## Land Use and Urban Design Chapter Survey Results
March 18-28, 2025

This survey is one of several ways the City of Olympia seeks to gather public comments and guidance for the update to the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan. It is not intended to be a statistically valid survey on this subject. Participants were encouraged to read the chapter before participating in the survey. The survey was open from March 18 to March 28 and there were 35 participants. The end of the survey provided an opportunity for participants to provide additional comments (see #11). The results of the survey and the comments provided by the participants will be used for guidance on amending the chapter.

1. Have you read the chapter or are you familiar with the Land Use and Urban Design Chapter?

1 (2.9%)

34 (97.1%)
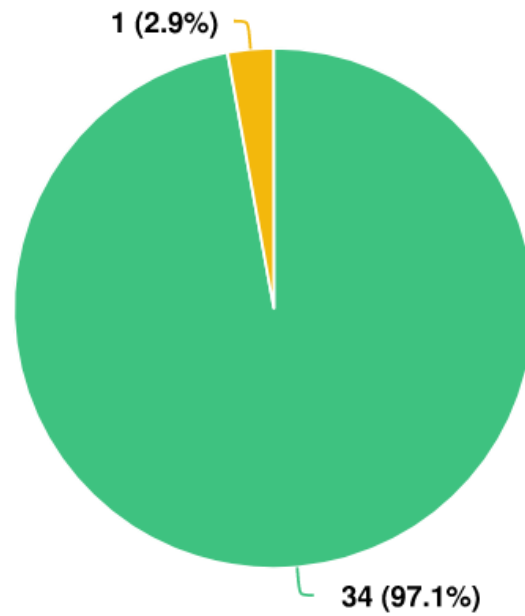
Question options

● Yes   ● No

2. The chapter starts with the Values statement which is a brief description of the values of the community in relation to land use.

"***What Olympia Values:***
Olympians value neighborhoods with distinct identities; historic buildings and places; a walkable and comfortable downtown; increased urban green space; locally produced food; and public spaces for community members in neighborhoods, downtown, and along our shorelines."

These values are woven throughout the chapter. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the Values statement.
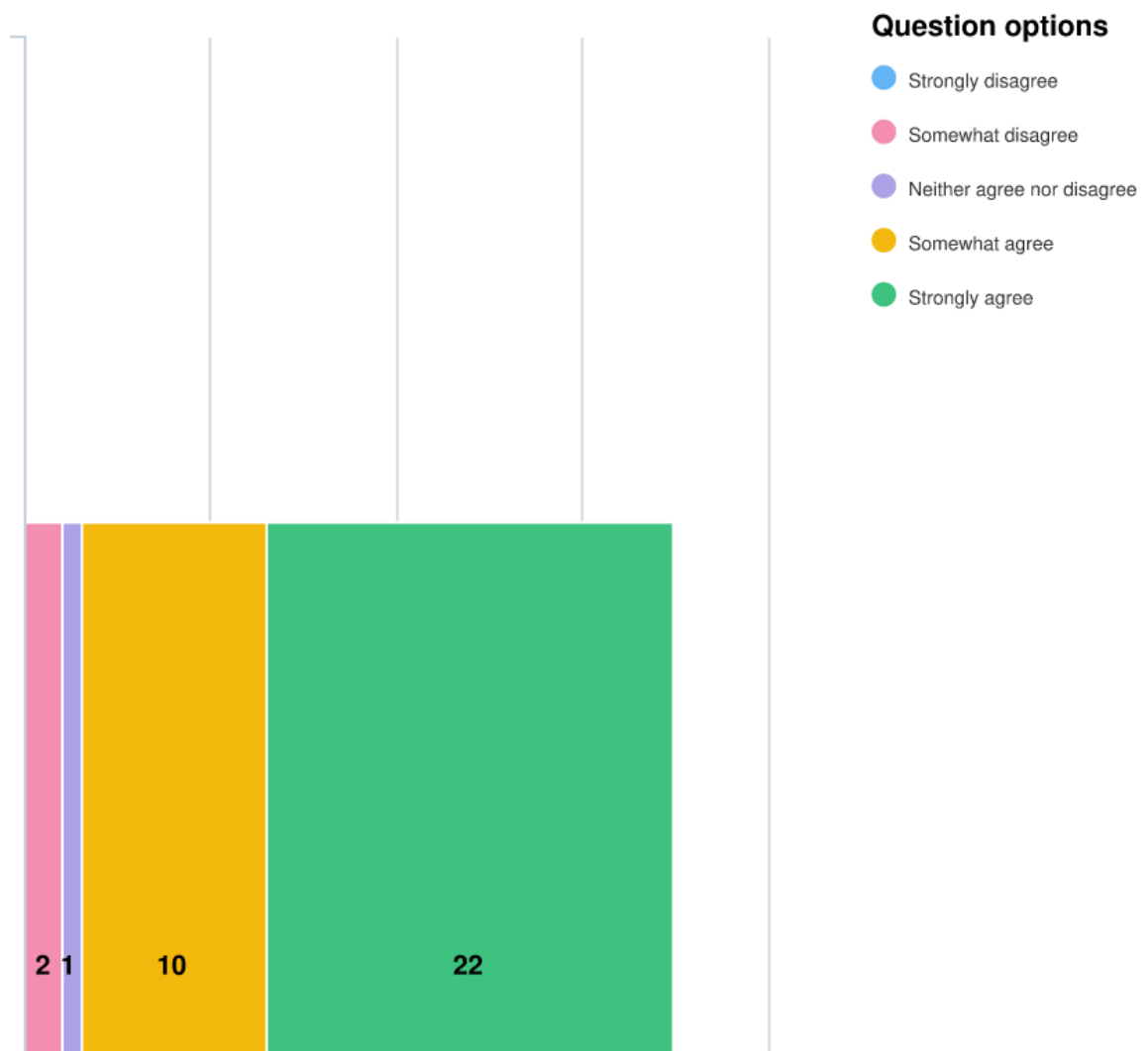Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree (note: no participants selected this response)

Question options

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

| 2 | 1 | 10 | 22 |

3. The Vision statement is also at the beginning of the chapter. It is a very brief description of what the community would like to see for the future of the City of Olympia.

   Our Vision for the Future:
   A walkable, accessible, vibrant city.

   This vision statement provides guidance for numerous sections of the chapter. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the Vision statement.
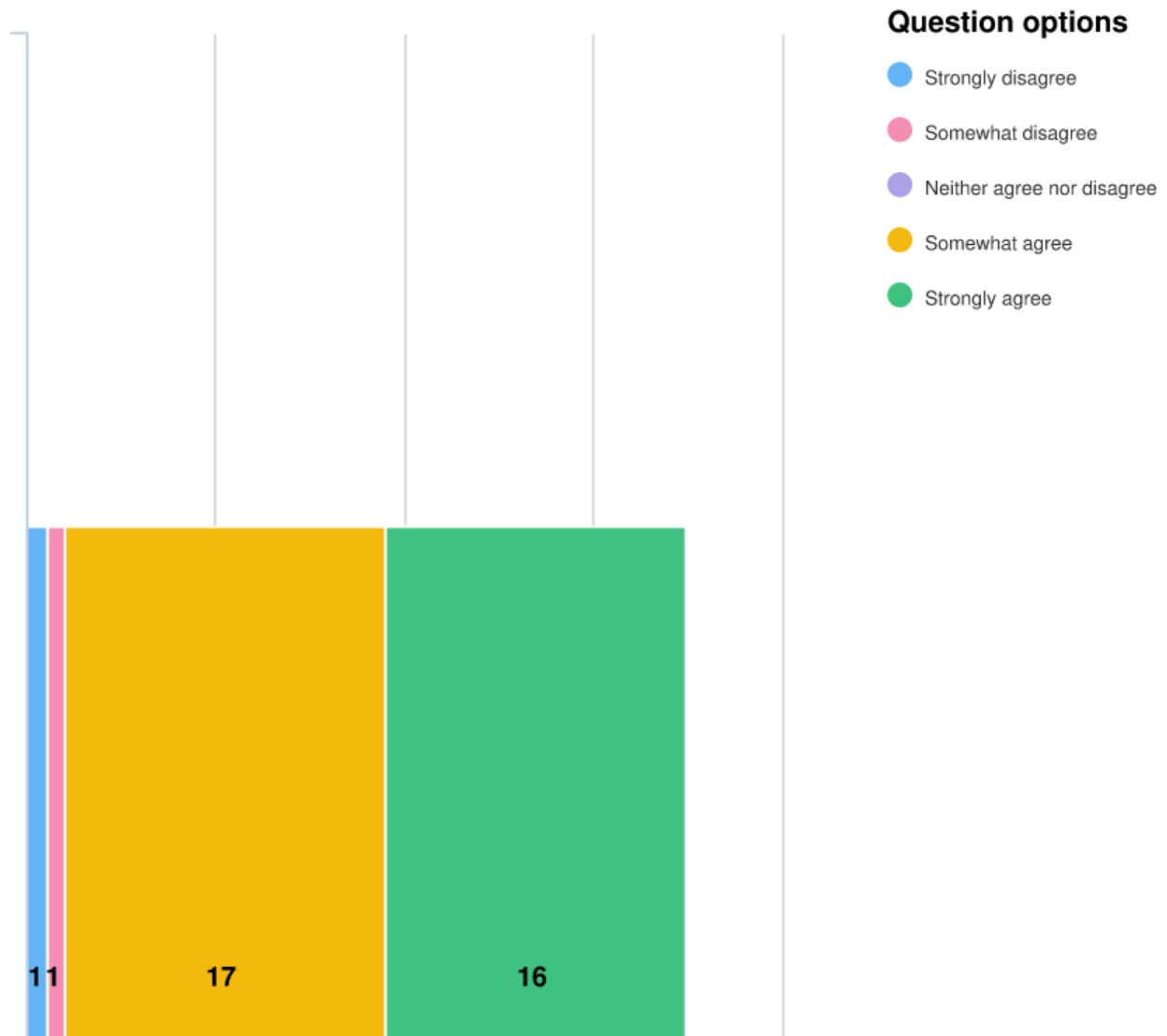   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Neither Agree or Disagree (Note: No participants selected this response)
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

Question options

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

1 1   17   16

4. Which of the following do you agree with the most?
   a. The chapter is in good shape overall but needs minor updates
   b. The chapter needs a moderate amount of updates
   c. The chapter needs a significant rewrite

4 (11.8%)

14 (41.2%)

16 (47.1%)
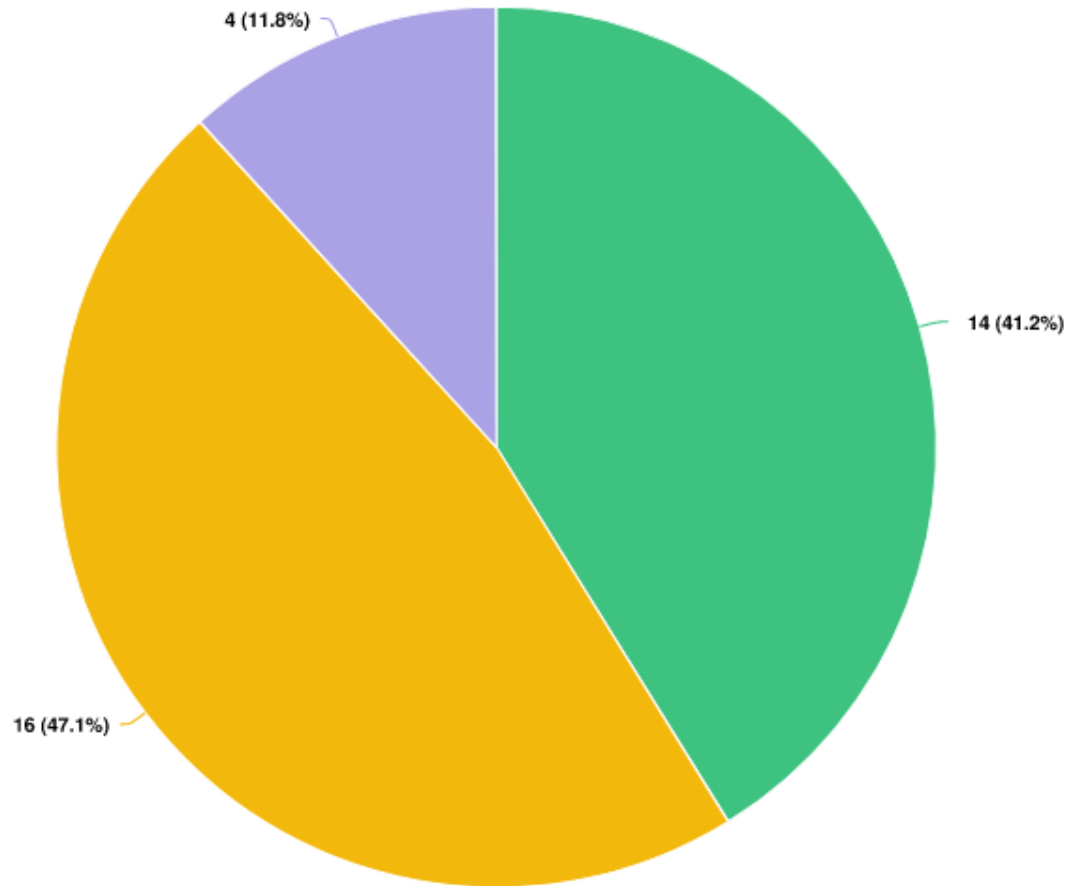
Question options

- The chapter needs a significant rewrite
- The chapter needs a moderate amount of updates
- The chapter is in good shape overall but needs minor updates

