

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan discusses the findings and recommendations for meeting park, arts, and recreation services in Olympia. More specifically, the plan:

- identifies and evaluates existing park and recreation areas;
- assesses the need for additional parkland, open space and specialized facilities;
- establishes criteria and standards for site selection, design, and management of the various areas;
- recommends an approach to funding acquisition, development and maintenance; and
- integrates recreation and arts services into the overall plan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The planning process and the development of the final document was designed to accomplish several objectives.

- **Develop a park system concept that is appropriate for the community considering limited funding and the difficulty of finding available and appropriate land.** Olympia is facing a growing shortage of vacant land for new parks. At the same time, the high cost of developing parks has slowed the process to a pace that lags behind the need. A concept that responds to those realities is essential in order to meet existing and future needs.
- **Design a park system that meets the needs of the community today and in the future.** Parks exist for the benefit of the community. But over time the population profile changes, preferences change, and general interest and recreation patterns change. The park system, arts programs and the recreation services of today must be flexible to meet the needs of tomorrow.
- **Identify the general location of future parks, open space, and trail systems.**
- **Provide direction for managing future recreation programs and services.** The Olympia Department of Parks, Arts & Recreation offers a wide variety of recreation programs using the Olympia Center, schools, and other facilities. The lack of facilities and working relationships with other agencies is restricting the growth of these programs while the population of Olympia and overall need continues to grow.
- **Provide direction for offering arts facilities and services.** The multi-faceted arts program in Olympia includes art in public places, community-wide events, and the promotion of other community arts organizations and events. There appears to be support for the establishment of an arts facility although more study is required to determine its function and feasibility.

- **Comply with the Growth Management Act (GMA).** The Growth Management Act was passed in 1991. It requires that the Land Use Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan identify future parks, trails, and open space corridors that preserve environmentally sensitive lands or lands that are useful for recreation or wildlife habitat. This planning is to occur both within the existing city limits as well as its future growth area.
- **Maintain Olympia’s eligibility for funding through grants.** The Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) requires that grant applicants have a current (within six years) park system master plan. This plan will meet the minimum requirements of the IAC.

CHANGES SINCE 1991

Since the 1991 comprehensive plan was written, a number of changes have occurred to both the profile of the community and the programs and services provided by the Parks, Arts & Recreation Department.

Parks and Facilities

Since 1991 parkland acreage has grown and park development has taken place. However, the costs of developing park sites has increased to the point where it has become a significant factor in the City’s capital budget.



Flag Football League Play

Acquisitions

Over 39 acres of parkland have been acquired in the past ten years for future athletic fields, neighborhood and community parks. In addition, more than 82 acres of open space has been added to the inventory, including properties adjacent to Grass Lake Refuge and Priest Point Park. The completion of the 3.5-mile Olympia Woodland Trail corridor acquisition has provided the impetus for the acquisition and development of other trail corridors.

Development

Development of recreation facilities also has been underway, including:

- Olympia Skate Court
- Heritage Park and Fountain
- Sunrise Park
- East Bay Waterfront Park
- Garfield Nature Trail
- Trillium Park
- Friendly Grove Park

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Recreation Programs and Services

After-school programs were established in all four middle schools. A Teen Recreation Program was established in The Olympia Center. Collaborative programming opportunities for youth and senior athletic events were developed, and an Outdoor Adventure Program for youth and adults was established. In addition to these new programs, four new special events were created:

- Ethnic Celebration
- Celebrate Olympia
- Irish Cottage Fair
- Children's Celebration

Cultural Facilities and Services

The past 13 years have seen significant development for the arts; including the inception of the Olympia Arts Commission and development of the Olympia Arts Program. The City currently sets aside \$1 per resident per year for public art. It also mandates through the Public Arts Ordinance that construction projects over \$500,000 that are visible and usable by the public set aside 1% for public art.

During the past 13 years, 17 works of art have been added to the public art collection. In addition, three new major works of art are in progress, including:

- Indian Creek Stormwater Treatment Facility
- 4th/5th Avenue corridor
- Park of the Seven Oars mitigation

*During the past 13 years,
17 works of art have
been added to the public
art collection.*

With the completion of these projects, the City's public art collection will represent an investment of nearly \$1 million. Other artistic events sponsored by the City with support from many businesses and individuals include studio tours, summer neighborhood performances, Arts Walk, and the Procession of the Species.

Olympia's achievements have become models statewide for other arts organizations and municipal arts programs because of the resourceful, focused and professional approach to programming.

Parks Maintenance

With the addition of new parks, open spaces and recreation facilities, the Parks Services Division has assumed increased maintenance responsibilities. The list below outlines changes in the Division to meet the challenges of maintaining new and existing facilities that are heavily used by the community. The Division has:

- Created the *Volunteer In Parks Program* to assist with park maintenance;
- Upgraded irrigation systems in many parks;
- Adopted environmentally conscious maintenance practices for turf management and fertilizer/pesticide applications;
- Increased street tree maintenance responsibilities with profound changes created by the City's Street Tree Program;
- Increased maintenance of additional beautification areas and street medians;
- Maintained a maintenance level concurrent with new lands being brought into the park system;
- Increased maintenance for the six new parks and two special recreation features - The Olympia Skate Court and Heritage Park Fountain;
- Assigned staff to maintain and manage facilities during weekends and evening hours;
- Supported special and community events each year; including Arts Walks, Harbor Days, Lakefair, and the Wooden Boat Festival;
- Maintained Olympia's Farmers Market; and

- Maintained school fields according to a joint use agreement with the Olympia School District.

Planning Projects

The Planning and Design Section of the Park Services Division is also responsible for planning local acquisition, park design and development. In addition to the list below, a staff of three has also provided technical assistance to projects ranging from downtown housing to landscape median design.

- Developed a Master Plan for the Grass Lake Refuge
- Developed a Master Plan for the Olympia Woodland Trail
- Developed an athletic field study
- Developed a Watershed Trails Expansion Plan
- Participated in studies of Downtown Housing Options and West Bay Development
- Developed and implemented a neighborhood park acquisition strategy resulting in the purchase of seven properties.
- Developed and adopted an urban trails plan.
- Completed the 2002 Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation Plan



Volunteers In Parks Participant

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for this study was divided into eight basic elements. They included:

