



Analysis of Council-Appointed Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committee

Agenda

1. Purpose
2. Primary Mission
3. Workplan and Meeting Structure
4. Recruitment
5. What We're Hearing and Experiencing
6. Discussion and Next Steps

Why This? Why Now?

1. An evaluation of the Council-Appointed Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees has not been performed – requested by Staff Liaisons and Advisory Bodies
2. Methods for engaging and communicating with the public has evolved
3. Staff and volunteers report difficulty achieving a quorum, the need to cancel meetings, and confusion regarding purpose and impact
4. Need to evaluate use of resources for public engagement

What do we want to know?

1. Is Council receiving public input in a way that is effective, meaningful, and inclusive?
2. Are the advisory bodies effectively achieving their purpose?
3. Is the meeting format and frequency effective?

Purpose

Council's Purpose for Advisory Bodies

Council Guidebook

- Assist Council when formulating public policy and transforming policy decisions into action.
 - Standing committees
 - Special Purpose Committees
 - Ad Hoc Task Forces

How a Body is Established

Standing Committees

- Action by the full Council through Ordinance
- Volunteer members recommended to full Council by Community Livability and Public Safety Committee following interviews

Ad Hoc Committee

- Simple majority vote of Council regarding Scope and Term

Appointed Body and Year Established

1969

- Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter (LEOFF) Disability Board

1990's

- Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
- Utility Advisory Committee

2000's

- Parking and Business Improvement Area Board
- Council of Neighborhood Associations

1935

- Planning Commission
- Civil Service Commission

1980's

- Arts Commission
- Design Review Board
- Heritage Commission
- Parks & Recreation Committee

2010's

- Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board
- Independent Salary Commission

2020's

- Cultural Access Advisory Board
- Social Justice & Equity Commission
- Use of Force Event/Community Policing Board
- Olympia Youth Council
- Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Advisory Workgroup

Board

*A group of persons having **managerial, supervisory, investigatory, or advisory powers.***

1. Cultural Access Advisory Board
2. Design Review Board
3. Community Policing Board
4. *LEOFF Disability Board*
5. *Parking & Business Improvement Area Board*

Committee

*A group of people entrusted by a government or other official body with **authority to take on a task or mission.***

1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
2. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
3. Olympia Metropolitan Park District Advisory Committee
4. Park and Recreation Advisory Committee
5. Utility Advisory Committee

Commission

*A body of persons **delegated** to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matters.*

1. Arts Commission
2. Heritage Commission
3. Planning Commission
4. Salary Commission
5. Social Justice & Equity Commission
6. *Civil Service Commission*

Current Boards, Committees, & Commissions

1. Arts Commission
2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
3. Community Policing Board
4. Cultural Access Program Advisory Board
5. Design Review Board
6. Heritage Commission
7. Independent Salary Commission
8. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
9. Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board
10. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
11. Planning Commission
12. Social Justice and Equity Commission
13. Utility Advisory Committee
14. Youth Council

Other Boards, Committees, and Commissions Supported by City Staff

1. Civil Service Commission
2. Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter (LEOFF) Disability Board
3. Parking and Business Improvement Area Board
4. Council of Neighborhood Associations
5. Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Advisory Workgroup
6. *Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee*
7. *Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Collaborative Executive Committee*

Primary Mission by Body



INPUT ON POLICY, RATES & SERVICES

- Arts Commission
- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Social Justice & Equity Commission
- Olympia Youth Council
- Utility Advisory Committee
- Council of Neighborhood Associations
- Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Advisory Group



LAND USE DECISIONS

- Planning Commission
- Design Review Board
- Heritage Commission



FUNDING

- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
- Cultural Access Advisory Committee
- Parking and Business Improvement Area Board



COMPENSATION

- Independent Salary Commission
- Civil Service Commission
- Law Enforcement Office and Firefighter Disability Board



ACCOUNTABILITY

- Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board
- Community Policing Board

Mandated by State or Interlocal Agreement

Required

1. Community Policing Board
2. Design Review Board*
3. Heritage Commission*
4. Planning Commission
5. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
6. Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board

Not Required

1. Arts Commission
2. Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
3. Cultural Access Advisory Board
4. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
5. Independent Salary Commission
6. Social Justice and Equity Commission
7. Utility Advisory Committee
8. Youth Council

Workplan & Meeting Frequency

Setting the Annual Work Plan

Work Plan Items Proposed

1. Required
2. Council requested
3. Staff Initiated
4. Requested by the Advisory Body
4. Housekeeping

2024 Work Plan Content

Council Request	4	Observations • Most work plan items are briefings by staff related to programs, services, and regulatory updates • Two of the four Council requested items were related to the Comprehensive Plan • The items requested by the bodies are interest-based regarding other City Programs and Services
Staff Initiated	33	
Advisory Body Request	21	

Work Plan Approval Process

1. Drafted by Staff
2. Developed with Committee
3. Reviewed by Community Livability and Public Safety Committee then forward to Council
4. Approved by Council

Council-Appointed Body	Planned Meetings	Canceled (2023)	Canceled (2024)
Design Review	24	11	16
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory	6	0	0
Heritage Commission	12	5	5
Planning Commission	24	4	3
Lodging Tax Advisory	3	1	2
Parks & Rec Advisory	8	2	1
Arts Commission	12	2	1
Social Justice and Equity Commission	12	2	0
Metropolitan Park District Advisory Committee	2	0	0
Utility Advisory	8	+2	0
Youth Advisory Council	12	0	0
Cultural Access Advisory Board	As Needed		
Salary Commission	As Needed		
Use of Force Board	As Needed		

Meeting Frequency & Attendance

- Number of planned meetings is not required in OMC with exception of Salary Commission; however, expectation is that they meet monthly
- Heritage Commission canceled half of their meetings in 2023 and 2024
- Design Review Committee canceled 70% of their meetings in 2024
- Social Justice and Equity Commission 4 people absent at 50% of meetings; 6 commissioners resigned since inception (2021)

What We're Hearing & Experiencing

What We're Hearing

Advisory Committees

- 78% agree their workplan is meaningful
- 74-75% agrees that the Council values their work, and it advances the Council's priorities
- 2% agree they meet too frequently
- 93% enjoy serving on the Committee; 89% are satisfied with the committee's work
- Desire to regularly connect with Council regarding their impact and purpose

Staff

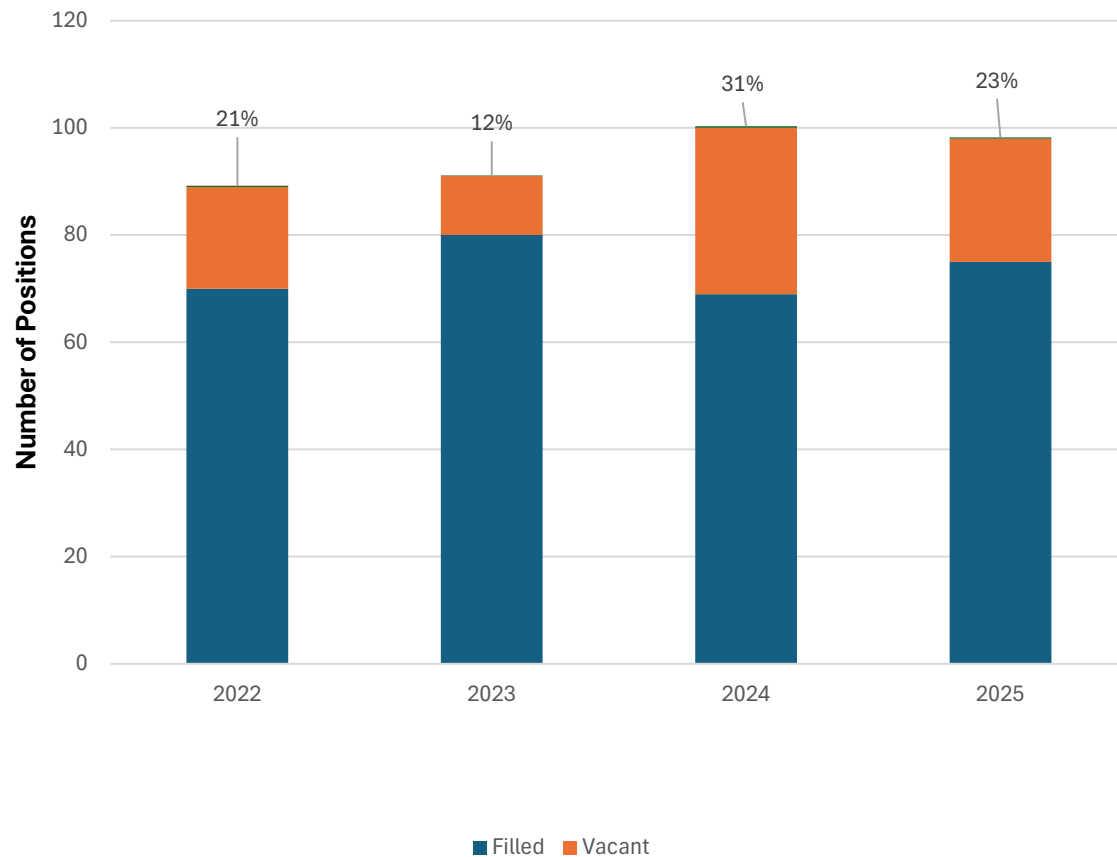
- 38% agree their workplan is meaningful
- 54% agrees that the Council values their work, and it advances the Council's priorities
- 16% believe they meet too frequently (50% were neutral)

What We are Experiencing

- Over-represented with residents who are familiar with government policy and processes
- High turnover on some bodies
- Challenge meeting quorum
- Staff is implementing new engagement techniques on major, complex policy work
- Maintaining Advisory Bodies is resource intensive

Annual Recruitment

Filled vs. Vacant Positions by Year



- In 2024 and 2025, 4 out of 12 bodies had 3 or more vacancies
- In 2024 and 2025, the number of people seeking an additional term was far less than the number of vacancies
- Bodies with the highest turnover:
 - Heritage Commission
 - Social Justice and Equity Commission
 - Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Bodies with the least turnover:
 - Use of Force
 - Cultural Access
 - Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
 - Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Advisory Board

What the Experts are saying

Public engagement is premised on the belief that everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that will affect their life. For some, the logistics of engagement may conflict with responsibilities.

- *Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement*
Simon Fraser University

"It is a simple but sobering fact of life that most experiences with Advisory Committees – after an initial two-to-three-years' honeymoon – are bad experiences both for the agency and for the potentially affected interests."

- Hans Bleiker,
Institute for Participatory Management and Planning

City Approach: Meaningful and Inclusive Engagement

- Elevate diverse and inclusive engagement
- Involve people who are most impacted by the policy, issue, or plan being considered
- Establish respectful, authentic, and trusting relationships that can be sustained over time
- Co-create with communities to address barriers to participation
- Adapt engagement strategies as needed based on experience

City Efforts to Improve Equitable & Inclusive Engagement on Public Policy

Examples:

1. Transportation Master Plan
2. Social Justice and Equity – Founding Members Work Group
3. Reimagining Public Safety – Work Group
4. Community Oversight of Law Enforcement – Commission AND Community Work Group
5. Olympia Strong
6. Youth Council Establishment

Tools & Techniques: Engage Olympia, Story Map, social media, temporary work groups, partner with historically under-represented communities, tailored engagement, prioritize accessibility

Who Participates on Advisory Bodies

- Open to residents
- Each body is 9 to 11 members with 3-year terms (total of 9 years)
- Individuals choose to apply

Why This? Why Now?

1. An evaluation of the Community-Member Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees has not been performed – requested by Staff Liaisons and Advisory Bodies
2. Methods for engaging and communicating with the public have evolved
3. Staff and volunteers report difficulty achieving a quorum, the need to cancel meetings, and confusion regarding purpose and impact
4. Need to evaluate use of resources for meaningful public engagement

Discussion

1. Affirm Public Engagement Goals
2. Reflect on Research
3. Identify Key Take Aways
4. Develop Options

Discussion Prompts

Affirm Engagement Goals:

1. Meaningful input to guide policy and decision-making
2. Equitable and inclusive engagement
3. Impactful participation and experiences for members
4. Sustainable use of resources (staff and funding)

Discussion:

Question #1: *What are the key takeaways from the information shared and/or your experience?*

Question #2: *What's most important to you in how we achieve these outcomes?*