

Services for the Public



Olympia Fire Department ladder truck during a training exercise

A stable community requires only that minimum needs are met for food, shelter, and safety. But for a community to thrive we must also focus our public services on healthy and educated children, tending to social service needs, responsive public safety systems, and strong neighborhoods. And, to realize our goals we need meaningful partnerships among the City, nonprofits, neighborhoods and regional governments. This chapter includes the goals and policies that guide schools, social services, and public safety. To provide a broad array of services efficiently we partner with organizations such as the Timberland Regional Library and the Olympia School District, as well as neighborhood associations and civic groups.



A strong community means having thriving schools and opportunities for life-long learning.

Schools Shape Minds and Neighborhoods

Schools are the centers of learning for our children, but the health and vitality of a neighborhood school is also a clear indicator of the health and vitality of the neighborhood itself. While the City doesn't manage schools, we can focus our planning to ensure the safety of children and work with school districts in

capital facility planning. Future school sites are among the types of "lands needed for public purposes," which must be identified in our Comprehensive Plan. School district impact fees are reflected in our Capital Facility Plan (CFP).

Olympia is served by Olympia School District No. 111 and a small portion is served by North Thurston School District No. 3. We are also fortunate to have opportunities for continuing education at South Puget Sound Community College and nearby St. Martin's University and The Evergreen State College.

Goals and Policies

GS1

Schools are well located.

PS1.1 Include the needs of schools in land use decisions, such as pedestrian safety and a quiet environment.

PS1.2 Place schools in a central location within their service areas, on a site allowing children to walk safely to school, and on or convenient to a neighborhood collector street to minimize the impact of school bus and other traffic.

PS1.3 Link new residential developments to school capacity.

PS1.4 Plan and prioritize sites for future school construction and preservation of historic sites through coordination between the City and school officials.

GS2

Neighborhoods are strong due to partnerships between residents and schools

PS2.1 Encourage the retention of existing sites because of the importance of schools in maintaining a strong, healthy neighborhood.

PS2.2 Promote shared school facilities for neighborhood parks, recreation, and open space uses.

PS2.3 Support safe walking and bicycling routes for students.

Affordable Housing for All

CHANGE:

Some portions of the old Housing chapter are now in Land Use and some are in Public Services.

Adequate and affordable housing is critical to a healthy community. When affordable housing is not located near jobs and services or on bus routes, people spend even more time and money on transportation. This has implications for our residents' quality of life, as well as for the environment. In addition to being affordable, housing must also be safe, and well-maintained.

CHANGE:

Data and specific demographics are now found in the Consolidated Plan.

The City addresses housing needs for our most vulnerable citizens through our Consolidated Plan which is updated every three years. The Consolidated Plan identifies Olympia's priorities for housing, shelter, and

social service needs along with economic development and public facility needs. The City works with other jurisdictions, private industry and nonprofit organizations to find solutions to low-income housing needs.

Goals and Policies

GS3

Affordable housing is available for all income levels throughout the community.

PS3.1 Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types to stimulate a broad range in housing costs.

PS3.2 Encourage preservation of existing houses.

PS3.3 Make adequate provisions for projected needs of houses of all income levels.

GS4

Deteriorating residential areas within the City are revitalized.

PS4.1 Support preservation of historic features or the character of historic properties in City housing rehabilitation programs.

PS4.2 Provide assistance and incentives for the rehabilitation of neglected properties for low-income individuals who cannot afford to maintain their properties.

GS5

Special needs populations, such as people with developmental disabilities, the homeless, the frail elderly, and others who have difficulty securing housing, have adequate, safe, affordable housing.

PS5.1 Disperse housing for low- and moderate-income and special needs persons throughout Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, and discourage concentration of such housing in any one geographic area.

PS5.2 Support the Fair Share Housing allocation process and work with other jurisdictions to monitor progress toward achieving agreed upon goals.

PS5.3 Evaluate the possibility of providing density bonuses when builders provide low-income housing in market-rate developments, and of tying the bonus to affordability.

PS5.4 Encourage new housing to be located on transportation arterials and adjacent to public transportation hubs.

PS5.5 Encourage self-help housing efforts in which people gain home equity in exchange for work performed in renovation or construction, such as "sweat equity," volunteer, and self-help programs.

PS5.6 Retain existing subsidized housing.

Social Services Fulfill a Vital Need

There are many reasons why community members may sometimes need extra help. The loss of a job or a serious illness can leave someone without the means to meet their basic needs. The social safety net in our community is comprised of a network of religious and charitable organizations that partner with local government to provide services to vulnerable citizens.

GS6

Our community is safe and welcoming and social services are accessible to all who need them.

PS6.1 Support non-profit and faith-based charitable foundations that provide funding and/or oversight for social service funding.

PS6.2 Work with other local governments to provide financial support and oversight of social service funding.

PS6.3 Focus public funding as available for programs and projects that assists low-income people and those at risk of homelessness.

PS6.4 Identify barriers to social service, shelter and housing resources for low-income people and those at risk of homelessness.

GS7

There are enough emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing with supportive services and independent affordable housing.

PS7.1 Encourage a strong network of emergency shelter resources for homeless and at risk families with children, childless adults, unaccompanied youth, and victims of sexual and domestic violence.

PS7.2 Work with other jurisdictions to support a broad range of social services and resources, maximizing a regional approach to shelter and housing resources.

PS7.3 Encourage broad-based support from businesses, charitable non-profit organizations, and faith-based communities organizations to provide for shelter and housing services.

PS7.4 Support coordinated service delivery models to maximize best use of public, charitable and privately-funded shelter and housing resources.

PS7.5 Support best practices that reflect current standards of care, and incorporate emerging models that maximize the use of public and charitable resources.

PS7.6 Encourage shelter and housing providers and programs to locate in the greater Olympia area, or near transportation arterial hubs, for easier access by residents.

PS7.7 Promote broad public awareness of homeless and homeless prevention resources to maximize access and to encourage charitable support and volunteer involvement.

PS7.8 Encourage centralized data collection to assess community needs and demographics. Use this data to support comprehensive reporting and to provide information to support continual improvement of services.

PS7.9 Redefine policies that limit or prevent the community from providing shelter and housing

resources.

PS7.10 Coordinate land use, housing, transportation and capital facility planning to support all aspects of shelter and housing resources, including: emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing with supportive services, and affordable housing.

PS7.11 Integrate group homes into all residential zones in the community. Set zoning standards that ensure that the size of a group home (e.g., number of residents and staff) is compatible with zoned densities and the availability of transportation and services.

PS7.12 Evaluate regulations to maximize the flexibility of shelter locations and other operational issues to increase shelter capacities.

GS8**The existing affordable housing stock is preserved.**

PS8.1 Continue to fund repair and rehabilitation of single-family and multifamily housing using Federal, State, and local funding sources.

PS8.2 Support applications by the Housing Authority of Thurston County and other non-profit housing developers to construct or purchase existing units for low-rent public housing.

PS8.3 Support applications from eligible non-profits to Federal and State funding sources to build new, or rehabilitate existing, housing to meet low-income housing needs.

PS8.4 Encourage and provide technical assistance for private developers and non-profits applying for below-market-rate loans from Federal or State sources, for construction or rehabilitation of low-income multifamily rental housing.

PS8.5 Inform tenants of purchase and relocation options when Community Development Block Grant or Housing and Urban Development-funded buildings are at risk of conversion to market rate status. When appropriate, work with the Housing Authority of Thurston County and non-profits to develop source strategies to enable the Housing Authority or nonprofit housing groups to buy such housing.

PS8.6 Enforce policies that provide financial and relocation assistance for persons displaced as a result of construction and development projects using federal funds. Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended requiring the replacement of low- and moderate-income housing units that are demolished or converted to another use, in connection with a Community Development Block Grant project.

GS9**New affordable housing is created to meet demand.**

PS9.1 Continue to support projects funded by low-income tax credits and revenue bonds.

PS9.2 Investigate and support appropriate multi-jurisdictional backing for the Housing Authority of Thurston County bond sales.

PS9.3 Promote partnerships between public and private non-profit organizations, to create increased housing and home ownership opportunities for households with special needs, and for low- and moderate-income households.

PS9.4 Continue to encourage development of single room occupancy (SRO) units Downtown,

along urban corridors, and in other areas where high density housing is permitted. This can include encouraging alliances between public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

PS9.5 Evaluate the possibility of supporting a manufactured home park acquisition program in which low-income tenants unite to purchase and renovate permanent sites for manufactured homes. Consider funding programs to subsidize the interest rates, loan origination fees, or costs of acquiring the land.

PS9.6 Encourage and assist other ownership approaches which may apply to low-income and special needs housing, such as shared or limited-equity housing, lease-purchase options, co-housing, land trusts and cooperatives.

PS9.7 Work with jurisdictional partners through the County-wide HOME Consortium, to fund affordable housing projects that serve low- and very low-income residents.

PS9.8 Continue to administer the Housing Tax Credit program to promote the development of new housing, both market rate and affordable.

PS9.9 Support non-profit and faith-based organizations in their efforts to provide emergency homeless shelters.

CHANGE:

New section.

Code Enforcement Promotes Neighborhood Livability

Code Enforcement ensures that the City's Municipal Code is enforced to protect health, safety and welfare as it relates to use of private property. This becomes increasingly important to maintaining our high quality of life as our community grows, densities increase, neighborhoods age and transitions occur. We see the future of Code Enforcement being one of greater collaboration with both internal partners (e.g. Police, Fire, Public Works, Building, and Legal Departments) and external partners (e.g. neighborhood associations, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, other governmental entities and interested parties). Code Enforcement also works with regional partners such as Animal Control to respond to issues regarding dangerous, illegal or nuisance animals in the city limits.

Goals and Policies

GS10

Compliance is reached with rare recourse to citations or appeals.

PS10.1 Direct efforts toward compliance, not penalties.

PS10.2 Focus on reducing the amount of time allowed to achieve compliance.

GPS11

Neighborhoods are involved in effective and efficient Code Enforcement.

PS11.1 Educate neighborhoods about Code Enforcement and other City services and how they can best interact with them.

PS11.2 Maintain regular communication with neighborhoods.

GS12 Tracking and reporting is consistent.

PS12.1 Provide complainants with timely information on current Code Enforcement activities.

PS12.2 Monitor enforcement practices and track and report outcomes in order to consider further refinement.

PS12.3 Communicate with complainant and alleged violator in a predictable and timely manner.

Fire Services Prevent Harm to People and Property



Olympia's Fire Department has a strong presence in the city.

Fire protection in Olympia has a long and proud [history](#). Our department has grown and changed over time, just as the City, itself, has. We offer the most highly trained professionals, using the best technology and preparation to maximize safety for the community and the fire fighters.

The primary reason for the existence of cities is to provide mutual advantage and protection for their citizens. Good community fire protection is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the Fire Department.

In addition to providing fire protection, our fire department is also a part of the Thurston County Medic One System. The objective for paramedics and fire fighters is to administer aid to the sick and/or injured citizens within six minutes from the receipt of an alarm. Normally, the fire fighters arrive minutes before the paramedic unit and give the first help to the patient. They then help the paramedics when they arrive. Fire fighters respond to Basic Life Support calls on their own.

The department's approach to fire prevention and protection is in [the Master Plan for Fire Protection](#)

which identifies the challenges facing the City and recommends specific solutions.



Fire fighters are often the first responders in an emergency.

Goals and Policies

GS13

The community has a high level of fire protection, emergency medical services and disaster management services, equal to or exceeding the industry standard.

PS13.1 Continue to manage fire protection functions, paramedic services, and City emergency services by planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the resources available.

PS13.2 Continue to provide a highly skilled and adequately staffed fire fighting force, to respond to fire, medical, and hazardous material emergencies, to protect life and property.

PS13.3 Continue to provide fire prevention and inspection activities to minimize the loss of life, property, and tax revenue due to fires.

PS13.4 Continue to provide paramedic and basic life support levels of pre-hospital emergency medical service care to the City of Olympia, as part of the Thurston County Medic One System.

PS13.5 Upgrade fire flow capacity of Olympia's water system as appropriate to meet current safety standards.

PS13.6 Continue to be a leader in the local fire service community in fire fighter safety, command practices, training and equipment maintenance.

PS13.7 Continue to coordinate City response to disaster through the Emergency Management program.

Police Services Promote Public Safety

Public safety is a key element in sustaining our high quality of life. Even neighborhoods with beautiful streets and parks would not be desirable if people were concerned about the crime rate. Commercial or residential streets cannot be walkable if people do not feel safe, either because of fear of crime, or because of speeding cars.

There are many ways to deliver police services. Each police agency has an individual “personality.” Community values and expectations contribute to that personality. So do the personal characteristics of agency and community leadership. Geography, demographics, and cultural heritage also play major roles in policing.

The City Council has the ultimate responsibility to provide leadership in ensuring a high quality of policing services. However, citizens in Olympia are very involved in their local government. This involvement is also reflected in their desire to influence how police services are provided.

Goals and Policies

GS14

Police services are delivered in a manner consistent with the values of the citizens of Olympia.

PS14.1 Deliver police services in a professional, timely, objective, and impartial manner.

PS14.2 Understand and respect the diversity of our community. Strive to reflect that diversity in the composition of the Police Department.

PS14.3 Interact respectfully with everyone in the community, and likewise earn their respect. Using force only when needed, and displaying humility, cordiality, and courtesy at all levels of the agency helps community members see themselves as allies with the police.

PS14.4 Encourage a spirit of cooperation that balances the collective interests of all citizens with the personal rights of individuals.

PS14.5 Maintain a departmental environment that is open, accessible, responsive, and seeks feedback, consistent with the small town feeling of the community.

PS14.6 Respond to law enforcement needs in a manner consistent with the seriousness of situations. Provide strong and effective responses to serious criminal behavior, and use discretion to apply alternative sanctions and responses with minor offenses.

GS15

The citizens of Olympia are empowered as partners in solving community problems.

PS15.1 Form interdisciplinary partnerships with individuals and groups in the community to address policing issues.

CHANGE:

Specific types of partners removed for brevity.

PS15.2 Encourage community-based crime prevention. Involve citizens in a partnership to solve problems with strategies that reduce repeat occurrences. Use community education to enhance crime prevention.

PS15.3 Emphasize day-to-day police interaction with the public to pro-actively address problems together, rather than responding only to crises after problems have occurred. Optimize positive contact between the police and community members to strengthen working relationships and make policing more effective.

GS16

Police services are provided in a manner consistent with Olympian's values, and done so in a cost-effective manner.

PS16.1 Provide a high quality of service in the traditional police agency functions.

PS16.2 Develop alternative ways to respond to calls for service, in order to relieve sworn officers from responding to calls not requiring their sworn authority or skills. Maximize the effectiveness of unallocated time to allow officers more time to address community problems proactively.

PS16.3 Maximize the appropriate use of non-sworn employees, volunteers, and referrals to other agencies, to enable the City to cost-effectively meet service requests.

PS16.4 Focus on the quality of services provided to citizens with non-emergency calls, rather than the speed of response.

PS16.5 Use satellite stations and regular patrol beats to increase the accessibility of the department to citizens, improving collaboration and interaction.

PS16.6 Measure level of service not by inputs (such as officers per capita), but by outcomes related to problem-solving, such as elimination of problems and citizen satisfaction with the quality of officer interaction.

PS16.7 Track police workloads and what generates them on a regular basis. Determine ways to reduce workloads or allocate work more efficiently, whether within the Police Department or outside of it. External entities which generate police workload should share responsibility for providing ways to manage it.

PS16.8 Improve efficiency through the appropriate use of technology for such necessary but time-consuming activities as report filing, data management, communication, and administrative tasks.

PS16.9 Improve access to information for police personnel and external customers through the effective use of data management technology.

PS16.10 Provide specialized units and services important to maintaining Olympia's quality of life.

GS17

The community participates in identifying policing priorities and solving policing problems.

PS17.1 Enlist the support of other public agencies and community service providers in coordinated efforts to solve policing problems, and in evaluating the effectiveness of police services.

CHANGE:

Specific types of partners removed for brevity.

PS17.2 Ensure regular communication and cooperation between the Police Department and other City departments, at both the managerial and line levels.

PS17.3 Maximize the recruitment and effective use of community volunteers.

PS17.4 Communicate with Olympia's diverse population to seek input on how best to meet their special needs.

GS18

The effectiveness of Olympia's police services is maximized by communicating openly and by being accessible and responsive to feedback.

PS18.1 Communicate with the public on a regular basis to gain public understanding and consensus on the community's policing needs.

PS18.2 Seek opportunities to inform the public of Police Department programs and activities.

PS18.3 Communicate with the community and the media about incidents on a timely basis.

PS18.4 Provide open and accessible ways for the public to receive information about incidents.

PS18.5 Provide both police personnel and the public with clearly articulated departmental values that provide a clear sense of the City's focus and direction.

PS18.6 Ensure that the Police Department, and particularly the Chief, is active and visible in City government and in the community.

GS19

The effectiveness of Olympia's police services is maximized by collaborating with other service providers.

PS19.1 Work with other service providers to explore potential mutual strategies to address social problems.

PS19.2 Build good working relationships with other agencies and service providers, identifying divisions of responsibility and ways to cooperate effectively.

PS19.3 Avoid using jails and the criminal justice system to address non-criminal social problems, whenever feasible. Work with the courts to seek alternative means where practical, such as dispute resolution, substance abuse treatment, or other strategies to address the underlying problems.

PS19.4 Facilitate increased cooperation and communication among the different elements of the criminal justice system: prosecutors, defenders, judges, and corrections. Engage in joint problem-solving on process issues to improve the effectiveness of the system.

PS19.5 Combine resources with other law enforcement agencies where joint approaches to law enforcement and crime prevention are effective, such as central dispatch, drug enforcement, SWAT teams, etc.

PS19.6 Encourage the creative use of relationships with private security firms, Animal Control, and other organizations to engage them as effective extensions of Police Department capabilities.

PS19.7 Draw upon creative relationships with other police agencies to gain from their experiences and expertise.





GS20

The conduct of police officers is held accountable to defined community expectations.

PS20.1 Ensure that Olympia's accountability system includes accessibility, integrity, legitimacy, learning, and reasonable cost.

PS20.2 Ensure that Olympia's accountability system meets the interests of the City Council, City Manager, Police Department management, Police Guild and the community in collaboratively providing accountability and support systems (e.g., training, counseling, and feedback) that meet the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

For More Information

- The [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) 
- The [Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Plan](#)
- The [Growth Management Act](#) 
- The [Master Plan for Fire Protection](#)
- [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) 
- [Olympia School District Master Plan](#) 

Copyright © 2012. All rights reserved. Last Updated: Apr 03, 2012

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources.