



# Meeting Agenda

## Land Use & Environment Committee

City Hall  
601 4th Avenue E  
Olympia, WA 98501

Information: 360.753.8244

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Thursday, March 5, 2020

6:00 PM

Washington Middle School  
Cafeteria, 3100 Cain Rd SE

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### Special Meeting

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

2.A [20-0230](#) Tenant-Landlord Work Session

Attachments: [Rental housing challenges and changes](#)

3. **ADJOURNMENT**

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## Land Use & Environment Committee

### Tenant-Landlord Work Session

**Agenda Date:** 3/5/2020  
**Agenda Item Number:** 2.A  
**File Number:**20-0230

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**Type:** discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** In Committee

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**Title**

Tenant-Landlord Work Session

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

Not referred to a committee.

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Hold a work session to hear from the public on rental housing. Work session only; No action requested.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to hear from renters, landlords and other stakeholders on rental housing in Olympia.

**Staff Contact:**

Cary Retlin, Housing Programs Manager, Community Planning & Development, 360.570.3956

**Presenter(s):**

Cary Retlin, City of Olympia

**Background and Analysis:**

In November the City Council had a work session on tenant protections that included discussion of tenant protections brought by advocates in October and tenant protections other cities have adopted.

This work session will have three components: a staff presentation, opportunity for renters and landlords to discuss rental housing, and listening session on rental housing challenges.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

According to Thurston Regional Planning Council, Olympia is now a majority renter city (53 percent). An affordable and predictable rental market is critical for renters and those who own and operate rental housing in the city.

**Options:**

Hear from the public on rental housing challenges.

**Financial Impact:**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Overview of rental housing challenges and recent changes



Olympia's Response to Homelessness  
[olympiawa.gov/homelessness](http://olympiawa.gov/homelessness)

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# Rental Housing Challenges and Changes

Presenter:

Cary Retlin, Housing Programs Manager  
Community Planning & Development

# Housing Challenges for Olympia

- Very low vacancy rate (around 2 percent)
- Demand for housing outpaces production: TRPC projects gap of 600 units a year
- Rents are increasing faster than wages
- 46 percent of Thurston County Renters are cost burdened (Department of Commerce, 2015)
- 53 percent of Olympians are renters (TRPC)
- 90,000 new residents moved to state last year, only 45,000 units built (Office of Financial Management)

# Causes and Effects of Eviction

- Between 2013 and 2017 1 in 55 renters had an eviction
- Black adults are over represented
- Women are evicted more often than men
- Eviction is linked to poverty and rent burden
  - (Rent burden means you pay more than 30 percent of your income to rent)
- In 2017 46 percent of households were rent burdened – half of those paid more than 50 percent to rent

*The State of Evictions: Results from the University of Washington Evictions Project. Thomas, Toomet, Kennedy, Ramiller. 2018. University of Washington. <https://evictions.study/washington/index.html>*

# July 2019 Changes to Residential Landlord Tenant Act (RCW 59.18)

Focused on reducing evictions because of links to homelessness

- Pay or vacate now 14 days (previously 3)
- Limit evictions for non-rent charges (not parking, late fees...)
- Require that payments must first be applied to rent
- 60 day notice for most rent increases (up from 30)
- 120 day notice for major renovations
- Landlord can now serve tenant eviction without a judge's permission
- More opportunities for tenancy reinstatement
  - Limits attorneys fees
  - Creates fund for tenants falling behind on rent

# Recent Changes in Other Cities

**Tumwater** Council started discussing a long list of changes, ranked them and shared with Lacey, Thurston County and Olympia last spring.

- **Federal Way** just passed the Stable Homes initiative
- **Burien** City Council passed similar just cause protections, as well as many others, in October
- **Bellingham** added just cause, added 'source of income' protections, and added penalties for landlords who violate the ordinance
- **Seattle** has the state's most extensive tenant protections. Recent protections prevent discrimination against some people with past criminal convictions
- In addition to some of these protections, **Tacoma** has a renter relocation program that helps fund move-in and other costs for some tenants



# Protections Requested from Tenants at October Olympia City Council Meeting:

- Require option of installment payments for move-in fees and deposits
- Limits to non-refundable fees, security deposits, and pet deposits
- Penalties for landlords that do not comply
- Prohibition of specific retaliations against tenants