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5. Does the chapter provide enough guidance for providing different types of housing at different income levels in neighborhoods across the City given the expected need for additional housing in the future?
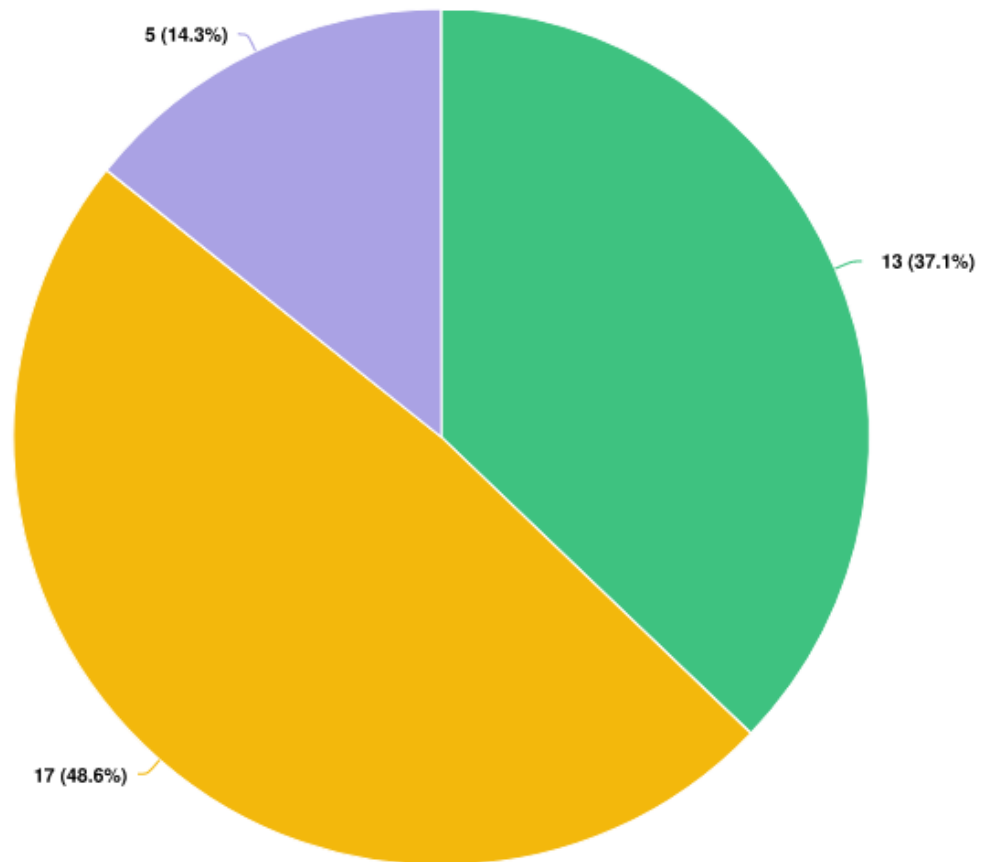Yes
No
Unsure

7 (20.0%)

15 (42.9%)

13 (37.1%)

Question options
Not sure   No   Yes
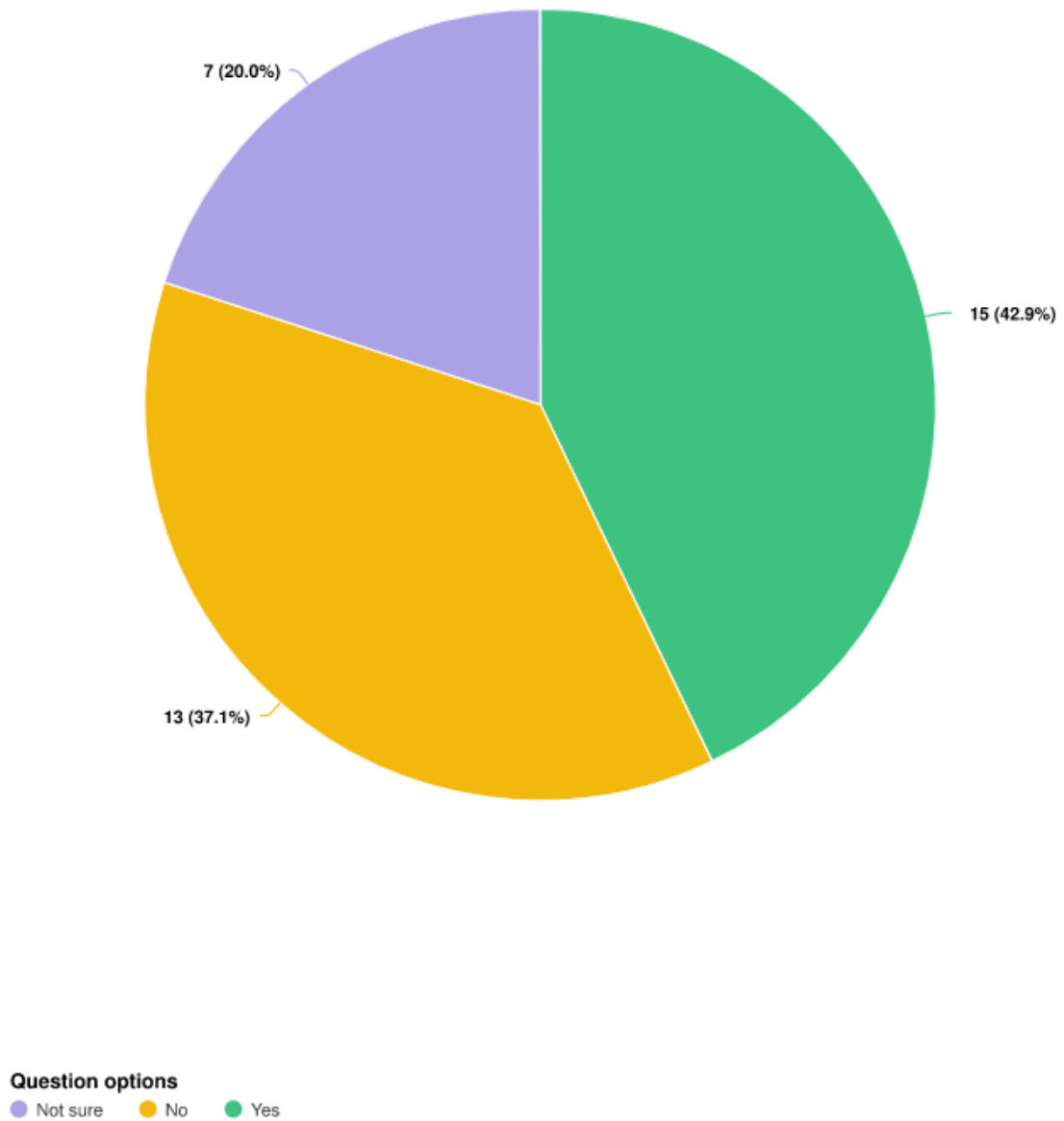
6. A majority of the City and its urban growth area (approximately 68%) is designated as low density neighborhoods (link to definition) on the Future Land Use map. Is this consistent with your vision for the future of the City? (Map is also located in Appendix A of the chapter)
   Yes
   No
   Unsure

