our community’s cultural life, and attract new residents.

**PE3.4** Encourage The Evergreen State College and South Puget Sound Community College to establish a physical presence downtown.

**PE3.5** Collaborate with hospitals, other health care providers, and regional economic development partners to identify actions the City could take to support the health care sector in ensuring public health and their vitality as a major local employment base.

**PE3.6** Support appropriate economic development efforts of our neighboring jurisdictions—recognizing the entire region benefits from new jobs—and their role in fostering activities, such as manufacturing, freight transportation, and air transportation.

**PE3.7** Collaborate with the Port in its role of facilitating economic development, while continuing to exercise regulatory control over Port development and operations.

**PE3.8** Balance the Port’s need for truck and rail transportation corridors, while minimizing conflicts with other traffic needs and land use goals. Collaborate with the Port of Olympia on topics that impact the Port’s current and future needs.

**PE3.9** Coordinate funding opportunities with other public stakeholders (the County, Intercity Transit agency, Port of Olympia, State of Washington, Olympia School District, and others) with the City’s CFP for major infrastructure investments to maximize the impact of those investments.

**PE3.10** Coordinate with the State of Washington on economic investments, policies, and other activities within Olympia.

**PE3.11** Collaborate with regional economic development partners to prepare for future economic disruptions and emergencies, including climate-exacerbated hazards, and implement effective disaster recovery. (Climate)

**PE3.12** Explore partnership opportunities with the Squaxin Island Tribe that expand their economic and cultural opportunities in Olympia.

**PE3.13** Support the Timberland Regional Library as a community and economic resource to expand access to learning, technology and workforce opportunities, and strengthen the downtown library’s role as a civic and economic anchor within Olympia’s core.

**PE3.14** Collaborate with regional economic development partners and business leaders to support a circular economy that increases demand for reused and recycled materials,

reduces solid waste generation, and reduces demand for extraction of new raw materials.  
(Climate)

### **GE4 Future proofing Olympia’s current strong revenue base.**

**PE4.1** Support established industry sectors such as automotive, retail, healthcare, construction, food system, and professional services for their value in providing a graduated range of employment opportunities and essential tax revenues.

**PE4.2** Periodically review major revenue-generating sectors and identify actions the City can take to help maintain their economic health.

**PE4.3** Ensure the total amount of land planned for commercial and industrial uses is sufficient and appropriately zoned to meet expected demand. Promote commercial infill and a mix of land uses throughout the city by encouraging density and removing unnecessary zoning barriers, especially in areas designated as Urban Corridors.

**PE4.4** Encourage businesses to export goods and services to regional, national, or international markets, but keep jobs and dollars in Olympia.

**PE4.5** Regularly review the development market to identify changing circumstances that create barriers or opportunities for investment in our community.

## **Enrich Olympia’s Sense of Place and Creative Economy**

Olympia has long been a uniquely creative community with many cultures to celebrate and strong support from the people and organizations who call it home. This benefits the economy in several ways: 1) enriches sense of place, leading to greater pride and individual investment in the community, 2) increases tourism, bringing new dollars into the community, and 3) provides opportunity to grow jobs in the creative sector.

Olympians desire a community that offers a variety of entertainment, cultural, arts, heritage, and recreational opportunities that honor the rich diversity of the community.

“Arts” encompasses a wide range of expressions, including but not limited to visual and culinary arts, local artisans, live music, theater, and diverse live performances and festivals across various genres. We also know that employers and entrepreneurs often choose to locate in cities with a vibrant mix of activities and culture because talented workers want to live in such places. Thus, we see enhancing Olympia’s creative vibe and

sense of place as both a benefit to those who already live here, and a way to attract quality employment opportunities and expand on Olympia’s reputation as a unique place in South Puget Sound.

Data shows that a sense of place—a sense of authenticity, continuity, and uniqueness—is critical to a community’s future economic opportunity. Cities in which residents report high levels of attachment and passion for their communities tend to have the highest rates of economic growth over time. Qualities such as a welcome and open feeling, attractiveness, walkability, and a variety of social events and venues all contributed to this emotional bond. Parks and trees, community and historic landmarks, and public art also contributed to this valuable sense of place.

Those same qualities that contribute to the strong emotional bonds many residents form with Olympia also appeal to visitors. Visitors contribute to our economy by shopping, dining, taking in a performance in one of our theaters, and spending the night in a hotel.

Downtown Olympia is the cultural heart of the community. It has a destination waterfront that attracts recreational boaters from throughout Puget Sound and beyond. It is home to a thriving arts scene, including the Washington Center for Performing Arts, Capitol Theater, State Theater, Olympia Family Theater, a burgeoning Creative District, and numerous events like the twice-annual Arts Walk.

Downtown is also home to the state’s largest farmer-operated farmers’ market. Adjacent to our waterfront, Olympia Farmers Market serves as a tourist destination and a place for residents to purchase local. This beloved community space draws upward of 350,000 visitors annually and serves as a link to a substantial network of small family-owned farms and businesses.

In addition to brick-and-mortar establishments, Olympia is host to a wide variety of events and festivals that enhance our quality of life and local economy. These support a variety of themes of culture, celebration, and community gathering, such as the Pet Parade, Olympia Brewfest, Arts Walk, Procession of the Species, Olympia Harbor Days, Juneteenth, Capital Lakefair, Port Plaza concerts and movie nights, Capital City Pride, and more. Most of these events take place within Olympia’s state-recognized Creative District.

The City’s most recent investment converted the historic Armory facility into an Art Hub Creative Campus. And Inspire Olympia Cultural Access Program tax revenue, approved by Olympia voters, will ensure broad access to a variety of arts, sciences, heritage, and cultural programs and experiences.

But Olympia’s creative economy is not limited to traditional arts and culture activities. It includes a growing volume of technology-based occupations, from graphic designers to software developers, engineers, and innovators, who contribute significantly to the local

gross domestic profit and generate multiplier effects that spread economic benefits to other sectors.

The City will continue to invest in creating lively places and spaces downtown, as well as other locations throughout the City, fostering a local sense of pride and broader reputation for Olympia as a place of unmatched vitality.

## Goals and Policies

### **GE5 Olympia has a thriving creative economy.**

**PE5.1** Continue to provide equitable programs and services that support visual and performing arts activities in Olympia.

**PE5.2** Establish a creative campus with and for the community that serves as a hub for community members, organizations, and artists to collaborate, and provides physical space for creative activities and expression.

**PE5.3** Work with partners to grow an inclusive creative sector workforce and provide artists and creative industry entrepreneurs with training, technical support, and other resources to help them succeed.

**PE5.4** Provide grant funding to increase public access to local arts, cultures, heritage, and science programs and experiences, especially for youth and traditionally underserved populations.

**PE5.5** Create entry points for many diverse artists, creatives, innovators, and culture-bearers to showcase their work.

**PE5.6** Invest in initiatives that showcase Olympia's innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and enhance Olympia's status as a magnet for creative economy related tourism and employment.

**PE5.7** Help artists and creatives develop networks to grow the creative sector locally and regionally.

**PE5.8** Support initiatives that make it affordable for artists and creatives to continue to live and work in Olympia.

**PE5.9** Support and foster the creative economy by reducing barriers to adaptive reuse of existing buildings to help initiate innovative ideas and spaces.

**PE5.10** Actively monitor emerging technology and trends, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), to determine its impact or value to our economy.

## **GE6 Downtown is a popular destination that contributes to Olympia's economic vibrancy.**

**PE6.1** Support a safe and active downtown that thrives day and night with many small businesses, great public places, events, art, and activities.

**PE6.2** Support lively and active downtown parks and waterfront attractions.

**PE6.3** Promote high-density housing downtown for a range of incomes.

**PE6.4** Support street beautification efforts, like regular cleaning, planting and protecting trees, and installing decorative features to help encourage private economic development and redevelopment activities.

**PE6.5** Support public transit to connect people with jobs and services, including increasing the span and frequency of public transit between the Capitol Campus and Downtown Olympia.

**PE6.6** Use equitable and inclusive planning processes and tools to improve the economic and social health of downtown.

**PE6.7** Collaborate with the Port of Olympia, nonprofit organizations, and private developers to support infill development that creates complete downtown blocks.

**PE6.8** Pursue public-private partnerships to activate vacant commercial spaces, including the use of City-owned properties to accommodate a range of business sizes and uses.

**PE6.9** Promote small business resiliency downtown by supporting pathways to commercial space ownership opportunities.

**PE6.10** Encourage flexibility in storefront sizes to accommodate a range of business sizes and explore land use strategies that allow for adaptable combinations of commercial and residential space within buildings.

**PE6.11** Attract regional anchor tenants and experiential uses, such as cultural institutions, educational services, sports, and entertainment facilities, that increase foot traffic and support surrounding small businesses.

**PE6.12** Leverage the tools available to the City through the Downtown Community Renewal Plan adopted by the Council in 2015 to foster positive redevelopment in the downtown core.

**PE6.13** Continue to implement the Olympia Downtown Strategy and update the plan every five years to guide short-term implementation.

**PE6.14** Encourage and partner with adjacent property owners and private businesses along the waterfront to contribute to sea level rise adaptation. (Climate)

### **GE7 Tourism is a community revenue source.**

**PE7.1** Support continued investments in signature places and spaces, beautification efforts, and events to continually improve upon Olympia’s diverse identity, natural beauty, and attractiveness to tourists.

**PE7.2** Implement strategies to enhance diverse heritage, cultural, and other tourism opportunities in partnership with Experience Olympia and Beyond.

**PE7.3** Support the development of fast, reliable public transit between Olympia and larger metropolitan areas to expand regional tourism access and increase visitor spending in local business and cultural destinations.

**PE7.4** Enhance wayfinding systems to attract and guide visitors to key commercial and cultural destinations.

**PE7.5** Support efforts to expand year-round tourism through seasonal events, festivals, amenities, experiences, and waterfront activation efforts that draw visitors beyond peak tourism periods.

### **GE8 Historic resources are used to promote economic stability in the City.**

**PE8.1** Strengthen economic vitality in historic areas through the continued support of the Heritage Commission and planning to protect and promote our historic resources.

**PE8.2** Celebrate historic buildings while integrating contemporary architecture in a context-sensitive manner.

**PE8.3** Protect and enhance the City’s ability to attract tourists and visitors through preservation of historic resources.

**PE8.4** Utilize renovation, reuse, and repair of existing buildings when preferable to new construction, doing so in a manner that protects and enhances the resource when historic properties are involved.

**PE8.5** Help low- and moderate-income individuals rehabilitate their historic properties.

## Public and Private Investment

Olympia enjoys a relatively healthy economy and stable revenue base, making it possible for it to invest in public improvements and services. These include the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, The Olympia Center, Percival Landing, the Olympia Farmers Market, new sewer capacity, new roads, and other infrastructure. All of this makes Olympia increasingly attractive to private investors, which will further increase our revenue base and make more community improvements possible.

Adequate and dependable infrastructure is critical to our ability to serve residents and businesses. Our investments have improved our public spaces and quality of life, leading the way for more private investment to follow.

Private investment can expand our community’s economy and strengthen its material prosperity. But basic infrastructure needs to be in place, or underway, in order to interest quality private businesses in locating or expanding in Olympia. For this reason, it’s critical for our community to invest resources in capital facilities that will support a healthy local economy and its values and vision for the future.

## Goals and Policies

### **GE9 The City achieves maximum economic, environmental, and social benefit from public infrastructure.**

**PE9.1** Use strategic public infrastructure investments to stimulate private investment in economic development and redevelopment activities.

**PE9.2** Make decisions to invest in public infrastructure projects after analysis projecting their total costs over their estimated useful lives, and their benefit to equitable environmental, economic, and social systems.

**PE9.3** Consider whether the public cost of new or improved infrastructure can be recovered through increased revenues the City can expect from the private investment the improvement will attract.

**PE9.4** Identify and take advantage of infrastructure grants, loans, and other incentives to achieve the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

**PE9.5** Identify potential tools, partnerships, and resources that can be used to create more economic certainty for developments by advancing the assessment of site contamination, where such efforts serve a clear public purpose.

**PE9.6** Identify where new and upgraded utilities will be needed to serve areas zoned for commercial and industrial use and encourage the development of utilities to service these areas.

**PE9.7** Investigate the feasibility of the City providing telecom and broadband infrastructure, high speed internet connectivity, or other new forms of infrastructure.

**PE9.8** Collaborate with public and private partners to finance critical public infrastructure, including but not limited to sewer upgrades, non-motorized transportation improvements, and street improvements to develop targeted commercial, residential, industrial, and mixed-use areas.

**PE9.9** In coordination with development, serve sites designated for industrial or commercial development with required utilities and other services on a cost-effective basis and at a level appropriate to the uses planned for the area.

**PE9.10** Avoid building lengthy and expensive service extensions that would cost more than could ever be recovered from revenues.

**PE9.11** Encourage the use of public rights-of-way as a form of public infrastructure that can be used for economic and social benefits, such as street fairs, parklets, or other similar uses.

**PE9.12** Explore the use of public financing tools, such as Tax Increment Financing, to support infrastructure investment and to attract private development in designated priority areas.

**PE9.13** Support implementation of the Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan to facilitate mixed-use redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and infrastructure improvements that create jobs, housing, and services in West Olympia.

**GE10 The City has responsive and efficient services and permitting process.**

**PE10.1** Maintain the City’s high quality customer service and continuously seek to improve it.

**PE10.2** Improve the predictability and cost-effectiveness of the City’s development review process by having clear rules and procedures and by eliminating redundancy and other process inefficiencies.

**PE10.3** Create a review process that is easy for all parties to understand at every stage and that invites input from affected parties as early as possible in the development process.

**PE10.4** Use proactive planning processes and tools such as, Subarea Plans, Focus Area Plans, and Community Renewal Area planning to define and develop a shared redevelopment vision for specific areas within the community.

**PE10.5** Develop and maintain redevelopment standards that are flexible and cost-effective to enable existing properties to be adapted into new economic uses.

**PE10.6** Support adaptive reuse of buildings through flexible code approaches that encourage the conversion of underutilized structures into viable spaces for commercial, mixed-use, or residential uses.

**GE11 Public and private investors are aware of Olympia’s advantages.**

**PE11.1** Actively promote equitable and inclusive economic activities that are consistent with the values expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

**PE11.2** Market Olympia’s advantages to local and out-of-town businesses that may be considering expansion or new facilities in the area.

**PE11.3** Define a more active City role in stimulating development and influencing the design and type of development.

**PE11.4** Continue to coordinate and partner with the Thurston County Economic Development Council, Thurston County Chamber, and others to promote Olympia’s economic redevelopment opportunities.

## A Resilient City

The impacts of climate change are already visible and forecast to become even more disruptive in the years ahead. Future risks include increased flooding along the shoreline areas of Puget Sound, more and faster moving wildfires, extreme fluctuations in weather, and more violent wind and storm events. The City has already adopted climate adaptation strategies and is underway with various actions to mitigate risk. But a lot of work remains to be completed. In this sense, there is also opportunity in the form of new living wage jobs and investment in green infrastructure and carbon reduction strategies.

### **GE12 Olympia is well prepared to withstand future economic disruptions and emergencies.**

**PE12.1** Ensure the local economy is resilient to climate disruption local businesses have access to resources to recover from climate disruptions in a timely manner. Support local businesses in assessing climate risks within their business operations. (Climate)

**PE12.3** Support businesses in climate and disaster preparedness planning, including continuity of operations strategies for extreme weather and natural disasters. (Climate)

**PE12.4** Provide resources, technical assistance and guidance for developing contingency plans for community events disrupted by climate-exacerbated hazards. (Climate)

**PE12.5** Develop public-private partnerships to ensure adequate alternatives are available for outdoor events impacted by extreme heat or wildfire smoke. (Climate)

### **GE13 Olympia supports development of the workforce necessary for implementing community-wide climate action and adopting climate-friendly business practices.**

**PE13.1** Support local workforce development partners and trade schools to develop technical job training programs that support climate action within Olympia. Prioritize

opportunities for frontline communities, youth, college students, and unemployed people. (Climate)

**PE13.2** Promote local industrial and workforce development to support a zero-waste economy that increases demand for reused and recycled materials and reduces demand for new raw materials. (Climate)

**PE13.3** Facilitate a green jobs pipeline for frontline communities. (Climate)

## For More Information

- Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is the City’s primary partner for enterprise development and training and a key liaison for private sector partnerships.
- Thurston Chamber of Commerce partners with the City on business engagement and workforce training initiatives.
- Enterprise for Equity provides microenterprise training and support.
- PacMtn Workforce Development Council is the workforce training lead for a five-county region, including Olympia and Thurston County.
- United Way of Thurston County supports career pathway opportunities and poverty reduction strategies.
- Olympia Downtown Alliance coordinates a variety of initiatives and advocacy for businesses located in greater downtown Olympia.
- [The Profile](#) is the Thurston County Regional Planning Council’s flagship document that provides demographic, statistical and mapping information.
- [Thurston Economic Vitality Index](#) provides both a trend analysis and a snapshot of Thurston County’s economy based upon a series of key indicators.
- [Olympia Strong](#) – A Roadmap to Economic Opportunities
- United Way of Thurston County - Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed ([ALICE](#))
- NW Cooperative Development Center
- Center for Disease Control (CDC) [Social Determinants of Health](#) include healthcare access and quality, education access and quality, social and community context, economic stability, and neighborhood and built environment.

# Public Safety



Crime Watch Neighborhood Sign.

## What Olympia Values:

*Olympians value the protection our police, fire, and emergency medical services provide, as well as the proactive steps public safety partners take to prepare for and manage impacts from natural disasters and other emergencies. They also value code enforcement services that help maintain the safety and appeal of our diverse neighborhoods and districts.*

## Our Vision for the Future:

*A secure and resilient community where public safety services are delivered with professionalism and compassion for all. We envision a public safety system that fosters trust, equity, and collective well-being – a system where every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, feels safe, valued, and heard.*

Read more in the [Community Values and Vision chapter](#).

# Public Safety in Olympia

In Olympia, public safety means:

## **Equity and Inclusion**

- Every individual is treated with dignity and respect.
- Our public safety system works to eliminate disparities and proactively address systemic barriers.

## **Trust and Accountability**

- Public safety must be transparent, fair, and accountable to the community.
- We will engage in authentic collaboration, listen deeply, and act with integrity.

## **A Community-Centered Approach**

- We will seek to identify solutions with input from those closest to the challenges.
- We commit to working in partnership with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to create lasting change.

## **Compassion and Well-being**

- We will strive to ensure individuals have the resources and support they need to thrive.
- We will emphasize prevention, intervention, and holistic approaches that foster wellness.

## **Innovation and Responsiveness**

- We will continuously evolve, using data and lived experiences to inform best practices.
- We will implement strategies that are dynamic, proactive, and tailored to meet the unique needs of our community.

## **Preparedness and Resilience**

- We will take proactive steps to manage risks and respond effectively to emergencies.
- We will strengthen Olympia's ability to withstand and recover from natural disasters and other crises.

## Our Commitment

This statement is more than words—it is a framework for action. We pledge to uphold these values in every policy, program, and decision we make. By centering

trust, equity, and well-being, and by prioritizing preparedness and resilience, we will build a public safety system that works for everyone.

## Sanctuary City

### A sanctuary from political persecution

In 1985 the Olympia City Council passed a Resolution declaring the desire for Olympia to be known as a City of Peace where those who are politically persecuted can find safe haven and sanctuary.

### A sanctuary regardless of immigration status

In December 2016, the City Council passed a Resolution declaring Olympia a Sanctuary City. Making it clear that the City serves and protects its residents regardless of their immigration status and will remain a safe haven for those who are politically persecuted as expressed in 1985.

### A sanctuary for reproductive rights

In 2022 the Olympia City Council passed a Resolution to demonstrate the City's values, declaring the City of Olympia to be a Sanctuary City for reproductive health care and abortion services and recognizing a woman's right to reproductive choice.

### A Sanctuary for the LGBTQIA2S+ Community

On January 28, 2025, the Olympia City Council passed a resolution declaring Olympia a sanctuary city for LGBTQIA2S+ community members, expanding its commitment to ensuring all residents feel safe and supported. The resolution reaffirms the City's dedication to protecting LGBTQIA2S+ rights, explicitly rejecting discrimination, and upholding Washington's Law Against Discrimination.

## Introduction

Community safety requires careful planning, earned trust, and collaborative partnerships. The Olympia Police and Fire Departments have recently completed internal strategic plans aimed at strengthening these foundations — positioning the City to address public safety today and be prepared for the challenges of the future. The Public Safety chapter of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the overarching goals and policies that will guide the Fire Department, Police Department, and Code Enforcement. The shared goals, policies, and commitment to collaboration contribute to a coordinated and proactive approach to safeguarding the community.

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. 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 hear the stories and learn about the experiences of community members. They aimed to gather insight into how people connected to the public safety system, how the system responded to their needs, and how they were supported as they navigated through and exited the system.

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.

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 that all recommendations will be implemented overnight, and City Council, staff, and partner agencies may need to pursue further study, prioritization, and funding.

The final recommendations, including four guiding principles, five goals, 21 strategies, and numerous actions are supported, implemented, and reflected throughout the Public Safety chapter goals and policies.

## Fire Services Prevent Harm to People and Property

The Olympia Fire Department (OFD) recruits, trains, and retains highly capable professionals and provides them with the best available equipment and technology to protect the community and themselves. OFD is a core partner in the Thurston County Medic One System and other local and regional programs that seek to advance pre-emptive education, equity in service, and reduce reliance on costly 911 emergency services. Additionally, the OFD’s new Community Assistance, Referral and Education Services (CARES) program now provides services that will result in a healthier community and reduce reliance on the 911 emergency system for non-acute concerns.



Olympia Fire Department vehicles.

The Department’s approach to fire prevention and protection is outlined in the [Fire Department Strategic Plan](#), which identifies the challenges facing the City and recommends specific solutions.

The Department’s core values include stewardship, integrity, compassion, and professionalism. The Department’s mission is to 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.



Olympia Fire personnel helping a community member.

## Goals and Policies

**GS1 The community has a high level of fire protection, emergency medical services equal to or exceeding the industry standard, and community expectations.**

**PS1.1** Continue to manage fire protection functions, paramedic services, and City emergency services by planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the resources available.

**PS1.2** Provide timely and effective response to emergency and non-emergency calls for service, and report performance levels to maintain community trust.

**PS1.3** Continue to provide fire code enforcement in new construction and fire safety inspections of existing businesses to reduce loss of life and minimize damage from fires.

**PS1.4** Ensure equipment and other assets are adequate in capacity to serve the safety needs of our evolving community and changing climate. (Climate)

**PS1.5** Continue to provide paramedic and basic life support care to the City of Olympia, as part of the Thurston County Medic One System.

**PS1.6** Upgrade the fire flow capacity of Olympia’s water system where needed to meet current safety standards and accommodate any future annexations.

**PS1.7** Conduct a comprehensive, inclusive community risk assessment and implement a risk reduction plan to ensure equitable service citywide.

**PS1.8** Develop performance measures and annually report on how the department’s practices are working so they can be improved or refined.

**PS1.9** Continue training and financial support for mutual aid partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure proper resources to fight wildfires regionally, while maintaining local levels of service. (Climate)

**GS2 The community proactively prepares for major disasters and is in a position to quickly and successfully respond to and recover from a wide range of emergency scenarios.**

**PS2.1** Coordinate the City’s preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery to disasters through an all-hazard Emergency Management program that includes planning for major catastrophic events. (Climate)

**PS2.2** Maintain role as a participating agency for post-disaster and pandemic recovery through the coordination of disaster cost recovery, and the facilitation of our community’s short- and long-term recovery goals and objectives. (Climate)

**PS2.3** Work with partners to gather best available information on the impact a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake would have on the community, including the potential magnitude, impacts of vertical movements and tsunamis, and how the Department might best prepare and respond.

**PS2.4** Prioritize policies, programs, and initiatives that mitigate risks from the highest priority hazards identified in the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region and Olympia Annex and the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. (Climate)

**PS2.5** Coordinate with regional partners to develop and implement extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness and response strategies. Prioritize actions and resources towards populations most vulnerable to extreme heat, wildfire, and smoke events. (Climate)

**PS2.6** Support existing and recruit new community centers and social service providers to act as resource hubs (also known as resilience hubs) during emergencies and climate-exacerbated hazards. Ensure these facilities have redundant infrastructure systems and are prepared with necessary resources to protect public health. (Climate)

**GS3 The community proactively provides emergency preparedness education and training to help prepare our community for catastrophic emergencies and respond to climate change. (Climate)**

**PS3.1** Educate community members on how to sustain their households without outside assistance for a minimum of 72 hours during an emergency event, acknowledging that some events, such as a severe earthquake, may require them to sustain themselves for five to ten days or more. (Climate)

**PS3.2** Work with County partners to expand notification alerts to reduce exposure to climate-exacerbated hazards, including wildfire smoke, tidal flooding, and extreme heat. Encourage the community to sign up for notification alerts through education and outreach. (Climate)

**PS3.3** Prioritize emergency preparedness education, outreach, and resources for the highest-priority hazards and towards communities most vulnerable to climate-exacerbated hazards and emergencies. (Climate)

**PS3.4** Provide resources and alerts in the most common languages spoken in Thurston County to reach people with limited English proficiency. (Climate)

**GS4 Maintain a well-trained, resilient, safe, and sustainable organization.**

**PS4.1** Continue to provide a highly skilled and adequately staffed firefighting force to respond to fire, medical, and all other hazards to protect life and property.

**PS4.2** Continue to ensure services are aligned with industry standards and community expectations.

**PS4.3** Employ the most current standards for firefighter safety, command practices, training, and equipment maintenance.

**PS4.4** Provide professional growth through development and opportunities for all employees. Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on- and off-duty.

**PS4.5** Ensure strong retention by maintaining a positive organizational culture driven by shared values, employee recognition, and transparency.

**PS4.6** Reduce 911 emergency response volumes through proactive public education and community assistance referrals.

**PS4.7** Continue to build on regional partnerships and seek alternative funding sources that help reinforce and expand response capacities.

**PS4.8** Factor climate-exacerbated hazards into the planning and coordination of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery among first responders and partners. Anticipate and modify staffing and resource needs before projected hazard events for effective and timely response. (Climate)

**PS4.9** Maintain capacity and staff time for emergency management, planning, and preparedness across the City. (Climate)

**PS4.10** Train emergency management professionals and adjacent service providers on trauma-informed care and mental health support for preparedness, response, and recovery in extreme weather emergency events and crises. (Climate)



Olympia Fire and Police personnel participate in a Safe Sidewalks event.

# Police Services Build Partnerships, Enhance Public Safety, and Contribute to Moving People Towards Wellness

The Olympia Police Department is the most visible part of the criminal justice system, but it is only one piece. The courts, prosecutors, and defense attorneys play key roles in carrying out the City’s mission of balancing compassion with accountability. The Department is dedicated to building partnerships and exploring non-enforcement solutions to situations where entering someone into the criminal justice system is not in the best interests of the individual or the community. The Department continues to seek and expand alternative responses to situations that don’t require law enforcement, while also holding chronic offenders accountable. Through its outreach services, including the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and Familiar Faces, the Department can tailor its responses to people in crisis, enabling it to provide assistance that fits each situation. As a result, the Department can maximize the effectiveness of its resources and provide individuals with more of the help they need.

The Department continuously uses data to track its progress. Available crime data is used to guide the deployment of police resources, track the successes, and identify opportunities for improvement. Use of force incidents and arrest data are tracked, evaluated, critiqued, and ultimately reported to the council-appointed police auditor. This data is used to ensure the Department is aligned with community expectations and industry best practices.

## Goals and Policies

**GS5 Police services are delivered in a manner consistent with the values of the community.**

**PS5.1** Broadly and clearly communicate the Department’s vision, mission, and values and make readily accessible the Department’s strategic plan, priorities, policies, and accomplishments.

**PS5.2** Deliver services in a professional, timely, and objective way.

**PS5.3** Continuously seek to understand the makeup of the community’s public safety values.

**PS5.4** Interactions with the community will continue to focus on de-escalation and be aligned with community expectations.

**PS5.5** Maintain transparency, accessibility, responsiveness, and a desire for ongoing community input.

**PS5.6** Balance compassion and accountability; hold individuals responsible and accountable in a safe, relational, and equitable way.

**PS5.7** Develop and maintain an accountable public safety system that is accessible, equitable, trusted by the community, and committed to continuous learning and improvement.

**PS5.8** Ensure that Olympia’s Community Policing Board, Civilian Police Auditor, and the Office of Professional Standards meet the interests of the community and act in accordance with current legislation and contemporary industry practices.

### **GS6 Community members are collaborators in identifying and solving community problems.**

**PS6.1** Communicate crime trends, prevention strategies, and enforcement data in an easy-to-understand and accessible way. Develop performance measures and annually report on how the program’s enforcement practices are working so they can be improved or refined.

**PS6.2** Continue to partner with individuals and groups in the community to identify challenges and possible solutions.

**PS6.3** Regularly meet with and listen to community members to understand and respond to their needs.

**PS6.4** Ensure the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely, and accessible access to Department and public safety information, including data-sharing, crime statistics, and Department programs and activities.

**PS6.5** Strengthen community trust and relationships with the Department by hosting or attending regular events, activities, and other non-enforcement related engagement opportunities.

**PS6.6** Continually evaluate police policies, training, and operational standards to adapt and integrate contemporary and best practices.

**PS6.7** Recruit community volunteers and use their strengths and talents to enhance the Department's effectiveness.

**PS6.8** Build authentic relationships with marginalized community groups to enhance trust, communication, reporting, and collaboration in problem-solving.

**PS6.9** Communicate about critical incidents in transparent, timely, and accessible ways.



Olympia Police instructing participants of the Olympia Police Youth Academy.

**GS7 The Department is appropriately staffed and equipped to provide a high level of service for the community.**

**PS7.1** Periodically review staffing levels to ensure adequate coverage for emergency responses, while allowing Department members to connect with the community in non-enforcement ways.

**PS7.2** Develop alternate ways to respond to calls for service where armed officers are not required.

**PS7.3** Continue to evaluate and expand the use of unarmed responders to assist community members who are in crisis and where there may not be a need for a law enforcement response.

**PS7.4** Focus on the quality of service provided to community members with non-emergency calls, and not merely the speed of response.

**PS7.5** Use publicly accessible satellite stations to improve community member access to and interaction with the Department.

**PS7.6** Develop a real-time crime analysis center with regional partners and use data to better identify and address trends.

**PS7.7** Continuously monitor trends in illegal activity and identify strategies to reduce or more effectively prevent crimes. Ensure that external partners contributing to police workload share in the responsibility for managing and supporting appropriate crime prevention strategies.

**PS7.8** Continue to explore the use of technology to continuously improve and realize efficiencies in Department services and processes.

**PS7.9** Provide specialized police units and services important to maintaining Olympia's quality of life. This should include, but is not limited to, traffic patrol and both resource officers and civilian crisis responders available to schools in Olympia.

**PS7.10** Maintain a strong commitment to public safety and the prioritization of the quality of life in downtown through the appropriate staffing and continued deployment of walking patrol police officers and crisis response unit staff.

**PS7.11** Ensure regular communication and collaboration between the Police Department and other City departments.

**GS8 The effectiveness of police services is maximized through collaboration with other departments, agencies, and providers.**

**PS8.1** Ensure continuous crisis intervention training for officers and collaborate with mental health professionals to address social rather than criminal problems.

**PS8.2** Increase the availability of crisis intervention teams and unarmed responders to handle incidents involving mental health.

**PS8.3** Continue to grow the Department’s collaborative partnerships with community-based non-profit and social service organizations to help address individuals’ support needs before and after arrest to reduce recidivism.

**PS8.4** Work with the courts and prosecutors to find alternatives to jail, such as dispute resolution, substance abuse treatment, and other strategies that address underlying problems.

**PS8.5** Continuously improve cooperation and communication among police, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, and corrections agencies. Collaborate on process improvements that enhance effectiveness and ease navigation of the public safety system for community members.

**PS8.6** Explore regionalization of certain administrative duties, such as evidence and property management, police records, and shared use of technology solutions.

**PS8.7** Continue to engage in conversations with the Olympia School District regarding School Resource Officers at area schools.



Olympia Crisis Response Unit personnel working with a member of the community.

**GS9 The Department maintains a strong workplace culture with compassionate and dedicated public servants.**

**PS9.1** Through recruitment and hiring practices, strive to reflect the community within the composition of the Police Department.

**PS9.2** Continue to invest in training and professional development opportunities that maintain employee safety and wellness.

**PS9.3** Maintain strong internal communications and engagement to support a culture of trust, knowledge, and accountability.

**PS9.4** Provide employees with a path for promotion and professional growth through training, specialty assignments, and succession planning.

**PS9.5** Explore more ways to help ensure public safety staff feel safe and supported when they are on- and off-duty.

**GS10 Adopt and maintain a Comprehensive Crowd Management Policy that provides clear guidance to officers, supervisors, commanders, and participating first responders and mutual aid partners regarding the employment of appropriate crowd management and public safety strategies.**

**PS10.1** Adopt a Public Assembly and Crowd Management Statement of Purpose that declares the Department's commitment to support and facilitate the exercise of First Amendment rights fairly and equitably, without consideration as to content or political affiliation, with as minimal interference with such activities as is reasonably necessary to preserve public safety and order.

**PS10.2** Establish formal communication protocols that consistently inform the community of its actions, including publishing After Action Reports and engagement with community members and business owners who are adversely affected by events.

**PS10.3** Require that all OPD officers, supervisors, commanders, and community partners (such as Olympia Fire Department Medics) who assist with crowd

management receive training on First Amendment rights, procedural justice, and crowd-specific de-escalation skills.

## Code Enforcement Preserves Community Livability

Code Enforcement is a City program that allows community members and others to report violations of city code relating to health, safety, and welfare on private and public property. The Code Enforcement program investigates and seeks to remedy a variety of concerns, including complaints about environmental noise, trash, graffiti, inoperable vehicles, outdoor storage of materials, land use, impact or obstruction to public infrastructure, dangerous buildings, unauthorized encampments, and other community safety and livability concerns. Code Enforcement collaborates with Olympia’s building, current planning and engineering, urban forestry, housing and homeless response programs, and the Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks, Arts and Recreation and Legal Departments to resolve cases and coordinates with other community entities on education and prevention activities.

## Goals and Policies

**GS11 The City provides consistent resolution of code complaints and violations, emphasizing voluntary compliance to minimize punitive actions.**

**PS11.1** Prioritize education and voluntary compliance; use penalties only when necessary to protect health, safety, and welfare.

**PS11.2** Support timely compliance by providing clear expectations, technical assistance, and referrals to community resources.

**PS11.3** Educate neighborhoods and engage with community organizations about code enforcement to strengthen trust and understanding.



Olympia Code Enforcement responds to a graffiti complaint.

## **GS12 Complaints, responses, and resolutions are tracked and reported consistently.**

**PS12.1** Provide community members who submit complaints with timely information on current code enforcement activities.

**PS12.2** Develop performance measures, maintain a public dashboard on geographic distribution of cases, and annually report on how the program's enforcement practices are working, including time to abatement, so they can be improved or refined.

**PS12.3** Adhere to a consistent process which is predictable and easy for complainants and violators to follow.

## **For More Information:**

- [Download the full Reimagining Public Safety Report](#)
- [Download the Olympia Police Department 2025-2030 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Download the One Community Plan](#)
- [Visit the Olympia Police Department website](#)
- [Visit the Olympia Fire Department website](#)
- [Visit the City of Olympia Code Enforcement website](#)
- [Visit the City of Olympia Housing & Homelessness website](#)

# Capital Facilities Plan



City sidewalk repair project.

The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is the mechanism by which the City schedules the timing, location, projected cost, and revenue sources for the capital improvements identified for implementation in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. It includes City of Olympia parks, transportation, utilities and general capital projects. The six-year financing plan for capital projects is amended annually.

Note: This page is NOT the proposed Capital Facilities Plan. The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is reviewed and updated annually. It is included as part of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan by reference. View the most recent Capital Facilities Plan on the City's [Budget webpage](#).

# Climate Element Goals and Policies Index

To capture the collaborative approach needed to address climate action in the City of Olympia, the Climate Element goals and policies are integrated throughout the Comprehensive Plan. This index is provided for reference, to show how climate goals and policies are integrated across the Comprehensive Plan chapters. For more information on specific actions, please see the corresponding chapter.

## Climate Action and Resilience Chapter

**GC1 Olympia reduces community-wide GHG emissions 59% below 2019 levels by 2030 and achieves net-zero emissions by 2040.**

**PC1.1** Implement local policies and programs to achieve adopted emissions reduction targets. Prioritize actions that advance high-impact strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address community priorities, prioritize environmental justice, and provide additional co-benefits.

**PC1.2** Continue collaborating with regional partners to implement the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and coordinate greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies across Thurston County.

**PC1.3** Update Olympia's Greenhouse Gas Inventory at least every three years to track progress and refine emissions reduction strategies.

**PC1.4** Support state advocacy initiatives to divest from fossil fuels and shift public investments toward clean energy and low-carbon alternatives.

**GC2 Olympia plans for future climate impacts and takes action to prepare for, adapt and respond to anticipated climate hazards.**

**PC2.1** Implement local policies and programs to enhance climate resilience. Prioritize actions that reduce significant climate risks, address community priorities, prioritize environmental justice, and provide additional co-benefits.

**PC2.2** Continue collaborating with regional partners to implement the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan, Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region, and other strategies to prepare for and adapt to climate impacts.

**PC2.3** Monitor the latest climate science and models to assess how climate change is impacting the region.

**PC2.4** Update Olympia’s Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment alongside 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates to reflect the latest understanding of climate trends and their impact on community assets. Adjust resilience strategies as needed to address evolving risks and conditions.

**GC3 All community members – especially those most affected by climate change – benefit from climate action and have equitable opportunities to influence policy decisions.**

**PC3.1** Conduct intentional outreach with frontline communities and youth to enable equitable engagement in the development and implementation of climate action and resilience initiatives.

**PC3.2** Partner with community-based organizations to engage diverse groups in developing and implementing climate solutions while addressing existing disparities. Support these organizations in building capacity for climate action.

**PC3.3** Provide guidance and resources, such as technical support, rebates, and other incentives to reduce barriers to climate action for all community members. Prioritize strategic investments to support frontline communities and address existing disparities in Olympia.

**PC3.4** Evaluate costs, benefits, and potential impacts of all new climate policies and programs. Address unintended impacts of policies and programs for all Olympians.

**GC4 Olympia has the staffing, resources, and funding to effectively implement climate action and resilience measures.**

**PC4.1** Fully staff City positions across all departments to support climate-related actions and hazard response.

**PC4.2** Develop a comprehensive funding strategy to support the implementation of climate policies and programs.

**PC4.3** Develop City-wide staff capacity through training and professional development to enhance expertise in climate resilience, emissions reduction, and equitable community engagement.

**PC4.4** Integrate climate resilience and emissions reduction efforts across all City departments to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive approach to climate action. Coordinate implementation with regional partners to the greatest extent possible.

**PC4.5** Monitor the effectiveness of climate programs and policies, using data-driven evaluation to refine strategies and improve outcomes over time.

## Natural Environment Chapter

### **GN1 Important ecosystem structure, function, and processes are protected by Olympia’s planning and regulatory activities.**

**PN1.3** Limit development in areas that are environmentally sensitive, such as steep slopes and wetlands. Direct development and redevelopment to less-sensitive areas.

**PN1.4** Promote programs and policies that protect and restore natural systems such as wetlands, streams, riparian areas, shorelines, and stands of mature trees.

**PN1.9** Increase the use of low impact development and nature-based (“green”) infrastructure methods through education, technical assistance, incentives, regulations, grants, and private-public partnerships.

**PN1.10** Design, build, and retrofit public projects using sustainable design and green building methods that require minimal maintenance, fit naturally into the surrounding environment, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**PN1.11** Require development to mitigate impacts and avoid future costs by incorporating timely measures, such as the clean-up of prior contamination as new development and redevelopment occurs.

### **GN2 Prioritized land is preserved and sustainably managed.**

**PN2.1** Evaluate, acquire and manage land by a set of priorities that considers the full spectrum of environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits. These priorities include Tribal treaty rights, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, access to nature, recreation opportunities, environmental justice, and climate resilience.

**PN2.2** Preserve land and acquire new parcels when there are opportunities to expand and connect habitat and protect the most environmentally sensitive or socially important landscapes.

**PN2.3** Identify, remove, and prevent the use and spread of invasive plants and wildlife.

**PN2.5** Design improvements to public land using vegetation that is attractive, adapted to a changing climate, supports a variety of wildlife, and requires minimal, long-term maintenance.

**PN2.6** Conserve and restore wildlife and aquatic habitat in both existing habitat corridors and other ecologically important sites. Protect salmon, amphibians, pollinators, migratory birds, and other similarly prioritized species.

**PN2.7** Increase awareness of the importance of pollinator species and biodiversity for food security and habitat health. Promote landscaping, gardening, and habitat stewardship practices that support pollinators.

**GN3 A healthy and resilient urban forest is protected and valued for its contribution to the environment and community.**

**PN3.1** Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan to establish tree canopy goals and inform the policies, programs, operations, and resources needed to implement those goals. The strategies described will strike a balance between environmental protection and sustainable urban growth.

**PN3.4** Consider climate resilience and adaptation strategies when developing planting plans, including species selection, planting locations, stock type, invasive pest susceptibility, materials sourcing and maintenance.

**PN3.5** Provide new trees with the necessary soil, water, space, and nutrients to grow to maturity, and plant the right size tree where there are conflicts, such as buildings, overhead utility wires or sidewalks.

**PN3.6** Protect the natural structure and growing condition of trees to minimize necessary maintenance and preserve the long-term health and safety of the urban forest.

**PN3.7** Adopt and promote vegetation management practices that decrease climate-exacerbated risks to both human and ecosystem health from severe wildfires.

**GN4 The waters and natural processes of Budd Inlet and other marine waters are protected from degrading impacts and significantly improved through upland, riparian and shoreline preservation and restoration.**

**PN4.1** Plan for the health and recovery of Budd Inlet on a regional scale and in collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe and all potentially affected agencies and stakeholders.

**PN4.4** Continue to champion future phases of planning and implementation toward restoring the Deschutes Estuary and surrounding shorelines of Budd Inlet.

**PN4.5** Support shellfish production and eelgrass planting in Budd Inlet.

**GN6 Healthy aquatic habitat is protected and restored.**

**PN6.2** Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, riparian restoration, and protecting water quality.

**PN6.4** Use regulations based on best available science and other means to prevent a net loss in the function and value of existing wetlands, while striving to increase and restore wetlands and streams over the long-term.

**PN6.6** Preserve and restore the aquatic habitat of Budd Inlet and other local marine waters, including adjacent shoreline habitats.

**GN9 Risk to human health and damage to wildlife and habitat due to harmful toxins, pollution, or other emerging threats is tracked by appropriate agencies and significantly reduced or eliminated.**

**PN9.3** Maintain City land and properties using non-chemical methods whenever possible; use standard *Integrated Pest Management* practices and other accepted, natural approaches to managing vegetation and pests.

**GN10 All members of the community can experience the natural environment through meaningful volunteer experiences, active recreation, and interactive learning opportunities.**

**PN10.2** Give all members of our community opportunities to experience, appreciate, and participate in volunteer stewardship of the natural environment. Ensure that the many benefits and opportunities provided by this work reaches all Olympia's communities equitably.

**PN10.3** Honor and incorporate Indigenous history, knowledge, stewardship practices, cultural connections to the land, and promote outcomes related to Tribal treaty rights.

**PN10.6** Foster a sense of place and community pride by carefully stewarding the trees, plants, and wildlife unique to Puget Sound. Preserve the Indigenous history of stewardship on these lands since time immemorial.

## Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

**GL1 Land use patterns, densities and site designs are equitable and support increased urban density, reduce urban sprawl, and decreasing automobile reliance.**

**PL1.1** Ensure that new development is built at urban densities or can be readily modified to achieve those densities; and require that development lacking municipal utility service be designed to cost-effectively transform when services become available.

**PL1.2** Focus development in locations that will enhance the community and have capacity and efficient supporting services, and where adverse environmental impacts can be avoided or minimized.

**PL1.3** Direct high-density development to areas with existing development where the terrain is conducive to walking, bicycling and transit use, where sensitive drainage basins will not be impacted and impacts from climate hazards are low or cannot be mitigated.

**PL1.4** Require functional and efficient development by adopting and periodically updating zoning consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

**PL1.6** Provide for a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in commercial districts and village sites that enables people to walk or roll to work and shopping, supports transit, and includes convenience businesses for residents. Integrate adjacent uses with sidewalks and bike paths leading from residential areas to commercial districts and neighborhood-oriented businesses.

**PL1.7** Enable frequent transit service, support housing, utilize existing infrastructure, provide public improvements and concentrate new major shopping, entertainment and office uses downtown, in the medical services area of Lilly Road, near the Capital Mall, and in the urban corridors.

**PL1.9** Require direct and convenient pedestrian access to commercial and public buildings from streets, bus stops and parking lots, and encourage sheltered seating and other uses of vacant sections of the street edge.

**PL1.10** Require businesses along transit routes to accommodate transit use by including building entrances near bus stops or other features such as transit shelters or on-site bus access.

**PL1.11** Encourage major commercial projects to include display windows, small shops with separate entrances, and plazas with seating and other well-landscaped gathering spaces.

**PL1.12** Require new and encourage existing businesses to provide secure bicycle parking.

**PL1.19** Increase the number of 10-minute neighborhoods through zoning and code changes that support an easily accessible environment, and destinations that serve a range of basic living needs. (Climate)

**GL2 Infill development and redevelopment of underutilized areas are prioritized to prevent urban sprawl, preserve rural and resource lands in Thurston County, and reduce emissions associated with transportation and land conversion.**

**PL2.1** Participate in a County-wide “transfer of development rights” program in which a density bonus and climate resilience benefits are achievable through purchase of transferred development rights from agricultural lands in the rural portion of the county.

**PL2.2** Maintain a stable urban growth area to reduce development pressure on natural, rural and working lands within Thurston County.

**PL2.3** Identify and implement mechanisms such as fee reductions and expedited review to incentivize multi-family and infill housing development that meets climate-resilient and energy-efficient standards.

**GL3 Development standards and site designs reduce exposure to climate hazards and enhance climate resilience to protect public health and safety.**

**PL3.1** Require new development to meet appropriate minimum standards, such as landscaping and design guidelines, stormwater and other engineering standards, and building codes, and address risks, such as geologically hazardous areas, extreme weather, and climate-exacerbated hazards; and require existing development to be gradually improved to such standards.

**PL3.2** Establish and update development standards that incorporate best practices for reducing the risk and impacts of wildfire and smoke, extreme heat, intense rainfall, and sea level rise.

**PL3.3** Consider and evaluate current and future wildfire risk when updating future land use maps and development standards to mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires.

**PL3.4** Encourage shoreline development and waterfront attractions that are consistent with the Sea Level Rise Response Plan.

**PL3.5** Encourage and sometimes require buildings and site designs that improve energy efficiency, support passive survivability, and provide backup power through renewable energy generation and storage. This includes street and lot orientation at the time property is subdivided or developed.

**PL3.6** Incentivize new commercial and residential construction to include on-site rainwater harvesting facilities, exceed required low impact development standards, and incorporate green stormwater infrastructure approaches.

**PL3.7** Encourage development that incorporates best practices to mitigate urban heat islands and stormwater runoff through land use, urban design, and urban greening.

**PL3.8** In pedestrian-oriented commercial areas, require sidewalk awnings, shading features, or other weather protection on new and substantially remodeled buildings.

**GL4 Land management and landscape practices increase the resilience of the built environment, ecosystems and communities to climate change.**

**PL4.1** Collaborate with private landowners to follow best management practices, particularly for properties abutting park, forest land, and environmentally sensitive areas.

**PL4.2** Provide resources to community members living in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas to implement fire prevention (e.g., Firewise) practices and support application of such practices through incentives, outreach, and development standards.

**PL4.3** Encourage residents to install landscape design features and to keep storm drains clear to reduce risks from changes in seasonal precipitation.

**PL4.4** Promote installation of building and landscape design features that encourage water conservation in new and existing construction.

**GL5-1 All new and existing buildings are electrified by 2040. New buildings achieve minimum energy efficiency standards, and all existing buildings receive energy efficiency retrofits by 2040.**

**GL5-2 All community members have access to appropriate heating, cooling and air filtration to shelter during extreme cold, heat and wildfire smoke events.**

**PL5.1** Support state building and energy code development and implementation to improve energy efficiency and electrify new buildings.

**PL5.2** Adopt local policies and programs to improve energy efficiency and electrify new and existing buildings to the greatest extent feasible. Provide technical support, incentives, and flexible implementation pathways to minimize impacts to renters, affordable housing providers and small businesses.

**PL5.3** Encourage retrofits for cooling and air filtration installation in existing buildings.

**PL5.4** Incentivize and support weatherization upgrades, passive survivability, cooling and air filtration systems, and energy redundancy for homes and facilities serving vulnerable populations.

**PL5.5** Partner with regional jurisdictions to develop and implement a local policy for assessment and disclosure of residential energy performance ratings at the time of sale, lease, or rent.

**PL5.6** Evaluate and establish baseline energy efficiency standards for rental housing, while minimizing displacement and financial burden for renters.

**PL5.7** Evaluate and establish building performance standards that exceed state minimum standards for multifamily and non-residential buildings. Provide technical support, incentives, and flexible implementation pathways to minimize impacts to renters, affordable housing providers and small businesses.

**PL5.8** Provide technical guidance and other incentives to encourage electrification and energy efficiency retrofits in existing buildings. Prioritize retrofits in overburdened communities and include protections to avoid displacement and financial burden on renters and small businesses.

**PL5.9** Foster partnerships with organizations serving overburdened communities to ensure building electrification outreach and incentive programs build capacity and alleviate cost burdens for all residents.

**PL5.10** Reduce energy use and phase out natural gas use in existing city-owned facilities and public infrastructure. Require new city-owned and funded facilities to be built all-electric.

**GL6 New construction and redevelopment prioritize materials and building practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production, transportation and disposal of building materials.**

**PL6.1** Encourage and incentivize the preservation and reuse of existing buildings and building materials.

**PL6.2** Evaluate and address development regulations that may pose barriers to reuse and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

**PL6.3** Encourage efficient use of building materials. Provide guidance and resources to reduce the use of high-embodied carbon materials in new construction and building retrofits.

**PL6.4** Analyze and implement opportunities to encourage design for deconstruction and reuse of materials rather than demolition.

**GL7 The production of local renewable energy increases communitywide.**

**PL7.1** Facilitate the development of community-owned, small-scale renewable energy generation projects, such as solar and geothermal energy.

**PL7.2** Support development of local microgrid solar and battery storage facilities, especially for critical infrastructure and community centers.

**PL7.3** Update development standards to reduce barriers to siting, permitting, and construction of small-scale renewable energy and battery storage systems within City limits.

**PL7.4** Incentivize or require solar panels, when feasible, on new buildings with large rooftops, as well as within or over parking areas.

**PL7.5** Encourage the use and development of bidirectional energy systems to support renewable energy production and manage peak demand on the electric grid.

**PL7.6** Install solar photovoltaics on all available and feasible city-owned properties, including but not limited to, building rooftops, municipal water pump sites and parking lots.

**GL12 Urban green space is available to the public and located throughout the community. It incorporates natural environments into the urban setting, that are nearby, easily accessible, and viewable so that people can experience nature daily.**

**PL12.1** Provide urban green spaces in which to spend time and experience the positive physical and mental health benefits associated with green spaces. Include such elements as trees, garden spaces, a variety of vegetation, water features, “green” walls and roofs, and seating.

**PL12.3** Establish a maximum distance to urban green space for everyone in the community.

**PL12.4** Increase the area of urban green space and tree canopy within neighborhoods, especially in areas of the City where community members do not have easily accessible urban green space and tree canopy.

**GL29 Local Thurston County food production is encouraged and supported to increase self-sufficiency, reduce environmental impact, adapt to future climate conditions, promote health, and the humane treatment of animals, and support the local economy.**

**PL29.2** Encourage residential landscapes to include pollinator gardens, drought-tolerant plants, food gardens, and biodiverse plants as an alternative to maintaining a lawn.

**PL29.12** Partner with community organizations to help educate community members who are interested in urban agriculture on how to address and plan for climate impacts such as drought and extreme heat and encourage the production of climate-friendly foods.

## Transportation Chapter

**GT2 The transportation system will support meeting the target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.**

**PT2.1** Reshape the transportation system so that it’s easier to walk or roll, bike, or take transit than to drive.

**GT3 Vehicle miles traveled will be 25% lower than 2021 levels by 2040.**

**PT3.1** Build and retrofit streets to support walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.

**GT4 100% of light-duty vehicles within Olympia will be electric by 2040. 75% of heavy-duty vehicles will be either electric or use zero-emission fuels by 2040.**

**PT4.1** Support the state of Washington’s law that all new light-duty passenger vehicles sold, purchased, or registered will be electric starting with the model year 2030.

**PT4.3** Develop supporting infrastructure and programs to support zero-emission vehicles. (Climate)

**PT4.4** Seek ways to encourage people to replace gas-powered vehicles with electric vehicles and e-bikes by helping them access financing, rebates, grants, or other resources.

**PT4.5** Encourage Intercity Transit’s transition to zero-emission buses.

**PT4.6** Encourage the Port of Olympia to transition diesel-powered freight vehicles serving the Port to zero-emission fuels.

**PT4.7** Encourage the school district to transition diesel-powered school buses to zero-emission fuels.

**PT4.8** Convert City fleet to zero-emission vehicles and develop supporting infrastructure and programs.

**GT5 Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is sufficient to support the transition to electric vehicles.**

**PT5.1** Require EV charging infrastructure and EV-ready parking wherever parking is provided for new and renovated buildings and parking lots.

**PT5.2** Evaluate barriers to equitable access to EV charging and develop a strategy to ensure all community members can access low-cost EV charging regardless of where they live or work.

**PT5.3** Provide public EV charging at city-owned facilities and parking lots.

**PT5.4** Encourage and incentivize the provision of low-cost EV charging for multifamily housing.

**GT6 Seek ways to reduce the urban heat island effect in street design.**

**PT6.1** Include street trees in street design to shade sidewalks, protect asphalt from heat, and buffer pedestrians. Proper selection, care, and placement are critical to long-term maintenance of trees along streets, pavement, and sidewalks.

**PT6.2** Include vegetation in street designs to reduce heat island and stormwater impacts and to improve the visual appeal of streets.

**PT6.3** Where feasible, use pavement and sidewalk materials that reduce heat island and stormwater impacts.

**GT7 The local transportation system — including infrastructure, routes, and travel modes — can withstand and recover quickly from the impacts of extreme weather events and other hazards worsened by climate change.**

**PT7.1** Use the most up-to-date hazard data to map transportation infrastructure that is vulnerable to repeated floods, sea level rise, and other physical hazards. Designate alternative travel routes for critical transportation corridors when streets must be closed. Align with regional planning efforts.

**PT7.2** Facilitate quick recovery of the whole multimodal transportation system after disruption from disasters or extreme weather events.

**PT7.3** Continue to collaborate with WSDOT on bridge monitoring, maintenance, and impacts from extreme heat and extreme weather.

**PT7.4** Factor climate impacts into project prioritization, design, management and maintenance of streets and transportation assets.

**GT8 All streets are safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists. Streets are designed to be human scale and encourage safe driving.**

**PT8.1** Retrofit major streets to be human scale and include features to make walking, rolling, biking, and transit use safe and inviting.

**PT8.5** Create attractive streetscapes with sidewalks, trees, planter strips, and pedestrian-scale streetlights. In denser areas, provide benches, building awnings, and attractive and functional transit stops and shelters.

**PT8.14** Study the impacts of closing some neighborhood and downtown streets to vehicle traffic. Prioritize the study relative to other projects during the next update of the Transportation Master Plan.

**GT9 As new streets are built and existing streets are reconstructed, add multimodal features consistent with the policies in this plan and specified in the City of Olympia Engineering Design and Development Standards.**

**PT9.10** Use innovative designs to reduce or eliminate stormwater run-off.

**GT11 The street network is a well-connected system of small blocks, allowing short, direct trips for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, drivers, and service vehicles.**

**PT11.6** Build new street connections so that emergency vehicles, transit, and other service vehicles have direct and efficient access.

**GT18 A mix of strategies is used to encourage infill development in the city, which both supports and is supported by walking, rolling, biking, and transit.**

**PT18.1** Increase allowed densities in the downtown core and along parts of the urban corridors, where walking, rolling, biking, and transit are more viable for the majority of trips people need to make.

**GT21 Urban corridors have high-quality transit service, allowing people to ride the bus spontaneously and easily replace car trips with trips by bus.**

**PT21.1** Develop a system with fast, frequent, and predictable service on urban corridors. Transit service should operate at least every 15 minutes on weekdays where surrounding land uses support it.

**GT22 Intercity Transit's short- and long-range plans are supported.**

**PT22.4** Consult with Intercity Transit when new developments are being reviewed so that current and future bus routes can be accessed by transit vehicles.

**PT22.6** Coordinate with Intercity Transit in requiring developers to provide facilities that help transit riders easily walk, roll, or bike to and from stops, such as shelters, awnings, cooling features, bike parking, walkways, benches, and lighting.

**PT22.7** Encourage Intercity Transit to provide service to passenger rail stations or other intermodal facilities.

**PT22.9** Encourage Intercity Transit to maintain a fare-free system.

**GT29 Bicycling is safe and inviting, and more people bike for transportation.**

**PT29.1** Build a network of low-stress bike routes on half-mile spacing, so no one is ever more than a quarter mile from one. Low stress bike facilities will include

enhanced bike lanes on major streets, standard bike lanes and/or bike corridors on smaller streets, trails, pathways, and special treatments to help a wider range of people feel comfortable riding bicycles.

**PT29.8** Support education and encouragement programs to promote and improve the safety of bicycling.

**PT29.9** Educate the public about street safety and behaviors that ensure the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

**GT31 Parking is provided in a way that makes its costs clearer to the driver, so people can make better informed choices about whether to drive.**

**PT31.1** Manage the cost and supply of parking to prioritize on-street parking for customers over commuters.

**PT31.2** Where paid parking exists, develop policies to ensure that people pay for parking the day or hour they use it. Avoid the sale of weekly, monthly, or yearly parking permits, so that people make the decision to drive on a daily basis. This may make them more inclined to walk, roll, bike, or take transit.

**PT31.3** Work with the state of Washington on consistent parking strategies to help meet the commute trip and vehicle miles reduction goals of the region.

**PT31.4** Allocate curb space strategically. Repurpose some vehicle parking stalls for active uses that complement adjacent land uses.

**PT31.5** Limit parking spaces near transit-oriented development to encourage use of transit and decrease single-occupancy vehicle travel.

## Housing Chapter

**GH1 The range of housing types and densities are consistent with the community's changing population needs and preferences.**

**PH1.9** Encourage multi-family structures to be located near collector streets with transit service, arterial streets, or neighborhood centers to support accessibility and connectivity.

**PH1.12** Encourage adaptive reuse of non-residential buildings for housing.

**PH1.13** Consider energy and transportation affordability alongside other fixed housing costs in affordable housing policies and programs.

**PH1.14** Ensure future climate-exacerbated hazards and their impacts are mitigated in new and existing construction.

**GH3 Affordable housing is available for all income levels throughout the community.**

**PH3.2** Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing homes to remain affordable and habitable for lower-income households.

**PH3.3** Take steps to ensure housing will be available to all income levels based on projected community needs.

**GH5 Special needs populations, such as people with developmental disabilities, the homeless, the frail elderly, and others who have difficulty securing housing, have adequate, safe, and affordable housing.**

**PH5.3** Encourage new housing on transportation arterials and in areas near public transportation hubs.

**GH7 Our community is safe and welcoming and social services are accessible to all who need them.**

**PH7.1** Support non-profit and faith-based charitable organizations that provide funding and/or oversight for social service funding.

**PH7.3** Support programs and projects that assist low-income people and those at risk of homelessness with public funding.

**GH8 There is enough emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent housing with supportive services, and independent affordable housing.**

**PH8.12** Evaluate regulations so the City can be more flexible in locating shelters and increasing capacity.

**GH9 The existing low-income housing stock is preserved.**

**PH9.1** Continue to fund the repair and rehabilitation of housing using federal, state, and local funding sources.

**GH10 New low-income housing is created to meet demand.**

**PH10.9** Support non-profit and faith-based organizations in their efforts to provide emergency homeless shelters.

# Utilities Chapter

**GU1 Utility and land use plans are coordinated so that utility services can be provided and maintained for proposed future land uses.**

**PU1.3** Evaluate land use plans and utility goals periodically to ensure growth is guided by our knowledge of current environmental constraints. This includes risks from climate change and the latest available utility technology and up-to date growth and development projections, including those that incorporate climate migration considerations.

**PU1.4** Make necessary improvements to utility facilities that do not currently meet minimum standards. Prioritize capital improvements to existing systems based on age, condition, risk of failure, and capacity to support infill development and increase climate adaptation, while also balancing the fair distribution of services and benefits to the entire community.

**GU2 Reliable utility service is provided at the lowest reasonable cost, consistent with the City’s aims of environmental stewardship, social equity, economic development and the protection of public health.**

**PU2.2** Ensure that utility fees, such as rates and general facility charges, are structured to reasonably reflect the actual cost of providing services to each customer rate-service class. Fees must also encourage customers to conserve water, reduce their demand on our wastewater treatment system, reduce waste generation, and maximize waste diversion.

**GU4 Use Olympia’s water resources efficiently to meet the needs of the community, reduce demand on facilities, and protect the natural environment.**

**PU4.1** Encourage and allow re-use techniques, including: rainwater collection, greywater systems, and the use of Class A reclaimed water as alternatives to the use of potable water. This can enhance stream flows or recharge aquifers, while also protecting water quality consistent with local and State regulations.

**PU4.7** Support conservation programs and resources that provide incentives to urban farmers to implement best management practices that address impacts of climate change and invest in solutions to adapt to future climate conditions.

**GU5 Adequate supplies of clean drinking water are available for current and future generations and instream flows and aquifer capacity are protected.**

**PU5.2** Develop and maintain multiple, geographically dispersed sources of water to supply to increase the reliability and redundancy of the system.

**PU5.3** Monitor water levels in aquifers and maintain numerical groundwater models.

**PU5.6** Maintain and implement a comprehensive drought resilience strategy that factors in projected climate impacts and sets action levels for different drought stages.

**PU 5.7** Assess and mitigate the risk wildfire poses to drinking water utility systems.

**GU8 The wastewater collection system is designed and operated as to minimize long term costs, provide sufficient capacity for projected demand, promote equity, and protect the natural environment.**

**PU8.8** Separate combined wastewater/stormwater pipes in conjunction with stormwater and road improvements or residential repairs, when economically feasible.

**GU9 The frequency and severity of flooding are managed and hazards are eliminated, except during major storm events.**

**PU9.1** Prioritize City upgrades and retrofits to improve stormwater systems in areas that are vulnerable to overland flooding and sea level rise.

**PU9.2** Emphasize the importance of emergency preparedness.

**PU9.6** Prioritize solutions to flooding that serve overburdened neighborhoods.

**PU9.7** Support knowledge sharing with private stormwater system owners about ways to upgrade or retrofit systems for increased precipitation intensity expected under future climate conditions.

**PU9.8** Prioritize solutions that reduce flooding from sea level rise to the transportation system, especially for transportation corridors used in emergency management.

**PU9.9** Reduce the volume of sewer overflows annually.

**PU9.10** Evaluate and assess approaches to appropriately size stormwater facilities for increased precipitation intensity expected under future climate conditions.

**PU9.11** Adapt wastewater infrastructure to accommodate anticipated precipitation trends.

**GU10** The Utility considers the interrelationship and complexity of its three missions to manage flooding, improve water quality and protect and enhance aquatic habitat in its decisions and involves other City departments in this effort.

**PU10.4** Where feasible, retrofit existing streetscapes with water quality and quantity stormwater system improvements to minimize pollution from roadway runoff to natural drainage systems and the waters of Puget Sound.

**PU10.6** Implement a Capital Improvement Program that maintains and improves the municipal separate storm sewer system in a manner that enhances and protects the City’s natural environment, mitigates flooding problems, improves water quality, adapts to future climate conditions, promotes a reliable and safe transportation network and provides the community a safe and healthy place for living, working and recreating.

**GU11** The stormwater and wastewater systems are resilient to the impacts of sea level rise and increased precipitation intensity.

**PU11.1** Continue to implement sea level rise adaptation measures, such as flood gates and stormwater pumps, to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding to infrastructure systems and operations.

**PU11.2** Continue to support and partner with the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative members to implement the long-term adaptation strategies identified in the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan.

**PU11.3** Establish new partnerships to design, plan, and adapt Olympia’s infrastructure systems to prepare for sea level rise.

**PU11.4** Continue to implement flow reduction programs through partnership with LOTT Clean Water Alliance and Cities of Lacey and Tumwater for single family, multi family, and industry and commercial customers who receive LOTT services.

**GU13** Solid waste is managed as a resource to provide environmental, economic, and social benefits.

**PU13.2** Support state legislation to establish extended producer responsibility policies and programs, increase reuse and repair of consumer goods and materials, improve/increase recycling and composting, reduce natural resource consumption, and reduce household hazardous waste and harmful chemicals.

**PU13.3** Maintain and update the Waste ReSources Management Plan, Engineering Design and Development Standards, and Olympia Municipal Code to ensure sanitary conditions are realized, solid waste collection operations are safe and efficient, waste prevention and diversion are optimized, and programs and services support a circular system where all waste is diverted from landfills.

**GU14 Solid waste disposed of in landfills is 75% lower than 2021 levels by 2040.**

**PU14.1** Reduce waste associated with city operations and encourage recycling through the City's purchasing, recycling and disposal policies.

**PU14.2** Follow the solid waste management hierarchy established in federal and state legislation, which sets waste reduction as the highest priority management option, followed by reuse, recycling/composting and responsible disposal.

**PU14.3** Expand, when practical and feasible, the City's recycling, composting, and waste reduction programs to maximize the diversion of material from disposal into remanufacture and reuse.

**PU14.4** Work toward evaluating and implementing mandatory recycling and composting for residential and commercial customers or banning these materials from garbage/landfill.

**GU17 Olympia reduces waste associated with construction, renovation, and demolition of buildings and infrastructure.**

**PU17.1** Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to minimize waste associated with all phases of building construction, including demolition.

**PU17.2** Collaborate with local businesses and public agencies to develop local facilities and programs to enable reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris.

**PU17.3** Develop incentives and technical assistance programs to encourage reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris.

**GU18 Cooperation and coordination exists among jurisdictions and private utility providers.**

**PU18.9** Olympia and Thurston County will coordinate with each other and the cities of Lacey and Tumwater on emergency management related to utility services by following the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.

**PU18.10** Collaborate with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to ensure continuity of operations and service provision during climate-exacerbated emergencies, including extreme heat and wildfire events.

**PU18.11** Support the transition of utility energy fuel mixes to renewable sources.

**PU18.12** Effectively meet rapidly increasing electrical demand as the City and the region work to achieve a clean energy transition by adopting codes that support the timely siting of existing and new technologies.

**PU18.13** Expedite the local permitting and approval process of electric infrastructure projects in order to maintain grid capacity and reliability.

**GU19 Private utilities are located underground whenever possible and beneficial to protect public health, safety and welfare, and to create a more reliable utility system.**

**PU19.3** Coordinate the undergrounding of both new and existing private utility lines consistent with policies PU 3.1 and PU 3.2.

## **Parks, Arts & Recreation Chapter**

**GR1 Unique facilities, public art, events, and recreational programming encourage social interaction, foster inclusive and collaborative community building, and enhance the visual character and livability of Olympia.**

**PR1.1** Continue to provide extraordinary parks and community activities that contribute to our high quality of life and attract tourism and private investment to Olympia.

**GR2 The City leverages its investments in parks, arts and recreation programs and facilities.**

**PR2.6** Identify and plan for climate impacts, including extreme precipitation, drought, and sea level rise, to valued community assets such as parks, trails, and recreation facilities. These strategies may include relocation, replacement, or adaptive design.

**PR2.7** Consider climate-exacerbated hazards in all siting, planning, and life cycle assessments of new and redeveloped capital Park assets.

**PR2.8** Consider how acquisition and management of new and existing Parks properties can contribute to community-wide resilience and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

**GR4 Olympia’s park system is resilient and provides climate mitigation and adaptation benefits.**

**PR4.1** Restore and plant climate resilient vegetation and trees utilizing scientific best practices. Maintain and support Olympia’s street trees to help cool streets and neighborhoods.

**PR4.2** Implement tree selection, care and maintenance best practices that account for drier and hotter future climate conditions.

**PR4.3** Enhance protection of parks from wildfire by periodically updating wildfire protection standard operating procedures based on evolving climate conditions and best practices for proper mitigation of wildfire risk.

**PR4.4** Identify opportunities for using existing and new parks and open space for stormwater management to the extent possible while providing recreational opportunities.

**PR4.5** Protect habitat, restore natural areas, manage shorelines, and plan for climate change impacts.

**PR4.6** Practice water conservation measures and implement water-smart designs in park properties and operations.

**PR4.7** Seek opportunities for installing constructed and natural cooling features in parks, such as park shelters and splash pads.

**PR4.8** Continue to support urban agriculture such as community gardens and pollinator gardens on Parks owned properties.

**GR5 Olympia's parks and public art support environmental stewardship and awareness of climate change.**

**PR5.1** Educate parks visitors and the community about environmental stewardship, conservation, and climate change impacts and solutions.

**PR5.2** Inspire community members to act by leading through example in environmental stewardship, visible changes in the way we do business and how we plan for the future.

**GR6 A vibrant park system that meets current and future community needs.**

**PR6.1** Provide parks with gathering spaces in close proximity (within ½ mile) to all residents. The distance should be measured by following an accessible travel route suitable for walking or small mobility device

**PR6.2** Ensure that Olympia’s park system includes opportunities for its residents to experience nature.

**PR6.4** Identify and acquire future park and open space sites that will serve residents in Olympia and its urban growth area.

**PR6.8** Develop parks or plazas near Urban Corridors.

**GR7 An urban trails system interconnects parks, schools, neighborhoods, open spaces, historical settings, neighboring jurisdictions’ trails systems, important public facilities, and employment centers via both on- and off-street trails.**

**PR7.4** Encourage walking, bicycling and other non-vehicular access for recreation and transportation purposes by linking parks to multi-modal routes, streets and trails in coordination with the Transportation Master Plan. Where appropriate, add facilities that support people arriving by various modes, such as a bicycle repair facility or additional bicycle parking facilities.

**GR8 A lively public waterfront contributes to a vibrant Olympia.**

**PR8.5** Encourage the acquisition of saltwater shoreline property and easements to create more public access to the waterfront while restoring and enhancing shoreline ecosystems.

**PR8.7** Incorporate the Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan strategies into future design, maintenance, and operations of Percival Landing and West Bay Park.

**GR13 Community members gather and recreate together.**

**PR13.6** Support contingency planning for outdoor events, programming, and recreation potentially disrupted by climate-exacerbated hazards.

**PR13.7** Encourage timely recovery, reopening, and reconstruction of damaged park assets after a natural disaster to ensure continuity of high-quality services.

## **Economy Chapter**

**GE1 Olympia has a thriving and diversified economy with pathways to prosperity available to everyone.**

**PE1.5** Support initiatives that help diversify the local economy to supplement our stable public sector base and reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community.

**GE2 Businesses and entrepreneurs thrive in Olympia and contribute to Olympia’s economic diversity.**

**PE2.8** Support, recruit and celebrate Olympia businesses pursuing climate resiliency, greenhouse gas reductions, and environmental justice.

**GE3 Olympia collaborates with partners to maximize economic opportunity.**

**PE3.11** Collaborate with regional economic development partners and business leaders to prepare for future economic disruptions and emergencies, including climate-exacerbated hazards, and implement effective disaster recovery.

**PE3.14** Collaborate with regional economic development partners and business leaders to support a circular economy that increases demand for reused and recycled materials, reduces solid waste generation, and reduces demand for extraction of new raw materials.

**GE6 Downtown is a popular destination that contributes to Olympia’s economic vibrancy.**

**PE6.14** Encourage and partner with adjacent property owners and private businesses along the waterfront to contribute to sea level rise adaptation.

**GE12 Olympia is well prepared to withstand future economic disruptions and emergencies, including extreme weather and climate hazards.**

**PE12.1** Ensure the local economy is resilient to climate disruptions local businesses have access to resources to recover from climate disruptions in a timely manner. Support local businesses in assessing climate risks within their business operations.

**PE12.4** Provide resources, technical assistance and guidance for developing contingency plans for community events disrupted by climate-exacerbated hazards.

**PE12.5** Develop public-private partnerships to ensure adequate alternatives are available for outdoor events impacted by extreme heat or wildfire smoke.

**GE13 Olympia supports development of the workforce necessary for implementing community-wide climate action and adopting climate-friendly business practices.**

**PE13.1** Support local workforce development partners and trade schools to develop technical job training programs that support climate action within Olympia. Prioritize opportunities for frontline communities, youth, college students, and unemployed people.

**PE13.2** Promote local industrial and workforce development to support a zero-waste economy that increases demand for reused and recycled materials and reduces demand for new raw materials.

**PE13.3** Facilitate a green jobs pipeline for frontline communities.

## Public Safety Chapter

**GS1 The community has a high level of fire protection, emergency medical services equal to or exceeding the industry standard and community expectations.**

**PS1.4** Ensure equipment and other assets are adequate in capacity to serve the safety needs of our evolving community and changing climate.

**PS1.9** Continue training and financial support for mutual aid partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure proper resources to fight wildfires regionally, while maintaining local levels of service.

**GS2 The community proactively prepares for major disasters and is in a position to quickly and successfully respond to and recover from a wide range of emergency scenarios.**

**PS2.1** Coordinate the City's preparation, mitigation, response and recovery to disasters through an all-hazard Emergency Management program that includes planning for major catastrophic events.

**PS2.2** Maintain role as a participating agency for post-disaster and pandemic recovery through the coordination of disaster cost recovery, and the facilitation of our community's short- and long-term recovery goals.

**PS2.4** Prioritize policies, programs, and initiatives that mitigate public health and safety risks from the highest priority hazards identified in the Hazards Mitigation

Plan for the Thurston Region and the Olympia Annex, as well as the Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment.

**PS2.5** Coordinate with regional partners to develop and implement extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness and response strategies. Prioritize actions and resources towards populations most vulnerable to extreme heat, wildfire and smoke events.

**PS2.6** Support existing and recruit new community centers and social service providers to act as resource hubs (also known as resilience hubs) during emergencies and climate-exacerbated hazards. Ensure these facilities have redundant infrastructure systems and are prepared with necessary resources to protect public health.

**GS3 The community proactively provides emergency preparedness education and training to help prepare our community for catastrophic emergencies and respond to climate change.**

**PS3.1** Educate community members on how to sustain their households without outside assistance for a minimum of 72 hours during an emergency event or power outage, and that some events, such as a severe earthquake, may require them to sustain themselves for five to ten days or more.

**PS3.2** Work with County partners to expand notification alerts to reduce exposure to climate-exacerbated hazards, including wildfire smoke, tidal flooding, and extreme heat. Encourage the community to sign up for notification alerts through education and outreach.

**PS3.3** Prioritize emergency preparedness education, outreach, and resources for the highest-priority hazards and towards communities most vulnerable to climate-exacerbated hazards and emergencies.

**PS3.4** Provide resources and alerts in the most common languages spoken in Thurston County to reach people with limited English proficiency.

**GS4 Maintain a well-trained, resilient, safe, and sustainable organization.**

**PS4.8** Factor climate-exacerbated hazards into the planning and coordination of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery among first responders and partners. Anticipate and modify staffing and resource needs before projected hazard events for effective and timely response.

**PS4.9** Maintain capacity and staff time for emergency management, planning and preparedness across the City.

**PS4.10** Train emergency management professionals and adjacent service providers on trauma-informed care and mental health support for preparedness, response and recovery in extreme weather emergency events and crises.

## Capital Facilities Plan

**Goal 1: The Capital Facilities Plan provides the public facilities needed to promote orderly compact urban growth, protect investments, maximize use of existing facilities, encourage economic development and redevelopment, promote private investment, increase public well-being and safety, protect and improve the natural environment and implement the Comprehensive Plan.**

**Policy 1.5** Evaluate and prioritize proposed capital improvement projects using the following long-term financial strategy principles and guidelines:

- i. Do projects well or not at all.
- ii. Focus programs on Olympia residents, businesses and utility customers when service is provided outside city limits.
- iii. Preserve and maintain physical infrastructure.
- iv. Use an asset management and full life cycle cost approach to the City's real estate holdings, facilities and utility infrastructure.
- v. Consider climate projections in life cycle assessments, planning, and design capacities for all capital projects, including City-owned buildings. (Climate)
- vi. Use unexpected one-time revenues for one-time costs or reserves.
- vii. Pursue innovative approaches.
- viii. Maintain capacity to respond to emerging community needs.
- ix. Address unfunded mandates.
- x. Selectively recover costs.
- xi. Recognize the connection between the operating and capital budgets, such as increased maintenance and operating costs of new capital projects.
- xii. Utilize partnerships wherever possible.
- xiii. Stay faithful to City goals over the long run.
- xiv. Think long-term.
- xv. Pursue grants.

**Policy 1.7** Give priority consideration to projects that:

- i. Are required to meet State or Federal law.
- ii. Implement the Comprehensive Plan, including the requirement to accommodate its 20-year future growth forecast.
- iii. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase climate resiliency, and implement adaptation strategies. (Climate)
- iv. Are needed to meet concurrency requirements for growth management.
- v. Are already initiated and to be completed in subsequent phases.

- vi. Renovate existing facilities to remove deficiencies or allow their full use, preserve the community's prior investment or reduce maintenance and operating costs.
- vii. Replace worn-out or obsolete facilities.
- viii. Promote equitable social, economic and environmental revitalization of commercial, industrial and residential areas in Olympia and its Growth Area.
- ix. Are substantially funded through grants or other outside funding.
- x. Address public hazards.

