



OLYMPIA

2045



Olympia 2045: Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

May 2025

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement

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All photographs provided by City of Olympia.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CFP	Capital Facilities Plan
City	City of Olympia
CRA	Community Renewal Area
DES	Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
DOE	Washington Department of Energy
draft EIS	City of Olympia Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DTS	Olympia Downtown Strategy
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EIS	environmental impact statement
GFC	General Facility Charges
GHG	greenhouse gas
GMA	Washington State Growth Management Act
LID	low-impact development
LOS	Levels of Service
LOTT Clean Water Alliance	Lacey, Olympia Tumwater, and Thurston County Clean Water Alliance
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OFD	Olympia Fire Department
OPD	Olympia Police Department
OMC	Olympia Municipal Code
Port	Port of Olympia
PUD	Planned Unit Development
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SMA	Shoreline Management Act
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
STEP	septic tank effluent pump
TMP	Transportation Master Plan
Triangle	Capital Mall Triangle subarea
TRPC	Thurston Regional Planning Council
UGA	Urban Growth Area
WAC	Washington Administrative Code

Fact Sheet

Project Name

Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Olympia resides within the traditional lands of the Steh-Chass band of Indigenous people of the Squaxin Island Tribe, who were removed from their land for the settlement that became Olympia. The Tribe has offered these words for acknowledgement:

The Squaxin Island Tribe's habitation of what is now Olympia spans thousands of years. The ancestral families who lived and thrived here named it Steh-Chass and occupied prosperous villages along the shores. Archaeological findings of ancestral artifacts in the area suggest habitation by Squaxin ancestors since the retreat of the glaciers during the last Ice Age. Today, the Squaxin people continue stewardship of these ancestral lands, from the Deschutes watershed and what is now Budd Inlet. The Steh-Chass (Squaxin) continue to call themselves "People of the Water" because of the bounty of the region's waterways and artesian waters, which have sustained the people for millennia.

The City of Olympia (City) will continue to strengthen its government-to-government relationship with the Squaxin Island Tribe to support shared environmental, economic, and community goals.

Objectives of the Proposal

The proposal evaluated in this EIS is the *Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update* to meet State, regional, and local goals and requirements under the Growth Management Act. The desired outcome of the EIS is the selection of a preferred alternative, the identification of potential adverse environmental impacts, and the identification of adjustments or mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental impacts. The assessment of potential adverse environmental impacts does not specifically consider or address past environmental impacts, whether positive or negative.

Alternatives

Alternatives are different ways of achieving a proposal's purpose and serve as the basis for environmental analysis relative to elements of the environment. Alternatives under consideration in this EIS provide a range of capacities to accommodate housing and job growth, housing types, and investments in infrastructure throughout Olympia and its Urban Growth Area. Each alternative is briefly described in the following subsections.

Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1 (no action), the proposed revisions to the City's existing Comprehensive Plan (last updated in 2021) would not be adopted. Alternative 1 continues the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the two other High Density Neighborhood Overlay areas. Alternative 1 has capacity for adding 14,480 new housing units over the 2025-to-2045 planning horizon. This is above the growth target for Olympia, which is 14,295 new units, but it does not meet other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types. Alternative 1 would not incorporate new state climate change and housing requirements.

Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

Under Alternative 2 (adopt updates), the proposed revisions to the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan would be adopted. Alternative 2 continues the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the other two High -Density Neighborhood Overlay areas, but with additional housing types and densities allowed in the other residential and mixed-use areas. Alternative 2 meets other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types. Alternative 2 accommodates the anticipated population growth of approximately 16,790 new residents and the need for approximately 14,295 new housing units. Alternative 2 would incorporate new state climate change and housing requirements.

Project Proponent

City of Olympia, Washington

State Environmental Policy Act Lead Agency

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Date of Issuance for the Draft EIS

May 13, 2025

Draft EIS Public Review and Comment Period

Following preparation of the draft EIS, the document will be made available to the public for review and comment. Fundamental to comment response during the evaluation phase is identifying substantive comments from observational or personal opinions and developing satisfactory responses to each type of comment. Consideration of all comments is essential in creating a defensible quality document providing direction for future decision-making by the City.

How to Comment

Affected agencies, Tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this draft EIS for the Comprehensive Plan from May 13, 2025, to June 13, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PST. To view the draft EIS or learn about public participation opportunities, please see the project website at www.olympiawa.gov/compplan.

All written comments should be directed to:

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Submittal of comments by email is preferred. Please include in the subject line: "Olympia 2045 Draft EIS Comments."

Email comments should be directed to:

Casey Schaufler, Associate Planner at Olympia2045@ci.olympia.wa.us

Subsequent Environmental Review and Final Action

The Final EIS is expected to be published in June 2025.

Document Availability and Cost

The draft EIS is available online at: www.olympiawa.gov/compplan

Printed copies of the draft EIS are available for review at no cost at the following locations:

City Hall Permit Center
Second Floor
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Additional copies may be purchased for the cost of reproduction at:

City Hall Permit Center
Second Floor
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Related Documents

Background data and materials used for this draft EIS are listed in Chapter 15.

Prior Environmental Reviews

City of Olympia Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan and Planned Action Final Environmental Impact Statement (City of Olympia 2024a)

Olympia 2045 SEPA Checklist (City of Olympia 2023a)

Olympia 2021 Comprehensive Plan Amendment SEPA Checklist (City of Olympia 2021a)

Revised Olympia 2013 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (City of Olympia 2014)

Olympia 1994 Comprehensive Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (City of Olympia 1994)

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The City of Olympia (City) is updating its Comprehensive Plan to prepare for expected growth in accordance with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and preparing the *Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS).

The growth strategy established in the prior periodic update in 2014 focused on concentrating most new growth in the city's three High-Density Neighborhood Overlay areas. Additional, although less, growth was planned for other residential neighborhoods through infill development. This growth strategy supported investments in transportation as well as other infrastructure and capital facilities. The proposed update to the City's Comprehensive Plan will plan for growth of an additional 16,790 people, 14,295 new housing units, and roughly 20,000 jobs by 2045. The EIS considers a range of approaches to distributing growth that aligns with community values for equity, climate change, and housing for all income levels.



To maintain a healthy and desirable community and still accommodate the projected residential and employment growth of the next 20 years, higher densities need to be accompanied by improved urban amenities. This includes accommodating more infill housing, continued improvements to the park system, more sidewalks and street trees, and the preservation of enough wildlife habitat to allow diverse native species to survive and thrive.

Olympia will also have to invest more of its financial resources into these sorts of capital improvements than in the past. At the same time, the City will need to address expanding demands upon traditional city facilities, such as sanitary sewers, drinking water supplies, the street system, stormwater control, and solid waste disposal—all in ways that are economically and environmentally sustainable.

This EIS includes plan alternatives, environmental analysis of those alternatives, and identification of impacts and mitigation measures. The EIS includes a no action alternative (Alternative 1) and an action alternative (Alternative 2).

1.2 Comprehensive Plan Objectives and EIS Objectives

Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan provides descriptive text with supporting goals, policies, and strategies to ensure that the city is a livable, welcoming, and vibrant place that maintains a high quality of life as the community grows over the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan looks ahead to the challenges Olympia needs to address and to the opportunities Olympia has to ensure that all people can thrive. The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework to ensure the following for the people who live, work, learn, shop, and play in Olympia:

- They can find a variety of affordable and attainable housing options.
- They have access to education, jobs, and economic opportunity.
- They enjoy parks and green space.
- They are able to get around using a range of transportation options.
- They have a resilient built and natural environment.
- They receive equitable and quality public services and capital facilities that support their needs.

The proposal evaluated in this EIS is the *Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update*. The desired outcome of the EIS is the selection of a preferred alternative, the identification of potential adverse environmental impacts, and the identification of adjustments or mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate any adverse environmental impacts. The assessment of potential adverse environmental impacts does not specifically consider or address past environmental impacts, whether positive or negative.

1.3 Summary of Alternatives

Alternatives are different ways of achieving a proposal’s purpose and serve as the basis for environmental analysis relative to elements of the environment. Alternatives under consideration in this EIS provide a range of capacities to accommodate housing and job growth, housing types, and investments in infrastructure citywide and in the UGA. Each alternative is summarized in the following subsections and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Alternative 1 would continue the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the two other High-Density Neighborhood Overlay areas. Alternative 1 has capacity for adding 14,480 new housing units over the 2025-to-2045 planning horizon. This is above the growth target for Olympia, which is 14,295 new units, but does not meet other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types.

1.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

Alternative 2 would continue the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the other two High-Density Neighborhood Overlay areas but with additional housing types and densities allowed in the other residential and mixed-use areas. Alternative 2 meets other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types. The proposed Comprehensive Plan update accommodates the anticipated population growth of approximately 16,790 new residents and the need for approximately 14,295 new housing units.

1.4 Summary of Key Findings, Impacts, and Potential Mitigation

Table 1-1 summarizes the anticipated impacts of Alternatives 1 and 2. Mitigation measures are summarized in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-1
Summary of Impacts**

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
Natural Environment	
Development may remove native vegetation and increase stormwater runoff, noise, light, and invasive species. A shift from sensitive to more disturbance-tolerant plant and wildlife species may occur. Traffic could increase emissions to air.	Similar to Alternative 1; however, the proposed updates could benefit natural resources by placing more emphasis on salmon protection, management of urban forests, green infrastructure, and habitat for priority groups of species.
Updating older developments to meet current standards such as LID and tree protection may improve environmental quality.	Similar to Alternative 1, with potentially greater improvements in environmental quality due to added emphasis on salmon protection, management of urban forests, green infrastructure, and habitat for priority groups of species.
Climate Action and Resilience	
New initiatives aimed at addressing GHG emission reductions and climate resiliency that were developed in response to the 2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and other previous studies will not be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.	New Climate Action and Resilience chapter would incorporate new initiatives aimed at addressing GHG emission reductions and climate resiliency that were developed in response to the 2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and other previous studies.
Land Use and Urban Design	
Expansion of the UGA is not proposed. The city has enough capacity to accommodate projected population growth. City would continue to implement plans for increased densities and additional housing in designated areas, with a focus on multimodal transportation. Higher density housing near major streets and commercial areas would allow residents to take advantage of employment opportunities, transit, and other services.	Similar to Alternative 1 in that only minimal land use or zoning changes are proposed and no UGA expansion is proposed. The updates would also capture recent City initiatives and address newer state regulations for more affordable housing by encouraging residential infill with diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles.

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
Selected major streets would gradually transform into attractive, higher density, mixed residential and commercial Urban Corridors with frequent transit service.	Similar to Alternative 1, with additional emphasis on infill development and growing outward from core areas.
Potential short-term and localized impacts on surrounding land uses (such as noise and restricted access) during construction of transportation infrastructure, housing, and other developments.	Same as Alternative 1.
Infill development in commercial areas, districts, and villages would be expected to result in more attractive commercial areas for pedestrians and customers, providing a mix of commercial, residential, and entertainment or recreational uses.	Similar to Alternative 1, with more emphasis on adaptive reuse and commercial infill of vacant or underutilized buildings that would create opportunities for small local businesses while promoting historic preservation. New policy to incorporate small scale neighborhood retail uses and the addition of public art and public spaces along corridors would provide more opportunities for community engagement and creating a sense of place.
Goals and policies promote strengthening building code requirements for energy efficiency during construction and operation.	Same as Alternative 1.
The addition of small scale multifamily development units in historically mostly single-unit housing developments could result in short-term adverse effects to existing residents from limited access to streets, increase in noise, and changes in views during construction, as well as increases in traffic from an increased population density in the long term.	Same as Alternative 1.
School goals and policies would remain in Public Services chapter. No added emphasis on multimodal access to schools.	Goals and policies regarding schools would be moved into Land Use and Urban Design chapter. Added emphasis on locating new schools where students can easily walk or bike to school and where school employees and students can commute on public transit. Anticipated benefits to neighboring communities due to increased access to education and potential community use of school spaces outside of school hours.
No updates to better recognize the contributions of historically marginalized groups or to more directly address historic and ongoing inequitable distribution of resources across the city.	More focus on supporting efforts to more equitably distribute resources geographically and among community members (e.g., resources for wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation, tree canopy, community gardens, urban green spaces). Anticipated beneficial impacts to physical and mental health for all community members, especially in neighborhoods with disadvantaged and overburdened communities.
Housing	
Recent State requirements for affordable housing would not be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.	New Housing chapter created in the Comprehensive Plan would comply with current State requirements, consolidate housing goals and policies in one place, and capture ongoing and new housing initiatives in Olympia since 2021.

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
<p>Long-term changes to housing opportunities and patterns that aim to create a denser, more diverse, and more compact city to accommodate anticipated population growth. Focusing on residential density growth along multimodal urban corridors with frequent transit service can reduce household transportation costs and improve access to employment, services, and amenities.</p>	<p>Similar to Alternative 1, with updated goals and policies that further encourage siting development near public services to improve accessibility for residents. Policies to encourage a variety of housing types and costs, including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special-needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings, would support affordability in housing options.</p>
<p>Potential long-term benefits through increased opportunities for home ownership and wealth building among diverse demographic groups. Increased housing supply could help reduce housing and renting costs influenced by market forces in the medium to long term.</p>	<p>New policies added to be consistent with the Housing Action Plan, including donating, leasing, or selling surplus City-owned land to developers for low-income housing. New policies to address housing for all income levels, addressing racial disparities and anti-displacement.</p>
<p>Policies for new developments to be compatible with adjacent lower density housing and to conform with topography could reduce adverse impacts on the character of existing neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Support to revitalize deteriorating residential areas by preserving historic features, and providing assistance and incentives to help low-income residents rehabilitate properties, would help preserve the character of existing residential neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Changes in density limits to support infill could have potential adverse effects on home dwellers of less densely developed areas, who may experience more traffic and noise, particularly during daily commute periods.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Policies to support special-needs populations who have difficulty securing housing would offer better opportunities for social integration, could reduce impacts similar to redlining, and could result in safer and more vibrant neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Potential short-term adverse effects on existing residential areas during construction of new housing, such as temporary road closures, noise, and air quality impacts from construction machinery.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Policies to provide more medium-term housing options for renters and increase housing supply could help reduce rental costs influenced by market forces in the medium to long term.</p>	<p>New goals and policies would support tenant protections to prevent displacement and increase housing stability. These policies could have beneficial effects on housing stability for tenants who lack protections, and particularly for historically disadvantaged communities.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	
<p>Potential reduction of total vehicle miles traveled as a result of the improvement of transportation infrastructure accompanied by changes in land use designations and patterns that encourage infill development.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
A more connected grid of smaller streets would be expected to shorten trips. Investments in high-frequency transit and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on urban and strategic corridors would increase connectivity. Alternative access to parks, schools, medical facilities, grocery stores, public buildings, dense employment centers, dense residential areas, and transit facilities would be expected to reduce single occupancy vehicle use.	Similar to Alternative 1. Requiring new development to ensure a supply of mobility units could further improve multimodal transportation infrastructure.
Construction of new streets in accordance with the 2016 Complete Streets Ordinance would increase non-motorized traffic and perceived sense of place and safety.	Same as Alternative 1.
Measures to improve equity in transportation would occur but would not be updated to current State standards.	The proposed updates would bring the Transportation chapter up to current State standards for equity and access.
Traffic-calming devices and retrofitting of existing streets would improve access and safety for individuals with or without a walking aid, using a wheelchair to roll, riding a bicycle, taking transit, or driving, consistent with ADA requirements and the City of Olympia <i>Engineering Design and Development Standards</i> .	Similar to Alternative 1. An added emphasis on access and prioritizing pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users over single occupancy vehicles could have beneficial impacts on transportation safety and equity. A new policy to encourage Intercity Transit to maintain a fare-free system and support connections beyond Thurston County would also expand access. Added language to encourage construction of bulbouts, crossing islands, roundabouts, and beacon systems would reduce travel times and improve safety.
Short-term impacts such as traffic detours, lane closures, and delays could occur during transportation construction projects.	Same as Alternative 1.
Parks, Arts, and Recreation	
Parks and recreation facilities may be affected by nearby construction projects as a result of construction traffic, dust, noise, or reduced access to the facilities (for example, if roadway improvements are undertaken at a park access point). Conversely, construction for parks and recreation facilities may have similar short-term impacts on surrounding land uses depending on the scale of the project.	Same as Alternative 1.
Development of new recreation facilities, such as sports fields, may lead to a permanent increase in traffic, noise, and nighttime lighting near these facilities. If currently undeveloped areas are converted to developed recreational facilities, this could result in a loss of native vegetation and an increase in impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff.	Same as Alternative 1.

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
Public art initiatives may cause temporary construction disturbances, such as noise and minor disruptions to pedestrian pathways, during the installation of new artworks. These impacts are expected to be minimal and outweighed by the long-term cultural and economic benefits.	Same as Alternative 1.
Lack of increased emphasis on equitable distribution of parks, arts, and recreation resources across the city and UGA could allow existing inequities to continue for a longer time.	Proposed updates emphasize the equitable distribution of parks, arts, and recreation resources across the city and UGA (locate within a 0.5-mile or 10-minute walk for all residents). Support for new large recreation projects (Percival Landing reconstruction, West Bay Park and Trail, Karen Fraser Woodland Trail, Armory Creative Campus, and Yelm Highway Community Park) would help bolster parks, arts, and recreation opportunities.
Utilities	
Utility services would continue to be provided under existing regulations and management plans. Existing utilities have the capacity to serve anticipated demand during applicable planning timeframes.	Same as Alternative 1.
Routine system maintenance and capital project construction could result in short-term impacts such as noise, stormwater contamination, equipment exhaust, and changing traffic patterns.	Same as Alternative 1.
Not adopting updates may inadvertently continue inequities in utility service.	Proposed updates include ensuring that equity is considered in ranking capital projects. Social equity and affordable housing goals would be supported by directing each utility to consider new rate equity programs for low-income households.
Conversion of septic to sewer and phasing out Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) systems in coordination with the LOTT Clean Water Alliance would continue as a priority.	Same as Alternative 1.
Economy	
Tourism will continue to be encouraged as a community revenue source. The City will continue to use the Section 108 loan program to promote economic investment, job creation, and redevelopment activities, which could benefit low- to moderate-income people.	Similar to Alternative 1, with added emphasis on achieving the desired outcomes of the Olympia Strong Plan (economic development through community partner resources, youth and dislocated worker engagement, greater housing security, and small business startups; City of Olympia 2024b). New goals and policies to diversify the local economy and encourage the support of local businesses may reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the city. Higher prices for local goods and services could lead to supply shortages and higher consumer cost if local businesses are not able to produce at the efficiency level of larger businesses.

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
<p>The cost of new or improved public infrastructure would continue to be balanced against opportunities to incentivize private investments that could result in increased revenues in the long term. Short-term City spending could lead to long-term increases in revenue from new businesses and tourism opportunities). Public infrastructure investments would have financial costs but could result in temporary job creation for construction contracts (especially if the workforce is locally employed).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Streamlining the permitting process could reduce the financial and technical resources and time needed to construct new projects and increase investors' willingness to foster new development in the city.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Potential for minor, short-term disruptions to businesses during construction (for example, temporary access disruptions; noise, visual, or air quality impacts from construction equipment).</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Updated goals and policies to further diversify the local economy would not be adopted.</p>	<p>Updated goals to increase the presence of Evergreen State College and South Puget Sound Community College in the Downtown area could limit the space available for dining or other professional services but could also increase foot traffic that would benefit the economy of the Downtown area.</p> <p>Additional focus on local artists and technology-based practitioners could result in long-term benefits from increased tourism and additional job opportunities in the creative sector. Long-term beneficial impacts on the economy could result from City and individual investments to improve public spaces.</p> <p>Attracting and growing headquarters for businesses that provide environmentally friendly products while also paying family wages could provide some economic benefit. However, headquarters alone are often separated from company operations and may not result in the anticipated beneficial impacts to the economy unless headquarters with business operations are included. A focus on companies delivering environmentally friendly products could limit opportunities for business and employment growth because it may discourage the presence of businesses that are not branded as such, including technology companies.</p>

Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Adopt Updates
Public Safety	
<p>Temporary disruptions to fire and police services could occur if street closures are necessary during the construction of new development projects. A more dense population could result in added capacity to the Code Enforcement program and other community-based efforts that enhance perceived public safety.</p>	<p>Similar to Alternative 1.</p>
<p>Updated goals and policies related to access and equity would not be adopted.</p>	<p>Updates related to improving access and equity could have minor beneficial effects on public safety by increasing service capacity and reducing response times. New public safety communications programs would help to better inform the public and track crime trends throughout the city.</p> <p>Reducing the use of force interactions through the adoption of best practices and new civilian-based teams could have a beneficial effect on perceived safety in communities, including historically disadvantaged and overburdened populations.</p>
Capital Facilities	
<p>The City would continue to encourage growth in centralized areas and reduce sprawl into adjacent resource and rural lands in Thurston County, but updates consistent with recent legislation and local initiatives would not be adopted, such as efforts to improve accessibility and equity on capital projects, incorporate climate resiliency, pursue public/private partnerships, and prioritize capital projects with multiple benefits to the public.</p>	<p>The updates would require that capital projects consider equity and accessibility; prioritize infrastructure planning and investments to support and accommodate infill development; and address hazards intensified by climate change, including sea level rise, flooding, drought, heat, and wildfire.</p>
<p>Potential impacts of infrastructure development include increased stormwater runoff, traffic, noise, light, and invasive species. These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative 1.</p>

**Table 1-2
Summary of Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation Measures Applicable to All Resources
Continue to update and enforce City codes, standards, and manuals to reflect evolving best available science; revisions to state and federal requirements; updated local management plans; and changed conditions.
Continue to apply and enforce City impact fee requirements for development (e.g., for parks, transportation, and schools).
Continue to apply and enforce City codes and standards for civil enforcement to ensure the quality of life and well-being of all populations, including disadvantaged and overburdened communities.
Mitigation Measures for Natural Environment
When evaluating City opportunities for restoration projects or the acquisition of property or development rights for open space, habitat, recreation, or other purposes, consider ecological processes and connections across the watershed.
Consult with local wildlife experts about effective and sustainable beaver management practices that also minimize impacts to vegetation and habitat. Consider developing a “menu” of management options appropriate to various situations and supporting an understanding of the likely federal, state, and local permitting requirements for each option.
Consider developing guidance for future planting projects that recommends plant species and management practices expected to increase resiliency to climate change. Consult with local restoration experts and incorporate recent information about climate change effects on native vegetation communities.
Development and implementation of an Urban Forest Plan will help to improve the city’s tree canopy and could improve air quality over the long term.
Climate Action and Resilience
When evaluating City opportunities for restoration projects or the acquisition of property or development rights for open space, habitat, recreation, or other purposes, consider the impacts of climate change to ecological processes, public safety, and infrastructure.
Address flood vulnerabilities through policies, urban planning, and regulations. Strategies may be developed by project partners individually or in collaboration (e.g., coordinated emergency responses).
Assess data and knowledge gaps in understanding of GHG emission sectors and natural hazard preparedness.
Develop policies to ensure that residents and businesses have access to resources to meet daily needs while working toward net-zero GHG emission commitments.
Expand transportation networks that enable people to travel effectively by alternate modes of transport (e.g., walking, biking, and public transit) instead of personal vehicles.
Increase access to emission-reducing technologies such as electric vehicles and solar powered infrastructure.
Implement policies that promote access to green spaces that support clean air.
Develop public-private partnerships to ensure adequate indoor facilities are available for outdoor events impacted by extreme heat or wildfire smoke.
Develop incentives and technical assistance programs to encourage reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris.
Adopt a climate implementation strategy that assigns and tracks timeframe, cost, and primary responsibility for the goals and policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Mitigation Measures for Land Use and Urban Design
Encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of historic trees and landscapes that have significance to the community or a neighborhood.
Use the subarea planning process described in the Public Participation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and prepare specific plans for Opportunity/Focus Areas of the community.
Coordinate with Tribes and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to identify required mitigation measures for proposed impacts on historic resources. Consult with Tribes on historic and cultural resource measures.
Apply best management practices for handling and proper disposal of hazardous materials.
Continue to apply district-specific mitigation measures outlined in planning documents to avoid or minimize potential impacts.
Continue government-to-government coordination and collaboration to support the long term commitments established in the 2021 accord between the Squaxin Island Tribe and the City of Olympia.
Encourage additional cooperation between the State and the City, among the local governments, and with special-purpose governments such as InterCity Transit, the Port and the school districts.
Require residential capacity to be replaced elsewhere in the urban area if a future proposal would remove land with residential capacity from that use rather than accommodating it in the rural area.
Consider application of the City's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program when new subdivisions with a density above eight units per acre in an R 4-8 District are proposed.
Increase residential development within the wider urban area by continuing efforts to expand the range of housing type options (e.g., duplexes, cottage housing, and accessory dwellings) in predominantly single-family neighborhoods where existing infrastructure is in place to accommodate the additional units .
Identify infill properties where lack of local sewer connection or other infrastructure-related site constraints are a barrier to development. Make strategic investments to extend utility and other infrastructure to areas where there is not enough future development potential to pay for the improvements that will support higher density growth. Consider use of latecomer agreements to help recover such costs over time.
Through interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, encourage adaptive reuse and commercial occupancy in existing underutilized or vacant buildings to increase the economic vitality of Downtown.
Create educational programs and partnerships surrounding the implementation of community gardens and urban agriculture to address and plan for climate impacts such as drought and extreme heat and encourage the production of locally grown climate-friendly foods.
Mitigation Measures for Housing
The City will use the Washington State Department of Commerce Growth Management Services checklist and Housing Guidance documents to ensure all state requirements are met or exceeded.
Continue to implement the recommendations in the 2021 Buildable Lands Report and actions outlined in the Housing Action Plan and One Community Plan.
Allocate enough land that will be suitable for a variety of housing types and costs, including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special-needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings to help provide both variety and affordability in housing options.
The City will implement tenant protections to help avoid or slow the process of displacement for households by preserving housing units, a household's tenancy, or access to information and assistance.
The City will implement protections for individuals and families experiencing displacements, requiring developers and rental property owners to provide relocation assistance, including Notice of Intent to Sell and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances.

Mitigation Measures for Transportation
The City will require mitigation for the transportation impacts of new developments, which will be consistent with the TMP and Street Safety Plan. New development will be required to build improvements or contribute funds to improve the function and safety of the streets, such as installing bike and pedestrian infrastructure, building roundabouts, making transit improvements, or modifying traffic signals to prioritize transit and non-motorized traffic.
Ensure a fair distribution of new transportation-related costs to new developments through use of impact fees.
Construct complete streets and maintain an urban form that is human-scale as the street system is improved with new development.
Encourage equitable transportation systems and concentrate housing and key services around frequent transportation routes to reduce emissions consistent with the City's climate goals.
Mitigation Measures for Parks, Arts, and Recreation
Ensure that parks development, improvements, and maintenance projects comply with stormwater, shorelines, flood damage prevention, critical areas, and landscaping requirements as well as mitigation for traffic and land use impacts to surrounding areas.
Continue to coordinate with other entities to make regional trail connections that also support non-motorized modes of transportation.
Continue collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe regarding shoreline restoration, access, cultural resources, and other issues of common interest.
Incorporate climate change and sea level rise findings and recommendations into future park designs and improvements.
Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan that covers parks, arts, and recreation.
Development and implementation of an Urban Forestry Plan will help to improve the city's tree canopy, which could benefit outdoor recreationists by improving views and providing shade.
Mitigation Measures for Utilities
Continue regional cooperation with the LOTT Clean Water Alliance and the Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan. Continue utilities cooperation between the State and the City, among local governments, and with special-purpose governments such as the Port and the school districts.
Implement programs focused on converting septic systems to sewers to avoid or minimize impacts on surface water and groundwater quality.
Consider alternative low-impact or green-impact utility management methods as technologies change.
Implement stormwater management technical assistance for owners of private stormwater systems to ensure that they are maintained and protective of water quality.
Mitigation Measures for Economy
Identify and apply to county, State, and federal infrastructure grants, loans, and other financial tools to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
To reduce the economic impacts of new development on overburdened populations, leverage community partner resources, engage youth and dislocated workers to broaden career pathway options, and invest in diverse small business startups and local enterprise growth.
Periodically review major revenue-generating sectors and identify actions the City can take to help maintain economic health. Regularly review the development market to identify changing circumstances that create barriers or opportunities for investment in the community.
Promote more dense housing Downtown that supports a range of income levels.

Support the continuation of public transportation as a means of linking the Capital Campus with Downtown and zero-fare transit to connect people to jobs and services.
Mitigation Measures for Public Safety
OPD will continue to develop collaborative law enforcement response and prevention strategies that help ensure a safe community while prioritizing equitable treatment and the importance of earning and maintaining community trust and partnerships.
The City will develop and periodically update a comprehensive communications strategy to inform the community about crime trends, prevention, and outcomes from high-profile cases or events and make these communications easily accessible to the public.
The City will develop a real-time crime analysis center with regional partners and use predictive analysis to better identify and address trends.
Mitigation Measures for Capital Facilities
Incorporate transportation infrastructure improvements and strategies into the planning process to accommodate projected growth and mitigate traffic congestion.
Incorporate stormwater management practices, including green infrastructure, to reduce water pollution and runoff from development activities.
Protect and integrate green spaces and biodiversity considerations into development plans to preserve environmental and recreational resources.
Ensure that adequate water resources are available for future development.
Incorporate climate resilience and consider future climate impacts when planning infrastructure, ensuring long-term sustainability and the protection of resources.
Ensure equitable access to essential public services such as utilities, parks, and transportation as part of the City's long-term development plans.
Manage construction activities within the broader planning process as part of the CFP to mitigate air and noise pollution during construction.

1.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

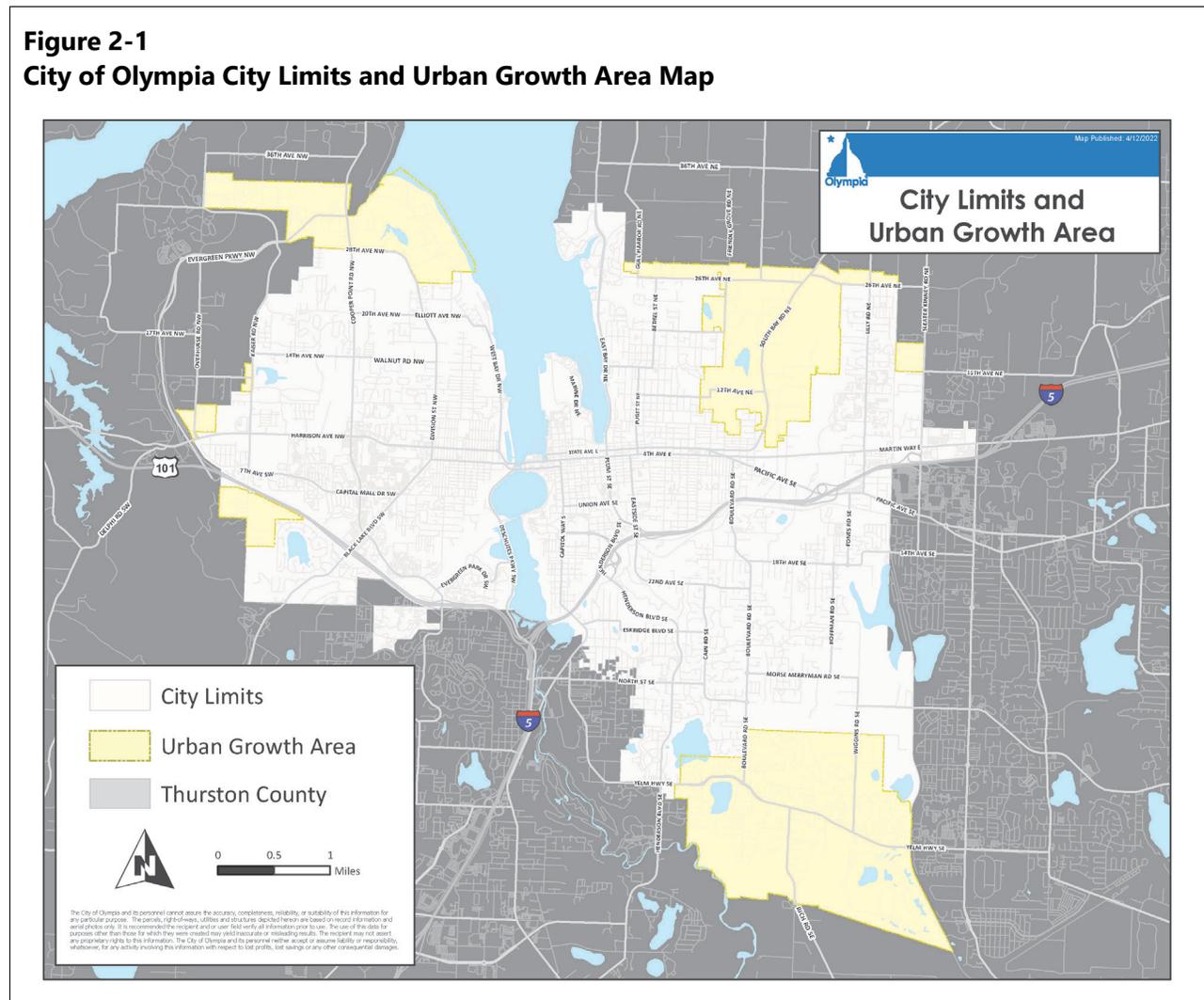
With implementation of the mitigation measures summarized previously, Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to any of the resources discussed in this EIS. Although there could be adverse effects during the construction of projects under Alternatives 1 and 2, these would be temporary and would support the goals proposed in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Plan update. Application of City codes and standards would continue under both alternatives, reducing the potential for impacts. Both alternatives would result in long-term changes in land use designations and patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city to accommodate a growing population.

2 Background and EIS Organization

2.1 Study Area

The study area for this EIS is the city of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area (UGA; Figure 2-1). Located at the southern end of Puget Sound on Budd Inlet, Olympia is the capital city of Washington State and county seat of Thurston County. It is situated between the cities of Tumwater to the south and Lacey to the east. The city encompasses approximately 20 square miles, which includes approximately 1.8 square miles covered with water, including the Deschutes Estuary (Capitol Lake).

Figure 2-1
City of Olympia City Limits and Urban Growth Area Map



2.2 Regulatory Context

2.2.1 Comprehensive Plan

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is a series of state statutes, first adopted in 1990, that requires fast-growing cities and counties to develop comprehensive plans to manage population growth. The GMA establishes a series of goals that form the basis of all comprehensive plans.

The role of the Olympia Comprehensive Plan is to articulate the City's vision for its future and provide supporting goals, policies, and strategies to plan for growth over the next 20 years. Subsequent implementation measures can include more detailed plans; development regulations such as zoning; and construction projects and other actions by government agencies or private parties. The City adopted its first GMA Comprehensive Plan in 1994, which addressed land use and transportation issues as well as parks, schools, utilities, and the local economy. The Comprehensive Plan underwent a major update in 2014 and subsequent amendments, most recently in 2021.



The intent of the 2014 Plan was to address the city's suburban but urbanizing development pattern to accommodate future population growth through infill development and more opportunities for higher density housing in the city and its UGA. The Comprehensive Plan includes increasing investments on improvements to the park system, urban tree canopy, and the preservation of wildlife habitat to create an urban form that supports less car dependence and uses a people-centric design for streets, buildings, and neighborhoods. The 2014 Plan also identified the need for the City to address expanding demands upon traditional city facilities, such as sanitary sewers, drinking water supplies, streets, stormwater control, and solid waste disposal.

The *Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update* is the result of a 3-year citywide planning effort looking 20 years into the future. It covers issues such as housing, land use, transportation, parks and open spaces, utilities, natural resources, public safety, and the economy. It also reflects community values around things like public participation, climate change, and diversity and equity issues.

The City is updating its 2021 Comprehensive Plan and implementing development regulations, with the intention of completing the update by December 2025, as required by the Washington State

Growth Management Act. This is the City’s first Periodic Update since the Countywide Planning Policies were updated in 2015 and again in March 2025.

2.2.2 Additional Planning Documents

Table 2-1 summarizes additional key plans, policies, manuals, and reports that support and implement the Comprehensive Plan, guide permitting and design decisions, and otherwise play a role in planning in Olympia.

**Table 2-1
Summary of Additional Planning Documents**

Document	Year*
Natural Environment	
Olympia Urban Forestry Manual	2021
Olympia Shoreline Master Program	2021
Climate Change and Resilience	
Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	2025
The City of Olympia’s Annex to the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region	2024
2021 Inventory of Community-Wide GHG Emissions	2021
2021 Community GHG Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis	2021
Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan	2020
Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan	2019
Land Use and Urban Design	
Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan	2024
Martin Way Corridor Study	2022
Olympia Urban Agriculture Analysis	2022
Olympia Downtown Strategy	2021
Olympia Downtown Strategy Design Guidelines	2021
Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan	2016
Master Plan for the Capitol of the State of Washington	2006
City of Olympia Design Vision and Strategy	1991
Housing	
Planning and Accommodating Housing Needs in Thurston County	2024

Document	Year*
Housing Needs Assessment, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, and City of Tumwater	2021
Olympia Housing Action Plan	2021
One Community Plan	2020
Transportation	
Olympia Transportation Master Plan	2021
Thurston Regional Transportation Plan	2020
Intercity Transit Short- and Long-Range Plan	2018
Ordinance No. 7037: Olympia's Complete Streets Ordinance	2017
Parks, Arts, and Recreation	
Thurston Regional Trails Plan	2023
Downtown Olympia Creative District Strategic Plan	2023
Olympia Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan	2022
Olympia Armory Creative Campus Concept Plan	2022
Olympia Crossings: An Art Plan for City Gateways	2017
Economy	
Olympia Strong Plan	2024
Public Safety	
Reimagining Public Safety	2024
One Community Plan: Healthy, Safe, and Housed	2020
Olympia Fire Department Strategic Plan	2024
Olympia Police Department Strategic Plan	2024
Capital Facilities and Utilities	
Olympia Capital Facilities Plan	2024
Olympia School District Capital Facility Plan	2024
North Thurston Public Schools Capital Facility Plan	2024
Olympia 2021-2026 Water System Plan	2024
2050 LOTT System Plan	2024
Waste ReSources Management Plan	2023
Olympia Wastewater Management Plan	2020
Olympia Storm and Surface Water Plan	2018
Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan and Area-Wide Supplement	1986, 1996

Document	Year*
Equity	
Olympia Economic Displacements and Racial Disparities Analysis	In process
Social Justice and Equity Commission Work Plan	2024
Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan	2021
Other Documents	
Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies	2025
Port of Olympia Strategic Plan	2025
Olympia Annual Work Plan and End of Year Status Report/Focus Areas	2024
Olympia Engineering Design and Development Standards	2023
Olympia Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual	2022
Thurston County Regional Council Buildable Lands Report	2021

*Most recent update as of April 2025.

2.3 SEPA Environmental Review Process

The State Environmental Policy Act or SEPA (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 43.21C) requires environmental review of proposed agency actions to allow decision-makers, applicants, and the public to understand how a proposal would affect the environment. In 2023, the City prepared a non-project SEPA checklist that concluded that this periodic update of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan would likely have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

The City published a Determination of Significance that included an environmental impact statement (EIS) scoping notice and scoping fact sheet on February 23, 2024, with a 31-day public comment period that ran through March 25, 2024. The City received written comments. Scoping comments helped the City identify what topics should be covered in this EIS. The EIS process is a tool for identifying and analyzing probable adverse environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and potential mitigation.

2.4 EIS Organization

This document has been prepared as a non-project EIS under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11. A non-project EIS provides an opportunity to evaluate policies, plans, or programs that will govern a series of connected actions more broadly before projects begin and permit applications are prepared. A non-project EIS does not provide site-specific detailed analysis.

Additional environmental review will occur as other project-specific or non-project actions are proposed in the city in the future.

WAC 197-11-442 allows flexibility for non-project EIS organization and contents. Following a description of the alternatives in Chapter 3, this EIS is organized consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and includes the following resource chapters:

- Chapter 4: Natural Environment
- Chapter 5: Climate Action and Resilience
- Chapter 6: Land Use and Urban Design
- Chapter 7: Housing
- Chapter 8: Transportation
- Chapter 9: Parks, Arts and Recreation
- Chapter 10: Utilities
- Chapter 11: Economy
- Chapter 12: Public Safety
- Chapter 13: Capital Facilities

Chapter 14 summarizes anticipated cumulative effects, and Chapter 15 lists references used in preparing the EIS.

2.5 Local Environmental Review Considerations

Pursuant to Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 14.04.110, the following additional elements must be addressed in an EIS:

- Economic impacts
- Cultural factors
- Social policy analysis
- Impacts upon neighborhood character

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool that is used to address these elements as part of the long-range planning process. This EIS includes an Economy chapter (Chapter 11) intended to address potential economic impacts and mitigation measures from updates to the Economy element of the Comprehensive Plan. Potential cultural impacts and mitigation measures are primarily addressed in the Parks, Arts and Recreation chapter of this EIS (Chapter 9), but are also addressed more generally in other chapters of this EIS. Social policy and neighborhood character goals and policies are incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, and potential impacts and mitigation measures related to these elements are evaluated throughout this EIS, primarily in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter (Chapter 6).

3 Description of Alternatives

3.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Alternative 1 would continue the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the two other High Density Neighborhood Overlay areas. Alternative 1 has capacity for adding 14,480 new housing units over the 2025-to-2045 planning horizon. This is above the growth target for Olympia, which is 14,295 new units, but does not meet other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types.

A cornerstone of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan is the Community Values and Vision chapter. This chapter includes a land acknowledgement statement, language around the City's commitment to equity, and the shared community values for the subsequent chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. It also includes a vision for each topic about what Olympia's community could be like in the future as those outcomes are pursued.

Each chapter of the plan addresses a specific topic, but the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be read and balanced in its entirety. The Introduction chapter acknowledges that sometimes two important goals can be seemingly at odds with each other. For example, the City wants to increase the overall tree canopy and at the same time support more rooftop solar photovoltaic renewable energy systems. Protecting environmentally sensitive areas needs to be balanced with encouraging the development of more housing.

The Future Land Use Map identifies the types of land uses, and the relative degree of intensity of those land uses, across the city limits and UGA. It identifies three High Density Neighborhood Overlay areas where the majority of new growth is expected to occur. These areas are connected by Urban Corridors, which accommodate mobility within the overlay areas and across the community by supporting improvements for walking and rolling, cycling, using public transit, and driving. The City plans for utilities based on the Future Land Use Map, which helps identify anticipated demand and what is needed to serve various geographic areas at intended intensities.

3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

Alternative 2 would continue the 2021 Comprehensive Plan with growth focused on Downtown and the other two High Density Neighborhood Overlay areas but with additional housing types and densities allowed in the other residential and mixed-use areas. Alternative 2 meets other new planning requirements, including affordable housing across income bands and a range of housing types. The proposed Comprehensive Plan update accommodates the anticipated population growth of approximately 16,790 new residents and the need for approximately 14,295 new housing units.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan update is not a significant change from the existing plan. It uses a similar Future Land Use Map and continues to strive to create a vibrant, urbanizing, compact development pattern where existing and future Olympians are safe, housed, and thriving. The City chooses to accept population and employment growth within the existing UGA to continue to support the use and preservation of rural and resources lands outside of UGAs. This is also part of the City's commitment to grow in a way that is environmentally sustainable, with fewer impacts to climate and the environment than sprawling development patterns. The City wants to grow in a cost-effective manner by making the most of the existing infrastructure, utility improvements, and past investments as population grows. Parks and open spaces are planned to be mixed with the built environment. The City plans to provide a variety of transportation options to help reduce dependence on cars and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle miles traveled associated with traditional vehicles with combustion engines.

Alternative 2 includes minor land use changes, such as the removal of three Neighborhood Center designations on the Future Land Use Map, as recommended in the 2024 Neighborhood Centers report. Walksheds were added for the other Neighborhood Centers designations to highlight the intention of these areas to primarily serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The Low Density Neighborhood and smaller Medium Density Neighborhood and Mixed Residential designations were consolidated into an Urban Residential designation. The primary updates are intended to capture local land use initiatives that are already in process or could be further refined.

Additional revisions support the provision of allowing small scale commercial uses in residential areas, both in neighborhood centers and in neighborhoods. Allowing residents to access small scale commercial businesses within their own neighborhoods can help promote active forms of transportation and therefore help to reduce greenhouse gases and vehicle miles traveled. It can also help to provide gathering spaces and enhance social connections among neighbors, which could reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Additional key aspects of the proposed Comprehensive Plan update include the following:

- **Equity.** Address equity throughout the plan to ensure equitable access to and provision of programs, services, and infrastructure.
- **Future Land Use Map.** Address the anticipated pattern and intensity of land uses across the city limits and UGA.
- **Public Participation and Partners.** Work with partners, such as non-profits and other public agencies like schools, public transit providers, and the Port of Olympia (Port).
- **Environmental Stewardship and Housing Needs.** Balance protection of the natural environment with the need for housing and other development in the built environment. Seek out opportunities that have mutual benefits to both the natural and built environments.

- **Transportation.** Provide a complete transportation network that helps reduce dependence on cars and the amount of vehicle miles traveled. Encourage walking and rolling, bicycling, the use of public transit, and shorter trips when driving due to proximity to retail uses and a street grid with good connections for all modes of travel.
- **Housing.** Make a variety of housing options attainable and affordable for all residents.
- **Climate Action and Resilience.** Implement intentional actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to climate impacts.
- **Economy.** Create economic stability and security for all, including opportunities for growth and strengthening our local economy.
- **Parks, Arts, and Recreation.** Expand excellent parks, open spaces, art, and recreational programming that are accessible to all.
- **Public Safety.** Ensure the public safety system is accessible and responsive for everyone.
- **Quality Utilities.** Provide dependable, high-quality utility services in a cost-effective manner.
- **Infrastructure and Investments.** Ensure infrastructure improvements and public investments are made consistently with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan and in a way that maximizes value for capital fund expenditures.

Although the development pattern anticipated going forward to year 2045 is similar to that of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, several notable changes are proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update, described as follows:

- **Recognition of Deschutes Estuary.** The City recognizes and fully supports returning Capitol Lake to an estuary (Interlocal Agreement Resolutions M-2173 and M-2563).
- **Commitment to Climate Resilience.** Olympia is committed to reducing contributions to climate change and increasing resilience to a changing climate.
- **Greater Emphasis on Equity.** The City builds on its commitment to equity, which is addressed throughout the update, in all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Greater Emphasis on Public Safety.** This update incorporates the *Reimagining Public Safety* work, which began in the early 2020s.
- **Consolidation of Housing Policies.** This update consolidates housing policies from two separate chapters into one, with more detail on planning for all economic segments of the community, addressing racial disparities and adding anti-displacement policies.

4 Natural Environment

4.1 Affected Environment

Olympia and its UGA are located in the lowlands of western Washington, at the southern end of Puget Sound. Within Olympia's 24-square-mile area, there are nine major streams, four lakes, four large wetlands, and several miles of marine shoreline. The area supports a variety of wildlife species that are common to urbanized lowland areas in the region. Freshwater, anadromous, and marine fish species are present, as are marine invertebrates and marine mammals.

The City manages approximately 736 acres of open space. Squaxin Park, Grass Lake Nature Park, and Watershed Park together compose more than 630 acres. Large, undeveloped open spaces such as these support the most intact vegetation communities, including wetlands, riparian areas, and forests. Developed areas also support smaller patches of native and ornamental vegetation and landscaping.



In 2024, the City and several other state, regional, and local governments and Tribes entered into an interlocal agreement for restoration of the Deschutes Estuary, also known as Capitol Lake. The restoration project will address water quality, invasive species, and sedimentation issues and will restore tideflats and estuary marsh habitats.

In 2025, the City published a *Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report* (City of Olympia 2025a) that evaluates various sectors of the natural and built environment for risk of climate-related impacts. The report identifies aquatic and marine ecosystems and urban forests as having a high probability and high consequences if action for climate resiliency is not taken. Similarly, pollinators are listed as having a high risk of impact due to extreme heat and rising temperatures. The City is working on an implementation strategy to assign and track timeframe, cost, and primary responsibility for goals and policies (City of Olympia 2025a).

4.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

4.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA planning goals include retaining open space; enhancing recreation opportunities; conserving fish and wildlife habitat; protecting the environment; and enhancing the state's quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water. Counties and cities are required to

identify open-space corridors within and between UGAs for multiple purposes, including wildlife habitat and critical areas.

Under the GMA, critical areas include wetlands, geologic hazard areas, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. Cities are to avoid directing new growth to areas where development would conflict with protecting critical areas.

4.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Natural Environment Chapter

The Natural Environment chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and supporting policies addressing environmental restoration, Tribal treaty rights, salmonid recovery, protection of water quality/quantity and aquatic habitat, air quality, nighttime lighting, toxins and pollution, human connections to nature, and adherence to the City's Shoreline Master Program (SMP). The SMP was updated in 2021 and approved by the Olympia City Council and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The Natural Environment chapter includes the Open Space and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map, which illustrates areas such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and significant wildlife habitat. Many of these areas are protected by the City's critical areas regulations, whereas other areas may provide opportunities to create or enhance open-space corridors.

4.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) that address protection and management of natural resources include the following:

- Chapter 13.16: Stormwater Management
- Title 14: Environmental Protection
- Chapter 16.56: Landmark Tree Protection
- Chapter 16.58: Public Trees
- Chapter 16.60: Tree, Soil, and Native Vegetation Protection and Replacement
- Chapter 18.20: Shoreline Master Program
- Chapter 18.32: Critical Areas
- Chapter 18.36: Landscaping and Screening

4.2.4 Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City documents that address protection and management of natural resources include the following:

- Storm and Surface Water Plan (City of Olympia 2018)
- Urban Forestry Manual (City of Olympia 2016)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
- Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (City of Olympia 2022)

- Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019)
- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report (City of Olympia 2025a)

4.3 Potential Impacts

4.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan Natural Environment chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to protect air quality, groundwater, stormwater, and surface water. This includes carrying out the GMA requirement that cities plan for anticipated population growth by accepting the need for denser development so that larger expanses of rural and resource lands outside of growth areas can be preserved.

Under Alternative 1, the potential natural environment impacts of future development proposals will continue to be addressed through regulations in place at the time of permit review and/or project -specific environmental review as appropriate. This includes regulation of activities affecting critical areas and shorelines, requirements for stormwater management, emphasis on using low-impact development (LID) stormwater techniques for new development when feasible, and tree and soil protection standards.

Even with plans and regulations in place, development can result in changes to the natural environment. For example, projects can remove native vegetation and increase stormwater runoff, noise, light, and invasive species. A shift from sensitive to more disturbance-tolerant plant and wildlife species is common in urbanized areas. Traffic associated with growth could increase emissions to air, depending on the mode of travel and the type of energy used to power cars (gasoline, electricity, or electricity from renewable sources). These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development (see Chapter 6 of this EIS for discussion of land use).

Also, older developments generally do not meet current standards, such as LID requirements for stormwater or requirements for vegetation retention, critical areas buffers, and landscaping. Redevelopment of these areas to current standards can improve environmental quality.

Enforcement of the codes and standards described in Section 4.2 and elsewhere in this EIS would minimize the potential for and scale of impacts to the natural environment under Alternative 1. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan would continue to encourage growth in centralized areas and reduce sprawl into adjacent resource and rural lands.

4.3.2 *Alternative 2: Adopt Updates*

The same general types of development impacts to the natural environment described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. These include loss of native vegetation and habitat for more sensitive wildlife species; stormwater runoff and potential degradation of aquatic habitats; and increased noise, light, and disturbance. These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development.

The revisions proposed for the Comprehensive Plan Natural Environment chapter would result in minor and in some cases beneficial effects on the natural environment, such as the City's stronger commitment to the protection of salmon. Constructing projects such as roadway stormwater retrofits and salmon restoration could result in short-term, localized impacts such as soil and vegetation disturbance during construction. Developing an Urban Forest Plan could also result in projects, such as invasive species removal and replanting, with temporary disturbance impacts but long-term improvements to the city's tree canopy. These types of activities would be designed to have long-term beneficial effects on the natural environment. Addressing encampments in sensitive areas could also benefit the natural environment by removing trash, potentially toxic materials, and human disturbance and restoring disturbed vegetation.

An added emphasis on green infrastructure could benefit aquatic habitats and species as well as reduce infrastructure costs. Such an approach may require additional public education and outreach to gain understanding and support and to address perceived conflicts (e.g., retaining trees near structures could be seen as a potential safety hazard). Other City outreach activities, such as educating shoreline landowners about proper use of fertilizers and pesticides, could also improve water quality and aquatic habitats.

Managing beaver populations in developed areas to reduce flooding could have indirect effects. For example, the flushing of pollutants from paved areas during flood events could be reduced through decreased flooding, resulting in improved water quality. On the other hand, retention of surface flows behind beaver dams may benefit water quality by allowing sediments to settle. Ponded areas



created by beavers can create aquatic habitats that benefit waterfowl and fish. The specific effects, as well as impacts on local beaver populations, would depend on the site-specific management approach.

Attention to priority groups of species such as pollinators, amphibians, and migratory birds could protect or improve habitat for those species. For mobile species, even small habitat areas could be

beneficial (for example, pollinator gardens within developed areas). Larger habitat areas or corridors would need to be considered for other species (e.g., for amphibians moving between aquatic breeding sites and forested areas) and may be more difficult to achieve in densely developed areas.

Incorporating climate change strategies into planting plans and projects could improve project success and reduce localized air pollution. It is possible that project designers may find it more difficult to obtain plant species that have not typically been stocked by local nurseries.

More engagement with the Squaxin Tribe, and a greater emphasis on Tribal treaty rights, could benefit salmonids and other culturally important species and habitats by incorporating Indigenous priorities and knowledge.

In summary, the impacts of Alternative 2 on the natural environment are expected to be less than significant and not substantially different than those of Alternative 1. Chapter 5 of this EIS discusses impacts related to climate resilience goals and policies.

4.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts to the natural environment under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to apply and enforce City codes and standards for critical areas, stormwater, shorelines, and vegetation.
- Update City code and design manuals as appropriate to reflect evolving best available science and changes in state requirements for protection and management of water, wildlife, vegetation, and critical areas. The City is planning to adopt updates to OMC 18.32 to incorporate the best available science and recent agency guidance.
- When evaluating City opportunities for restoration projects or the acquisition of property or development rights for open space, habitat, recreation, or other purposes, consider ecological processes and connections across the watershed.

The following additional mitigation measures undertaken by the City could also increase environmental benefits in concert with the Natural Environment chapter updates proposed under Alternative 2:

- Consult with local wildlife experts about effective and sustainable beaver management practices that also minimize impacts to vegetation and habitat. Consider developing a “menu” of management options appropriate to various situations and supporting an understanding of the likely federal, state, and local permitting requirements for each option.
- Consider developing guidance for future planting projects that recommends plant species and management practices expected to increase resiliency to climate change. Consult with

local restoration experts and incorporate recent information about climate change effects on native vegetation communities.

- Development and implementation of an Urban Forestry Plan will help to improve the city's tree canopy and could improve air quality over the long term.
- Implementing the greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions sub-element would minimize potential impacts to the natural environment by reducing the long-term exposure to future climate hazards.

4.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to the natural environment in Olympia or its UGA. Areas designated for infill and more intensive development would continue to be centralized in already urbanizing areas, reducing the potential to affect intact vegetation communities. Application of City codes and standards would continue under both alternatives.

5 Climate Action and Resilience

5.1 Affected Environment

The present and anticipated effects of climate change pose a variety of challenges to the natural and built environment of Olympia. The City and its UGA are located in the lowlands of western Washington in the southern end of Puget Sound and encompass a 24-square-mile residential, commercial, industrial, and natural area. Land use districts in the city, described in OMC Title 18, include Residential Districts, Villages and Centers, Commercial Districts, and Industrial Districts. Baseline environmental conditions include air temperatures that are several degrees warmer than the state average. Climate models have predicted that annual mean temperatures in the Olympia area may increase by 2.8°F between 2025 and 2049. Sea level rise of 12 inches is predicted to occur as early as 2030 and may increase the frequency of severe flooding (e.g., a 100-year storm tide) to every other year (City of Olympia 2025a).

The urban coastline of the city's 450-acre downtown area is particularly vulnerable to the effects of a changing climate, which could include flooding and sea level rise. In 2022, a record-high King Tide occurred and resulted in several road closures in downtown Olympia. The downtown area contains infrastructure central to governance, recreation, and cultural expression such as Olympia City Hall, the Port of Olympia marine terminal, Percival Landing, Budd Inlet Treatment Plant, and the Lower Deschutes Watershed (AECOM 2019). Rising sea levels may lead to eroded shorelines and damage infrastructure (e.g., homes, commercial businesses, streets, utilities) during high tides and storm surges.

In 2025, the City published a *Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report* that evaluates various sectors of the natural and built environment for risk of climate-related impacts (City of Olympia 2025a). The report is intended to prepare the city for a more climate-resilient future, and its results inform the Comprehensive Plan update. The City recognizes that it must build resilience by bolstering all aspects of the Olympia community, including residents, infrastructure, and natural systems. Strengthening local systems—public services, infrastructure, and ecosystems—through holistic approaches can deliver numerous co-benefits, such as improved health, wildlife habitat, jobs, and energy savings. The goals, policies, vision, and framework laid out in Comprehensive Plan update will drive the City's priorities, programming, and investments over the next 20 years—a critical time for investment in a resilient future for the community.



5.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

5.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA was amended in 2023 to incorporate goals and requirements about climate mitigation and resilience. These are consistent with some of the City's climate action and resilience goals. GMA planning goals pertaining to climate action and resilience require local governments to adequately anticipate, adapt, and mitigate the effects of climate change. GMA required elements consist of two sub-elements that are included in the updated Comprehensive Plan including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and climate resilience.

The GHG Reduction sub-element identifies the actions the City will take to reduce overall GHG emissions. The Climate Resilience sub-element identifies strategies to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change in human communities and ecological systems through goals and policies that were developed in response to the 2025 *Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment* and other previous studies, consistent with the best available science and scientifically credible climate projections per RCW 36.70A.070(9).

5.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Climate Action and Resilience Chapter

The Climate Action and Resilience chapter of the Comprehensive Plan contains goals and supporting policies that will reduce GHG emissions and strengthen Olympia's ability to prepare for and adapt to climate change impacts. The aim of this chapter is to guide policy to achieve the following:

- Reduce GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled.
- Improve climate preparedness, recovery, and response efforts to enhance climate resiliency and anticipate and avoid the adverse impacts of climate change.
- Prioritize environmental justice to avoid the development or worsening of localized climate impacts to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

The City's climate and resilience policies and actions are primarily influenced by the *Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan* (Thurston Regional Planning Council 2020), *Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan* (AECOM 2019), *2021 Inventory of Community-Wide GHG Emissions* (City of Olympia 2021b), *2021 Community GHG Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis* (City of Olympia 2021c), and *Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment* (City of Olympia 2025a). City policy has been established to maximize environmental, economic, and social benefits while prioritizing environmental justice to avoid worsening environmental health disparities.

5.2.2.1 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the OMC that address climate action and resilience include the following:

- Chapter 3.20: Local Improvement Districts
- Chapter 12.10: Olympia Commute Trip Reduction Plan
- Title 16: Buildings and Construction
- Chapter 16.70: Flood Damage Prevention
- Chapter 16.80: Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction
- Chapter 16.100: Electric Vehicle Parking
- Title 18: Unified Development Code
- Chapter 18.20: Shoreline Master Program Regulations
- Chapter 18.32: Critical Areas

5.2.2.2 Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City documents that address climate action and resilience include the following:

- Transportation Master Plan (City of Olympia 2021d)
- Olympia Downtown Strategy (City of Olympia 2017)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
- Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (City of Olympia 2022)
- 2019 Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019 in partnership with the Port of Olympia and LOTT Clean Water Alliance)
- 2020 Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TRPC 2020a)
- 2021 Inventory of Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions (City of Olympia 2021b)
- 2021 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis (City of Olympia 2021c)
- The City of Olympia's Annex to the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region (2024)
- 2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (City of Olympia 2025a)

5.3 Potential Impacts

5.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the proposed Climate Action and Resilience chapter updates to the Comprehensive Plan would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to protect air quality, groundwater, stormwater, and surface water. This includes carrying out the GMA requirement that cities plan for anticipated population growth by accepting the need for denser development so that larger expanses of rural and resource lands can be preserved.

Under Alternative 1, the potential impacts of climate change to future development proposals will continue to be addressed through regulations that are in place at the time of permit review and/or project-specific environmental review as appropriate. This includes regulation of activities affecting urban infrastructure and shorelines, GHG emission reduction, and the implementation of natural hazard mitigation plans. This includes implementation of the Washington Renewable Energy Standard that will push utilities toward becoming 100% renewable or zero-emitting by 2045. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan would continue to encourage policies that positively benefit public and environmental health as well as infrastructure operation and maintenance through anticipation and response to the effects of a changing climate. However, new initiatives aimed at addressing GHG emission reductions and climate resiliency that were developed in response to the *2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment* and other previous studies will not be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

5.3.2 *Alternative 2: Adopt Updates*

The same general types of impacts described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. These include continued implementation of current policies and regulations that anticipate and mitigate the effects of climate change at a project level. The implementation of the Climate Action and Resilience chapter under Alternative 2 would provide a stronger and more deliberate collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that is needed to reduce GHG emissions and address climate resilience.

Under Alternative 2, the Climate Action and Resilience chapter consists of two sub-elements: GHG emissions reduction and climate resilience. *GHG emission reductions* refers to actions that reduce or eliminate carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping emissions that influence the severity of climate change over time. *Climate resilience* refers to the process of anticipating, responding, and adapting to the effects of climate change on the natural environment, built environment, and communities (Commerce 2023). The City is working on a climate implementation strategy to assign and track timeframe, cost, and primary responsibility for the goals and policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan (City of Olympia 2025a). Adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan under Alternative 2 would support initiatives intended to reduce GHG emissions and implement climate resiliency measures.

5.3.2.1 **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction**

The GHG Emissions Reduction sub-element is required to be adopted by the state of Washington's 11 most populous counties and cities, including the City of Olympia. This sub-element includes actions to reduce or eliminate present and future GHG emissions, with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions, to reduce the rate of climate change (MRSC 2025).

The City joined the Cities Race to Zero Campaign in 2021 to demonstrate a commitment for inclusive climate action that coincides with goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. The Olympia City Council formalized this commitment in April 2022 by pledging to reduce community-wide GHG emissions to 59% below 2019 levels by 2030, with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2040 (ICLEI 2023). Policies focusing on land use planning, community electricity use, and solid waste management would generate beneficial effects to address the City's main sources of GHG emission while ensuring daily necessities are available for the community. Land use planning supports increased urban density while providing efficient, low-emission public transport, biking, and walking networks. Strategies to increase solar renewable energy system usage and decarbonize electric grids would transition the energy grid to renewable resources. Improved recycling and composting programs would reduce organic waste content in waste streams and may result in a reduction in methane emissions.

The most recent GHG inventory for the City, completed in 2021, reported that the top three community-wide GHG emissions sources are transportation (34%), commercial energy (27%), and residential energy (22%) (City of Olympia 2023b). The report presents a contribution analysis of the 2019 and 2021 sector-based inventories, which explores the drivers of Olympia's emissions trends. The intent of the report is to better explain what caused observed changes between inventory years. For the City, cleaner electricity fuel mix and decreasing vehicle miles traveled per person show the largest causes for decreases in overall community emissions. Population growth and higher temperatures appeared to contribute to the highest increases in community emissions. The report anticipates that future annexations in the City may cause an increase in GHG emissions by expanding the City's boundaries and increasing population.

In response to the GHG inventory prepared in 2021, the City also prepared a *Community GHG Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis* which forecasts "business as usual" GHG emissions for the City and presents two possible emissions reduction scenarios (moderate and aggressive). The two scenarios are intended to help the City set goals and metrics for reaching zero emissions by 2040 or 2050. The analysis shows that many of the current measures are positively contributing to the net-zero emissions targets, including rooftop solar, existing building electrification, efficiency retrofits, electric vehicle adoption, vehicle miles traveled per person reduction, upstream impacts, and landfill waste reduction. The analysis also evaluates Washington's Renewable Energy Standard, which states that all utilities in Washington must be 100% renewable or zero-emitting by 2045, as an emissions reduction measure. The emissions reduction strategy analysis evaluates current measures being taken by the City to reduce emissions and provides suggestions for additional actions that may be taken to achieve net-zero emissions targets.

The Comprehensive Plan update adopted under Alternative 2 will utilize the abovementioned 2021 studies and provide a foundation for the goals and policies in the Climate chapter consistent with the *2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment*.

5.3.2.2 Climate Resilience

The Climate Resilience sub-element is required for all fully planning cities and counties including Olympia. This sub-element includes actions to improve climate preparedness, response, and recovery policies (MRSC 2019). The Climate Resilience sub-element additionally aims to prioritize actions that benefit overburdened communities that would disproportionately suffer from the compounding environmental impacts and natural hazards due to climate change. A main principle of the Climate Element is resilience; it states that: "Olympia will continue developing built, natural, and social infrastructure that promotes human and environmental well-being. A resilient Olympia will withstand more frequent and intense extreme weather events due to climate change through effective, coordinated emergency management. Enhancing natural areas, strengthening community bonds, and preparing our built environment will ensure all Olympians benefit from climate adaptation actions."

Climate resilience goals and policies have been developed in response to the *2025 Olympia Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment* and other previous supporting studies (City of Olympia 2025a). The updated Comprehensive Plan also includes policies supporting ongoing coordination with the Olympia Sea Level Rise Collaborative to implement the City's Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019). Adopting the goals and policies outlined within the Climate Resilience sub-element would provide beneficial impacts to affected areas of the city and UGA through infrastructure protection, decreased catastrophic service interruptions, increased public and environmental safety, and increased adaptive capacity and restoration of the natural environment.

5.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential climate change impacts under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Update City code and design manuals as appropriate to reflect evolving best available science and changes in state requirements for climate-related mitigation policies.
- When evaluating City opportunities for restoration projects or the acquisition of property or development rights for open space, habitat, recreation, or other purposes, consider the impacts of climate change to ecological processes, public safety, and infrastructure.

Implementing the mitigation measures included in the Natural Environment chapter (EIS Chapter 4) would help to minimize potential climate impacts. The following additional climate-related

mitigation measures undertaken by the City could also increase environmental benefits in concert with the Climate Action and Resilience chapter updates proposed under Alternative 2:

- Address flood vulnerabilities through policies, urban planning, and regulations. Strategies may be developed by project partners individually or in collaboration (e.g., coordinated emergency responses through highly trafficked areas).
- Assess data and knowledge gaps in understanding of GHG emission sectors and natural hazard preparedness.
- Develop policies to ensure that residents and businesses have access to resources needed to meet daily needs while working toward net-zero GHG emission commitments.
- Expand transportation networks that enable people to travel effectively by alternate modes of transport (e.g., walking, biking, and public transit) instead of personal vehicles.
- Increase access to emission-reducing technologies such as electric vehicles and solar powered infrastructure.
- Implement policies that promote access to green spaces that support clean air.
- Develop public-private partnerships to ensure adequate indoor facilities are available for outdoor events impacted by extreme heat or wildfire smoke.
- Establish and update development regulations that incorporate best practices to address climate resiliency.
- Develop incentives and technical assistance programs to encourage reuse and recycling of construction and demolition debris.
- Adopt a climate implementation strategy that assigns and tracks timeframe, cost, and primary responsibility for the goals and policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

5.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts related to climate action and resilience in Olympia or its UGA. Climate change policies would continue to be implemented within affected areas as well as across the broader community. Application of City codes and standards would continue under both alternatives.

6 Land Use and Urban Design

6.1 Affected Environment

The City, in cooperation with Thurston County, plays a major role in determining the location, intensity, and form of land uses in the community through the establishment of the urban growth boundary. Long-range planning is facilitated through various City departments and in collaboration with the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), a regional council of governments that carries out regionally focused plans and studies on topics such as transportation, growth management, and environmental quality.



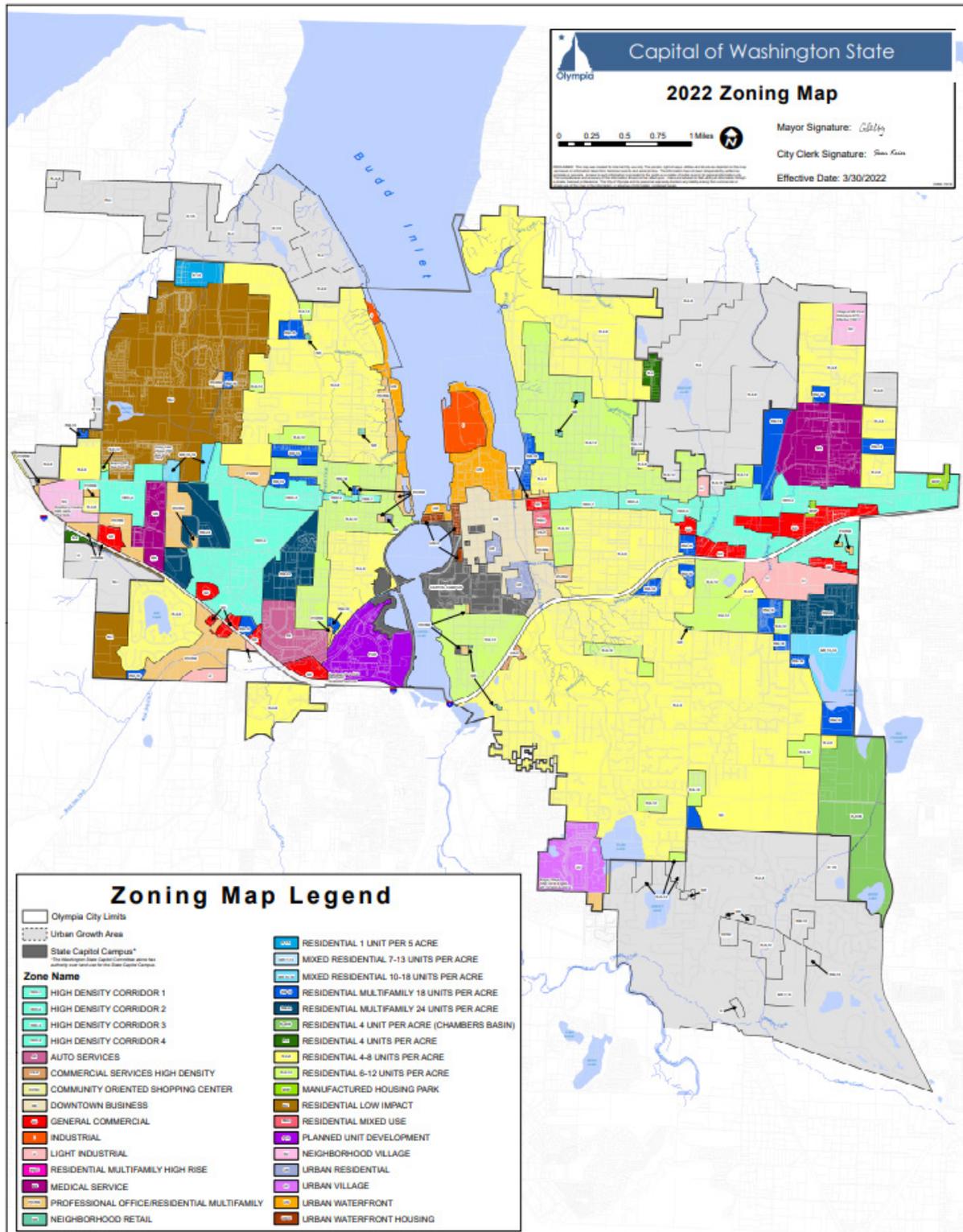
The City employs regulations, such as zoning, design review, stormwater, engineering, building, and subdivision standards, to ensure that new development conforms to the goals and policies described in the Comprehensive Plan. The regulations are administered by City staff and a Hearing Examiner selected by the City Council. Equally important to this land use and design vision is capital facility planning and construction by the

City and other public agencies of the area. Continuing cooperation between the State and the City, among the local governments, and with special-purpose governments—such as InterCity Transit, the Port and the school districts—is critical. As envisioned, resources and the support of the community will be needed to focus more detailed efforts in neighborhoods and other special places.

The Comprehensive Plan envisions gradually increasing densities in Olympia, including infill within residential neighborhoods, accompanied by attractive streets and buildings arranged for the convenience of pedestrians. The location, mix, and relationship of land uses to each other and to streets will be crucial, as will be the character of commercial and residential areas, parks, and open spaces. The Comprehensive Plan envisions new development that will reinforce the community's identity, urban design preferences, and historic form. Selected major streets will gradually transform into attractive, higher density, mixed residential and commercial Urban Corridors with frequent transit service.

The study area for this chapter is defined by the city limits and UGA as depicted in Figure 2-1 in Chapter 2. Zoning districts in the City are described in OMC Title 18 and include Residential Districts; Villages and Centers; Commercial Districts; and Industrial Districts. The zoning map adopted by the City in 2022 can be used as a proxy for existing land uses in the City (Figure 6-1). Select subareas in the city have special development standards to support existing features and functions in a way that aligns with land use plans.

**Figure 6-1
2022 City of Olympia Zoning Map**



6.1.1 *Downtown Olympia*

Downtown Olympia is the urban hub of Thurston County. In 2017, the City prepared the *Olympia Downtown Strategy* (DTS) to support a greater concentration of mixed-use developments and transit infrastructure to efficiently use land and promote a diverse social and economic environment (City of Olympia 2017a). The DTS assumes that the current land use zoning and development standards are consistent with the City's objectives and market conditions and are designed to adapt to identified future trends for increased demand in the area for retail, office, and residential developments.

6.1.2 *Urban Corridors*

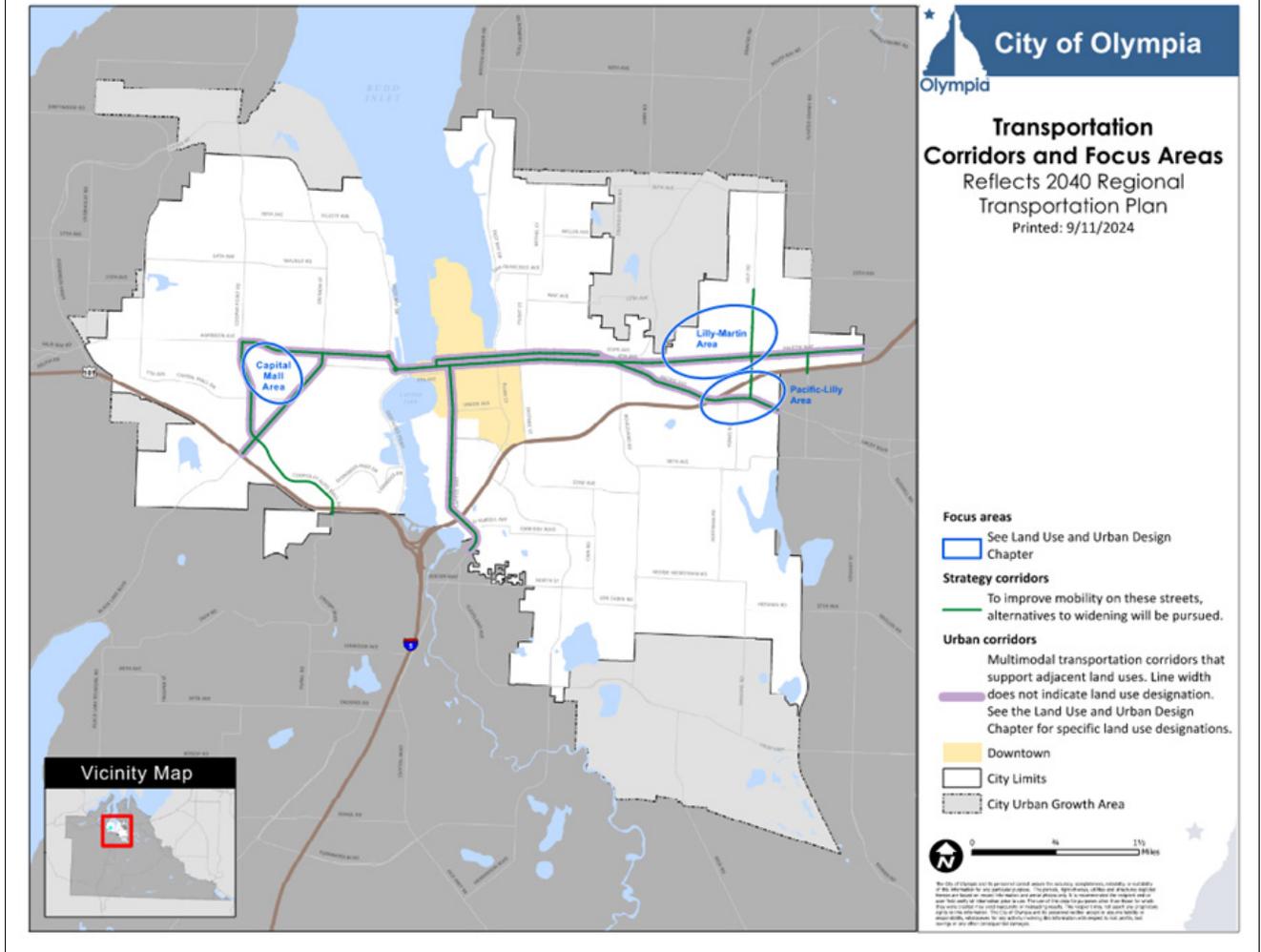
Urban corridors are multimodal transportation corridors that support adjacent land uses. Figure 6-2 shows the main transportation corridors in the city and identifies three focus areas where a High-Density Neighborhoods Overlay has been applied.

One of the focus areas is the Capital Mall Triangle subarea (the Triangle), which is a regional shopping destination. It is bounded by multiple Urban Corridors. It has a current land use pattern with a suburban mall surrounded by parking lots with limited street connectivity and is accessed by a network of five-lane arterials (City of Olympia 2024a).

Additionally, developments in the area surrounding the Martin Way corridor support a crucial urban artery that links multiple jurisdictions and connects people throughout the region to homes, businesses, and services (TRPC 2021a). This area, known as the Pacific/Martin/Lilly Triangle, is another area of focused growth that was established in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

In 2021, the City published its first Transportation Master Plan, a plan that links projected multimodal transportation investments—including Urban Corridors—to the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. See Chapter 8 of this EIS for more information about transportation planning.

**Figure 6-2
Transportation Corridors**



6.1.3 Agriculture

In 2022, the Olympia Urban Agriculture Analysis was prepared for the City. This analysis identified the agricultural resources located throughout the city and its UGA (Peterson 2022). The analysis examined accessibility to and the function of agricultural uses. Key findings included identifying areas underserved by any agricultural resource, the potential for expansion in those areas, and the need for sidewalk accessibility to many existing resources (Peterson 2022).

6.1.4 Planned Unit Development Districts

The City established Planned Unit Development (PUD) districts to permit flexibility in the arrangement of structures on the sites in order to encourage better architectural design, provide adequate greenbelt and open space areas, provide the maximum possible protection of the natural

amenities of the area, provide adequate accesses and utilities for the uses permitted, assure adequate light and air, and provide protection from discordant influences. Evergreen Park is a PUD district, with an area of approximately 200 acres on the west side of the city, designed to establish standards for the development of a combined residential and commercial community. This PUD district is currently the only PUD district codified in OMC 18.54. Other planned developments include an Urban Village (Briggs Village) and Neighborhood Villages (Woodbury Crossing and Village at Mill Pond in the city limits and Glenmore Village in the southeast UGA).

6.1.5 Opportunity/Focus Areas

The City developed an investment strategy that identified six “Opportunity Areas” where the City was interested in furthering development outcomes and where subarea planning was needed. The Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the Comprehensive Plan addresses these areas and refers to them as Focus Areas or Opportunity Areas. These areas are addressed in both the Economy chapter and the Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan calls for subarea plans to be developed for these Opportunity Areas. Some of these areas have already had the planning work completed. For example, the *Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan* (City of Olympia 2016) and code amendments are complete, and the City is working on carrying out the strategy for this opportunity area. The Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan has been adopted (2024), and code amendments are in process. Other areas include the Auto Mall; the Medical Services districts along Lilly Road near Martin Way; the area surrounding the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road; including the nearby Stoll Road area; and the West Bay Drive area.

6.1.6 Capital Mall Triangle Subarea

The Triangle is a 288-acre area on the west side of Olympia. The Triangle is a regional shopping destination, but it has a current land use pattern that includes traditional big box retail, is auto-oriented, and has a suburban mall surrounded by vast parking lots accessed by a network of five-lane arterials. Street connectivity is currently limited, and existing intersections are strained in the subarea. The subarea is designated as an Urban Corridor and is one of the three areas in the city with the High-Density Neighborhoods Overlay. The Comprehensive Plan and Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan envision the Triangle transitioning to a more dense, walkable, mixed-use urban neighborhood with a mix of jobs, housing, and services anchored by high-frequency, direct transit service (City of Olympia 2024a). The City published a subarea plan in 2024 to implement the adopted vision of a High-Density Neighborhood Overlay area. This will help accommodate the planned growth projections outlined in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan while providing a mixed-use, vibrant urban neighborhood in the Triangle (City of Olympia 2024a).

6.1.7 *Martin Way Corridor*

Martin Way, between Pacific Avenue and Marvin Road, serves as a crucial Urban Corridor that links multiple jurisdictions across its 5-mile stretch. This former state highway connects people throughout the region to homes, businesses, services, and recreation. The Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, and Intercity Transit have participated in a joint planning effort to develop a coordinated vision for the future of Martin Way and identify transportation improvements, regulatory changes, and other tools and infrastructure needs that may be necessary to achieve that vision. In 2021, a Martin Way Corridor Study was published outlining this vision.

6.1.8 *Port of Olympia*

The Port is a Washington state special-purpose municipal corporation serving Thurston County. The Port owns and operates four distinct business lines in Thurston County, with significant property located along the city's waterfront. Within the city, the majority of Port-owned property is zoned as Industry and Urban Waterfront. The Port manages these properties and planning efforts for future projects and uses along the waterfront. Examples of the Port's long-range planning documents include the following:

- *A Community-Informed Plan for Our Future: Port Vision 2050 Action Plan* (Port of Olympia 2019)
 - Summarizes public outreach and visioning, similar to a comprehensive plan
- *Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements* (Port of Olympia 2024b)
 - Envisions projects that will be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan

The Port is currently preparing a Port Peninsula Integrated Master Plan which is anticipated to be complete in late 2025.

6.2 **Planning and Regulatory Context**

6.2.1 *Growth Management Act Goals*

The GMA requires the Land Use and Urban Design element of the Comprehensive Plan to implement land use designations and densities that are consistent with the transportation and housing elements and State and regional plans in their use of spatial growth assumptions, population forecasts, and planning periods. GMA goals applicable to land use include the following:

- Encouraging economic development and the development of urban areas where public facilities and services exist and could be provided in an efficient manner to reduce sprawl and low-density development

- Encouraging multimodal transportation systems that help reduce GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled per capita
- Planning for and accommodating housing affordable to all economic segments of the population through a variety of residential densities and housing types
- Encouraging economic development
- Protecting property rights of landowners from arbitrary and discriminatory actions
- Retaining open space and green space
- Enhancing recreational opportunities
- Encouraging the involvement of citizens in the planning process
- Integrating goals and policies of the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.020) in the Comprehensive Plan
- Identifying and encouraging the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance

6.2.2 City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program

The Washington State Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.200) requires local jurisdictions to develop Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) that recognize and protect statewide interests over local interests, preserve the natural character of the shoreline, favor long-term benefits over short-term benefits, protect resources and ecology of the shoreline, and increase public access and recreational opportunities in publicly owned areas of the shoreline.

The City of Olympia SMP is a set of local shoreline policies and regulations adopted by the City and approved by Ecology in 2021 (City of Olympia 2021e). The SMP generally applies to all major waterbodies and lands within 200 feet of those waters. Similar to the Comprehensive Plan, the SMP was developed to accommodate current and future use of the shoreline in a manner that is consistent with surrounding uses while protecting critical areas and the shoreline environment.

6.2.3 Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Urban Design Chapter

The Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and supporting policies that guide decision-making about Olympia's future population and employment growth and direct land use patterns, densities, and design standards. The City's Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the County-Wide Planning Policies adopted by Thurston County and its seven cities in 1993 and later updated in 2015 and again in March 2025. The policies encourage prioritization of infill development in areas that have adequate public infrastructure and service capacities, and phasing of urban development and facilities outward from core areas.

The Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on built land uses such as housing and commercial structures and development patterns. The chapter addresses the proposed land uses in Olympia's UGA and the design locations of buildings and other structures

within that landscape, including the location and quantity of land uses, their relation to each other, and their functional design; opportunities for historic preservation; and the aesthetic form of the urban environment. For example, the Comprehensive Plan describes Urban Corridors as selected areas with combined employment and residential density that support frequent transit and pedestrian access between businesses. Facilities and services that support urban development patterns are described in the Transportation, Utilities, and Public Safety chapters; complementary parks, open spaces, and natural areas are addressed in the Natural Environment and Parks, Arts and Recreation chapters; and employment and other economic topics affected by land use are discussed in the Economy chapter.

6.2.4 *Olympia Municipal Code*

The main chapters of the OMC that address land uses and urban design include the following:

- Chapter 3.20: Local Improvement Districts
- Chapter 3.24: Public Lands
- Chapter 3.62: Parking and Business Improvement Area
- Chapter 4.40: Land Use Application Review Fees
- Chapter 10.08: Speed Limits
- Title 12: Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places
- Title 16: Buildings and Construction
- Title 17: Subdivisions
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

6.2.5 *Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)*

Other City documents that address land uses and urban design include the following:

- Thurston County-Wide Planning Policies Update (Thurston County 2025)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
- Buildable Lands Report for Thurston County (TRPC 2021b)
- Housing Needs Assessment, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, & City of Tumwater (TRPC 2021c)
- Olympia Housing Action Plan (City of Olympia and TRPC 2021)
- Capital Mall Triangle Subarea Plan (City of Olympia 2024a)
- City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program (City of Olympia 2021e)
- Olympia Downtown Strategy (City of Olympia 2021)
- Olympia Downtown Strategy Design Guidelines (adopted 2021; City of Olympia 2021f)
- Martin Way Corridor Study (TRPC 2021a)
- Olympia Urban Agriculture Analysis (Peterson 2022)
- Kaiser Harrison Opportunity Area Plan (City of Olympia 2016)

- 2023 Ordinance No. 7388: Amending the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development (City of Olympia 2023c)
- Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TRPC 2020a)
- Thurston Regional Transportation Plan (TRPC 2020b)
- Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (City of Olympia 2022)
- Master Plan for the Capitol of the State of Washington (State of Washington 2006)
- City of Olympia Design Vision and Strategy (City of Olympia 1991)

6.3 Potential Impacts

6.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

The proposed Comprehensive Plan update outlines goals and policies for general land use design, including land use patterns and building forms; schools; and industrial, historic, and green space preservation. Under Alternative 1, the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Urban Design chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to land use would remain in place.

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan envisions gradually increasing densities in the city, accompanied by attractive streets and buildings arranged for the convenience of pedestrians. The location, mix, and relationship of land uses to each other and to the city will continue to be considered for the development of commercial and residential areas, parks, and open spaces. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to increase new development that would reinforce the community's identity, urban design preferences, and historic form. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, selected major streets will gradually transform into attractive, higher density, mixed residential and commercial Urban Corridors with frequent transit service.

Alternative 1 is expected to support long-term changes in land use designations and patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city to accommodate a growing population. Based on medium growth projections, the population of the city and its UGA is expected to grow from roughly 70,860 to 87,650 people by 2045, for a total increase of 16,790 people (TRPC 2024a). These changes will be supported by improvements in transportation infrastructure (e.g., improved streets and improved multimodal transportation infrastructure) and in additional housing units. These developments would be supported by a multimodal transportation system further described in Chapter 8 of this EIS, and would be expected to reduce the percentage of drive-alone commuters in Thurston County.

Goals and policies under Alternative 1 would not have long-term adverse effects on existing historic and natural resources or open spaces. Alternative 1 will continue to protect the cultural resources and natural qualities of sites, buildings, and districts that have shaped the city's community—

including streets that are currently considered attractive, safe, and an inviting place for pedestrians—and will focus on keeping historic buildings properly maintained and in continuous use. There could be short-term impacts to access and the recreational quality of existing districts during construction. For example, there could be an increase in noise levels from equipment during construction or maintenance, temporary closures to streets, or visual impacts from machinery. However, construction-related impacts would be project-specific and are expected to be minor, local, and temporary and would be avoided or minimized by following City development standards.

Under Alternative 1, Downtown Olympia will continue to be an attractive place to live, work, and play. Future office, retail, and residential development would continue to support Downtown's role as a regional center and home of State government, commerce, and industry. Similarly, under Alternative 1, industrial activities will continue, and the City will ensure that industries are well located to minimize environmental impacts and diversify the local economy. Therefore, there would be minor or no impacts to industrial uses.

Goals and policies supporting commercial uses, districts and villages, and Urban Corridors under Alternative 1 will continue to focus on promoting intensive development in commercial areas to increase their vitality and make better use of the city's transit and street system. As such, any new commercial area will be limited to allowing neighborhood-oriented businesses and services in the neighborhood centers of residential areas to increase multimodal access. Infill development in commercial areas, districts, and villages would be expected to result in more attractive commercial areas for pedestrians and customers, providing a mix of commercial, residential, and entertainment or recreational uses. Additionally, developing residential density areas that include land uses that support the community (i.e., community centers, day care centers, social service offices, educational functions, parks, and other public spaces) through Urban Corridors would increase use of public services provided to the community, thus resulting in beneficial effects in the quality of life for residents in the long term.

Moreover, under Alternative 1, neighborhoods are envisioned as places where many features are available within a 10-minute walk, and higher density housing will be available near major streets and commercial areas to take advantage of employment opportunities, transit, and other services. This is known as the "10-minute neighborhood" paradigm that provides ready access from homes to supporting businesses and to parks, schools, and other gathering places.

Alternative 1 also supports goals and policies that promote strengthening building code requirements for energy efficiency during construction and operation. The addition of multifamily development units in historically mostly single-unit housing developments could result in short-term adverse effects to existing residents from limited access to streets, increase in noise, and changes in visual conditions in the neighborhoods during construction, as well as increases in motorized and non-motorized traffic from an increased population density in the long term. To address this, the City

will require adherence to City codes and design manuals for each district and will conduct a public process where the needs of specific neighborhoods can be individually addressed as site-specific plans are prepared.

6.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

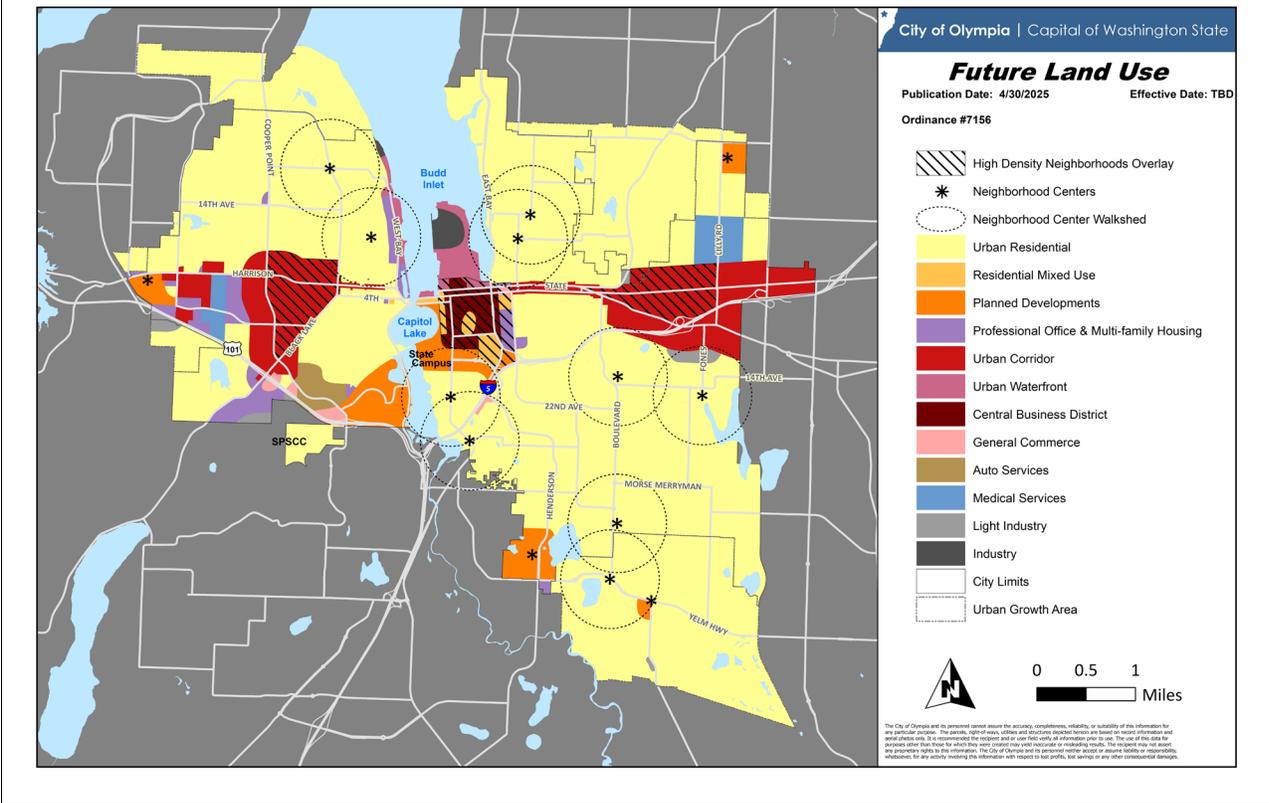
Increased growth and change would occur under both alternatives. The goal of the Comprehensive Plan update is to continue to encourage and remove barriers to development of more dense residential and mixed-use infill in the community to reduce sprawl into adjacent resource and rural lands. The Comprehensive Plan update would capture long-range planning initiatives and plans that are currently being implemented in the city.

Alternative 2 includes minor land use changes, such as the removal of three Neighborhood Center designations on the Future Land Use Map, as recommended in the 2024 Neighborhood Centers report. Walksheds were added for the other Neighborhood Centers designations to highlight the intention of these areas to primarily serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The Low Density Neighborhood and smaller Medium Density Neighborhood and Mixed Residential designations were consolidated into an Urban Residential designation. The primary updates are intended to capture local land use initiatives that are already in process or could be further refined. Therefore, the same general types of development impacts on land uses described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. Impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development, and would be accompanied by changes in land use zoning districts and development patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city.

The specific text revisions proposed for the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Urban Design chapter under Alternative 2 would result in minor, and in some cases beneficial, effects on the quality of life in Olympia. In addition to the goals and policies included in Alternative 1, Alternative 2 includes goals and policies regarding schools that were previously discussed in the Public Services chapter and that emphasize coordinating City and school district policies to site new schools in locations where students can easily walk or bike to school and where school employees and students can commute on public transit. Impacts from including schools in the land use planning process will be beneficial to neighboring communities due to increased access to education. Schools could also offer public spaces for community use outside of school hours.

The proposed Future Land Use Map (Figure 6-3) shows the locations for a variety of land uses in Olympia's UGA. Although Figure 6-3 is not a zoning map, it provides guidance for zoning and other regulations to ensure uses of land and development are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Figure 6-3
Proposed Future Land Use Map of Olympia and Its UGA**



Additional revisions support the provision of allowing small scale commercial uses in residential areas, both in neighborhood centers and in neighborhoods. Allowing residents to access small scale commercial businesses within their own neighborhoods can help promote active forms of transportation and therefore help to reduce greenhouse gases and vehicle miles traveled. It can also help to provide gathering spaces and enhance social connections among neighbors, which could reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Alternative 2 also expands on the importance of prioritizing infill development in areas that have adequate public infrastructure and service capacities to later phase urban development and supporting facilities outward from core areas. This would support organized growth and help the City adapt to future population trends by investing in well planned infrastructure projects.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan update recognizes the contributions of marginalized groups, workers, women, and people from various cultures toward shaping Olympia's history and heritage.

The updates also emphasize the importance of environmental justice by supporting efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities geographically or among community members. Examples of these efforts include more equitable distribution of resources for wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation; policies to encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of trees; added policies to explore the use of community gardens and urban agriculture to meet local food demands; and increases in the area of urban green spaces and tree canopy within neighborhoods that do not have easy access to them. Therefore, development projects supported by Alternative 2 would result in beneficial impacts to physical and mental health for all neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods with disadvantaged and overburdened communities.



Alternative 2 would update the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the progress of housing and land use initiatives and plans that were proposed in the Buildable Lands Report, Housing Needs Assessment, and Olympia Housing Action Plan developed in 2021, around the time that the Comprehensive Plan was most recently amended (TRPC 2021b, 2021c; City of Olympia and TRPC 2021). The Comprehensive Plan update would incorporate these ongoing initiatives and update the City's goals and policies to reflect more recent initiatives and regulations, such as those captured in the *Planning for and Accommodating Housing Needs in Thurston County* document that implements the Housing Affordability Requirements of House Bill 1220 (TRPC 2024b). The Comprehensive Plan update would encourage residential infill with diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles. The Comprehensive Plan update also includes goals and policies encouraging the location of amenities at the boundaries of certain districts so they can work as a bridge between socioeconomic groups concentrating in different districts. Diversifying housing types across the city and strategically locating amenities could attract new businesses and services to neighborhoods, which in turn supports the "10-minute neighborhood" paradigm envisioned under Alternative 1.

Alternative 2 would result in beneficial effects from encouraging adaptive reuse and commercial infill of vacant or underutilized buildings to create opportunities for small local businesses while promoting historic preservation. These benefits would also increase employment and contribute to the cultural quality of districts and Urban Corridors. The City also included a new policy to incorporate public art and public spaces along corridors, providing opportunities for community engagement in creating a sense of place.

In summary, the impacts of Alternative 2 on land use are expected to be less than significant and not substantially different than those of Alternative 1. Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 could have short-term adverse impacts on access, noise, and the visual quality of existing land uses during the construction period for maintenance and new development projects. These impacts would be project-specific and mitigated by adhering to City codes and design standards. Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 is expected to result in long-term changes in land use designations and patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city to accommodate a growing population and increase the ability to walk, roll, bicycle, and use transit to meet mobility needs.

6.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential land use impacts under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to apply and enforce City codes and regulations such as zoning, design review, stormwater, engineering, building, and subdivision standards for new development.
- Encourage the protection, loss mitigation, and maintenance of historic trees and landscapes that have significance to the community or a neighborhood.
- Update City code and design manuals as appropriate to reflect changes in state requirements for construction and retrofitting of housing and commercial structures and development patterns.
- Use the subarea planning process described in the Public Participation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and prepare specific plans for a few select Opportunity/Focus Areas of the community.
- Coordinate with Tribes and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to identify required mitigation measures for proposed impacts on historic resources.
- Apply best management practices for handling and proper disposal of hazardous materials.
- Continue to apply district-specific mitigation measures outlined in planning documents to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

The following additional mitigation measures undertaken by the City could also increase environmental benefits in concert with the Land Use and Urban Design chapter updates proposed under Alternative 2:

- Continue government-to-government coordination and collaboration to support the long-term commitments established in the accord between the Squaxin Island Tribe and the City of Olympia in 2021 (Squaxin Island Tribe and City of Olympia 2021).
- Encourage additional cooperation between the State and the City, among the local governments, and with special-purpose governments such as InterCity Transit, the Port and the school districts.

- Require residential capacity to be replaced elsewhere in the urban area if a future proposal would remove land with residential capacity from that use rather than accommodating it in the rural area.
- Consider application of the City's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program when development above eight units per acre in an R 4-8 District is proposed. Development rights are obtained from an eligible property owner in a Thurston County TDR Sending Zone. With one TDR credit, a density of nine units per acre can be achieved in the Residential 4-8 District. (This requirement does not apply to density bonuses granted in accordance with OMC 18.04.080(4)).
- Increase residential development within the wider urban area by continuing efforts to expand the range of housing type options (e.g., duplexes, cottage housing, and accessory dwellings) in predominantly single-family neighborhoods, where existing infrastructure is in place to accommodate the additional units.
- Identify infill properties where lack of local sewer connection or other infrastructure-related site constraints are a barrier to development. Make strategic investments to extend utility and other infrastructure to areas where there is not enough future development potential to pay for the improvements that will support higher density growth.
- Through interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, encourage adaptive reuse and commercial occupancy in existing underutilized or vacant buildings to increase the economic vitality of Downtown.
- Create educational programs and partnerships surrounding the implementation of community gardens and urban agriculture to address and plan for climate impacts such as drought and extreme heat and encourage the production of climate-friendly foods.

6.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to land use in Olympia or its UGA. Although there could be adverse effects during the construction of projects under Alternatives 1 and 2, these would be temporary and would support the goals proposed in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Plan update. Both alternatives would result in long-term changes in land use designations and patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city to accommodate a growing population.

7 Housing

7.1 Affected Environment

Thurston County is one of the fastest growing counties in Washington. By 2045, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) expects that more than 380,000 people will reside in the county, with a large share of the population living in Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater or their respective unincorporated UGAs (TRPC 2021b). Based on medium growth projections, the population of the City and its UGA is expected to grow from roughly 70,860 to 87,650 people by 2045, for a total increase of 16,790 people (TRPC 2024b).

The 2020 Census indicated that Olympia and its UGA included approximately 30,735 housing units. According to the TRPC, about 54% were single-family homes, 42% were multi-family (shared-wall) units, and 4% were manufactured housing. The 2024 TRPC housing estimates and forecasts indicate that Olympia and its UGA will require approximately 14,295 new housing units by 2045 to accommodate population growth (TRPC 2024b).

Based on existing zoning and development patterns, Olympia and its UGA have a combined capacity of approximately 18,941 new housing units, ensuring adequate space for anticipated growth. Nearly 3,468 units can be accommodated in mid-rise multifamily zones; 7,352 units in low-rise multifamily zones; and 1,152 units in moderate-density zones. Additionally, Olympia's accessory dwelling unit (ADU) capacity is projected to be approximately 310 units over the planning period.



In Olympia, 46% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, and 16% of households are spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs, which include rent or mortgage, utilities, and insurance (TRPC 2021b). Regardless of race or ethnicity, lower income households are generally disadvantaged by the high cost of housing because spending more on housing inhibits opportunities for investment in other life pursuits, such as education, retirement, or health care.

The City has collaborated with other jurisdictions and agencies to explore regional solutions to reduce homelessness and increase affordable housing. The City has started to implement actions that reduce barriers to housing development. Examples include donating land and providing funding for low-income housing development, increasing the types of housing allowed in low-density neighborhoods, reducing setbacks and allowing deferral of impact fees, implementing a voter-

approved Home Fund to create permanent supportive housing, promoting flexible codes and preapproved plan sets to encourage ADUs, and championing the formation of an interjurisdictional Regional Housing Council that sets policy and funding priorities to advance equitable access to safe and affordable housing in Thurston County.

7.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

7.2.1 *Growth Management Act Goals*

The GMA requires the Housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to implement and be consistent with the Land Use chapter and state and regional plans in their use of spatial growth assumptions, population forecasts, and planning periods. The GMA requires that each jurisdiction have enough developable land to accommodate the 20-year projected population growth. GMA goals applicable to housing include the following:

- Reducing urban sprawl and encouraging urban growth by encouraging development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services can be provided in an efficient manner
- Planning for and accommodating housing affordable to all economic segments of the population
- Encouraging the preservation of existing housing stock
- Promoting a variety of residential housing types and densities

Additionally, the Washington State Legislature passed E2SHB 1923 in 2019, encouraging cities planning under the GMA to take actions toward increasing residential building capacity. These actions are codified and include developing a Housing Action Plan (HAP).

7.2.2 *Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter*

The proposed new Housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan incorporates goals and policies that were previously outlined in the housing sections of the Land Use and Urban Design and Public Services chapters of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan goals and policies focus on equity, inclusion, and affordability; embrace development practices that promote efficient land use and prioritize high standards of living; and include partnerships with regional businesses and nonprofit organizations to expand housing opportunities through collaboration and innovation. In 2021, the City adopted the Olympia HAP, which identifies specific actions that the City will take to address housing needs. The HAP is intended to inform the City's Comprehensive Plan policies and guide implementation of actions that help the City meet its strategic objectives (TRPC 2021b).

The HAP builds on affordable housing efforts completed by the City to date, and it supports the process of identifying actions to increase the supply, diversity, and affordability of housing. The HAP was preceded by a regional Housing Needs Assessment, prepared by the TRPC for the Cities of

Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, that identified the following housing gaps and priorities (TRPC 2021b):

- Reduce housing costs for low-income and cost-burdened households
- Increase the overall housing supply
- Increase the variety of housing sizes and types
- Increase senior housing options
- Maintain and improve the existing housing stock
- Provide safe and stable options for renters and homeowners
- Increase permanent housing options for people with disabilities and those at risk of experiencing homelessness

The HAP also identifies a menu of over 45 actions the City can take to address housing gaps, needs, and equity considerations, and a state and federal legislative agenda to increase the funds needed to implement these actions.

7.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) that address housing include the following:

- Chapter 4.16: House Mover’s License
- Chapter 5.80: Unfair Housing Practices
- Chapter 5.82: Rental Housing Code
- Chapter 5.86: Multi-Family Dwelling Tax Exemptions
- Chapter 10.18: Truck and Trailer Parking in Residential Areas
- Chapter 12.02: Engineering Design and Development Standards
- Chapter 12.28: Moving Buildings
- Chapter 12.48: Street Names and House Numbers
- Title 16: Buildings and Construction
- Title 17: Subdivisions
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

7.2.4 Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City documents that address housing include the following:

- Housing Needs Assessment, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, & City of Tumwater (TRPC 2021c)
- Olympia Housing Action Plan (City of Olympia and TRPC 2021)
- Planning and Accommodating Housing Needs in Thurston County (TRPC 2024b)
- One Community Plan (City of Olympia 2020a)
- Economic Displacements and Racial Disparities Analysis (in progress)

7.3 Potential Impacts

7.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan would not be adopted or implemented, and the Housing chapter will not be included as a standalone chapter. The City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to housing would continue to be discussed in the Land Use and Urban Design and Public Services chapters.

Alternative 1 is expected to support long-term changes in land use designations and patterns that aim to create a denser and more compact city to accommodate a growing population. These changes would be supported by additional housing units built near multimodal transportation systems. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan includes goals and policies that aim to increase housing densities through incentives and regulations, such as minimum and maximum density limits to achieve efficient uses of buildable lands consistent with environmental constraints and affordability. Examples of policies include adopting zoning that allows for a variety of compatible housing types and densities, dispersing low- and moderate-income and special-needs housing throughout the urban area, and promoting home ownership.

Policies under Alternative 1 could have long-term beneficial effects to housing by increasing opportunities for home ownership for diverse demographic groups in selected areas of the city. Owning a home can significantly improve a household's ability to build both short-term and generational wealth. Policies also support providing more medium-term housing options for renters. Additionally, increasing housing supply could help reduce housing and renting costs influenced by market forces in the medium to long term. Focusing on residential density growth along multimodal urban corridors with frequent transit service can reduce household transportation costs and improve access to employment, services, and amenities. Chapter 8 of the EIS provides a more detailed discussion of the effects of encouraging new housing on transportation arterials and in areas near public transportation hubs.

Alternative 1 also includes policies that require that new developments are designed to be compatible with adjacent lower density housing and to conform with topography, which would be expected to reduce adverse impacts on the character or features of existing neighborhoods. Additionally, goals and policies support efforts to revitalize deteriorating residential areas by preserving historic features on historic properties and providing assistance and incentives to help low-income residents rehabilitate properties they cannot afford to maintain. Long-term beneficial effects are expected to result in existing residential areas.

Changes in density limits to support infill could have potential adverse effects on home dwellers of less densely developed areas, who may experience more traffic and noise, particularly during daily commute periods.

Under Alternative 1, existing policies to support special-needs populations who have difficulty securing housing would remain in place. Examples include improving access to social services for elderly residents, people with developmental disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and other groups by supporting social service programs and charitable organizations; dispersing housing for low-income, moderate-income, and special needs residents throughout Olympia and its UGA; and discouraging concentrations of such housing in any one geographic area. Distributing diverse types of residential units offers better opportunities for social integration, could reduce impacts similar to redlining, and could result in safer and more vibrant neighborhoods.

Alternative 1 could result in short-term adverse effects on existing residential areas during construction of new housing, such as temporary road closures, noise, and air quality impacts from construction machinery. These impacts would be mitigated by adhering to City codes and design standards. Alternative 1 is expected to result in long-term changes to housing opportunities and patterns that aim to create a denser, more diverse, and more compact city to accommodate anticipated population growth.

7.3.2 Alternative 2: Adoption

Under both alternatives, additional population, job, and housing growth will occur. The goal of the Comprehensive Plan update is to continue to encourage and remove barriers to the development of increased density residential and mixed-use infill in the community and to update the Comprehensive Plan chapters to comply with current State requirements.

The same general types of development impacts on housing described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. Alternative 2 continues to encourage redevelopment in the three High-Density Neighborhood Overlay areas and infill development. It includes updated goals and policies that further encourage siting development near public services to improve accessibility for residents. With the addition of new policies to be consistent with the HAP, the Comprehensive Plan would include donating, leasing, or selling surplus City-owned land to developers for low-income housing. The Comprehensive Plan would also be updated to meet the Department of Commerce minimum standards for housing.

The primary update for Alternative 2 is the inclusion of a new Housing chapter that combines information that was previously part of the Public Services and the Land Use and Urban Design chapters. The Housing chapter also captures updates to ongoing and new housing initiatives in Olympia since 2021. Adding a new chapter to the Comprehensive Plan that focuses on the City's

housing goals and policies reflects the City's commitment to fostering well-planned neighborhoods and ensuring that housing options are available for all income levels and life stages.

The new Housing chapter also addresses recent State laws requiring local jurisdictions to identify and address local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing. Areas at higher risk of displacement must also be identified and anti-displacement policies established.

Alternative 2 provides new goals and policies to support tenant protections to prevent displacement and increase housing stability. Examples include implementing and enforcing just-cause eviction requirements that reduce the risk of sudden displacement; establishing and enforcing a rental stabilization policy to prevent sudden and excessive rent increases beyond a reasonable annual percentage; developing a formal relocation program for tenants who are displaced due to redevelopment, substantial rent increases, or evictions without a cause; and considering the adoption of a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinance to give renters the first right to purchase property for sale. These policies could have beneficial effects on housing stability for tenants who lack protections, and particularly for historically disadvantaged communities.

The Comprehensive Plan would also be updated to encourage allocating enough land that would be suitable for a variety of housing types and costs, including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special-needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings. This approach would help provide both variety and affordability in housing options, consistent with *Planning for and Accommodating Housing Needs in Thurston County* (TRPC 2024b).

In summary, the impacts of Alternative 2 on housing are expected to be less than significant and not substantially different than those of Alternative 1. Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 could have short-term adverse impacts on access, noise, and views near existing residential areas during the construction period for restoration and new development projects. These impacts would be project-specific and mitigated by adhering to City codes and design standards. Like Alternative 1, Alternative 2 is expected to result in long-term changes on housing opportunities and patterns that aim to create a denser, more diverse, and more compact city to accommodate a growing population.

7.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential housing impacts under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to update and enforce building design standards, and historic preservation protections where applicable, for new developments to minimize impacts on the character or features of existing neighborhoods.

- The City will use the Washington State Department of Commerce Growth Management Services checklist and Housing Guidance documents to ensure all state requirements are met or exceeded.
- Continue to implement the recommendations in the 2021 Buildable Lands Report and actions outlined in the HAP.

The following additional mitigation measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts on housing under Alternative 2:

- Allocate enough land that will be suitable for a variety of housing types and costs, including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special-needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings to help provide both variety and affordability in housing options.
- The City will implement tenant protections to help avoid or slow the process of displacement for households by preserving housing units, a household’s tenancy, or access to information and assistance.
- The City will implement mitigation for individuals and families experiencing displacements, requiring developers to provide relocation assistance, including Notice of Intent to Sell and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Ordinances.

7.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to housing in Olympia or its UGA. There could be temporary disruptions to existing residential units due to street closures during the construction of new development projects. However, impacts would be minimized through best management practices, and the construction of these projects would support the goals proposed by the Comprehensive Plan and would result in housing opportunities across the City and its UGA. The planned development supported by the City would meet expected population growth and would contribute to the economic growth of the City. Alternative 2 includes new tenant protection goals and policies that would improve housing stability for renters from all demographics, which could significantly improve a household’s ability to pursue educational and professional opportunities, access healthcare, and build wealth.

8 Transportation

8.1 Affected Environment

Travel within and around Olympia is served by roadways; on-street parking; State highways; pedestrian and bicycle facilities; and transit and mode-share facilities and services. The city has a network of urban streets ranging from low-volume residential streets to major arterials.

Approximately 68% of Olympia's streets have a sidewalk on at least one side. About 60% of Olympia's major streets have bike lanes, and a majority of the city is within a 10-minute walk of a transit route. Interstate 5 and Highway 101 run through the city. Additionally, two freight rail lines pass through Olympia and connect to the Port and the Mottman Industrial Park.

Intercity Transit is the primary public transit provider in Olympia and surrounding urban areas, providing connections to transit in Pierce County. Other service providers (e.g., Mason County Transit, Grays Harbor Transit, and Lewis County Transit) provide service to the city as well, connecting to adjacent counties. Since 2016, Intercity Transit has implemented a Short- and Long-Range Plan (Intercity Transit 2018) that includes high-frequency transit, providing more frequent buses, fewer stops, a longer route, and priority at traffic signals.

8.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

8.2.1 *Growth Management Act Goals*

The GMA requires the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan to implement and be consistent with the land use element and State and regional plans in their use of spatial growth assumptions, population forecasts, and planning periods. GMA goals applicable to transportation include the following: 1) the encouragement of economic development and the development of urban areas where public facilities could be provided efficiently to reduce sprawl and low density development; and 2) the encouragement of multimodal transportation systems that help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and vehicle miles traveled per capita.

The GMA provides concurrency requirements and allows for impact fee programs for cities to help build and fund the transportation system to support new growth. The City's concurrency program is intended for the transportation system to build capacity in all travel modes to serve new commercial and residential growth. Transportation concurrency projects will increase the city's street system capacity by adding pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements in addition to improvements for cars and trucks.

8.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Chapter

The Transportation chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies that guide decision-making about Olympia's future transportation system and aim to reduce traffic and improve access and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. In 2021, the City published its first Transportation Master Plan (TMP) that ties to the Comprehensive Plan vision, defines street system needs and investments, proposes projects that support realizing the Comprehensive Plan's vision, and updates the City's concurrency and impact fee programs to make them more multimodal. Both the Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and the TMP support the goals and policies set forth in the Thurston Regional Transportation Plan and the Washington State Commute Trip Reduction law.



One priority goal in the TMP that aligns with the Comprehensive Plan goals is to support infill development through the creation of vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods within a half-mile of at least 72% of households by 2035. To improve safety for pedestrians, the City plans to add sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks and pathways, as well as curb ramps and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible devices to accommodate people of all mobilities. The City's

TMP also prioritizes non-motorized vehicle transportation, including enhancing existing bike lanes and creating bike corridors that would build a low-stress bicycle network. These priorities would be expected to result in most households being located within a 10-minute walk of shopping and services, including transit routes, and people could choose to walk, roll, bike, or use transit to meet some of their daily needs.

8.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the OMC that address transportation infrastructure and facilities include the following:

- Chapter 10.08: Speed Limits
- Chapter 12.10: Olympia Commute Trip Reduction Plan
- Chapter 12.14: Transportation Benefit District
- Chapter 12.16: Street Vacations
- Chapter 12.20: Street Excavations
- Chapter 12.36: Sidewalk Maintenance
- Chapter 15.20: Transportation Concurrency Ordinance

- Chapter 16.100: Electric Vehicle Parking
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

8.2.4 *Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)*

Other City documents that address transportation infrastructure and facilities include the following:

- Transportation Master Plan (City of Olympia 2021d)
- Thurston Regional Transportation Plan (TRPC 2020b)
- Intercity Transit Short- and Long-Range Plan (Intercity Transit 2018)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
- Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (City of Olympia 2022)
- Ordinance No. 7037: Olympia’s 2016 Complete Streets Ordinance (City of Olympia 2017b)
- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report (City of Olympia 2025a)

8.3 Potential Impacts

8.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan Transportation chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to transportation would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that supports the Thurston Regional Transportation Plan and is intended to foster a transportation system that:

- Focuses on creating opportunities for people to use all modes of transportation to get within and around the city and neighboring jurisdictions more efficiently with the addition of roundabouts, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike facilities, and transit service
- Provides improved access to create vibrant urban areas, reduce environmental impacts from increased vehicle miles traveled and associated increased GHG emissions, and conserve financial and energy resources allocated to transportation
- Supports implementation of GMA requirements that cities plan for anticipated population growth by accepting the need for denser development

Alternative 1 aims to result in a reduction of total vehicle miles traveled as a result of the improvement of transportation infrastructure accompanied by changes in land use designations and patterns that encourage infill development. Changes in land use discussed in Chapter 6 of this EIS would be combined with improved streets and multimodal and transportation infrastructure to support compliance with the State’s Commute Trip Reduction law and goals of the GMA.

Alternative 1 also focuses on creating a network of paths and trails for pedestrian and bike use and a human-scale street grid of small blocks. Existing streets would be modified to reduce capacity for

single occupancy vehicles and to increase capacity for transit and non-motorized transportation that will be needed to accommodate GMA requirements. The more connected grid of smaller streets proposed under Alternative 1 would be expected to shorten trips for people walking, rolling, biking, and driving and to optimize routes for cars, trucks, buses, and emergency vehicles. In addition, investments in high-frequency transit on direct routes, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on urban and strategic corridors, will be designed to increase connectivity. Providing more alternative access to parks, schools, medical facilities, grocery stores, public buildings, dense employment centers, dense residential areas, and transit facilities would be expected to reduce single occupancy vehicle use, reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve travel times, and reduce GHG emissions.

New streets would be built in accordance with the Complete Streets Ordinance passed in 2016, which requires streets to be designed as multiuse public spaces that highlight cultural and natural features of a neighborhood or a district. A resulting increase in non-motorized traffic and perceived sense of place and safety in existing neighborhoods would support the Comprehensive Plan's effort to make streets more equitable. Measures to improve equity in transportation include adding multimodal features for users to access essential services regardless of their age, income, or ability to drive and providing transit stops with accommodations. However, policies supporting more accessible modes of transportation would not be updated to current State standards under Alternative 1.

Safety improvements would include allowing traffic-calming devices on local access areas and retrofitting existing streets to be more accessible and safer for individuals with or without a walking aid, using a wheelchair to roll, riding a bicycle, taking transit, or driving, consistent with ADA requirements and the City of Olympia Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b).

Enforcement of City codes and standards would minimize the potential for and scale of transportation impacts under Alternative 1. It is anticipated that some developments will require temporary street closures, the construction of new streets, improvements to or extension of existing streets, or connection of existing streets. Street improvements will require sidewalks and could require pedestrian and bicycle connections in many cases. Short-term construction impacts could include traffic detours, lane closures, and delays.

Overall, Alternative 1 would result in multimodal transportation infrastructure that would accommodate future population demands and would be expected to result in long-term beneficial impacts to transportation.

8.3.2 *Alternative 2: Adopt Updates*

The same general types of transportation impacts described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. Short-term construction detours and delays may occur during development of new transportation infrastructure, but long-term benefits to transportation efficiency, access, and equity are expected. These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for infill development with associated transportation improvement requirements.

The Comprehensive Plan update will continue to provide a policy framework that supports the Thurston Regional Transportation Plan and fosters multimodal transportation opportunities, reduced congestion, improved access and more equitable transportation infrastructure, vibrant urban areas, reduced environmental impacts, and financial responsibility while complying with GMA requirements to accommodate population growth and the State Commute Trip Reduction law. Concentrating housing and key services around frequent transportation routes would also help lower emissions and help improve air quality in the city, consistent with the City's climate goals (see Chapter 5 of this EIS).

The revisions proposed for the Comprehensive Plan Transportation chapter under Alternative 2 would result in minor and in some cases beneficial effects on transportation infrastructure, facilities, and services. An added emphasis on access and prioritizing pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users over single occupancy vehicles could have beneficial impacts on transportation safety and equity. A new policy to encourage Intercity Transit to maintain a fare-free system and support connections beyond Thurston County by coordinating with Pierce Transit, Grays Harbor Transit, Mason Transit, and Lewis County Transit when appropriate would also expand access. Added language to encourage construction of bulbouts, crossing islands, roundabouts, and beacon systems would reduce travel times and improve safety.

Alternative 2 includes new goals to improve the biking infrastructure in the Downtown core, including public lockers or secure bike parking in City-owned parking lots, and support for cargo delivery by bicycle. Another priority is to study additional street connections and consider the impacts of building only pedestrian and bicycle connections instead of full streets, as well as the implications of reducing five-lane streets to three lanes. Improved biking and pedestrian infrastructure could result in more people choosing to walk or bike and could therefore decrease vehicle trips.

Alternative 2 also proposes to allow new development only if there is a supply of mobility units, making it mandatory to ensure access. Mobility units are defined in OMC 15.20.020 as "person trips" generated by land use development and supported by multimodal transportation infrastructure. They are a metric that the City uses to identify concurrency with transportation planning.

Similar to Alternative 1, existing streets would be expected to be modified to reduce capacity for single-occupancy vehicles and to increase capacity for transit and non-motorized transportation.

Though there could be short-term adverse effects on transportation during project construction, these would be temporary and would support long-term benefits from multimodal transportation infrastructure that would accommodate future population demands.

In summary, the impacts of Alternative 2 on transportation are expected to be less than significant and not substantially different than those of Alternative 1. Like Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would be expected to result in long-term beneficial impacts to transportation and an increase in non-motorized trips.

8.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts on transportation under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to apply and enforce City codes and standards for sidewalk maintenance, signs, speed limits, and district developments.
- Update City code and design manuals as appropriate to reflect changes in State requirements for transportation and transit infrastructure.
- The City will require mitigation for the transportation impacts of new developments, which will be consistent with the TMP and Street Safety Plan.
- New development will be required to build improvements or contribute funds to improve the function and safety of the streets, such as installing bike and pedestrian infrastructure, building roundabouts, making transit improvements, or modifying traffic signals to prioritize transit and non-motorized traffic.
- Ensure a fair distribution of new transportation-related costs to new developments through use of impact fees.
- Construct complete streets and maintain an urban form that is human-scale as the street system is improved with new development.
- Encourage equitable transportation systems and concentrate housing and key services around frequent transportation routes to reduce emissions consistent with the City's climate goals (see EIS Chapter 5).

8.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse transportation impacts in Olympia or its UGA. Though there could be short-term adverse effects on existing transportation during the construction of projects required under Alternatives 1 and 2, these would be temporary and would support the City's goals and compliance with the GMA and other State requirements.

9 Parks, Arts, and Recreation

9.1 Affected Environment

There are more than 50 parks and open spaces and 24 miles of trails within Olympia. The city encompasses more than 1,400 acres of parkland, including community, neighborhood, and open space parks as well as recreational facilities such as sports fields. Squaxin Park, Grass Lake Nature Park, and Watershed Park together compose more than 630 acres of green space. The Deschutes Estuary (Capitol Lake), Heritage Park, Marathon Park, and Sylvester Park are public spaces included in the Washington State Capitol campus grounds and managed by the State of Washington Department of Enterprise Services.



Olympia has a thriving arts community supported through public, private, and non-profit enterprises. Public art and cultural amenities play a key role in shaping the city's identity, enhancing the built environment, and fostering economic vitality. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of public art as an essential component of Olympia's creative landscape.

The downtown Olympia Creative District, a State-certified district designated by the Washington State Arts Commission, serves as a central hub for artistic expression and creative enterprise. Spanning 30 blocks, the district is home to more than 150 creative businesses, including theaters, galleries, breweries, and industrial designers. These businesses and institutions contribute to the vibrancy of downtown, drawing residents and visitors alike while reinforcing Olympia's reputation as a community arts destination.

Beyond the Creative District, the City actively supports and maintains 146 pieces of public art throughout its neighborhoods, parks, and civic spaces. These installations provide artistic engagement opportunities, enrich public spaces, and strengthen community identity. Additionally, the Olympia Armory at 515 Eastside Street Southeast is undergoing transformation into a center for creative innovation, fostering artistic collaboration and expanding access to arts and culture.

9.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

9.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA planning goals include retaining open space; enhancing recreation opportunities; conserving fish and wildlife habitat; protecting the environment; and enhancing the state's quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water. Counties and cities are required to

identify open-space corridors within and between UGAs for multiple purposes. Parks and recreation facilities are to be developed within designated UGAs to ensure that new development incorporates access to outdoor recreation areas and adequate green spaces.

9.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Parks, Arts, and Recreation Chapter

The Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies addressing public safety, health, climate change impacts, and equity. The chapter addresses service standards required to uphold the safety and quality of facilities within parks and recreation areas and the management of the natural environment within park open spaces. A map of parkland within the city limits and UGA is included that identifies city parks, non-city parks, roads, highways, and waterbodies.

The City's Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan, which is referenced in the Comprehensive Plan, has a 20-year planning horizon, with an emphasis on the 6-year outlook (City of Olympia 2022b). It assesses parks and recreation facility needs, lists proposed projects, and describes how projects will be financed. The master plan is updated regularly.

The Thurston Regional Trails Plan is another important recreation planning document. Led by TRPC, the plan covers more than a dozen regional trail systems spanning nearly 60 miles. These trails are owned and operated by several city, county, and state governments (including the City) as well as the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

9.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the OMC that are relevant to the management of parks, arts, and recreation include the following:

- Title 12: Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places
- Chapter 12.60: Park Regulations
- Chapter 13.16: Stormwater Management
- Title 14: Environmental Protection
- Chapter 15.16: Impact Fees
- Chapter 16.70: Flood Damage Prevention
- Chapter 18.20: Shoreline Master Program Regulations
- Chapter 18.32: Critical Areas
- Chapter 18.36: Landscaping and Screening

9.2.4 *Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)*

Other City documents addressing parks, arts, and recreation include the following:

- Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan (City of Olympia 2022b)
- Urban Forestry Manual (City of Olympia 2016)
- Olympia Armory Creative Campus Concept Design Plan (City of Olympia 2022c)
- Creative District Strategic Plan (Olympia Downtown Alliance 2023)
- Olympia Art Crossings: An Art Plan for City Gateways (City of Olympia Department of Parks, Art, and Recreation 2017)

9.3 **Potential Impacts**

9.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to protect public safety and the natural environment of the City's parks and recreation areas. This includes carrying out the GMA requirement that cities plan for anticipated population growth by accepting the need for denser development so that larger expanses of rural land can be preserved.

Increased population growth will place additional demand on the City's parks, arts, and recreation programs and facilities. Under Alternative 1, the City would continue to implement its Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan priorities and projects as well as coordinate with other entities through the Thurston Regional Trail Plan. The City would continue to budget and seek funding for planned parks acquisition and maintenance projects. New development would continue to be assessed park impact fees in accordance with OMC 15.16.

Parks and recreation facilities may be affected by nearby construction projects as a result of construction traffic, dust, noise, or reduced access to the facilities (for example, if roadway improvements are undertaken at a park access point). Conversely, construction for parks and recreation facilities may have similar short-term impacts on surrounding land uses depending on the scale of the project.

Development of new recreation facilities, such as sports fields, may lead to a permanent increase in traffic, noise, and nighttime lighting near these facilities. If currently undeveloped areas are converted to developed recreational facilities, this could result in a loss of native vegetation and an increase in impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff.

Potential environmental impacts associated with public art initiatives may similarly include temporary construction related disturbances, such as noise and minor disruptions to pedestrian pathways, during the installation of new artworks. However, these impacts are expected to be minimal and outweighed by the long-term cultural and economic benefits. Public art enhances a sense of place, strengthens community bonds, and contributes to Olympia's ongoing sustainability by fostering creative engagement and cultural appreciation.

The impacts of future development proposals on the City's parks and recreational facilities, and the impacts of parks development and maintenance projects on the natural environment and surrounding land uses, will continue to be addressed through regulations in place at the time of permit review and project-specific environmental review as appropriate. However, the 2021 Comprehensive Plan does not include future development goals and policies that emphasize equity and inclusion, consider future climate change impacts more specifically, and focus on providing recreational amenities near each neighborhood.

9.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

The same general types of development impacts to parks and recreation areas described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. However, the Comprehensive Plan update includes additional emphasis on goals and policies related to equity and inclusion and considers future climate change impacts.

The Comprehensive Plan update emphasizes the equitable distribution of parks, arts, and recreation resources across the city and UGA. Parks with gathering spaces are to be provided in close proximity (within a 0.5-mile or 10-minute walk) to all residents. The distance should be measured by following an accessible travel route suitable for walking or use of a small mobility device. It is possible that providing more parks throughout the city could disperse some recreational demand and vehicle traffic away from larger and regional city parks. This would also provide for more equitable access to recreational opportunities for residents.

The Comprehensive Plan update identifies new large recreation projects, including the Percival Landing reconstruction, West Bay Park and Trail, Karen Fraser Woodland Trail, Armory Creative Campus, and Yelm Highway Community Park. Support for these new projects in the Comprehensive Plan could help bolster parks, arts, and recreation opportunities. For example, the Armory Creative Campus is also highlighted by the City's ARCH initiative as a major project that offers accessible, inclusive space for programs, practice, classes, and gatherings.

The revisions proposed for the Comprehensive Plan Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapter under Alternative 2 would result in minor and in some cases beneficial effects on parks, arts, and recreation. An added emphasis on non-vehicular modes of access to city parks may result in beneficial long-

term impacts by reducing vehicle traffic emissions. See Chapter 5 of this EIS for discussion of the Climate Action and Resilience chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Overall, Alternative 2 is expected to support and enhance Olympia's public art environment while reinforcing the city's reputation as a dynamic arts and cultural hub.

9.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts to city parks and recreation areas under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to apply and enforce City codes and standards for parks impact fees.
- Ensure that parks development, improvements, and maintenance projects comply with stormwater, shorelines, flood damage prevention, critical areas, and landscaping requirements as well as mitigation for traffic and land use impacts to surrounding areas.
- Continue to coordinate with other entities to make regional trail connections that also support nonmotorized modes of transportation.
- Continue collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe regarding shoreline restoration, access, cultural resources, and other issues of common interest.

The following additional mitigation measures undertaken by the City could also increase environmental benefits in concert with the Parks, Arts, and Recreation chapter updates proposed under Alternative 2:

- Incorporate the climate change and sea level rise findings and recommendations described in Chapter 5 of this EIS into future park designs.
- Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan that covers parks, arts, and recreation.
- Development and implementation of an Urban Forest Plan will help to improve the city's tree canopy, which could benefit outdoor recreationists by improving views and providing shade.

9.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to parks, arts, and recreation programs or sites in Olympia or its UGA. Application of City plans, codes, and standards would continue under both alternatives.

10 Utilities

10.1 Affected Environment

Olympia and its UGA encompass a 24-square-mile residential, commercial, industrial, and natural area. The City's Public Works Department manages four public utilities providing essential infrastructure throughout the city and UGA. The service areas for each utility generally follow the boundary of the city and UGA with minor variations. The four utilities are as follows:

- Drinking Water Utility
- Wastewater Utility
- Storm and Surface Water Utility
- Waste ReSources Utility

Each utility periodically updates its management plan according to applicable regulations. These plans guide system design, maintenance, and administration of services. The Utilities chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides a broad vision by setting goals and policies designed to guide these updates.

Numerous privately held utilities operate within the city to provide additional services, including communications, electricity, cable, and natural gas. Privately owned utilities such as natural gas and electric, cable service, and telecommunications facilities are regulated within City-owned rights-of-way. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates private investor-owned utilities throughout the state. The private utilities subsection of the Comprehensive Plan is not addressed in this EIS analysis because the proposed changes this subsection are minimal (adding a policy to consider a range of screening measures to increase compatibility, and updates to private utility company names).

10.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

10.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA primary goals, which aim to encourage development in urban areas, reduce sprawl, preserve the environment, and provide equitable housing, are crucial in guiding the city's growth. The utilities and transportation elements, which form the backbone of this development, are reviewed to ensure the long-term capacity of all public and private utilities to serve the community's needs. This review provides the foundation for determining development densities and the phasing of that development, directing utilities to provide services in line with the goals of all other elements.

10.2.2 *Comprehensive Plan Utilities Chapter*

The Utilities element of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies that guide decision-making for the city's utilities. It ensures that essential services are coordinated and cost-effective while considering economic, social, and environmental impacts. The Comprehensive Plan includes guidance for short-term and long-term system administration, repairing and replacing aging infrastructure, managing wastewater and stormwater, handling waste and recycling, preparing for sea level rise, addressing storm impacts, and protecting the natural environment.

10.2.3 *Olympia Municipal Code*

The primary chapters of the OMC addressing public and private utilities are listed as follows:

- Chapter 13.04: Water
- Chapter 13.08: Sewers
- Chapter 13.12: Garbage
- Chapter 13.16: Storm and Surface Water Management
- Chapter 13.20: Wastewater System
- Chapter 13.24: Reclaimed Water
- Chapter 16.70: Building and Construction - Flood Damage Prevention
- Chapter 16.80: Sea Level Rise Flood Damage Reduction
- Chapter 16.90: General Provisions Governing the Procurement of Compost Products in Projects
- Chapter 17.48: Design Standards

10.2.4 *Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)*

Several plans, standards, and manuals also guide the provision of essential utility services to the city and UGA. These regulations, which include regional and state guidelines, establish a framework for utility services. In addition to the City's Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), which is updated and incorporated as part of the Comprehensive Plan, these documents include the following:

- **City of Olympia**
 - Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
 - 2020 Wastewater Management Plan (City of Olympia 2020b)
 - 2021–2026 Water System Plan (City of Olympia 2024e)
 - Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (City of Olympia 2022)
 - Storm and Surface Water Plan (City of Olympia 2018)
 - Waste ReSources Management Plan (City of Olympia 2023d)
 - City of Olympia Stormwater Management Action Plan (City of Olympia 2023e)
 - City of Olympia Stormwater Management Program Plan (City of Olympia 2025b)
 - Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019)

- **Regional**
 - Wastewater Resource Management 2050 LOTT System Plan (LOTT 2024)
 - Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan (1996)
 - Thurston County 2018-2023 Capital Facilities Plan (Thurston County 2018)
- **State of Washington**
 - Department of Ecology Dissolved Oxygen Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan for Budd Inlet and Its Priority Implementation Actions (Ecology 2022)

10.3 Potential Impacts

10.3.1 *Alternative 1: No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the City would not adopt the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan, including the Utilities chapter. Instead, the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan will remain in place and guide future utility service decisions. Broadly, the current plan provides a policy framework that informs the management plans of each utility, ranging from the provision of services, future capital expenditures, regulatory compliance, community education and involvement, and environmental protection. The existing utility management plans and current regulatory framework would remain in place. The utilities will continue regular updates according to their operational requirements.

The Drinking Water Utility would continue to operate under the existing permit granted by the Washington State Department of Health Office of Drinking Water. All other master plans, standards, and best management practices regulating the utility would remain in place, as well as its CFP and funding sources. The City's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual and Critical Areas Ordinance will continue to protect groundwater from contamination (City of Olympia 2022). According to the Olympia 2021-2026 Water System Plan, the City can meet the anticipated 20-year demand. These plans will ensure that the Drinking Water Utility complies with permit requirements.

Under Alternative 1, the Wastewater Utility would continue to comply with the current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and Ecology's Dissolved Oxygen Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan for Budd Inlet. The LOTT Clean Water Alliance would remain in place and continue to treat wastewater from the city and UGA. The 2018 Storm and Surface Water Plan, 2023 Stormwater Management Action Plan, and State and federal regulations, including the City's Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit, would continue to guide the Storm and Surface Water Utility. The Storm and Surface Water Plan is regularly updated.

The Waste ReSources Utility would also continue its compliance with the existing regulatory framework under Alternative 1. Operations and current expansion projects for solid waste disposal would continue in accordance with the 7-year plan for 2023 to 2030. The plan's primary goals—

climate and environmental protections; diversity, equity and inclusion; operational safety; and financial sustainability—would remain in effect.

The provision of utilities has both short-term and long-term impacts on the environment. Short-term impacts can result from routine system maintenance and capital project construction, including construction noise, stormwater contamination, equipment exhaust, and changing traffic patterns. Under Alternative 1, an array of protections and monitoring required under City, county, State, and federal regulations would continue to mitigate these impacts. Future proposed planned actions and capital projects will undergo SEPA analysis and permitting review to ensure compliance and implementation of mitigation measures.



Although substantive, these regulations and plans may not provide the level of environmental protection, social justice, and equitable distribution of services without adopting the updated goals and policies proposed under Alternative 2.

Decision-makers may not incorporate the current best available science into their processes, and new policies supporting low-impact and green infrastructure methods may not be adopted.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies that refer to priority implementation actions for converting septic to sewer and phasing out Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) systems in coordination with the LOTT Clean Water Alliance. The priority ranking system for capital projects under the 2021 Comprehensive Plan includes balancing Storm and Surface Water Utility capital projects with the utility's three missions: flooding, water quality, and habitat. These initiatives would continue as intended under the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan update includes climate change and equity as new goals for consideration when implementing capital projects. It is possible these goals may be less salient during the implementation of capital projects under Alternative 1. Thus, the current Comprehensive Plan may inadvertently continue any inequities by not specifically looking for and correcting improvements in underserved areas. Despite these impacts, City, State, and federal regulations regarding the maintenance and expansion of utilities would ensure that the impacts of Alternative 1 would be less than significant.

10.3.2 *Alternative 2: Adopt Updates*

Under Alternative 2, the proposed Comprehensive Plan update would be adopted and guide the goals and policies for Olympia's utilities. The utilities will continue providing safe, efficient, and practical utility services. The update adds emphasis within each utility subsection on planning for climate change, sea level rise, and more frequent extreme weather events. The utility subsections emphasize using renewable energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These would benefit the City by addressing resiliency when planning utility systems and implementing projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help the City meet or exceed climate goals.

Under both alternatives, the Drinking Water, Wastewater, Waste ReSources, and Storm and Surface Water Utilities would continue to operate under their existing permits, plans, standards, and best management practices and City code requirements. Alternative 2 would result in the following updates:

- **Drinking water:** Alternative 2 emphasizes developing and implementing education programs available to the entire community and allowing cross-utility education. These changes would help to better educate the community about protecting the city's water supply quality and availability.
- **Wastewater:** Alternative 2 emphasizes planning and implementing a priority ranking system to balance capital projects, including equity, as part of the ranking criteria. Alternative 2 includes goals to provide technical assistance for owners of private stormwater systems to ensure that they are properly maintained.
- **Waste management:** Updates emphasize recycling and consumer education programs, aiming for an overall decrease in waste production. These changes would have short- and long-term environmental benefits, including reducing the risk of water and airborne contamination, safely managing hazardous wastes, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Comprehensive Plan update emphasizes the equitable distribution, repair, and replacement of utility services with goals to serve all of the city's residents and advance Olympia's social equity goals and affordable housing by directing each utility to consider new rate equity programs for low-income households. Each utility subsection prioritizes the continued provision of utilities to support higher density residential and commercial uses as growth occurs. Overall, Alternative 2 would establish goals and policies that are more equitable for the city's residents and protective of utility infrastructure by addressing environmental issues with best available science and evaluating and addressing potential climate change and sea level rise impacts.

10.3.3 Mitigation Measures

The following measures, undertaken by the City, would minimize potential utilities impacts under both alternatives:

- Continue to update development codes as needed in coordination with utilities as they update their long-term management plans.
- Continue regional cooperation with the LOTT Clean Water Alliance and the Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan.
- Continue utilities cooperation between the State and the City, among local governments, and with special-purpose governments such as the Port and the school districts.
- Implement programs focused on converting septic systems to sewers to avoid or minimize impacts on surface water and groundwater quality.
- Consider alternative low-impact or green-impact utility management methods as technologies change.
- Implement stormwater management technical assistance for owners of private stormwater systems to ensure that they are maintained and protective of water quality.

10.3.4 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse utilities impacts to Olympia or its UGA. Under both options, each utility's short and long-term management plans would continue to address city and regional growth, population, and development while ensuring compliance with City, county, State, and federal regulations.

11 Economy

11.1 Affected Environment

Olympia is an employment center for Thurston County, with a population size that can double with commuters who travel to the city during the work week. Top employment industries include public administration (State and local government), healthcare, professional services, retail trade, and accommodations and food service. It is expected that there will be a nearly 35% increase in the number of jobs located in Olympia between 2025 and 2045, of which a large and stable base of government employment is expected to continue because of the city's status as the state capitol. Trends also point to faster employment growth in the private sector, specifically within info-tech, professional services, and the healthcare industry, which is the city's current fastest-growing sector.

The overall purpose of economic development is to improve the quality of life for people. Through partnerships, programs, and investments, the City strives to help residents, businesses, and communities thrive. The City's efforts to achieve economic development, as identified in its Olympia Strong Plan (City of Olympia 2024b), fall into four main themes:

1. **Education and Workforce Pathways:** Fostering a variety of education and career training opportunities to ensure individuals have the skills necessary to access in-demand and well-paying jobs.
2. **Housing and Sense of Security:** Facilitating affordable housing initiatives to alleviate the burden on low- and moderate-income families and provide them with stable living conditions.
3. **Business Enterprise Resources and Support:** Fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses to create new avenues for wealth creation, reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the community, and bolster the tax base the City relies on to fund community goals and needs.
4. **Community Lovability, Pride, and Resiliency:** Investing in programs and projects that make Olympia a desirable destination to work, live, and play and that bolster the City's ability to respond effectively to physical and financial challenges.

Downtown Olympia is the cultural heart of the city, with a thriving arts scene, a flourishing creative district, and a destination waterfront that attracts recreational boaters from throughout Puget Sound. Downtown Olympia is also home to the state's largest farmer-operated farmers' market, which serves as a link to a network of small family-owned farms and businesses that provide opportunities for residents and visitors to support the local economy. Olympia hosts a wide variety of events and festivals, including the Pet Parade, Olympia Brewfest, Arts Walk, Olympia Harbor Days, Port Plaza concerts and movie nights, and the Capital Lakefair Festival.

11.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

11.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA requires the Economy chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to implement and be consistent with the Land Use and Urban Design element and State and regional plans in their use of spatial growth assumptions, population forecasts, and planning periods. GMA goals applicable to the city's economy include the following:

- Encouraging economic development that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans
- Promoting economic opportunity for all citizens, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons
- Promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses
- Recognizing regional differences impacting economic development opportunities
- Encouraging growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of natural resources, public services, and public facilities

11.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Economy Chapter

The Economy chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies that guide decision-making about the City's future economic development efforts and aim to create pathways that elevate more residents of all backgrounds and abilities into economic security. The goal of the Economy chapter is to create opportunities that improve the quality of life for residents and commuters and increase the tourism potential of the city for visitors through collaboration with government, business, education, workforce, non-profits, and other regional entities from different sectors.

11.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the OMC that address the city's economy include the following:

- Title 3: Revenue and Finance
- Title 4: Fees and Fines
- Title 5: Business Taxes, Licenses, and Regulations
- Title 16: Buildings and Construction
- Title 15: Impact Fees
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

11.2.4 Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City documents that relate to the Economy chapter include the following:

- Olympia Strong Plan (City of Olympia 2024b)
- Olympia Housing Action Plan (City of Olympia and TRPC 2021)
- City of Olympia Transportation Master Plan (City of Olympia 2021)

11.3 Potential Impacts

11.3.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1, the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan Economy chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to the city's economy would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that guides decision-making about planning and investing in infrastructure with the goal of balancing economic, environmental, and social needs while supporting a variety of potential economic sectors. This includes goals and policies that aim to develop residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use areas and to continue collaboration with regional partners and neighboring jurisdictions to develop strategies for creating a sustainable economy.

Under Alternative 1, the City would continue to encourage tourism as a community revenue source by supporting services and facilities for visitors, supporting local art and music venues and events, implementing strategies to enhance heritage tourism in Downtown Olympia, and continuing ongoing landscaping practices that would help maintain existing levels of tourism-based revenues in the City. The City will continue to use the Section 108 loan program to promote economic investment, job creation, and redevelopment activities, which could benefit low- to moderate-income people. Examples of redevelopment activities include promoting more dense housing Downtown for a range of incomes, maintaining green spaces, and supporting public transit to link the Capital Campus and Downtown to jobs and services.

The City would also continue to invest in public infrastructure (e.g., utilities, rail improvement, and revitalizing public spaces) to balance Olympia's social, economic, and environmental needs and support a variety of economic sectors. Examples of policies include considering whether the cost of new or improved public infrastructure can incentivize private investments that could result in increased revenues in the long term. Depending on the funding source, these investments could result in short-term adverse effects from deficits in the City budget but could also lead to long-term increases in the City's revenue base from associated new businesses and tourism opportunities.

Under Alternative 1, the City would continue to use regulatory and fee-based incentives to encourage sustainable practices and would aim to streamline the permitting review process for development and land uses. Depending on how these policies are implemented, they could reduce

the financial and technical resources and time needed to construct new projects and increase investors' willingness to foster new development in the city.

Alternative 1 could result in minor, short-term disruptions to businesses within or adjacent to construction areas (for example, temporary access disruptions; noise, visual, or air quality impacts from construction equipment). Depending on the funding source, there could also be short-term deficits in the City budget from public infrastructure investment needed to meet the goals and policies outlined in this chapter. However, minor and short-term beneficial impacts to the local economy could result from temporary job creation for construction contracts during project-specific developments, especially if the workforce is locally employed. Additionally, long-term economic growth from development consistent with the goals and policies outlined in this chapter would be expected to advance equity in Olympia's economy, diversify the City's revenue base, and increase the number of city residents who achieve financial stability.

11.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

The same general types of economic impacts described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. Alternative 2 includes an added emphasis on achieving the desired outcomes of the Olympia Strong Plan (City of Olympia 2024b), such as supporting economic development through community partner resources, directly engaging youth and dislocated workers to broaden career pathway options, continuing to facilitate greater housing security, and investing in diverse small business startups and local enterprise growth.

Alternative 2 also includes new goals and policies to diversify the local economy and encourage the support of local businesses that can reduce reliance on goods and services from outside the city. Examples of these policies include strengthening regional partnerships and investing in programs that increase access to education and career training opportunities in the city's growing industries, fostering a desirable setting for business investment, and encouraging communities to acquire products from local businesses whenever possible.



To achieve the City's goals, the proposed Comprehensive Plan update focuses on supporting the workforce by creating education and career training opportunities necessary to access in-demand and well-paying jobs; fostering entrepreneurship; and supporting small businesses to create new avenues for wealth creation, reduce reliance on goods and services from outside of the community, and bolster the City's tax base to fund community goals and needs. The chapter also discusses

associated benefits to the community and the local economy, from facilitating affordable housing initiatives to alleviating the burden on low- and moderate-income families by providing stable living conditions and investing in programs that improve the City's ability to respond effectively to physical and financial challenges.

Although the implementation of these goals and policies could help local businesses and entrepreneurs by increasing the City's revenue base in the long term, the higher prices from the production of local goods and services could lead to supply shortages and higher expenses to the consumer if local businesses are not able to produce at the efficiency level of larger businesses. These impacts would vary depending on the product or service and would depend on consumer tastes and preferences.

Alternative 2 also includes goals and policies to support established industrial and commercial activities. Impacts from potential changes to land uses to meet the expected demand for commercial and industrial uses are described in more detail in Chapter 6 of this EIS. Updated goals include increasing the presence of Evergreen State College and South Puget Sound Community College in the Downtown area. These actions could potentially limit the space available for dining or other professional services. However, they could also potentially increase foot traffic and draw to the Downtown core students and staff who would otherwise be in Lacey, Tumwater, or the Evergreen State College main campuses. This would provide an economic benefit to the Downtown area.

The Comprehensive Plan update seeks to strengthen the creative economic sector through programs, services, and facilities and could result in beneficial impacts on local artists and technology-based practitioners. This added focus could result in long-term benefits from increased tourism and additional job opportunities in the creative sector.

There could be beneficial impacts from investments in initiatives that further the sense of place through improving public areas and stimulating tourism in the city. For example, the updates focus on investing in spaces in Downtown Olympia to foster its cultural significance. Long-term beneficial impacts on the economy could result from increased individual investments to improve public spaces. City spending for initiatives to improve public access to local arts, cultural, heritage, and science programs, and to assist low- and moderate-income individuals in rehabilitating their historic properties, would need to be reconciled in the City budget. Efforts to support and foster the creative economy by reducing barriers to adaptive reuse of existing buildings would require compliance with SEPA and other City regulations.

Updates to goals and policies to improve employment growth would bring benefits in the long term because they would produce a more diversified portfolio of local jobs that help balance the market. Additionally, a healthy tax base could help fund and provide consistent services for the community. The proposed Comprehensive Plan update focuses on attracting and growing headquarters for

businesses that provide environmentally friendly products while also paying family wages. However, headquarters alone are often separated from the company operations and could not result in the anticipated beneficial impacts to the economy unless headquarters with business operations are included. Moreover, a focus on companies delivering environmentally friendly products could limit opportunities for business and employment growth because it may discourage the presence of businesses that are not branded as such, including technology companies.

Similar to Alternative 1, there could be minor, short-term disruptions to businesses within or adjacent to construction areas, such as temporary access disruptions, noise, visual, or air quality impacts from construction equipment. Depending on the funding source, there could also be short-term deficits in the City budget from the public infrastructure investments needed to meet the goals and policies outlined in this chapter. However, minor and short-term beneficial impacts to the local economy would be expected from temporary job creation for construction contracts during project-specific developments, especially if a local workforce is employed.

In summary, the economic impacts from Alternative 2 are expected to be less than significant and not substantially different than those of Alternative 1. Like Alternative 1, Alternative 2 could result in long-term beneficial impacts on the city's economy from increased economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs and businesses, with an added emphasis on the creative industry that could result in beneficial economic impacts from job creation and increased tourism. Short-term impacts from the construction of new development projects in the city are not expected to result in significant impacts to the local economy.

11.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize economic impacts under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Identify and apply to county, State, and federal infrastructure grants, loans, and other financial tools to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- To reduce the economic impacts of new development on overburdened populations, leverage community partner resources, engage youth and dislocated workers to broaden career pathway options, and invest in diverse small business startups and local enterprise growth.
- Periodically review major revenue-generating sectors and identify actions the City can take to help maintain economic health.
- Regularly review the development market to identify changing circumstances that create barriers or opportunities for investment in the community.
- Promote more dense housing Downtown that supports a range of income levels.
- Support the continuation of public transportation as a means of linking the Capital Campus with Downtown and zero-fare transit to connect people to jobs and services.

11.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse economic impacts in Olympia or its UGA. Although there could be short-term adverse effects on existing businesses within or adjacent to construction sites, these would be temporary and would support the City's long-term goals and compliance with the GMA and other State requirements.

12 Public Safety

12.1 Affected Environment

Public safety in Olympia and its UGA encompasses fire and disaster protection, law enforcement, and the city's code enforcement program. The Olympia Fire Department (OFD) provides fire protection services. It is a core partner in the Thurston County Medic One System and other local and regional programs that advance pre-emptive education and equity in service and reduce reliance on 911 emergency services for non-acute concerns.

The Olympia Police Department (OPD) is the primary entity responsible for the law enforcement side of public safety. However, the broader public safety system increasingly involves coordination with civilian liaisons, courts, restorative justice programs, and many other actors. Over time, the City has also increased citizen oversight of law enforcement, including expanded direct involvement of community members, a broader scope of Civilian Police Auditor reviews, improved data sharing and transparency, and better community education on policing and oversight mechanisms. For example, Code Enforcement is a City program that allows community members and others to report violations of City code relating to health, safety, and welfare on private property. The Code Enforcement program investigates and seeks to remedy a variety of safety and livability situations, including complaints about noise, trash, graffiti, signs, abandoned vehicles, animal control, overgrown noxious weeds, dangerous buildings, unlawful encampments, and other community safety and livability concerns. Code Enforcement collaborates with OFD, OPD, Public Works, and Building and Legal Departments to resolve cases and coordinate with other community entities on education and prevention activities.

12.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

12.2.1 *Growth Management Act Goals*

The GMA planning goals include encouraging the development of urban areas where adequate public services can be provided in an efficient manner and without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards. The GMA also encourages public participation during the planning process, including vulnerable and overburdened communities, and encourages coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

12.2.2 *Comprehensive Plan Public Safety Chapter*

The Public Safety chapter (referred to as the Public Services chapter in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan) outlines goals and policies that guide actions for the OFD and OPD and establishes other goals associated with the City's array of code enforcement responsibilities. The OPD and OFD have completed internal strategic plans designed to achieve those requisites and proactively ensure that

the City is in the position to not only maintain equitable public safety but also enhance preparedness for evolving conditions and future emergencies. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan Public Services chapter also includes public schools, housing, and social services, which would be moved to the Land Use and Urban Design and Housing sections as part of the proposed update.

12.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

The main chapters of the OMC that address public safety include the following:

- Chapter 1.20: Prisoners
- Chapter 1.24: Discrimination in Delivery of City Services and Resources
- Title 2: Administration and Personnel
- Chapter 4.02: Police Department Fees
- Chapter 4.38: Fire System Fees
- Chapter 4.39: Fire Basic Life Support Transport Fees
- Chapter 4.44: Uniform Civil Enforcement
- Chapter 4.50: Civil Infractions
- Title 8: Health and Safety
- Title 9: Criminal Code
- Title 16: Buildings and Construction
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

12.2.4 Other City Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City documents that address public safety include the following:

- Reimagining Public Safety (City of Olympia 2024c)
- Olympia Fire Department Strategic Plan 2025–2029
- Olympia Police Department Strategic Plan 2025–2030
- CARES (Community Assistance, Referral, and Education Services)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)

12.3 Potential Impacts

12.3.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1, the proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan Public Services chapter would not be adopted or implemented, and the City's 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies related to public services would remain in place. The Public Services chapter of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that is intended to increase accessibility to public schools, affordable housing, social services, fire services, and law enforcement services.

Under Alternative 1, OFD staff offer first response, fire prevention and protection, and City emergency services by planning, organizing, and controlling resources available and by supporting the Thurston County Medic One System. The City emphasizes the importance of community involvement in local government and defines community values that guide law enforcement. Goals and policies for law enforcement emphasize the importance of providing consistent and efficient services by adopting technologies (i.e., reporting and data management technologies) that allow for a more transparent, accessible, and direct interaction with the community. A more transparent and direct communication would be expected to reduce response time, which would have beneficial impacts on perceived safety in the community.

Alternative 1 also emphasizes the importance of interagency cooperation that helps increase response capacity and encourages alternatives to imprisonment, such as dispute resolution, substance abuse treatment, and other strategies that address underlying issues and promote restorative justice. Restorative justice approaches for minor offenses could have long-term beneficial effects on the community from reduced recidivism.

There could be temporary disruptions to existing services offered by OFD and OPD units due to street closures during the construction of new development projects under Alternative 1. However, the construction of these projects would support the goals of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan and would result in increased access to communities and more efficient operations. The planned development supported by the City would support a denser population and could result in added capacity to the Code Enforcement program and other community-based efforts that enhance perceived public safety. Short-term construction impacts would be offset by adherence to permit requirements and best management practices for traffic control. More broadly, new developments would continue to be subject to code enforcement, and businesses would be required to undergo fire safety inspections to reduce loss of life and minimize damage from fires.

12.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan update is to continue to encourage and remove barriers to the development of dense residential and mixed-use infill in the community, and to incorporate current regulations and the best available science. The same general types of development impacts on public safety described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development. Alternative 2 continues to encourage infill development but includes updated goals and policies that further encourage siting development in close proximity to public services to improve accessibility for residents. That may slightly increase construction impacts in more heavily developed areas compared to Alternative 1.

The proposed update includes changing the Comprehensive Plan chapter title from “Public Services” to “Public Safety.” The public schools, housing, and social services goals and policies are moved to the Land Use and Urban Design and Housing chapters. Narrowing the scope of the Public Safety chapter to the OFD, OPD, and Code Enforcement program focuses on the City’s commitment to equity and public safety.

Impacts from Alternative 2 would be similar to those from Alternative 1. However, updates to the goals and policies related to improving access, increasing equity, and developing new public safety communications programs could have minor and, in most cases, beneficial effects on public safety. For example, the updates include adding emphasis on improving the quality of the services provided by OFD through investments and interagency cooperation that are intended to increase service capacity and reduce response times. New public safety communications programs that are proposed include developing and periodically updating a comprehensive communications strategy to inform the community about crime trends, prevention, and outcomes from high-profile cases or events and making these communications easily accessible to the public. Another program would include developing a real-time crime analysis center with regional partners and using predictive analysis to better identify and address trends. If implemented, these programs would help to better inform the public and track crime trends throughout the city.

Under Alternative 2, updates also include an emphasis on reducing the use of force interactions through the adoption of best practices and new civilian-based teams that would continue to implement crime prevention and criminal diversion initiatives. Alternative 2 defines OPD as the primary entity responsible for law enforcement, which could have beneficial effects by standardizing policing methods across different districts of the city and its UGA. Under Alternative 2, OPD would continue to adapt to changing socioeconomic conditions as well as evolving State and federal laws and would continue to develop collaborative law enforcement response and prevention strategies that help ensure a safe community while prioritizing equitable treatment and the importance of earning and maintaining community trust and partnership, consistent with City values. The added emphasis on compassion and accountability and the implementation of evolving best practices could have a beneficial effect on perceived safety by communities, including historically disadvantaged and overburdened populations.

Similar to Alternative 1, there could be temporary disruptions to existing services offered by fire and police department units due to street closures during the construction of new development projects. However, the construction of these projects would support the goals proposed by the Comprehensive Plan update and would result in increased access to communities and more efficient operations from the fire and police services. The planned development supported by the City would support a denser population and could result in added capacity to the Code Enforcement program and other community-based efforts that enhance public safety.

12.4 Mitigation Measures

The following measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts on public safety under both Alternatives 1 and 2:

- Continue to apply and enforce City codes and standards for civil enforcement to ensure the quality of life and well-being of all populations, including disadvantaged and overburdened communities.
- Update City code and design manuals as appropriate to reflect changes in State requirements for law enforcement, disaster protection, and preparedness.

The following additional mitigation measures undertaken by the City would serve to minimize potential impacts on public safety under Alternative 2:

- OPD will continue to develop collaborative law enforcement response and prevention strategies that help ensure a safe community while prioritizing equitable treatment and the importance of earning and maintaining community trust and partnerships.
- The City will develop and periodically update a comprehensive communications strategy to inform the community about crime trends, prevention, and outcomes from high-profile cases or events and make these communications easily accessible to the public.
- The City will develop a real-time crime analysis center with regional partners and use predictive analysis to better identify and address trends.

12.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to public safety in Olympia or its UGA. There could be temporary disruptions to existing services offered by fire and police department units due to street closures during the construction of new development projects. However, the construction of these projects would support the goals proposed by the Comprehensive Plan and would result in increased access to communities and more efficient operations from the fire and police services. The planned development supported by the City would support a denser population and could result in added capacity to the Code Enforcement program and other community-based efforts that enhance perceived public safety. Alternative 2 includes new programs to improve public safety communications that would benefit public safety by helping to better inform the public and track crime trends throughout the city.

13 Capital Facilities

13.1 Affected Environment

A capital facility refers to any structure, improvement, equipment, or major asset that serves a public purpose and has a useful lifespan of at least 5 years. Capital facilities are an essential part of daily life, encompassing publicly owned infrastructure that people rely on, such as streets, parks, and public buildings like the Timberland Regional Library and Olympia Center. They also include critical utility systems, such as sanitary sewer infrastructure that ensures wastewater is treated and safely managed. Even those who do not reside in the city use these facilities when commuting, working, shopping, vacationing, or engaging in recreational activities within Olympia.

The City maintains a Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) that is Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. The CFP operates on a 20-year planning horizon, with the first 6 years forming the “Six-Year Financial Plan.” The CFP prioritizes maintenance or general repair of infrastructure, legal or statutorily required activities, continuation of multiyear projects (e.g., contractual obligations), and implementation of legislative goals and objectives (in that order). Annual expenditures for the first year are included in the City’s Capital Budget, adopted each December. The CFP undergoes regular review and public engagement to adapt to changing priorities, growth projections, and regulatory requirements. Public input in master planning efforts is integral to the CFP update process. Residents, businesses, and community groups collaborate with City staff and the Olympia Planning Commission or other advisory committees to shape master plans through scheduled updates and engagement efforts. The plans must also account for projected population growth. These plans are listed in Section 13.2 of this chapter, and some of those features and functions are described in the following paragraphs.

The capital projects described in the CFP are planned years in advance. The CFP is the product of many separate but coordinated planning documents or master plans, each focusing on a specific type of facility (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, parks, transportation, etc.). The City’s Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies along with projected population growth and future land uses, then various master plans are developed to identify the specific need, location, and timing of future projects.

Economic development and community revitalization efforts are key CFP components. The City strives to foster neighborhood centers and businesses and expand support for locally grown and produced goods. The DTS and the Community Renewal Area (CRA) address blight, improve Downtown infrastructure, and stimulate economic growth.

Transportation access is also a priority. Olympia focuses on providing a multimodal transportation system that provides options for walking, bicycling, taking the bus, or driving. Intercity Transit buses

run frequently, connecting Downtown with the Washington State Capitol Campus, providing essential transit for workers, visitors, and State legislature attendees.

Through strategic planning, sustainability initiatives, and community engagement, Olympia continues to enhance its capital facilities to support long-term growth, economic vitality, and quality of life for residents and visitors.

Just as all chapters of the Comprehensive Plan must align and support each other, the CFP must outline how the City will provide the necessary capital facilities to achieve its vision for the future while maintaining adopted service levels. This consistency also extends to the Capital Budget, ensuring that the City allocates funds to build the required facilities. The program sections of the CFP for the 2025-to-2030 6-year financial plan and key projects are briefly described as follows.

13.1.1 Parks, Art, and Recreation

The 2025-to-2030 CFP supports the goals of the 2022 Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Key CFP projects include ADA facility upgrades, the Armory Creative Campus Arts Center, and new community park developments featuring athletic fields, picnic shelters, sports courts, and water access. Another example is the Squaxin Park Inclusive Playground Design, providing equipment and play spaces designed for children of all abilities. The CFP is proposing the Rebecca Howard Park Development Plan, a project focused on equality and inclusivity that supports the vision and goals of the proposed Comprehensive Plan update and the 2025-to-2030 CFP. This plan includes developing a park where the City's annual Juneteenth celebration is held each year, honoring the history and accomplishments of Olympia's African-American and Black community members.

13.1.2 Transportation

The CFP helps implement the vision set forth in the transportation goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, which focus on creating complete streets that support walking, biking, transit, and automobile and freight movement. The majority of projects in the transportation program

What is a Capital Facilities Plan?

A 20-year plan to implement the Comprehensive Plan vision, showing how the City will provide urban governmental services at adopted LOS standards for the existing and projected population growth in the City and its UGA. It includes projected timing, location, costs and funding sources for capital projects. The CFP identifies which capital facilities are necessary to support development and growth. Projects in the CFP are directly related to the applicable master plan or functional plans, such as the Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan; the Storm and Surface Water Plan; and other similar plans. The CFP is an element of the Comprehensive Plan that is required to be internally consistent with the other chapters of the plan and the City budget.

Six-Year Financial Plan:

A 6-year financially constrained plan of identified projects, anticipated costs, and proposed funding sources that is part of the CFP.

Capital Improvement:

A project to create, expand or modify a capital facility. The project may include design, permitting, environmental analysis, land acquisition, construction, landscaping, site improvements, initial furnishings and equipment.

Capital Budget:

The approved annual budget for capital facilities, as adopted by the City Council. The Capital Budget is "Year One" of the Capital Investment Strategy.

—from p. 55 of the *Capital Facilities Plan, 2025–2030 Financial Plan, Volume II* (City of Olympia 2024d)

section of the CFP come from the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), which outlines a 20-year vision for transportation improvements. The CFP supports the following transportation projects: 2025 Sidewalk Repair; Pacific and State Pedestrian and Bike Safety; Pacific, State, and 4th Chip Seals; I-5 Bike Trail Connection; Martin Way Pedestrian Safety Improvements; and Capitol Way South Overlay and Bike Lanes.

13.1.3 Fire

The Olympia Fire Department (OFD) is committed to providing rapid, effective emergency response with highly trained professionals. The OFD's mission includes reducing risk through prevention, fire and medical education, and disaster preparedness. The CFP fire budget targets capital facility projects including new Fire Station 6, associated new fire apparatus, and replacement fire apparatus.

13.1.4 General Capital Facilities

General government facilities are designed to serve a wide range of functions. The General Capital Facilities program section covers projects related to City-owned structures, the ADA program, and economic development initiatives. The projects discussed in the 2025-to-2030 CFP include feasibility studies, improvements for accessibility at City-owned properties, and major maintenance and repairs for these facilities. The CFP supports the following new General Capital Facilities projects: 108 State Exterior Stucco and Wood Renovation; Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Improvements; Olympia Fire Department Natural Gas Heater Electrification; and Maintenance Center Mitigation and Building Repairs.

13.1.5 Drinking Water

The Drinking Water Utility's mission is to provide safe and reliable drinking water while safeguarding the community's water resources. Growth-related projects are included to support the infrastructure needs of new development and are funded by General Facility Charge (GFC) revenue. If a project benefits both new and existing development, costs are shared between GFC funds and Drinking Water Utility rates. The CFP supports the following new drinking water projects: Small Diameter Water Main Replacement, Fones Road Water Main Construction, and Transmission Main Seismic Valve Installation.

13.1.6 Wastewater

The Wastewater Utility, which relies heavily on infrastructure, maintains approximately 230 miles of gravity pipe and 35 regional lift stations and oversees around 1,790 residential and 27 commercial Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) systems. The continued use of more than 4,100 septic systems in Olympia raises concerns about long-term public health and water quality, prompting efforts to transition these systems to the municipal system. Growth-related projects are included to support the expanding customer base and are funded by GFC revenues. When a project serves both new and

existing developments, GFCs contribute to the cost. The CFP includes lift station upgrades and sewer extensions that cater to both current and future need. The CFP also supports the following new wastewater projects: Old Port 1 Lift Station Upgrade, 4th Avenue Sewer Construction, and Fones Road Side Sewer.

13.1.7 Storm and Surface Water

Storm and surface water management is a vital environmental service provided by the City to address flooding, protect water quality, and enhance aquatic habitats. Growth-related projects are included in the plan that support new development and are funded through GFC. When a project benefits both new and existing developments, the cost is shared between GFC revenue and Stormwater Utility rates. The CFP also supports the following new storm and surface water projects: Aquatic Habitat Property Acquisition, Schneider Creek Fish Passage Design, and Brawne Avenue Water Quality Retrofit Construction.

13.1.8 Waste ReSources

The Waste ReSources Utility's mission is to lead Olympia toward a waste-free future by offering solid waste collection, disposal, diversion services, and educational outreach. The City's Waste ReSources plan aligns with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and follows the County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan to guide waste reduction and recycling efforts. The CFP supports the following new Waste ReSources Utility project: Waste ReSources Maintenance Facility Construction.

13.1.9 Home Fund

The Olympia Home Fund, established in 2018 through a sales tax levy, generates over \$2.4 million annually to support housing solutions for vulnerable homeless residents. The levy adds 0.1% to the sales tax rate, with 65% of funds dedicated to constructing affordable housing and shelters and the remaining 35% supporting related operations and programs. These funds are directed to Thurston County's home fund. In 2023, the county-wide Affordable Housing Advisory Board was formed to review applications and recommend capital awards for housing projects. These projects strive to achieve the following:

- Construct new affordable housing, shelter beds, or treatment beds.
- Provide housing for households earning less than 50% of the area median income.
- Focus on vulnerable groups such as seniors, disabled individuals, families with children, youth, domestic violence survivors, and veterans.
- Reduce homelessness through coordinated entry referrals and provide integrated supportive services.

13.2 Planning and Regulatory Context

13.2.1 Growth Management Act Goals

The GMA requires comprehensive plans to include a CFP element. Under RCW 36.70A.070(3), this element must provide an inventory of existing facilities, forecast future needs, identify proposed locations and capacities for new or expanded infrastructure, outline a 6-year financing strategy with public funding sources, and establish a reassessment process if anticipated funding falls short. Additionally, the plan includes park and recreation facilities to guide the capital budget and ensure that infrastructure development aligns with adopted service levels.

Recent updates to the GMA added new requirements for capital facilities planning. In 2023, the Washington State Department of Commerce introduced a climate change and resiliency element through HB 1181 (RCW 36.70A.071). This policy mandates that cities “plan for and invest in capital facilities to accommodate infill development,” which helps reduce air and water pollution while improving long-term resilience. It also emphasizes equity, requiring “co-governance” with local communities and prioritizing investments in frontline communities.

Additionally, the GMA requires that local governments consider future climate conditions when designing and siting capital facilities. The policy in RCW 36.70A.071 states, “Given that capital facilities represent significant public investments, it is prudent to ensure that facilities are designed and sited to be resilient to climate impacts.” This requires local governments to review their CFPs in the context of projected climate risks and adjust infrastructure plans accordingly. Infrastructure must also be designed and sited with future climate conditions in mind, including projected changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea level rise. As stated in the policy’s supplemental description, “To comply, local governments must evaluate anticipated climate risks, update their CFPs accordingly, and modify infrastructure design and location decisions to ensure long-term functionality and sustainability.”

The GMA requires jurisdictions to ensure capital facilities are available when new development occurs or as populations grow. This is known as concurrency, is specifically for transportation facilities, and involves two key aspects:

1. Public facilities must be in place when needed, or a financial commitment must be made to provide them within 6 years.
2. Facilities must meet local Levels of Service (LOS) standards, which measure capacity based on factors like park acreage, mobility units, or water pressure. These standards are influenced by community input, city recommendations, and national or State mandates.

If a jurisdiction cannot meet LOS requirements, it must either prohibit development or lower standards. Transportation facilities must be improved concurrently with development, meaning improvements or financial commitments must be made within 6 years.

13.2.2 Comprehensive Plan Capital Facilities Chapter

The CFP is a required element of the Comprehensive Plan (Volume 2), ensuring the City has the financial resources to develop infrastructure that supports its 20-year vision. It guides the scheduling of capital improvements, detailing location, estimated costs, and funding sources that are outlined in other Comprehensive Plan chapters. The CFP covers Olympia’s parks, transportation, utilities, and general capital projects and is updated annually with a 6-year financing plan to reflect changing needs and funding priorities.

Capital improvements are shaped by factors such as population growth, infrastructure conditions, maintenance requirements, operational needs, and community priorities. As part of the proposed Comprehensive Plan update, the City reviewed the current capital facilities goals and policies, which have remained unchanged since 2014, to assess potential updates.

13.2.3 Olympia Municipal Code

Many chapters of the OMC are relevant to the CFP. Examples include the following:

- Title 12: Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places
- Title 13: Public Services
- Title 14: Environmental Protection
- Title 15: Impact Fees
- Title 16: Building and Construction
- Title 17: Subdivisions
- Title 18: Unified Development Code

13.2.4 Other City and Regional Documents (Plans, Standards, and Manuals)

Other City and regional documents that may influence the Capital Facilities chapter and CFP include the following.

Master Plans

- ADA Transition Schedule (City of Olympia 2019)
- Engineering Design and Development Standards (City of Olympia 2023b)
- Olympia Housing Action Plan (City of Olympia and TRPC 2021)
- Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019)
- One Community Plan: Healthy, Safe, and Housed (City of Olympia 2020a)
- Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan (City of Olympia 2022b)

- Shoreline Master Program (City of Olympia 2021e)
- Storm and Surface Water Plan (City of Olympia 2018)
- Transportation Master Plan (City of Olympia 2021d)
- Waste ReSources Management Plan (City of Olympia 2023d)
- Wastewater Management Plan (City of Olympia 2020b)
- Water System Plan (City of Olympia 2024e)

Education

- Olympia School District Capital Facility Plan 2025–2030
- North Thurston Public Schools Capital Facility Plan

Other City and Regional Plans

- Capital Facilities Plan, 2021–2025 Financial Plan (City of Olympia 2021g)
- County-Wide Planning Policies Update (Thurston County 2025)
- Capital Asset Management Program
- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (City of Olympia 2025a)
- 2050 Wastewater Resource Management Plan (LOTT 2024)
- Thurston County Coordinated Water System Plan (1996)
- Thurston Regional Transportation Plan (TRPC 2020b)
- Reimagining Public Safety (City of Olympia 2024c)
- Olympia Sea Level Rise Response Plan (AECOM 2019)
- Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TRPC 2020a)

Other City and regional documents that overlap with the planning and regulatory context of the CFP, which may be found in other chapters of this EIS.

13.3 Potential Impacts

13.3.1 Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1, the City would not adopt proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan, including the updated Capital Facilities chapter. Instead, the City’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies would remain in place. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a policy framework that plans for anticipated population growth by accepting the need for denser development so that larger expanses of rural and resource lands beyond the UGAs can be preserved. Some current City initiatives may not be as fully supported without adoption of the capital facilities goals and policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan update, including efforts to improve accessibility and equity on capital projects, incorporate climate resiliency, pursue public/private partnerships, and prioritize capital projects with multiple benefits to the public. Additionally, adoption of the CFP update could

potentially be delayed if it is not adopted with the current update. The updated CFP includes important capital facilities projects that are summarized in Section 13.1.

Under Alternative 1, the potential impacts of future development will continue to be addressed through regulations in place at the time of permit review and project specific environmental review as appropriate. Even with plans and regulations in place, infrastructure development can result in changes to the environment, such as increased stormwater runoff, traffic, noise, light, and invasive species. These impacts would be most likely to occur in the areas designated for the highest density and most intensive types of development (see Chapter 6 of this EIS for discussion of land use).

Enforcement of the codes and standards described in other chapters of this EIS would minimize the potential for and scale of impacts under Alternative 1. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan would continue to encourage growth in centralized areas and reduce sprawl into adjacent resource and rural lands but will not include updates consistent with recent legislation and local initiatives.

13.3.2 Alternative 2: Adopt Updates

The same general types of impacts on capital facilities described for Alternative 1 could occur under Alternative 2. Proposed updates to the CFP may involve significant infrastructure projects or urban development, which could have environmental impacts on water resources, land use, and ecosystem health.

Under Alternative 2, the updated Comprehensive Plan and corresponding CFP would be adopted and guide the goals and policies of Olympia's capital facilities. The updates would require that capital projects consider equity, provide accessibility to people of varying mobility, and prioritize environmental justice. In addition, this alternative would prioritize infrastructure planning and investments to support and accommodate infill development. It would also address hazards intensified by climate change, including sea level rise, flooding, drought, heat, wildfire, and other effects of changing climate and precipitation patterns. Infrastructure development would be aligned with growth management goals, fairly distributed, and resilient to future challenges such as climate change and rising demand.

Alternative 2 would also encourage the following:

- Analysis of climate projections for capital projects
- Reduction of GHG emissions, increased climate resiliency, and implementation of adaptation strategies
- Prioritization of capital facilities projects that provide multiple benefits to the public.
- Reworking of capital projects that may result in maladaptation or interfere with environmentally sensitive areas, contribute to hazards, or exacerbate current climate vulnerabilities

- Consideration of expected future economic activity, goals for responding to the impacts of climate change, and the need for affordable housing at all income levels as projected in the Comprehensive Plan
- Balance of funding strategies that derive revenues from growth with strategic public investments that support development of more housing, such as local improvement districts, tax increment financing, bonds, public and private partnerships, and other funding and financing tools
- Exploration of new revenue sources—including city- or county-wide bonds, tax increment financing, public and private partnerships, and other financing tools—when analyzing and identifying certain infrastructure investments for new revenues that provide clear public benefits
- Reassessment of the Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the Comprehensive Plan if probable funding strategies for capital facilities are projected to fall short of needs over the 20-year planning period

13.4 Mitigation Measures

The CFP updated policies, particularly regarding infrastructure development, must be aligned with growth management goals, fairly distributed to meet increased demands of a growing population, and sustainable in the face of future challenges, such as climate change. The following measures, undertaken by the City, would minimize potential impacts under both alternatives:

- Incorporate transportation infrastructure improvements and strategies into the planning process to accommodate projected growth and mitigate traffic congestion.
- Incorporate stormwater management practices, including green infrastructure, to reduce water pollution and runoff from development activities.
- Protect and integrate green spaces and biodiversity considerations into development plans to preserve environmental and recreational resources.
- Ensure that adequate water resources are available for future development.
- Incorporate climate resilience and consider future climate impacts when planning infrastructure, ensuring long-term sustainability and the protection of resources.
- Ensure equitable access to essential public services such as utilities, parks, and transportation as part of the City's long-term development plans.
- Manage construction activities within the broader planning process as part of the CFP to mitigate air and noise pollution during construction.

13.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Alternatives 1 and 2 would not result in significant unavoidable adverse impacts to capital facilities in Olympia. Although there could be short-term adverse effects on existing capital facilities during the construction of projects, these would be temporary and support the City's goals and compliance with

the GMA and other State requirements. The City would continue to update applicable codes and apply and enforce City codes and regulations to offset potential impacts from future capital facilities projects.

14 Cumulative Effects

SEPA requires a range of impacts to be evaluated as part of environmental review including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts and associated mitigation measures per WAC 197-11-060 and WAC 197-11-792. This section describes how the effects of the Comprehensive Plan periodic update may contribute to the environmental effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative effects are those that could result in the combination of effects from individual project actions occurring over time. If left unmitigated, the cumulative or incremental effects of these actions have the potential to result in significant environmental impacts.

14.1 Cumulative Effects Evaluation

Overall, the Comprehensive Plan periodic update includes changes that are intended to bring the plan into compliance with new state requirements and current City initiatives and measures. The planning horizon is extended to Year 2045, and the city and its UGA are expected to grow by approximately 16,790 people (TRPC 2024a). Population and employment growth will be accommodated within the existing urban growth boundary, where adequate urban governmental services and capital facilities exist or can be expanded to serve that growth. As required by the Growth Management Act, it is anticipated that any changes to codes, standards, or regulations that may result from this non-project action will be consistent with the changes evaluated in this draft EIS. Other potential future actions are speculative at this point, but they will be subject to existing laws and regulations that are intended to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the environment. Therefore, cumulative effects cannot be evaluated for this non-project action.

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