



City Council Referral Request

Tracking Number
(Provided by Staff)

Click or tap
here to enter
text.

Date of
Referral

12/29/2025

Requester Councilmember Dani
Madrone, Councilmember
Clark Gilman, Mayor Pro
Tem Yến Huỳnh

Referral To ☒ Study Session

☐ Staff

☐ Community Livability & Public Safety

☐ Land Use & Environment Committee

☐ Work Session

☐ Committee of the Chairs

☐ Finance Committee

☐ Advisory Committee (type here)

Problem Statement

A clear concise description of the issue(s) that need(s) to be addressed.

Food security and its connection to our local food system has come up over the past several years with recent threats to federal food assistance, the empty shelves we experienced during the pandemic, and the City's purchase of Spooner's Farm to develop into soccer fields. Issues surrounding food security often rise to the surface during a crisis, but there are actions the City can take that can bolster the local food system and soften the impacts when there are disruptions.

Aside from some long-standing investments from the city, including the farmer's market and community gardens in two parks, for many years, the goals in Olympia's comprehensive plan pertaining to local food production, urban agriculture, and food security were largely unaddressed.

Recently, Olympia has advanced some work that addresses these issues, but in a piecemeal manner that needs a broader assessment of community needs and a coordinated approach. These efforts include: mapping of soils and urban agriculture resources with the Thurston Conservation District (TCD), community gardens (both the City-run gardens – Sunrise and Yauger – and those supported by TCD), updates to City code for urban agriculture, and the planning of an urban farm park that has led to conversations with the Olympia School District on the Freedom Farm

The local food system is important to all Olympians—we all have a role in participating.

Request

What is being requested to assist in addressing the issue described in the problem statement?

The development of a food system plan for Olympia that:

- Describes the importance of food to Olympia's culture and heritage
- Shares a snapshot of data that speaks to the current trends and needs of the food system, including food production, consumption, challenges with access (particularly for fresh and local foods), and the organizations currently engaged
- Reviews planning efforts by cities of comparable size/resources (examples include Cottage Grove, OR, Kingston, NY, Rochester, NY, Tumwater, WA, Guelph, Ontario, and others), while borrowing ideas from larger cities with scalable concepts
- Engages local organizations and neighborhood associations, building on the community engagement that has already been conducted by Olympia, Tumwater, and other organizations
- Leverages community engagement with opportunities to educate on our current food system, the importance of a resilient food system, and how people can help strengthen it
- Engages with the Squaxin Island Tribe and immigrant communities on needs for culturally relevant foods
- Considers how public land can be used for community food production, including pollinator habitat
- Proposes updated policies related to food that can be adopted into the Comp Plan via amendment
- Identifies clear next steps and resources needed for Olympia to support and advance this work, including partnership opportunities with community organizations

Relationship to City Business or Proposed City Business/Services

Describe how this will enhance what is already offered and/or what it will provide that is not currently available. Why is this the City's issue to address? How will this create a more adaptive and resilient organization? How will this enhance the City's work to further equity, climate, and social justice?

Food is an important component of our local culture and heritage. As an urban community, Olympia has a role in the local food system – from production to consumption. A food system plan will compliment and coordinate the efforts recently taken or currently underway. It will create more resilience for our community when there are disruptions to the food supply or to food assistance, ensuring that people have access to fresh and healthy foods. Additionally, more opportunities to participate in the local food system will give people greater appreciation for and more autonomy over what they consume.

Connection to Comprehensive Plan

Choose all that apply.

☐ **Public Safety**

Ensure that all Olympians feel safe and receive reliable, compassionate care.

☒ **Community Livability**

Enrich quality of life and foster belonging for all who live, work, or spend time in Olympia.

☒ **Environmental Stewardship**

Preserve and enhance Olympia's natural resources.

☒ **Economy**

Promote a thriving and diversified economy with pathways to prosperity for everyone.

☐ **Organizational Excellence**

Deliver exceptional services and programs that are responsive to the needs of the community.

☒ **Well-Planned City**

Plan for, construct and maintain a built environment that ensures the wellbeing of current and future generations.

Options

Describe proposed options for moving the idea or issue forward for the meeting body to consider.

This work will need the support of a consultant to design and carry out the planning process. This work should engage the full Council, as the Food Systems Plan will touch the work of all committees. There is broad interest across the Council.

Timing

Is this issue time sensitive, are there other timing factors to consider?

While Olympia's Comprehensive Plan has long held goals and policies that relate to local food production and food security, the most recent update includes a specific goal to develop a food system plan. This topic has risen in importance to the City Council because of treats to federal SNAP food assistance benefits. Additionally, local organizations continue to come forward with needs to support the local food system and access to healthy food, often due to lack of federal funding or general lack of access to space and resources.

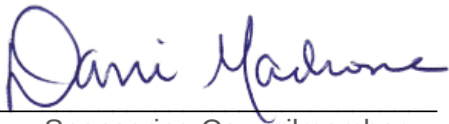
Supporting Documentation (Work Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Parks Plan, etc)

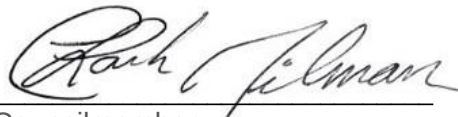
Are there documents that support your request or should be considered?

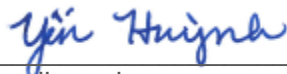
Comprehensive plan goal **PL29.16** Develop a Food System Plan for the Olympia Community

Councilmember Signatures

Two Councilmembers must support the request including the Chair of the Committee of referral. (Cannot be a committee quorum unless discussed at an open public meeting of the committee.)


Sponsoring Councilmember

1. 
Councilmember

2. 
Councilmember

Staff Supplement

Staff will review the request to generate administrative impacts to be considered as part of proposal (staff to initial after their review):

Budget Impacts: Click or tap here to enter text.

Legal Review (to include regulatory authority): Click or tap here to enter text.

Policy implications: Click or tap here to enter text.

Implementation Considerations: Click or tap here to enter text.

Staff Liaison: Click or tap here to enter text.