



MEMBERS:

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Rainier
- City of Tenino
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Town of Bucoda
- Thurston County
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Olympia School District
- Tumwater School District
- Intercity Transit
- LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Port of Olympia
- PUD No. 1 of Thurston County

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

- Lacey Fire District #3
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- The Evergreen State College
- Thurston Conservation District
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Timberland Regional Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Regional Planning Council

FROM: Sara Porter, Assistant Planner

DATE: March 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Area Cost of Living Index, Annual Average, 2020

PURPOSE

The annual average 2020 Cost of Living Index (COLI) for the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region is 110.1 according to the most recently published data by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER). TRPC staff gather information and submit it to C2ER on a quarterly basis, for compilation into this national index.

Summary:

- Updated 2020 Cost of Living data has been released by the Council for Community and Economic Research.
- The cost of living in the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region is 110.1, which is 10.1 percent higher than the average of all 269 urban areas participating in the survey.
- Cost of living statistics are some of the most commonly requested information provided by TRPC.
- A Cost of Living Calculator is available on TRPC's website allowing an in-depth comparison of the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater area to all participating cities. A link to the calculator is available from our home page (www.trpc.org) under Quick Links.

REQUESTED ACTION

No action needed. This is for your information.

sp:bl



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BACKGROUND

Every three months, TRPC staff participate in a cost of living survey, to gather data that allows the comparison of how much it costs to live in the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region relative to other cities across the nation. The statistics are published in a national index that is released every quarter, and are also included in the National Data Book, which is published annually by the Bureau of the Census. TRPC makes the data available on our web site as soon as it is available, and it is consistently one of the most popular products coming from our Information Services Program. Currently, the cost of living in the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region is 10.1 percent higher than the average of all 269 urban areas participating in the survey.

Cost of living statistics are some of the most commonly requested information provided by TRPC. C2ER produces the only index of its scale and kind in the United States, allowing users to compare living costs in a particular place to the average of all participating cities. The C2ER index differs from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in that the CPI strictly compares costs in one region over time. In contrast, the Cost of Living Index allows for comparisons among many places at one point in time but does not compare changes over time. Items surveyed include products and services in the categories of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous.

The table presents index results for the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region and several other select cities. This information is provided to the Regional Council on a quarterly basis.

**C2ER Cost of Living Index
Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, Annual Average, 2020**

City	100% Composite Index	14% Grocery Items	28% Housing	9% Utilities	9% Trans- portation	5% Health Care	35% Misc. Goods & Services
Average of Cities Participating in the Survey this Year	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Bellingham, WA	120.0	111.1	129.4	86.4	127.1	116.5	123.7
Kennewick-Richland-Pasco, WA	102.9	102.8	103.6	96.7	114.0	126.7	98.0
Moses Lake, WA	95.6	95.1	78.7	85.3	123.9	122.6	101.3
Mount Vernon - Anacortes, WA	117.8	123.4	128.4	86.4	117.9	115.4	115.6
Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater, WA	110.1	117.7	101.5	92.9	134.0	123.0	110.6
Seattle, WA	156.8	127.7	232.7	109.4	140.8	127.6	128.9
Spokane, WA	106.5	100.5	100.8	100.6	110.1	119.3	112.5
Wenatchee, WA	106.9	102.4	112.3	79.4	117.2	122.9	107.1
Yakima, WA	100.1	101.5	86.6	85.2	118.6	115.0	107.5
Portland, OR	133.7	112.6	181.3	89.1	129.2	116.3	119.6
New York (Manhattan), NY	244.7	148.1	542.3	98.3	131.7	109.8	132.8
Atlanta, GA	101.1	105.0	102.8	84.7	102.0	102.0	102.3
Chicago, IL	123.9	107.2	163.0	92.7	113.6	98.9	113.9
Denver, CO	113.4	95.0	138.5	79.8	113.1	100.2	111.5
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	147.7	113.9	228.9	107.9	134.5	110.2	115.7

Sources: C2ER - The Council for Community and Economic Research; Thurston Regional Planning Council.

Notes: The Cost of Living Index compiles costs of consumer products on a quarterly basis. Currently, the cost of living in the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater region is 10.1 percent higher than the average of all 269 urban areas participating in the survey. The average cost of living of all the cities participating in the survey is always scaled to equal 100. The purpose of the index is to compare living costs in a particular location to this average. The index cannot, however, be used to compare changes in costs over time, as the cities participating in the survey change each quarter. Think of the index in terms of percentages. The average cost of living of all cities participating in the survey is 100 percent of itself.