

VISION

“Helping to Make Art Happen”

Our vision is to stimulate and promote the continued growth and vitality of the arts, which are an integral part of the community at large.

ARTS IN THE OLYMPIA AREA

Just 13 years after the inception of the City’s Arts Program, Olympia has come into its own as a recognized arts town. Twice named as one of the best small arts towns in America, and recently headlined in a national magazine as “the hippest town in the West” (in reference to our alternative music scene), Olympia is home to nearly 1,000 individual artists and almost 100 arts organizations and venues. Resident artists are music, literary, performance, and visual arts oriented, both nationally known and emerging from a world touring operatic vocal artist and composer/conductor to the talented teens and twenty-somethings in Olympia who this year staged and produced a full-length rock opera.

Major South Sound arts venues include the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, Midnight Sun Performance Space, The State Theater, Capitol Playhouse, Wild Grace Arts Center, the Olympia Little Theater, The Drew Harvey Theater, The Hands On Children’s Museum, The Monarch Contemporary Art Center, the Evergreen Longhouse Education Art center, and The Bronze Works. That this community can sustain so many art venues makes other groups such as Harlequin Productions (certainly a success story by any standard) more confident in establishing their own spaces, greatly adding to the vitality of our community.

In addition to these venues, Olympia boasts more than 70 pieces of public art, a multitude of arts festivals, and has a wealth of organizations representing all areas of the arts. Seventeen organizations present theatrical performances and nine organizations support the visual arts. There are numerous dance, music, and literary groups, a film society, a symphony, a chamber orchestra, a ballet company, and choral groups, all of which enjoy support and attendance at their programs. Any night of the week, residents and visitors alike have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of art experiences. From classical performance, open mikes, and music in the park to Dixieland Jazz, opera, and eclectic exhibitions, there is something for everyone in Olympia.

Many of our high schools and higher education institutions now include quality performances and regularly present outstanding productions and programs. Beyond school offerings, young people can also participate in

DAILY DIVERSITY



On any given day, you can finger paint with a toddler, workout in the gym, eat a meal with a senior friend, shoot pool with a teen, and still have time to enjoy a leisurely evening in downtown Olympia.

The Olympia Center has become home to a number of diverse organizations that serve the greater Olympia community. Over 30 organizations hold regular meetings at The Olympia Center for a wide variety of purposes. These organizations, combined with recreation and senior programming, draw an average of 1000 users to the building each day. It is this representation of Olympia’s diversity that makes The Olympia Center a special place for recreation, meetings, and events.

the Capital Area Youth Symphony, summer arts programs, specialized classes, or the Capital Playhouse Theater for Youth.

The mix of established and emerging artists in Olympia is part of what makes our arts community unique among others, with art students from The Evergreen State College, South Puget Sound Community College, and St. Martin's College staying on as residents of Olympia and continuing to live here as their careers and reputations grow.

Private galleries and local museums, including the Washington State Capital Museum, the Lacey Museum, the Bigelow House, and the Henderson House Museum, offer opportunities to learn about local history, to exhibit, and to teach.

From its inception, the City of Olympia's Arts Programs have endeavored to support and promote this arts community, representing such diversity with one voice. Because there are no other municipal programs of this type in neighboring jurisdictions, many of the city's programs benefit the arts regionally while serving as a model for communities throughout Washington State.

The City's Arts Program, with the largest Arts Walk in the region and a collection of art, valued at approximately \$1 million, encourages the best work from our community and introduces art from outside the area, both enhancing the city and enriching the dialogue and understanding of art among our citizenry. Other, less visible components of the City's arts program are no less important for supporting the arts in Olympia: community partnerships and collaboration, technical support and consultation to the field, and promotion, education and outreach.



Performance at Arts Walk

The City of Olympia's efforts provide visibility and opportunities for art in the community, which in turn creates a dynamic vitality in the look of our city and the spirit of our people. A firm foundation, along with a government, a community, and businesses that care, will ensure that the arts in Olympia will continue to grow and flourish, further enhancing the quality of life in our city.

THE CITY OF OLYMPIA ARTS PROGRAM

The City of Olympia Arts Program (Arts & Communication Division) was created 13 years ago, along with the establishment of the Olympia Arts Commission, an 11-member advisory board appointed by the City Council. The spirit of community involvement, which is so strongly felt in the leadership of the Commission, is indicative of all the art programs of the City. Whether encouraging active public involvement in the public art program or inviting neighborhood associations to provide assistance in choosing performances for neighborhood park concerts, the Arts Program excels in consensus building and creative problem solving to bring the arts into the fabric of our community.



Neighborhood Performance Series at Sunrise Park

The City's programs are varied and visionary, incorporating partnerships with community groups, businesses, and governmental agencies that go beyond "art for art's sake" to assist in community and economic revitalization. Arts Walk, studio tours, and neighborhood performances are perhaps the most visible components of the program. Part entertainment, part education, and 100% outreach, these special events bring art to the community, creating a sense of familiarity and civic pride. In many places, the arts wear a cloak of elitism, generating a mystique that art openings and symphony performances are only for those who can afford to "understand" it. But, unlike many other communities, Olympians truly love and embrace the arts. All walks of

life, young and old participate and benefit from the open celebration of the creative process in our midst.

The City's Public Art Collection is accessible to the citizenry year-round, creating destinations for community dialogue and quiet contemplation, and more increasingly, creating a distinctive identity for the city, in the creative components of our public works projects.

In the area of promotion, education and outreach, the Arts Program offers extensive arts resource guides listing local arts organizations and performance groups to document the wealth of arts in our community and provide resources for community members. Community workshops, such as funding opportunities for individual artists, draw full-capacity audiences. Cultural tourism has become a great topic of interest, resulting in an ambitious cultural tourism program. In association with the Olympia School District, the Arts Program works to provide connections to local arts resources through a listing of artists, both performing and visual who are professionals in their fields. This resource allows busy teachers the tools they need in to develop interdisciplinary projects that infuse art into the curriculum.



Future 4th Avenue Bridge, Courtesy DGES

Part of the success of Olympia’s Arts Program can be measured in the frequency of calls and requests for technical assistance. Ranging from how to start a public art program and the logistics of planning a community event to how to build a scale model or develop an artist contract. Olympia’s programs and policies are not only used as models throughout the state, but have also been implemented in communities

outside of Washington (most recently in Colorado and Kansas). On a local level, community confidence in, and visibility of the city's programs has led to a strong increase in the need for this type of service.

The Arts Program/Arts & Communication Division is funded by the City's General Fund. In addition, the City annually sets aside one dollar per person and 1% of city construction projects that are more than \$500,000, visible and useable by the public, solely for developing the City's public art collection. The Division employs one full-time and two half-time employees. Although limited in resources, the program works creatively to fund various public services. Community partnerships, grants, volunteers, and in-kind support, help to stretch dollars while allowing active participation in finding creative solutions to issues as diverse as social services, economics, infrastructure, revitalization, neighborhood and community identity, environment, and urban design amenities.

The City of Olympia's Arts Program from the beginning has sought to expand the community's understanding of the arts and to bring art into our everyday lives. An African parable states that a community without art is dead. If so, Olympia is very much alive. From the unforgettable Ballet of City Vehicles in 1990 to the artistic ground broken in the Indian Creek Stormwater Facility and 4th/5th Avenue Corridor, the City's Arts Program continues to provide the City with opportunities to grow and learn and go where no arts have gone before!

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Collections and Programs

The following is an inventory of art programs and collections in Olympia.

Special Events

- **Arts Walk** - A successful partnership with area artists and the Olympia downtown business community that highlights the work of over 500 visual, performing and literary artists at more than 100 venues. It includes youth and adult artists, hands-on activities and demonstrations. Arts Walk is held on the third Friday and Saturday in April and the first Friday in October.
- **Artist Studio Tour** - Initiated in 1999, this program provides the public with the opportunity to visit artists' studios to see works in progress, artists' materials, and the environments in which they create.
- **Neighborhood Performance Series** - This program is designed to bring local performing arts into neighborhood settings. The City works with neighborhood associations to plan and promote each concert.

Promotion, Education and Outreach

- Cultural Tourism

- Arts Resource Guides
- Community Workshops
- Public Speaking and Teaching

“All we have, it seems to me, is the beauty of art and nature and life, and the love which that beauty inspires.”

-Edward Abbey

Technical Support/ Consultation to the Field

- Planning
- Logistics
- Fundraising
- Events Management
- Program Development
- Marketing

Community Partnerships for Creative Solutions

- Economics
- Infrastructure
- Urban Design Amenities
- Environment
- Social Services
- Education
- Neighborhood and Community Identify
- Land Use
- Revitalization

Public Art

The City sets aside \$1 per person and 1% of major city construction projects for public art. Projects range from small local artist projects in neighborhood parks to major installations. Current projects include an artist/engineer designed storm water facility and the integration of public art in the design of the 4th/5th Avenue Corridor and Bridge Project.



Olympia Salmon Run Proposal by Andrea Marie Wilbur-Sigo

Table 8.1
 City of Olympia Public Art Collection
 Works Acquired 1990-2002

Year Acquired	Title and Site	Artist
1990	"The Kiss" / Percival Landing	Richard Beyer
1991	"Crossroads" / West Side Fire Station	Tom Anderson
1991	"Long Instant" / Fire Station Headquarters	Michael Fajans
1991	"Falcon Mexicanus" / East Side Fire Station	Ross Matteson
1991	"Untitled" East Side Fire Station	Carolyn Skye
1993	"Park of the Seven Oars" / Harrison & West Bay Drive	Tom Anderson, Karen Lohmann, Sara Ogier, John Mark Osborne, Joe Tougas
1994	"Your Name Here" / LBA Park, Deaccessioned in 2000	Denita Benyshek
1995	"Fish Fantasy" / Old City Hall	Dorbe Holden, Debra VanTuinen
1996	"Animal Journey"/Lion's Park	Dorbe Holden, John Mark Osbourne
1996	"Stone Amphitheater" / Bigelow Park	Karen Lohman, John Mark Osborne
1996	"Tide Pool of Time" / Percival Landing	Brian Goldbloom, David Vala
1998	"Triumph of the Vegetables" / Olympia Farmers Market	Nick Lyle, Jean Whitesavage
1999	"Motherhood" / Percival Landing	Simon Kogan
2000	"Capitol Lake Reflections"/Portable Works Collection	Debra Van Tuinen
2000	"A Crown for Amber"/Portable Works Collection	Nikki McClure
2001	"In a State of Dragon Your Heel"/Portable Works Collection	Lynn Guenard
2001	Indian Creek Stormwater Treatment Facility / Fredrick and Wheeler	Elizabeth Conner
2001	"Oly Mola I: Falling Leaves"/Portable Works Collection	Carolyn C. Wagner
2002	"Strawberry Street"/Portable Works Collection	Betty Jo Fitzgerald
2002	Olympia Salmon Run Sculptures/Downtown Olympia	Various Artists
2002	"Untitled"/Portable Works Collection	Tom Anderson
<i>In Progress</i>	4 th /5 th Avenue Corridor	T. Ellen Sollod
<i>In Progress</i>	Park of the Seven Oars Mitigation	Tom Anderson, Karen Lohmann, John Mark Osborne, Joe Tougas



"Motherhood" by Simon Kogan

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

From the Survey

- Off all the facilities and programs offered by the City, the public appears to be the least aware of the arts activities and programs.
- Approximately 40% of the public has participated in recreation or arts programs offered by the City.
- 40% are unaware of arts programs and activities.
- From a list of most needed major projects, an Art Center ranked only slightly below indoor/outdoor sports complex and outdoor swimming.
- When asked an open-ended question about what recreation, sports, or arts programs are most needed, arts rank third.
- 46% travel outside Thurston Co. to visit museums or visual art exhibits.
- In response to the question, what roles should the City play in arts activities and services, sponsoring events ranked #1, provide information and resources ranked #2, and promote art activities ranked #3.
- Over 60% favor regional development and management for arts programs and an art center.

- Of the 60% of the population that is aware of the arts program, there is overwhelming support of this City service.
- Additional programming and promotion is needed to reach the population that is unaware of the City's offerings.

General Conclusions

- There is general consensus that the public is satisfied with the programs and services of the City's Arts Program. The successes of Arts Walk and the Public Art Program have led to strong community confidence in the program. These factors indicate that the community would support gradual expansion of the program to meet the growth and needs of the community.
- Current trends, daily requests, and survey results clearly point to an increased need for information, resources, and general promotion of the arts. Although the program currently addresses this need, the demand is rapidly exceeding the ability of resources to respond. This leads to customer service that is based on "reacting" rather than planning.
- The Arts Program has become an essential part of the community "mix". Helping others to meet their goals may not bring increased visibility to the Arts Program itself, but should be considered a worthwhile investment in the community.

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Staffing Needs

- Expansion of staff resources should be considered for both short and long-term planning. Near term priorities for expansion should focus on increasing the role of the arts in community partnerships and collaboration, and on meeting current demands for information, promotion, and technical support to improve levels of service within the current program base. Only limited resources are available for managing, maintaining, and doing public outreach about the City's art collection. Therefore, phasing in additional resources should be considered as the collection grows and ages. Incremental increases should also be considered in order to add events that focus on literary and performing arts, while appealing to broader audiences. Utilizing technology is inevitable and should receive high priority when considering services.
- There is strong interest in new partnerships and possibilities for public art. Increasing resources to meet this goal should be considered when looking at alternate or expanded funding mechanisms. In looking to the future, providing adequate resources will be critical for quality planning and development of facility needs.

Recommendations for Action

- Add incrementally to the operating budget for the City's Arts Program to:
 - increase support to meet current and future demands for services;

- expand programs to enable sponsorship of events that feature literary and performing arts;
 - create and maintain an arts information website;
 - provide increased level of service for technical support and consultation to others; and
 - strengthen the ability to promote the City's arts services and programs.
- Prepare a feasibility study for establishing and operating an art center.
 - Expand the public art collection by increasing the per capita funding.
 - Review and examine procedures and funding mechanisms to incorporate public art into Public Works projects.
 - Establish a revised process, with defined criteria, for City grants to community arts organizations.



Artist demonstration during the annual Artist Studio Tour