



Planning Commission

Complete Letter Summarizing Public Comments on Olympia Housing Action Plan

Agenda Date: 6/7/2021
Agenda Item Number: 6.A
File Number:21-0551

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Complete Letter Summarizing Public Comments on Olympia Housing Action Plan

Recommended Action

Review draft summary letter for City Council, make any changes, including adding Commissioner comments, and move to give the Chair authority to review and sign the final letter following the meeting.

Report

Issue:

Whether to complete a letter to City Council summarizing public comments on Olympia's Housing Action Plan. The Plan defines 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

Background and Analysis:

On May 17, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Olympia Housing Action Plan. The Commission has been asked to provide a letter to City Council summarizing the public's comments. The Commission is not asked to make a formal recommendation. Chair Millar also attended the May 27 Land Use Committee meeting to provide a report out.

In 2019, the Washington state legislature made grant funds available to cities to develop housing action plans that promote more housing, more diverse housing types and affordability. 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 TRPC, the cities completed several deliverables that provide necessary background information and identify strategies and potential actions the cities can take. These are available on

the attached 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.

At this time each city is conducting their own public review process to determine which actions to include as they adapt the regional draft into city-specific housing action plans. Each city will adopt their own housing action plan by June of 2021, in order to meet the requirements of the grant which funds this work.

Next Steps

A draft letter summarizing oral and written testimony received as part of the Planning Commission's public hearing is attached. The Commission will make any changes to letter this evening. Staff recommends the Commission give the Chair authority to approve the final letter following the meeting, to keep the conversation focused on what important concepts and ideas to convey rather than wordsmithing. The letter will be provided to the Land Use & Environment Committee and City Council in June.

- June 7 - OPC to complete comment letter
- June 17 - Land Use Committee Briefing
- June 22 - City Council Adoption

Following adoption of the Housing Action Plan, public engagement and implementation of housing actions will be ongoing. The City will also hold a public process to update the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan between 2022-2025.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

A report from the housing survey posted at Engage Olympia in March is attached.

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. Review draft summary letter for City Council, make any changes, including adding Commissioner comments, and move to give the Chair authority to review and sign the final letter following the meeting.
2. Review draft summary letter for City Council, make any changes, including adding

Commissioner comments, and vote to approve the final letter this evening.

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 will be directed to the Thurston Regional Planning Council for supportive tasks. Olympia will use its remaining \$50,000 to support staff work on the effort.

Attachments:

Draft Letter

Draft Housing Action Plan

Written Public Comments

Survey report

[Link to Engage Olympia page](#)