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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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June 2, 2021

Olympia City Council
c/o Amy Buckler, Strategic Projects Manager
City of Olympia
601 4th Ave E
Olympia, Washington 98507

Sent Via Electronic Mail

RE: Draft Housing Action Plan

Dear council members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed draft housing action plan (HAP). We appreciate your coordination with our agency as you work to fulfill the HB 1923 grant contract to develop this plan.

City staff and Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) have done an excellent job at completing all of the required elements of a HAP outlined in RCW 36.70A.600 (2). The HAP if implemented as designed should help the city meet its housing needs by accommodating the future population demand with a greater diversity of housing options and greater affordability, while addressing equity, displacement and improving affordable housing options.

We especially like the following:

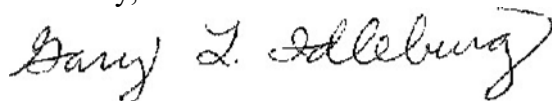
- The regional approach between Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. A regional approach to housing allowed a comprehensive analysis of regional housing needs and supported coordination of strategies among jurisdictions.
- The housing needs assessment and landlord/rental survey they conducted was very good.
- The housing strategy descriptions, which note the actions that should be taken by the city(ies) and evaluates the importance of the strategy toward meeting the housing goals. This provides a strong basis for the HAP strategy recommendations.
- The direct commitment to equity in housing affordability. The analysis of which should allow the city to carefully evaluate and implement specific development regulation and policy changes in the future with an understanding of how to reduce inequity and increase the availability of affordable housing.

- The breadth of the housing strategies and action recommendations that not only address the goals and objectives of the HAP, including addressing equity, reducing housing costs and establishing a permanent funding source for low income-housing, but also includes the implementation status.

We recommend the city make a plan for monitoring the achievement of goals within the HAP as it looks to adoption and continual implementation of this strong set of housing strategies. A monitoring plan would allow the city to measure its progress and evaluate which changes have been effective at meeting the goals, and which might need modifications to meet the intended purpose.

Congratulations to city of Olympia and TRPC staff for the great work the draft housing action plan represents. If you have any questions or need technical assistance, please feel free to contact me at gary.idleburg@commerce.wa.gov or (360) 481.1398. We extend our continued support to the City of Olympia as you review this draft plan for adoption as intended direction for housing policy.

Sincerely,



Gary Idleburg
Senior Planner
Growth Management Services

cc: Amy Buckler, Senior Projects Manager, City of Olympia
Leonard Bauer, Deputy Director-Community Planning, City of Olympia
David Andersen, AICP, Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Steve Roberge, Deputy Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Anne Fritzel, AICP, Senior Housing Planner, Growth Management Services
Laura Hodgson, Associate Housing Planner, Growth Management Services