

ORDINANCE NO. O2025-017

AN ORDINANCE of the City Council of the City of Tumwater, Washington, adding a new chapter 2.60 to the Tumwater Municipal Code, establishing an Equity Commission to identify and address challenges of inequity through policy improvement, inclusive activities, and educational partnerships.

WHEREAS, the historical memory of Tumwater begins with Coast Salish peoples, whose descendants are members of the tribes now known as the Nisqually, the Squaxin Island, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, and the Cowlitz who gathered shellfish and frequented the inlets and prairies of Puget Sound since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, the first Euro-American colony of New Market thrived due to the generosity and hospitality of black pioneer George Bush, who together with wife Isabella, provided support and welcome to immigrants and community members while also facing the challenges of racism and conflict in 19th century America; and

WHEREAS, in the years after New Market became Tumwater, German immigrant Leopold Schmidt and his family invested a lifetime of labor and innovation in the Olympia Brewing Company, a major employer in the region and cultural touchstone for the country; and

WHEREAS, the success of individuals does not indicate that the efforts to address and repair the deeply rooted systemic inequities in the United States and Tumwater are complete. The Tumwater City Council acknowledges that significant work remains to be done and that members of the Tumwater community continue to experience varying levels of systemic oppression and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the City Council values above all else PEOPLE – defined as People, Environment, Opportunity, Partnership, Learning, and Excellence; and

WHEREAS, the City Council respects the diverse people that make up the social fabric of our community and strives to be inclusive of all people regardless of age, race, color, ability, gender, religion, sexual identity, or national origin. Tumwater welcomes all.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUMWATER, STATE OF WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

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Section 1. A new chapter 2.60, Equity Commission, is hereby added to Title 2 of the Tumwater Municipal Code to read as follows:

2.60.010 Creation

There is hereby created an Equity Commission which shall perform all of the duties and shall have all of the authority hereinafter set out.

2.60.020 Purpose

The commission's purpose is to identify and promote activities related to city services and facilities that foster a more welcoming community. It aims to enhance participation from underrepresented community members and address existing gaps and barriers that may prevent full engagement in city governance and public policy. The commission will provide recommendations to the City Council to improve local government practices and policies.

2.60.030 Membership – Terms

A. The commission shall consist of seven general members who reside in the city of Tumwater. One general member may reside in Tumwater's urban growth area. Commissioners shall be appointed by the mayor, which appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the city council. The members shall be selected without respect to political affiliations.

B. The original appointment of members to the Equity Commission shall be as follows: three for two years, four for three years. Thereafter, appointments shall be made for a three-year term. Vacancies shall be filled by the mayor for the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

C. A simple majority of the currently appointed membership of the Equity Commission shall constitute a quorum.

D. The commission members shall not receive any salary or other compensation for services rendered on the commission.

E. Vacancies occurring otherwise than through the expiration of terms shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

F. Members may be removed from the commission prior to the expiration of their term of office by the mayor, pursuant to Tumwater Municipal Code 2.54.

2.60.040 Organization – Records

A. The commission shall select its own chairperson from within its membership and may create such other offices and adopt all rules as it may deem necessary for the orderly conduct of its business.

B. An accurate record shall be kept of the proceedings of all meetings. These records shall be public and a copy thereof shall be transmitted to the city clerk after each meeting.

2.60.050 Commission duties and responsibilities

The commission shall have the power and it shall be its duty, subject to such rules and regulations as may from time to time be prescribed by ordinance, to:

1. Provide awareness and feedback to the Mayor and City Council on issues of inequity in City facilities and services; and
2. Identify existing gaps and barriers which could prevent full participation in government and public policy; and
3. Seek greater participation from underrepresented community members in city activities, including events, governance, and public policy.

Section 2. Corrections. The City Clerk and codifiers of this ordinance are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

Section 3. Ratification. Any act consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this ordinance is hereby ratified and affirmed.

Section 4. Severability. The provisions of this ordinance are declared separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this ordinance or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person or circumstance, shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the ordinance, or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days after passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

ADOPTED this 21st day of October, 2025.

CITY OF TUMWATER

Signed by:
Debbie Sullivan
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Debbie Sullivan, Mayor

ATTEST:
DocSigned by:
Melody Valiant
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Melody Valiant, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DocSigned by:
Karen Kirkpatrick
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Karen Kirkpatrick, City Attorney

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Effective Date: 11-23-2025