5 (14.3%)

13 (37.1%)

17 (48.6%)

Question options
Not sure   No   Yes

7. Land uses and the designs of development can create opportunities for social interactions. This is an important part of creating a cohesive community and avoiding isolation. Do you feel that the chapter does enough to encourage land use design/construction techniques that support social interactions?
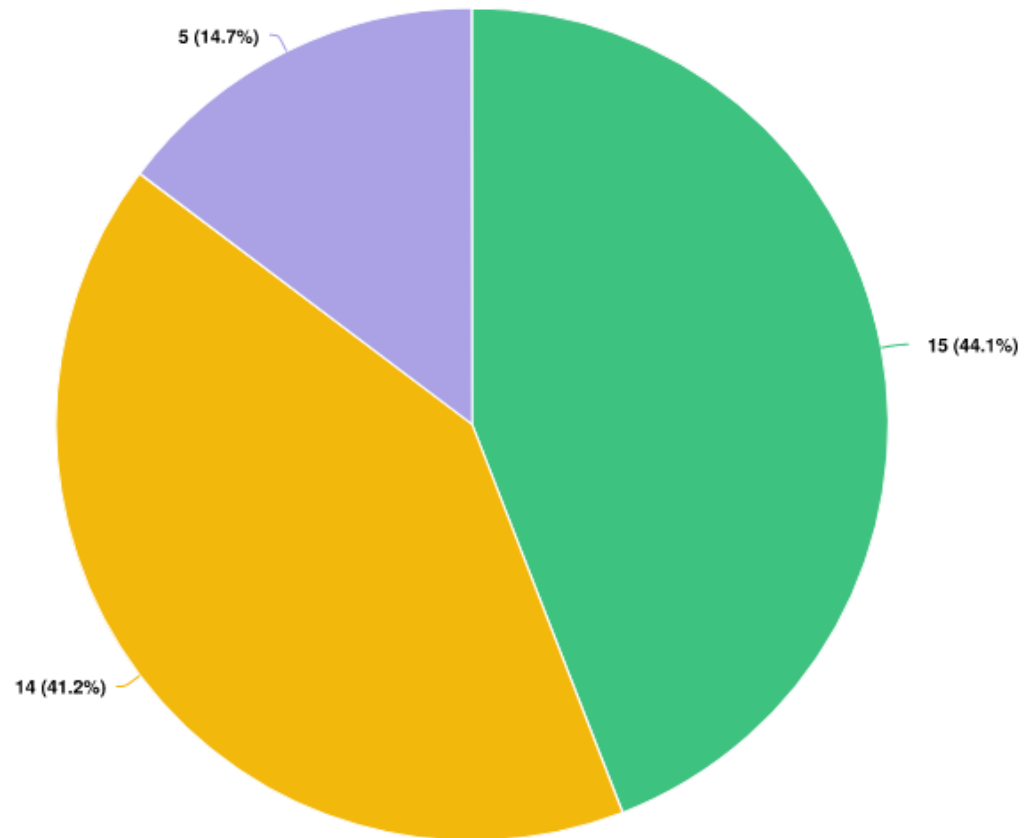Yes
No
Unsure

9 (25.7%)
10 (28.6%)
16 (45.7%)
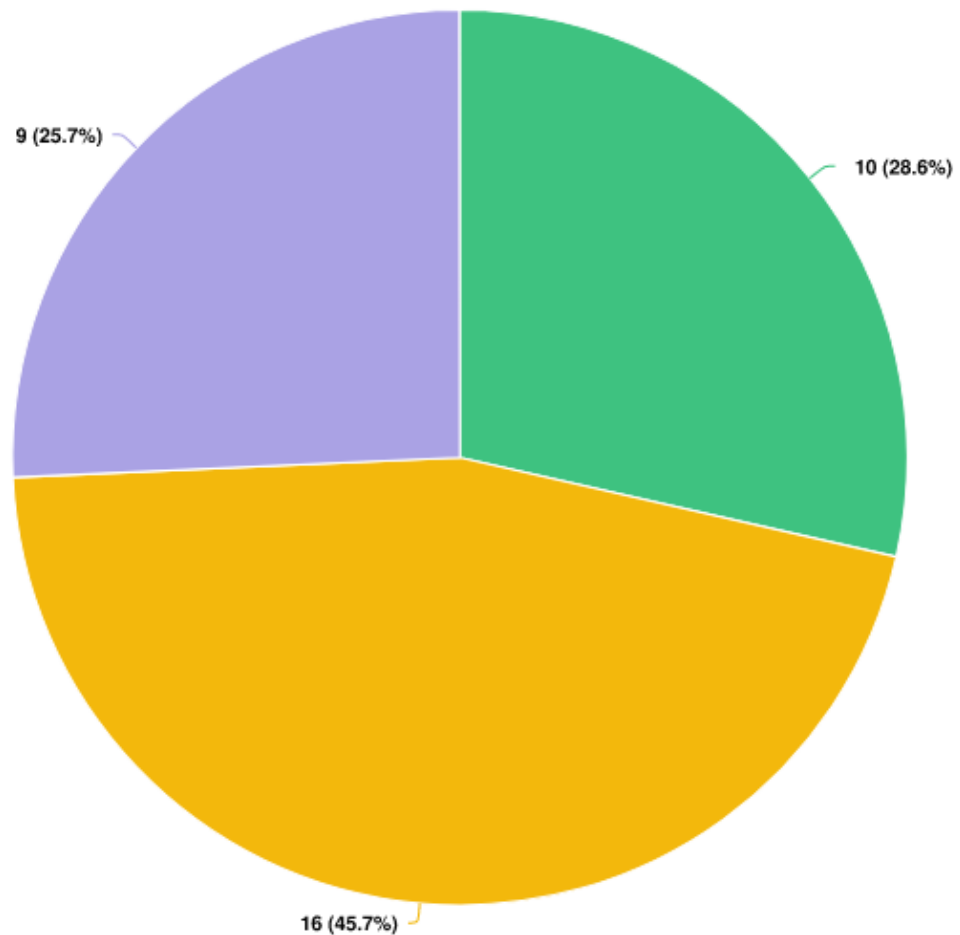
Question options
● Not sure   ● No   ● Yes

