

PREFACE

It has been ten years since Olympia updated its Park and Recreation Plan. Since that time over 120 acres of parkland and open space has been acquired. However, the demand for neighborhood parks, sports fields, trail systems, swimming pools, cultural arts facilities, waterfront access and programs and other leisure services continues to grow. Finding the needed financial resources has become a challenge, resulting in the search for new funding sources, new ways of developing parks and new partners to share in the cost and delivery of services.

While this plan update revealed significant progress toward meeting future park needs, there are still areas of Olympia that are not served by a local park. A map recently prepared by the Thurston Regional Planning Agency revealed that the major portion of the community is developed. As a result, this plan may be the last opportunity to acquire park and open space for the future residents of Olympia.

Added to this need for parkland is the strong desire by city residents for more services and facilities such as an indoor swimming pool, sport fields, an arts facility, and recreation and arts programs and services. All of these needs require financial resources and a commitment on the part of the Parks, Arts & Recreation Department, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, the Olympia Arts Commission and the City Council.

This plan presents a vision for meeting future park, recreation, and arts services. It features new approaches to meeting these needs. The plan:

- Recognizes that the land available for new parks and open space within Olympia's urban growth area is decreasing rapidly. Fresh and saltwater access is also precious and difficult to obtain. Thereafter the challenge will be to redevelop and enhance current holdings to meet future needs. The plan points to a number of improvements designed to address the needs of our customers.
- Champions the acquisition of the West Bay Corridor for major public access, recreation, and aesthetic enjoyment. This is the most significant opportunity facing the City at this time. Taking advantage of it will require effective partnering with the Port of Olympia, Burlington Northern Railroad and private landowners.
- Continues to build on the system of neighborhood parks but takes a more modest approach to development of those parks. The traditional approach involves expensive equipment and facilities and upkeep. The plan envisions a variety of neighborhood parks, some of which contain special

amenities such as tennis courts that also serve as a community resource.

- Adds more links to the existing parks and trail system. The links of trail and open space will help create a green network throughout the city. It will offer opportunities for active and passive enjoyment and also augment the transportation system.
- Integrates arts and recreation programming into the plan. The 1990 Plan focused on land acquisition and development and recreational facilities only. To achieve the level of funding needed, staffing and programming costs must also be addressed.
- Calls for creative partnerships with other public agencies including the Olympia School District, Thurston County, the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, Intercity Transit, private groups, and adjoining cities. Such partnerships are essential if the City is to provide adequate sport fields, space for recreational programming, public art offerings, and convenient access to our residents of all ages and physical ability.
- Explores the vexing problem of funding and implementing the vision. Upon voter approval, this plan proposes raising the tax on private utilities, as a means to provide funding for parks acquisition and development.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CFP	Capital Facility Plan
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GMA	Growth Management Act
HDC	High Density Corridor
IAC	Inter Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation
LBA	Little Baseball Association
LOS	Level of Service
OPARD	Olympia Parks, Arts & Recreation Department
OWT	Olympia Woodland Trail
PAR	Parks, Arts & Recreation
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SCUBA	Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus
TRPC	Thurston Regional Planning Council
UGA	Urban Growth Area
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CITY OF OLYMPIA PARKS, ARTS &
RECREATION DEPARTMENT, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

www.ci.olympia.wa.us/par

After adoption by the Olympia City Council,
the plan will be made available on our website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last park plan for the City of Olympia was approved in 1991. In 1994, a parks element was added to the Olympia Comprehensive Plan. At that time, the combined population of the city and its Urban Growth Area (UGA) was 42,000. Today, this area boasts a population of over 54,000. By the year 2025, the population is projected to reach over 79,000.

As Olympia's population increases, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain current levels of recreational service and arts amenities. Existing facilities increasingly suffer from over use. This leads to resource degradation and diminished user experiences. To address this, additional park acreage must be purchased and new recreation facilities constructed.

This plan adopts four new Level of Service (LOS) categories - one for each of the city's four park types. These are Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Areas, and the Open Space Network. In the Olympia Park System, "level of service" refers to the amount of park acres, by type, needed per person. LOS figures are no longer based on numbers of individual park facilities (i.e., ball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds) per 1000 population. The new LOS standards are expressed in developed park acres per 1000 population.

A needs assessment has determined the amount of developed park acreage (by park type) required to meet these levels of service. Undeveloped properties within the city that meet criteria for park development have been identified. The plan proposes a 22-year time frame for implementation. The City Council has provided the following strategies for plan implementation. The Council determined that this plan will:

- Place a *high priority* on acquisition and a *medium priority* on development and maintenance in the city limits.
- Place a *medium priority* on land acquisition and a *low priority* on development in the Olympia UGA.
- Place a *high priority* on acquiring Neighborhood and Community Parks and Open Space and a *medium priority* on acquiring Special Use Areas.
- Place a *medium priority* on developing Neighborhood and Community Parks and a *low priority* on developing Special Use Areas and Open Space.

- Consider a wide range of funding options to increase the pace of our park effort.
- Place a *high priority* on the creation of a long-term park maintenance plan and a funding mechanism.