**Goal 2 As urbanization occurs, the capital facilities needed to direct and serve future development and redevelopment are provided for Olympia and its Urban Growth Area.**

**Policy 2.2** Plan and coordinate the location of public facilities and utilities to accommodate growth in advance of need, and in accordance with the following standards:

- i. Coordinate urban services, planning and standards by identifying sites for schools, parks, fire and police stations, major stormwater facilities, greenbelts and open space consistent with goals and policies promoting compact growth in the Comprehensive Plan prior to development. Acquire sites for these facilities in a timely manner and as early as possible in the overall development of the area.
- ii. Assure adequate capacity in all modes of transportation, public and private utilities, municipal services, parks and schools.
- iii. Protect groundwater from contamination and maintain groundwater in adequate supply by identifying and reserving future supplies well in advance of need.
- iv. Proactively seek opportunities to combine capital facilities projects that are identified in facilities master plans or other City plans, such as sewer and water main extensions, transportation connections and improvements, and projects that address sea level rise. (Climate)
- v. Prioritize capital facilities projects that provide multiple benefits for the public. Rework any capital projects that may result in maladaptation or interfere with environmentally sensitive areas, contribute to hazards, or exacerbate current climate vulnerabilities. (Climate)

**Policy 2.5** When planning for public facilities, consider expected future economic activity, goals for responding to the impacts of climate change, and the need for housing affordable at all income levels as projected in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Goal 4 Public facilities constructed in Olympia and its Growth Area meet appropriate safety, construction, durability, sustainability, accessibility, and equity standards.**

**Policy 4.3** Ensure that the Engineering Development and Design Standards are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including its goals for adapting to and

mitigating climate change, and projected need for housing affordable at all income levels.

# Comprehensive Plan Glossary

## Definitions

**Access control:** Changing roadway designs to limit the number of driveways and intersections on major streets.

**Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** A dwelling unit that has been added onto, created within, or separated from a single-family detached dwelling for use as a complete independent living unit with provisions for cooking, sanitation and sleeping.

**Accountability system:** A system in which standards for employee conduct are clearly stated and members of a department are held responsible for meeting those standards.

**Annexation:** The process by which jurisdiction over land within the urban growth area is transferred from the county to the city.

**Arterial:** The largest local streets intended to move the most traffic.

**Bonded indebtedness:** In general, the debt owed after a municipality issues bonds to finance public facilities. This includes the amount of the bond plus interest.

**Bulb Out:** Extensions of the sidewalk into the parking lane, in order to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance. Bulb outs make the pedestrian more visible to drivers and cars more visible to pedestrians.

**Bus Corridor:** The main bus routes in Olympia. Bus corridors are on major streets with high-quality, frequent transit service.

**Capacity:** The maximum level of designed use for a structure (such as a street or utility line).

**Class A reclaimed water:** Reclaimed, or "recycled" water is produced from the water we use and discard every day. It is ideal for many non-drinking purposes. Reclaimed water allows communities to stretch their water supplies and match the type of water they use to actual needs. Class A Reclaimed Water, the highest quality of reclaimed water.

**Community Development Block Grant:** A federally funded program designed primarily to support low- to moderate-income households.

**Complete Streets:** Streets designed to accommodate diverse modes including walking, cycling, and public transit and automobile use.

**Concurrency:** A governmental policy requiring the availability of public services (water, sewer, roads, schools, etc.) before a new development is approved for construction.

**Conservation Easement:** A nonpossessory interest in real property imposing limitations or affirmative obligations, the purpose of which include retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open space values of real property; assuring its availability for agricultural, forest, recreational or open space use; protecting natural resources; or maintaining air or water quality.

**Consolidated Plan:** A strategic plan that outlines objectives for Community Development Block Grant funding.

**Crossing Island:** Islands in the middle of a street that allow the pedestrian to cross one half of the street at a time. Pedestrians are able to more easily find gaps in traffic and reduce their exposure to a large number of cars at one time.

**Culturally Inclusive:** Recognizes, supports, and promotes diverse housing types, strong arts and historic preservation; and the contributors of diverse Olympians to the building environment and to our cultural heritage.

**Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS):** Standards used to govern new construction (City and private development) within the city of Olympia. Standards apply to transportation, storm drainage, drinking water, reclaimed water, wastewater, and solid waste facilities.

**Fair Share Housing:** A policy to ensure the availability of affordable housing for all incomes and needs and ensure that each community includes a fair share of housing for all economic segments of the population.

**General facility charges:** One-time permit fees charged for new construction at the time of connection to the public infrastructure system.

**Greywater:** Wastewater obtained from domestic sinks and tubs but excluding that part of the plumbing waste stream that includes human wastes.

**Group homes:** A place of residence for the handicapped, physically or mentally disabled, developmentally disabled, homeless, or otherwise dependent persons. Group Homes are intended to provide residential facilities in a home-like environment. Such homes range from licensed establishments operated with 24 hour supervision to non-licensed facilities offering only shelter.

Growth Management Act (GMA): A series of laws passed by the Washington State Legislature in the early 1990's to guide population and employment growth in the state. The "GMA" is outlined in RCW [36.70A](#).

Heritage Register: An official list of places (sites, buildings, and structures) important to the history of Olympia and worthy of recognition and preservation. The Register was established in May 1983 by the Olympia City Council, and in 2002 includes more than 200 properties.

HOME Consortium: Interlocal Board that receives and administers on behalf of Thurston County federal funds distributed to the County under the HOME Investment Partnership Program. Formed in June 2002 by Intergovernmental Agreement with the cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Tenino, Bucoda, Rainier, and Thurston County.

Human Scale: Design and construction considerations based upon the scale of a human being which imbues occupants and users of the built environment with a sense of comfort and security.

Hydrology: A science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water on and below the earth's surface and in the atmosphere.

Impervious surface: Pavement, including but not limited to, asphalt, concrete, and compacted gravel, roofs, revetments, and any other built surfaces which substantially impede the infiltration of precipitation.

Infill: Land that is largely vacant and underdeveloped within areas that are already largely developed.

Latecomer fees: Developer reimbursements that finance infrastructure to support the new development.

Level of Service: An indicator of the degree of service provided by a public facility based on the operational characteristics of that facility.

Local Access Street: Local access streets carry local traffic within a neighborhood and may provide connections to collectors or arterials.

Local Improvement Districts: Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) in the City of Olympia are created to finance development infrastructure such as roads and streets, drainage improvement, and the installation of water or sewer lines. Within the City there is one active Local Improvement District. Not all property within the City is included in this district.

**Major Collector:** Major collectors provide connections between arterials and concentrations of residential and commercial activities.

**MGD:** Million Gallons per Day

**Mitigation:** Mitigation means countering the negative environmental impacts that developing the land can have on wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, and other habitats in the following order of preference: 1. Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; 2. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, by using appropriate technology, or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts; 3. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the affected environment; 4. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; 5. Compensating for the impact by replacing, enhancing or providing substitute resources or environments; 6. Monitoring the impact and taking appropriate corrective measures. Mitigation for individual actions may include a combination of the above measures.

**Mixed Use:** The use of a parcel or structure by two or more different land uses, such as a combination of residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment in a single or physically integrated group of structures.

**Mobility:** Mobility refers to the movement of people or goods.

**Moratorium:** A temporary halting or severe restriction on specified development activities.

**Multimodal:** Referring to various modes -- walking, cycling, automobile, public transit, etc. -- and connections among modes.

**Neighborhood Collector:** Neighborhood collectors collect and distribute traffic between a residential neighborhood and an arterial or major collector.

**Net loss (Shoreline Master Program):** A standard designed to halt the introduction of new impacts to shoreline ecological functions resulting from new development.

**Pathway:** Neighborhood pathways are short connections for bicyclists and pedestrians that connect streets to parks, schools and other streets where no motor vehicle connection exists.

**Pedestrian Scale (same as human scale):** Design and construction considerations based upon the scale of a human being which imbue occupants and users of the built environment with a sense of comfort and security.

**Permeable materials:** Porous materials that allow rainwater to pass through to soak back into the ground.

**Planter Strip:** A strip planted with trees, shrubs, or other vegetation between the sidewalk and the curb.

**Sense of Place:** A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics - visual, cultural, social, and environmental - that provide meaning to a location.

**STEP systems:** STEP stands for Septic Tank Effluent Pump. Most customers' household waste goes directly into our sewer collection pipes; waste from customers on STEP systems doesn't. Instead, household wastewater spends time in a STEP sewer system before heading out to the main sewer collection lines. There is a "STEP in-between" flushing your toilet and wastewater being transported to the treatment plant.

**Stewardship:** Careful and responsible management.

**Strategy Corridors:** Streets where widening is not a preferred option to address congestion problems. This may be because the street is already at the maximum five-lane width, or that adjacent land uses are either fully built out or are environmentally sensitive.

**Street Hierarchy:** The system by which roads are classified according to their purpose and the travel demand they serve.

**Street Spacing:** How often different types of streets are planned or built within a street layout.

**Street Standards:** Design standards that guide the uniform development of public streets to support present and future multimodal transportation. Standards define the specific features and dimensions of different classes of streets.

**Streetscape:** The elements that make up a street and that define its character, including building frontage, street furniture, landscaping, awnings, signs and lighting.

**Sustainable:** A sustainable community is one that persists over generations and is far-seeing enough, flexible enough and wise enough to maintain its natural, economic, social and political support systems. Promotes a healthy environment, a diverse and resilient local economy, and historic preservation, reuse, and adaptability of existing buildings.

**Taking:** Regulating or limiting the use of property under the government's police power authority in such a way as to destroy one or more of the fundamental attributes of ownership, deny all reasonable economic use of the property, or require the property owner to provide a public benefit rather than addressing some public impact caused by a proposed use.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):** A process to gain credit for unused development rights that can be sold and transferred to another property. Development rights may be used to allow specific density changes in urban areas.

**Transit Queue Jump Lanes:** A bus lane combined with traffic signal priority enabling buses to bypass waiting queues of traffic.

**Transportation Demand Management:** Measures that encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone or that reduce the need to travel altogether.

**Unincorporated:** An area within the county that is not within city or town jurisdiction.

**Urban Corridor:** Selected major streets and the planned high-density, mixed land uses that surround them.

**Urban Growth Area:** Area designated by the County, in coordination with cities, within which urban growth is encouraged. "Urban growth" makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces such that it is incompatible with the primary use of land for agriculture and other rural uses and development, as defined in RCW [36.70A](#). Growth can occur outside of the "UGA" only if it is not urban in nature.

**Village:** A small, compact center of predominantly residential character but with a core of mixed-use commercial, residential, and community services. A village typically has a recognizable center, discrete physical boundaries, and a pedestrian scale and orientation. Olympia's village sites are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

**Wayfinding:** Signs, markings, maps, electronic devices and other features that help people navigate through an area.

**Wellhead Area:** Surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field supplying a public water supply system.



# Critical Areas Ordinance

## EXHIBIT B

As part of its periodic update under the Washington State Growth Management Act, the City of Olympia will update its Comprehensive Plan, Development Regulations, and Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO).

The periodic update has a deadline for adoption by December 31, 2025 for the Comprehensive Plan and its implementing development regulations. Cities have an additional 12 months to complete updating the CAO when working in good faith toward completion. The City of Olympia expects to adopt amendments to the CAO in 2026 and anticipates the following schedule:

Dec 2025-Jan 2026	Draft CAO Amendments Issued
December 2025	Planning Commission Briefing
Jan/Feb 2026	Planning Commission Briefing
Feb/March 2026	Planning Commission Public Hearing, Deliberations and Recommendation
March/April 2026	Council's Land Use and Environment Committee Recommendation
April/May 2026	City Council Decision/Adoption