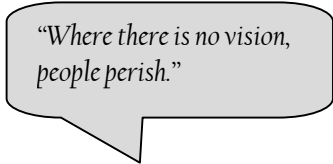


THE VISION

A DECADE HAS PASSED since the community first captured and expressed its vision for its parks, open spaces and recreation facilities. Today, the future anticipated in Olympia's 1991 Plan for Parks, Open Space and Recreation Facilities has arrived. Many of the challenges remain the same. Many things have changed. It is time to renew that vision.



*"Where there is no vision,
people perish."*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

WHAT IS THE NEW VISION for Olympia's parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities? What will the park and open space system, the arts and recreation program look like after the 2002 Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan is fully implemented?

LOOKING FORWARD . . .

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT . . . that you traveled forward with us to the Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation Department of the future. During this future-trek, we toured Olympia, visited parks, looked at arts and recreation programs, and talked with citizens. Upon our return, we proudly reported:

WE WERE WELCOMED by brilliantly blooming plantings at our community gateways; tree-lined boulevards; landscaped street medians and well-maintained public grounds. These multi-colored flowering portals beckon, greet and guide visitors to the community.

NINE NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS have been purchased and developed in Olympia. These parks have fostered a new neighborhood spirit. These parks include picnic shelters, restroom facilities, playground equipment, horseshoe pits, basketball hoops, tennis courts and grassy play areas. Sometimes they are quiet places to just relax on a sunny day- removed from the hubbub of city life. At other times they are places for kids to run, scream, and create their own adventures. Like Lion's and Sunrise parks, many have become new neighborhood focal points; their distinctive character creating a 'sense of place' and forging cultural and historical connections within the community.

OLYMPIA'S COMMUNITY PARKS and special use areas have also been enhanced. The remainder of the fountain block has been purchased. Two new park sites have been acquired- a future ball field complex on the south side, and a special use area on West Bay. Facilities at Percival Landing and East Bay Park have been enhanced. Offering spectacular views of Budd Inlet and shimmering sunsets, East Bay and West Bay are still reminders of the environment we cherish.

WE DISCOVERED A NETWORK OF OPEN SPACE. Areas of marine and freshwater shoreline, lush wetlands and forested ravines have been preserved for future generations. Priest Point Park remains a gem. Other areas like Grass Lake Refuge, Mission Creek corridor, Watershed Park, the ravines of Indian Creek and West Bay tributaries contribute to Olympia's charm. The city is interwoven with creeks, wetlands, ravines and steep bluffs. These natural features define our neighborhoods and give each a distinct character. They bring nature into the heart of the city. These are places for wildlife and native plant communities to flourish for decades and centuries to come.

WE VIEWED NEOTROPICAL BIRDS migrating through the network of open spaces. Deer, coyotes, beavers, raccoons, herons and other birds still make their homes in the forests, alder thickets and wetlands.

There is more . . .

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON plays a special role in Olympia. Heritage Park remains a centerpiece of our downtown. Stretching from Budd Inlet to the Temple of Justice, this park has been completed and provides a unique tribute to the lands, waters and people of this great state.

OLYMPIA HAS BECOME a walkable community. A system of sidewalks, bike paths and recreation trails connect neighborhoods with key destinations, with each other, and with surrounding communities. A series of vista points provide panoramic views of Mt. Rainier, the Olympics, and the Black Hills. Thurston County has "bridged the gap" across Martin Way, I-5 and Pacific Avenue, completing the Chehalis-Western Trail. The Olympia Woodland Trail corridor has been extended to Lacey and a West Bay trail corridor has been acquired.

OLYMPIA HAS INVESTED in new outdoor recreational facilities to satisfy the needs of a growing population. New softball and soccer fields have been developed. Through a partnership, the dream of a community swimming pool has been realized. A new state-of-the-art aquatic center provides swimming facilities that area residents of all ages can enjoy.

WE WERE PLEASED to find the community's recreational facilities in excellent condition. A major maintenance fund has been established for the park system, and a maintenance management system has been instituted. These tools have enabled us to efficiently repair,

rehabilitate and upgrade a once-aging park infrastructure. Park facilities are solid; they meet current building codes, and are accessible to all. Our playgrounds are safe.

There is more . . .

THE OLYMPIA CENTER continues to serve as a vibrant hub of community activity - providing arts and crafts, a teen lobby, educational programs and public meeting spaces. These opportunities have proven essential to maintaining a healthy, livable community.

EXCITING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES are provided through athletics, outdoor adventures, and diverse class offerings that provide life-long enrichment for all ages. These activities promote physical fitness and mental well being, bring citizens together in positive, supportive and fun atmospheres, and create memorable experiences.

TEEN PROGRAMS provide a safe environment and a variety of recreational activities and self-esteem building experiences that offer a positive alternative to at-risk behaviors. A knowledgeable, caring and compassionate staff is available to serve as listening, supportive and caring mentors.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR special events fulfill the need of the community to gather and celebrate. Music, dance, food, games and activities intertwine and create exciting and colorful recreational opportunities that families can experience together.

There is still more . . .

OLYMPIA IS RECOGNIZED as a statewide leader in the arts. The feasibility of a new community art center has been evaluated; it could be a place to view, express, experience, learn and make all forms of art. The public gallery space could host exhibits by area artists, youth and traveling national exhibits. Young and old from all walks of life could participate and benefit from the open celebration of the creative process in our midst.

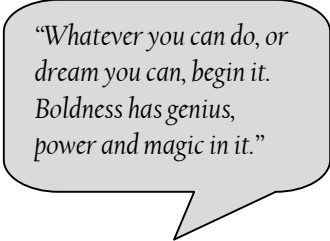
THE INTRINSIC BEAUTY of Olympia has been enhanced by the sensitive incorporation of art into public works. The 4th Avenue Bridge and the Indian Creek Stormwater treatment Facility exemplify the transformation of infrastructure into pleasing and meaningful public

THIS VISION WILL REQUIRE:

PARTNERSHIPS. As budgets tighten, the provision of major community recreation facilities such as the aquatic facility, sports complex and art center will necessitate an unprecedented level of inter-departmental, inter-jurisdictional, and public-private cooperation.

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE as resources are focused on land acquisition in the near-term. This strategy requires that the development of park facilities be postponed until the latter stages of plan implementation.

A COMMITMENT by Olympians to support a new funding source for park acquisition, development and ongoing maintenance. As Olympia's population increases, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain current levels of service. Existing facilities increasingly suffer from over use. This leads to degraded park resources and diminished visitor experiences. The city general fund allocations and park impact fees have proven inadequate to stay abreast of infill growth and development. We propose that the cost of implementing the vision be funded by a voter-approved 2% increase in the private utility tax, which would provide the financing for a long term, three-phased program of park acquisition, development and maintenance.



*“Whatever you can do, or
dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius,
power and magic in it.”*

-Goethe

HOW WE WILL KNOW when we have attained the vision? When the plan is fully implemented. When we know that we have made a **DIFFERENCE**. When we have enriched our collective quality of life. When we have become good environmental stewards. When we have strengthened community connections. When we have created neighborhood identity. When we have fostered artistic expression. When we have beautified our city. When we have helped to revitalize our downtown. When we have inspired others to make a difference. When we have strengthened our community spirit.

IN SHORT, WHEN WE HAVE TOUCHED THE LIFE OF EVERY OLYMPIAN IN A POSITIVE WAY.