



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Accepting the City of Olympia Housing Action Plan

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Title

Approval of a Resolution Accepting the City of Olympia Housing Action Plan

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use & Environment Committee will be considering their recommendation at the June 17, 2021, meeting - which is pending at the time of the publication of the June 22 City Council meeting packet.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a Resolution accepting the City of Olympia Housing Action Plan as proposed. (*pending a recommendation by the Land Use & Environment Committee on June 17)

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a Resolution accepting the City of Olympia Housing Action Plan (*pending a recommendation by the Land Use & Environment Committee on June 17.) The Housing Action Plan includes strategies and actions that promote more housing; more diverse housing types; affordability and stability.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler, Strategic Projects Manager

Katrina Van Every, Senior Planner, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Michael Ambrogio, Senior GIS Specialist, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Background and Analysis:

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature made grant funds available to cities in order to develop housing action plans that promote more housing; more diverse housing types and affordability/stability of residents. In recognition of our shared housing market and the cross-jurisdictional need for affordable housing; the Cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater jointly applied

for and received funds to collaborate on this effort.

With help from Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), the cities completed several deliverables. These are available on the Engage Olympia page and include:

- A housing needs assessment, including a 25-year projection of housing affordable at different income levels.
- A landlord survey, to better understand what residents are paying for rent and how rents are changing.
- A draft regional housing action plan (menu of actions) cities can take to ensure housing stock adequate and affordable for current and future residents.

Subsequently, each city conducted their own public review process to develop city-specific housing action plans. Under contract with the Department of Commerce, Olympia's Housing Action Plan must be completed by June of 2021.

The plan identifies seven housing needs/gaps to be addressed:

- **Affordability** - Reduce the cost of housing for low-income and cost burdened households.
- **Supply** - Increase the inventory of housing for all households.
- **Variety** - Increase the variety of housing sizes and types.
- **Seniors** - Increase the stock of housing options needed for aging seniors.
- **Improvements** - Maintain the existing housing stock, including improving energy efficiency and air quality.
- **Stability** - Increase household wealth by providing safe, stable options for rental housing and pathways to homeownership.
- **Supportive Housing** - Increase permanent housing options for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness and people with disabilities.

The Plan includes over 70 actions the City can take to help meet these housing needs. The City of Olympia has already implemented approximately one third of these actions, at least partially. Additional housing actions are underway this year. Tables in the plan include the following for each action: implementation status, current approach, recommended approach, city resources needed, and a recommended timeframe for implementation.

The actions are organized around six strategies:

1. Increase the supply of permanently affordable housing for households that make 80 percent or less of the area median income.
2. Make it easier for households to access housing and stay housed.

3. Expand overall housing supply by making it easier to build all types of housing projects.
4. Increase the variety of housing choices.
5. Continually build on resources, collaboration and public understanding to improve implementation of housing strategies.
6. Establish a permanent source of funding for low-income housing.

All of these strategies are important for meeting our community's housing needs and should be implemented concurrently.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation of housing actions will be ongoing. Most of the recommended actions will require further exploration and public process to determine if and how the City should carry out the action. For example, any changes to the development code will require a public hearing and recommendation by the Planning Commission.

The Housing Action Plan will also inform the next periodic update to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. This public process is expected to begin in 2021-22.

ACTIONS FOR LOW INCOME AND WORKFORCE HOUSING

The attached Actions for Low Income and Workforce Housing document can be a helpful tool for thinking about which actions in the plan can best support construction and maintenance of very low income or workforce housing. Very low income housing is defined as affordable to households that make at or below 60% area median income. Workforce housing is affordable to households that make between 60-120% of area median income.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Planning Commission was asked to hold a public hearing on the draft plan and provide a letter to the City Council summarizing public comments received. The letter is attached with all written comments received enclosed. Also attached is a summary of results from a housing survey posted to Engage Olympia during March 2021.

Housing affordability and development are major issues of importance to the community. Olympia's recently developed One Community (homeless response) Plan identified building more housing of all types for all incomes as a key priority moving forward.

Options:

1. Move to approve the resolution accepting Olympia's Housing Action Plan as proposed (*pending a recommendation by the Land Use & Environment Committee on June 17)
2. Move to approve the resolution accepting Olympia's Housing Action Plan with modifications (*pending a recommendation by the Land Use & Environment Committee on June 17)
3. Do not approve the resolution accepting the Olympia Housing Action Plan

Financial Impact:

The Washington State Department of Commerce awarded Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater grants totaling \$300,000 for development of housing action plans. Under an interlocal agreement, \$150,000 was directed to the Thurston Regional Planning Council for supportive tasks. Olympia used its remaining \$50,000 to support staff work on the effort. Following adoption of the Housing Action Plan, implementation actions may need additional financial resources to complete.

Attachments:

Resolution
Olympia Housing Action Plan
Commerce Letter
Planning Commission Letter
Survey Summary
Actions for Low Income and Workforce Housing
[Link to Engage Olympia Page](#)