8. Would you like to see the design technique of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design addressed more in the chapter? (See Goal GL9 of the chapter)
Yes
No
Unsure

5 (14.7%)

15 (44.1%)

14 (41.2%)

Question options
● Not sure   ● No   ● Yes

9. Neighborhood retail establishments are small-scale commercial uses which offer a limited range of goods within a residential neighborhood. Currently, they are limited to designated Neighborhood Centers where local economic demand and appropriate design can assure compatibility with the neighborhood. Should neighborhood retail be expanded to residential areas citywide?
Yes
No
Unsure

2 (5.7%)

12 (34.3%)

21 (60.0%)
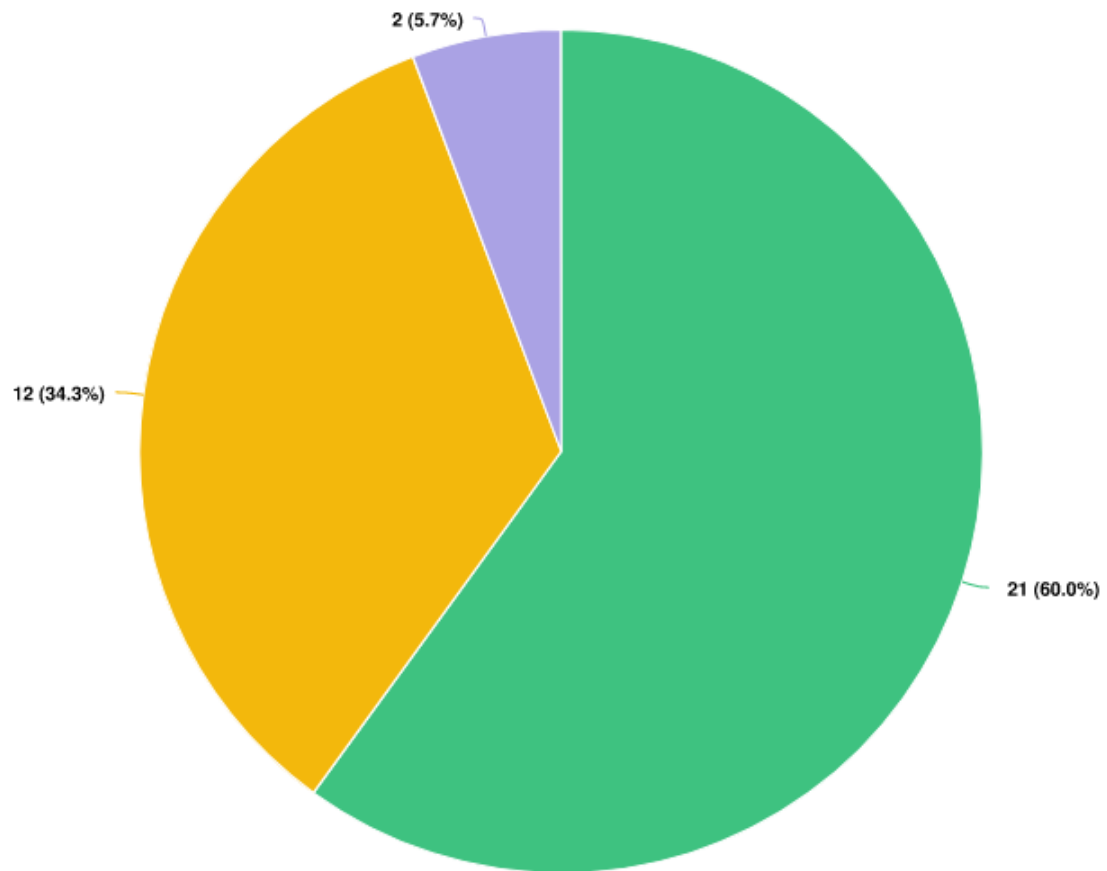
Question options
- Not sure
- No
- Yes

10. Do the policies for urban agriculture contain enough guidance and support? ([See Goal GL25](#))
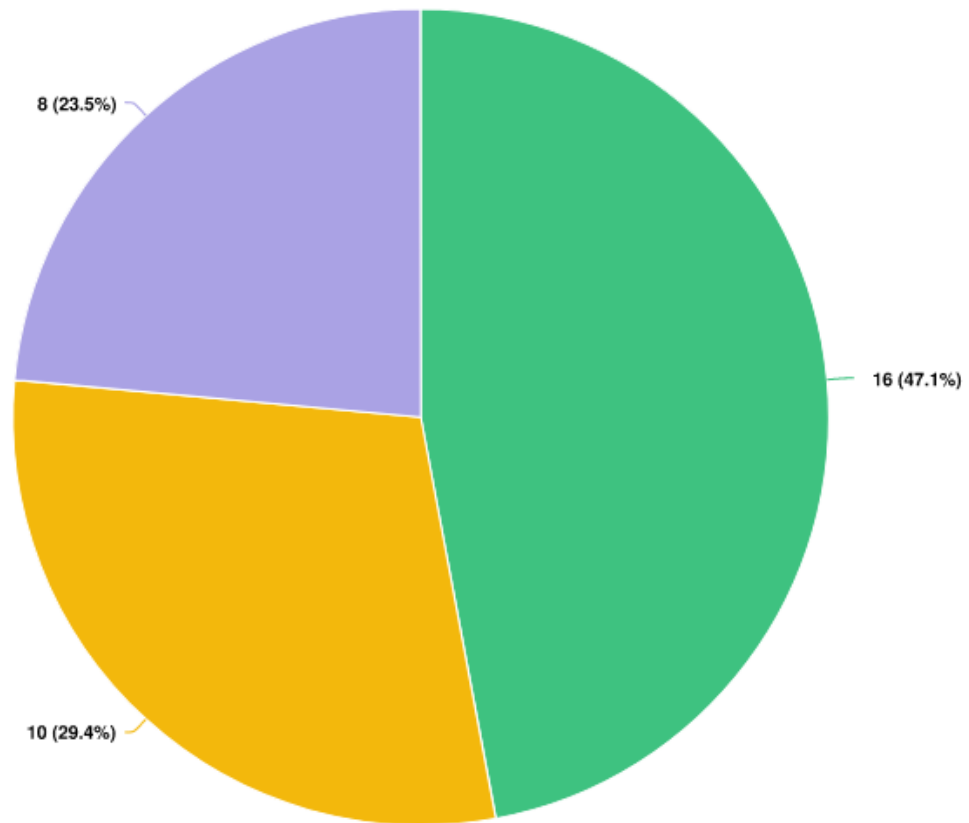   Yes
    Unsure
    No

Question options
- Not sure
- No
- Yes

11. An opportunity to provide additional comments was at the end of the survey. The comments are provided here.

I'd like to see how our map stands with (or not) Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston County's comp plans. Are we pushing off our obligation to provide denser housing areas onto them? Or perhaps that IS the plan, that Lacey grow exponentially (as they are) as they build these massive apartment complexes. And then some of this "denser housing" comes though the permitting of ADU's in single family neighborhoods, thereby preserving our quiet? And keeping home values high, and unaffordable by so many? So much to juggle.... For example, of course I don't want the proposed Springwood Gardens development near my home to be apartments, but wouldn't townhouses be a better option, using fewer materials, and providing more options for open space? (i know, the developer is the one who drives the proposal...but do our guidelines take sustainable building practices into account (sorry, didn't I read the report for that question)? How do our building design regulations dovetail with land use? I applaud all your work on this--I know it is often a thankless job. So thank you.
We are still too car-centric. Eliminate cars downtown and provide parking just outside of downtown.
Downtown needs to have a stronger reaction to removing homeless, so developing a crisis behavioral health center in a rural area.
Wildlife (native plants and animals) are given short schrift. They can't protect themselves from humans, and hence should be given TOP PRIORITY. They need habitat protection and wildlife corridors for safe travel. Humans can live just about anywhere, so they should be planned for only AFTER the wildlife planning. Human arrogance knows no bounds! Extinction is FOREVER, and must be prevented. Your planners should take a course in conservation biology!
Sadly, I find I just don't trust you. Does "walkability" mean less/no parking, so old ladies like me are stuck? Does "affordable housing" mean I have one rental, subject to extensive rules and rent control, while all the corporate owned apartments going up everywhere and sucking wealth from our community have a ten year exception? The city freezes my income, but did the city freeze my property taxes on my single rental owned by an old lady on a fixed income? I was a career civil servant, I believe government can do good, yet I've experienced too much negative from the city to keep the faith. Another example; endless "inclusive" language, yet we need a business license just to participate in the Call for Art, creating an income, language and tech barrier as well as a barrier for those who hesitate to be involved with government, all limits participation of the very "marginalized" people you claim to encourage. If the license is needed to collect the honorarium it could be required of the winner only, and the cost taken from the winnings. Would a low income parent spend

$30/$40 for a business license just so their child could participate, or to participate themselves? Just an example of the ways the city discourages involvement and participation. I find myself asking, when I read plans and do these surveys, what do they really mean? What are they up to? The city has a credibility problem. If you're loosing people like me, who have believed in and trusted good government for a lifetime, you've got real problems.

Olympia does not protect historic buildings. Downtown has become ugly. Olympia is not interested in ecological science based restoration. Things like daylighting some culverted streams.

Urban agriculture should not be a low priority. We need more housing in the city. But low-rise. Not more than 3-4 stories. And should be for owners—duplex, quad plexes, condos, townhomes—not apartments.

Ban low density/single family zoning. Allow as dense housing as is possible by the laws of physics. Build basic shelter that is free at point of access.

"Crime prevention" is a wild way of making Jane Jacobs's "eyes on the street" sound scary as hell. Banning and/or slowing and quieting private automobiles would make it more pleasant to spend time adjacent to where petty crime is occurring to allow for pro-social encouragement and interventions. Meeting peoples' basic needs will be more effective than punishing and criminalizing them.

Eliminating mandatory parking requirements will clear space currently used as free storage of private property and make space for people. Building a grid vs hub and spoke transit system with express corridors will stop people from whining about not being forced to drive everywhere.

Need more flexibility to solve issues facing city. Restrictions makes housing more expensive and less available. Specify Desired outcome and allow others to solve the how. Government is only one lever and it's a blunt object when going it alone.

New development must focus on infill and redevelopment of already disturbed sites such as excess parking lots. We should have high density multistory residential with mixed use retail. Leave natural areas like forest and wetland undeveloped. Restore areas of natural vegetation to the landscape instead of street plantings and non-native plants. Restore habitat to salmon-bearing streams by day-lighting the streams and removing culverts.

Hi! I think the high density corridor on the eastside at 4th and State should be wider. Having the three high density zones so separate does not feel like it supports the housing needs or the reduction of automobile reliance.
I think there should be more focus on climate resilient communities in where and what and how we build. I don't see that in there.

I would also like to see it be more explicit about promoting or requiring gridded streets.

I would also like it to be explicit about prioritizing pedestrians by prohibiting and replacing 'beg' buttons across the city, anyone walking anywhere in the city should FEEL invited and expected.

GL7 should have an equity component.

GL9 - how strongly does the research support this approach?

GL15 - remove references to property owners. feels very 1800's.

GL18 - maybe beg button prohibition here? and applied elsewhere. 18.6 - All streets should be pedestrian streets! maybe flip it and designate just a few car streets?

GL20 - how do you balance this goal with the need for more housing? If a large low income housing project is financed but neighbors think it's ugly do you build it? i think we ahould!

If you read this far thank you!

Stop bringing crime and unsafe people in neighborhoods where are children go to to school and play.

I think it's important to incorporate art into the vision statement. Also, the need for affordable housing far surpasses the current document.

Neighborhood centers are great and there is some control over appropriate business and design. It would be nice to see more of these centers near neighborhoods. But—Just allowing retail anywhere in Residential areas seems too risky that someone will set up an undesirable shop next door. We are already overrun by lobbyists buying houses to run their businesses out of. And there doesn't seem to be any enforcement on these businesses.

I would like to see some acknowledgment in either values or vision of enhancing/ preserving view corridors in Olympia. The natural beauty of the mountain scenery is an outstanding asset of our city!!

Eliminate all single family zoning. At the very least, make duplexes allowed in all zones across the city, and I'd recommend quads or triplexes as long as they match neighborhood character. Perhaps consider allowing those on corner lots specifically. Increase city density to protect farm, forest, and natural lands outside the city. This also fosters increased reliable transit options for all. Increase bike safety with better bike lanes and goals for improved bikability of the city.

We need far more trees and we need to stop cutting mid to large size trees! Ordinances should prohibit removal of trees and mandate more tree planting.

Urban agriculture requires more well-defined goals, clear targets, and structured timelines. It would be beneficial to incorporate initiatives that encourage and incentivize property owners with cultivable land to share their spaces with individuals in housing lacking gardening areas, particularly those residing in densely populated developments.

YES BUT WITH THIS CAVEAT - NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS - In regard to Neighborhood Centers I believe it should arise out of local subarea plans developed by community members in the subarea. These plans should prioritize services that are felt to be most important to the neighborhood and in an area that is both suitable and feasible for a neighborhood center, based on the criteria in this chapter.

In regards to general approach for the plan it needs, as noted above in question regarding social cohesion mor emphasis on the role that neighborhoods play. Suggestions:

Recognizing the significance of neighborhoods in our civic design - The Comp Plan should make the need for vibrant neighborhoods up front and list of policies to improve neighborhoods. Language should include:

● All areas of the city will have either an organic (self-organized neighborhood) or an initial designated neighborhood, like the subareas that the City and the CNA developed and the City incorporated into the 2014 Comp Plan. A map of these areas can be found here.

● Aspects of participatory budgeting should be applied to the neighborhood and subarea level. This should be used to help prioritize ongoing city investments and target neighborhood needs such as grants, subarea planning priorities, development of neighborhood centers, community gardens and pilot projects.

● With every investment or policy there is an opportunity to increase one or more forms of social infrastructure. Comp Plan chapters as well as budget evaluations should answer how the policy or investment will affect social connection?

● Large expensive projects are important as is maintenance. However, funding for large projects and the focus of maintenance on downtown and commercial areas should not crowd out funding smaller less expensive projects that improve the lives of people and neighborhoods and demonstrates that they are not forgotten.

Subarea Planning - In addition, the role of constituent neighborhoods in subarea planning should be emphasized, energized with proper staffing, funding and policy development

deference. Subarea policy language should include:

● Neighborhood Centers arise out of subarea planning
● A policy item should be included to make it a priority to develop and fund a work
plan to complete subarea plans for the entire City.
● Neighborhood centers should be identified in the subarea planning process. The
plans will prioritize the services that are most important to the neighborhoods.

The missing concept of social infrastructure - needs to be introduced and expanded upon.
Neighborhoods are the key to addressing social isolation and polarization and strengthening
our civic infrastructure. The concepts contained in the recent Triangle Subarea plan are an
example of what should be added to the updated plan. This includes:

"A lack of social connections increases the risk of many health issues and chronic stress (CDC,
2021).
Loneliness is most prevalent in low-density areas where commuting by car reduces
opportunities for
social interactions and high-rise buildings if residential design does not promote community
and
relationship building (Mattisson et al., 2015; Kalantari and Shepley, 2021). Development and
design that
support active living, non-car commutes, and social connections improve residents' chances
at health
and wellbeing." – source "DC-12 Residential building design for social connection"

● Encourage small social group sizes—important for building trust amongst neighbors—by
encouraging building types that limit the number of units sharing a single entry or shared
common space to 8 to 12 units. This may include removing barriers to single-stair access
construction.

● Clearly delineate public to private space that encourages both social interaction but also
creates
private retreat areas for a sense of safety and control over social exposure.

● Locate shared spaces along residents' daily paths to encourage chance interactions.

● Adopt residential open space standards to focus on achievable social spaces that help build
trust
amongst neighbors, sense of ownership over shared space, and chances at interaction. Study
the interaction of shared open space standards with tree code requirements.

● Identify spaces that would support and build community, such as a community center,
community gardens, local farmer's markets, daycare, expanded library, youth activities,

aquatic
center, Senior Center, and Boys and Girls Club/YMCA/after school programs.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on this essential chapter in the Plan. A few additional thoughts...

Related to the vision and values statement: I strongly agree with the elements in the current draft of the chapter. And I think - given the social isolation you reference in one of your questions - the values and vision statements should reference ways to address it. Maybe something like - Olympia values... a resilient community that supports active living and the forging of social bonds and where people of all backgrounds and income levels are welcomed and can afford to live. The vision statement could be expanded to "a walkable, accessible, resilient, and vibrant city rich in opportunities for to participate in civic life.

Related to urban agriculture (GL25): there is no mention of opening up City property like City ROW and planting strips to grow food like what the NE neighborhood has done with the Joy Food Forest in the Joy Avenue ROW. Access to water is another limiting factor that's not addressed directly. Although the City offers discounted rates for some urban ag uses, I just learned that to get the lower rate, a new meter usually needs to be installed that is prohibitively expensive for some folks that already have or would like to develop a community garden. I suggest including policies that address these issues in this section. This could include support to develop large rain catchment systems like the one the NE neighborhood installed at the Joy Food Forest.

Neighborhood retail: The question about allowing neighborhood retail in residential areas citywide doesn't clearly define what kind of businesses would be allowed, and what if any policies would be in place to address design or neighborhood compatibility issues. The question implies that the only options are neighborhood centers as currently designated or allowing neighborhood retail in all residential areas. These kinds of questions would best be addressed in sub-area plans that reflect each subarea's unique needs and character, and not by blanket citywide zoning.

Sub-area planning: I was disappointed that on the Land Use and Urban Design web page the plans for SubAreas A & B are not referenced as recent plans/work that influence this update, especially given the goals and policies in the Plan related to subarea planning.

Performance measures and an implementation plan: Finally, there is no mention of developing an implementation plan for this chapter in the as one of the next steps in completing the update of this chapter. I strongly support most of the goals and policies in the current version of the Plan which was adopted in 2014. However, not much progress has been made since 2014 in implementing many of the policies or in achieving the goals in this chapter including those related to sub-area planning and neighborhood centers. To address

this, performance measures for the goals in this chapter should be set, and the chapter should discuss the need to develop new creative strategies to realize the vision in this chapter in a regularly reviewed and updated implementation plan that's shared and discussed with the community.

The Land Use Chapter needs to better address the following concerns raised by the Council of Neighborhood Associations:

Address the Loss of Housing for Commercial Purposes That Does Not Serve the Needs of Residents.

The Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive plan should include goals and tactics to prevent unpermitted home occupation and residential conversions to businesses that don't further the goals of being a walkable city with convenient services to its residents. We must guard against neighborhoods reaching a tipping point where all residential and historic character is lost forever.

Some residential neighborhoods are now threatened by conversion of residences to business use only. Olympia has long allowed business use of a property that is primarily a residence. However, we are now experiencing a large proportion of homes in certain neighborhoods, particularly the South Capitol area, being licensed for home occupied businesses that are, in fact, rarely occupied other than for business purposes. In the South Capitol neighborhood many of the residences used as businesses are vacant most of the year.

When many residences in a neighborhood are left vacant there is a loss of neighborhood identity, an increase in social isolation, and decrease in housing density. In addition, when the primary use of a home in a residential zoned neighborhood is business and not residential it has a direct impact on the architectural design for new homes and any improvements on current homes. The design needs of a home whose primary use is business are not compatible with what is needed for residential use and therefore these homes are condemned for business use for all future buyers. The Plan should:

> Provide rules and policies that discourage the conversion of residential housing for commercial uses that detract from the vibrancy, increases social isolation of neighborhoods and decreases housing density.

> Include additional focus on residential to business conversions in historic districts where homes previously occupied by families become businesses that are rarely occupied other than for seasonal business purposes and go vacant much of the year. This "missing tooth" problem in a residential neighborhood negatively impacts the surrounding residences.

> Control for changes to these converted residences that conflict with the current designs

and they should be evaluated in terms of the goal of providing a walkable neighborhood with convenient services for residents.

The increases in density should happen where there is existing water, sewer, and sidewalks. Infill should be carefully mapped so that we don't end up with older narrow streets without sidewalks having many more cars parked on them. Those areas should be left to later development when we can afford to retrofit the streets. Blanket changes to zoning should be avoided. The zoning changes to increase housing should be tailored to the existing conditions in the neighborhood. The chapter overall seems like it is a bit too many policies.

Regarding question 5; much of the new housing I see, in both outlying areas of Olympia and outside the Urban Growth boundary, is large houses built on large parcels. This is a high price to pay -- in terms of lost forests, trees, farms, and open space -- for so little gain in terms of meeting housing needs.
Regarding question 7; I think there are opportunities to rethink how people in residential neighborhoods access commercial businesses but, this means we need to rethink how people get around, and the City's current commercial zones are not getting the job done. There should be a range of neighborhood commercial districts -- small, medium and large -- to encourage non-automobile access (even downtown).
Regarding question 9; As older commercial areas become obsolete, newer neighborhood/commercial centers will need to be designed for compatibility with nearby residents, a mix of desirable businesses, development sequencing and so forth. If you build it they will come!

The social isolation part, in the values and vision statements, should have more complete information about how to increase social connections.
The urban agriculture part is not complete enough. Some City property should be designated or defined as usable for urban agriculture.
Neighborhood retail really needs to be defined more also as to what kind of businesses you are talking about and what policies are in place for neighborhoods to have a say in what businesses come into their neighborhood. Also what policies are available to neighborhoods if the retail is not working out. If you are only taking about neighborhood centers I agree with those, but I strongly do not agree with retail throughout neighborhoods.

The Vision statement is ablest. The Vision statement puts those who have very limited mobility and need to rely upon cars rather than bikes, and need close parking, in a secondary position to those who can walk/bike. Projects like the triangle subarea plan are at risk of prioritizing those who can walk/bike over those with very limited mobility. People with mobility disabilities may need more than curb cuts—they may need to keep all streets open and available to use cars and have close parking.

'Did not find anything that referencing issue:
-Improvement of pedestrian crossings for Capitol Way from 10th Ave down to Sylvester Park? It's been dangerous crossing forever!
-Evergreen College is an asset to our State, (Not a graduate or ever attended), How can we encourage the University /State to have bring a School of Business or Social programs or

Esturary Research,, etc, into our Downtown? It would it create an anchor facility/building(s) in downtown and bring a better mix to the business's that thrive there.

-The walking pathway from South, Historic neighborhood, thru Cap Campus into Downtown via Columbia St is an Office Industrial parking lot mess that, obviously, has no plans for improvement?

Sandy's Flats tenants, on Capitol, has only made Columbia St even more a blight on this pathway into Olympia downtown. Can any of this be addressed in the master plan?

It's a good chapter and I look forward to seeing it implemented!

The goals sound good, but city policies don't appear to be actually implemented. There are many new developments that are being built on sensitive areas- wetlands, forests, critical aquifer areas- and none of them are affordable. So where is the benefit to the community? We are covering up our aquifers, adding to the toxic burden, destroying trees that mitigate for climate change and only getting houses that people who live here can't afford.   The first question before anything is permitted should be "Does this improve the well-being of the community?" And not, does this get us some more tax money.

Low Density Neighborhoods are not yet close to their capacity in R-4-8 and R 6-12 areas. Low density neighborhoods do not need to be upzoned, just brought up to the existing upper limits, i.e.; R4-8 and R 6-12.

Small scale commercial should be restricted to Neighborhood Centers, not spread throughout neighborhoods. Having commercial enterprises in the neighborhoods will be too disruptive for people living near these stores. Small scale commercial should be in Neighborhood Centers, and new Neighborhood Centers should arise out of neighborhood subarea plans.

The Comprehensive Plan has good urban agriculture policies but little work has been done by the City to promote or advance these policies. It is important for food to be grown locally. It increases the amount of food available, cuts down on the cost of food, and encourages social interactions among people. New policies could be developed that encourage sharing of resources and cooperative agreements. In a cooperative agreement, people with space on their property could lend space to other local residents that want to do the work of growing food. Harvested food could then be shared with the property owner and the person doing the gardening. This could be a win - win arrangement.   Also encouraging programs for gleaming produce from fruit trees would be a good idea.

The City needs to track and report on the implementation of policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Are the policies being implemented or are they just words on paper?

This plan was written 4 years ago. the map is 2018 6+ years ago. neither take into consideration HB 2111.