Utilizing these strategies, four funding alternatives - each proposing an incremental increase in the scale and pace of plan implementation- were developed. These alternatives were identified as "status-quo," "moderate," "ambitious" and "land-emphasis." During the upcoming Capital Facility Plan period 2003-2008, these alternatives were estimated to range in cost from about \$6.6 million to approximately \$31.2 million. After several meetings, the Olympia City Council selected the "land emphasis" alternative as the preferred alternative.

Parks - The "Land Emphasis Alternative"

Land suitable for many types of park development is becoming scarce within the city limits and urban growth area boundaries. Recognizing this, Council selected the "land-emphasis" alternative. This implementation alternative focuses on acquiring land in the near-term, while it is still available. Under this approach, the city will acquire much of the land necessary to implement the plan vision by 2008. Park land and open space will be purchased utilizing Councilmanic bonds, and park development will be funded primarily by developer contributions in the form of impact fees (city), SEPA mitigation fees (county) and grants.

With the exception of special use areas, there is already a deficit of developed park facilities. Initially, the "land emphasis" strategy is expected to further reduce service levels, resulting in a continuing decline in the LOS.

The full implementation of this plan is estimated to cost approximately \$124 million, in 2002 dollars. The "land-emphasis" alternative requires that almost \$30 million in Councilmanic debt be expended over the next 20 years (beginning in 2005), primarily for land acquisition. This debt is to be retired via a voter-approved 2% increase in the private utility tax. Upon review of several potential funding sources, Council identified this source as the most realistic mechanism for funding the acquisition, development and

continued maintenance of our park system. This increase will generate approximately \$1,500,000 per year.

During the first six years of plan implementation, the land emphasis strategy will increase the number of Community Park sites from 4 to 6, and Neighborhood Park sites will be increased from 15 to 24. The number of Special Use Area sites will increase from 15 to 21. Approximately 168 acres will be added to the city's Open Space Network. This will provide additional open space as well as corridors for future recreational trails throughout the community.

An increase of \$245,000 in the Department's annual operation and minor maintenance budget will be required to operate and maintain the land acquired and facilities constructed during the 2003-2008 CFP period.

Olympia's park system was built largely in the mid-1970's; much of the infrastructure is beginning to need major repair and rehabilitation. The department's current yearly operating and maintenance budget is insufficient to fund a task of this magnitude. To address this situation, Council supports the initiation of a parks major maintenance fund in 2004. Council has discussed the annual dedication of \$150,000 in General CFP Funds for major park facility maintenance and rehabilitation.

Arts and Recreation

Citizens are generally satisfied with Olympia's recreation and arts programs, however these programs are faced with several significant challenges. Physical and operational modifications to The Olympia Center are needed for this facility to function more effectively as a recreation facility. A reliable, affordable means of transportation must be found to serve off-site recreation program participants. A cooperative approach with the Olympia School District is needed to meet community recreational programming needs. This joint effort would facilitate the use of area middle schools as satellite or neighborhood recreation centers in the late afternoon and evenings. Additional full-sized, lighted, outdoor, all-weather soccer fields in a developed community park are also needed. The absence of a community aquatic facility greatly limits the scope of recreational program offerings. The arts in the Olympia area would benefit most by the establishment of a community arts center. Providing community facilities of this

scale will require an unprecedented level of inter-departmental, inter-jurisdictional, and public-private cooperation.

As the Olympia community continues to grow, so must its inventory of park facilities and arts and recreation program offerings. Without the means to provide for parks, recreation and social exchange in our urbanizing neighborhoods, our quality of life will be diminished. To address this challenge over the long term, this plan outlines a three-phased program of park acquisition, development and maintenance. This plan will require an additional financial commitment. It is a plan that will preserve and expand Olympia's most cherished assets.

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, Chapter Seven- Parks, Arts and Recreation of the *Comprehensive Plan for Olympia and the Olympia Growth Area*, adopted in 1994 is dated and renders the Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department ineligible for Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) grant funding, and

WHEREAS, this plan is the basis for the Parks, Arts and Recreation Department's upcoming revision of Chapter Seven of the *Comprehensive Plan for Olympia and the Olympia Growth Area*, and complies with the requirements of the State of Washington Growth Management Act; and

WHEREAS, this plan contains all required elements for IAC planning eligibility; and

WHEREAS, IAC planning policies require a resolution, ordinance, or other adoption instrument showing formal adoption of the plan and planning process by the governing entity; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Steering Committee conducted a series of public input workshops and a household survey to assure that the wants, needs and concerns of the citizens of Olympia were captured in the planning process; and

WHEREAS, the actions proposed in this plan reflect a reasoned synthesis of public input and professional judgement to achieve the desired levels of service for park facilities within the document's 22-year planning horizon; and

WHEREAS, the implementation policies and funding mechanisms outlined in this plan were refined from several alternatives, and determined by this Council to represent a realistic and achievable approach to plan implementation; and

WHEREAS, this plan has been reviewed and approved by the Olympia Arts Commission, the Olympia Planning Commission and the Olympia Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the final draft of this plan was presented to the public for final review and comment at a public open house held on October 9, 2002; and

WHEREAS, this plan was submitted to the City of Olympia SEPA Official who, upon review, subsequently issued a Determination of Non Significance; and

WHEREAS, the Director of the Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department has presented to this Council for approval the *2002 Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan*;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL that the plan and process presented in the *2002 Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan* dated November 4, 2002 is hereby adopted.

PASSED BY THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL this _____ day of _____ 2002.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY