



July 1, 2024

**To:** The Olympia City Council

**From:** The City of Olympia Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

**RE:** Recommendation regarding the Natural Environment Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

I am writing on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) to recommend acceptance of proposed updates to the Natural Environment chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Kym Foley (Public Works, Environmental Habitat Planner), the staff lead responsible for the Natural Environment chapter update, has met with PRAC twice since January 2024 to provide a briefing, receive feedback, and follow up on proposed changes based on input from the Committee. PRAC was given an opportunity to make recommendations regarding the public engagement process to ensure that goals and policies accurately and equitably reflect needs and interests of Olympia's community members. Draft updates to the chapter were reviewed by the Committee, who have made the following recommendations for consideration in the final draft:

- Refine use of the term 'community'; Clarify implications regarding a specific geographic area or community group versus the city as a whole
- Reconsider policy addressing the impact of encampments on natural areas. Consider removing this language as the more appropriate 'aspirational' goal may be to no longer have community members experiencing homelessness
- Better define the term "Urban Forest" in goal GN3 to clarify inclusion of trees across all landscapes: urban, residential, natural areas; both private and public (and rights-of-way)
- Edit "Clean Air" section header to better reflect the policies included in goal GN7

With these proposed changes, the Committee finds the draft update of the Natural Environment chapter dated June 2024 accurately reflects a vision for a sustainable Olympia that is shared with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. The goals and policies align with those in the Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapter promoting a healthy and resilient natural environment that also supports healthy and resilient communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Alexandrea Safiq, PhD**

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