

# CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

---

## ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The role of this Plan is to state clearly our vision for the future of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area, and how to get there from here. There are many questions to answer: What areas are most suitable for development, and what areas should be preserved in their natural state? Where should we locate new housing, industry, commerce, and public facilities? How should our neighborhoods look? How should we lay out new streets? What strategy should we use to reduce the overuse of autos which is strangling our cities?

How many parks do we need; of what size and kind, and where? What can we do to ensure a strong local economy? How can we manage growth to achieve the kind of community we want? How can we encourage the wise use and conservation of energy and other natural resources? How can we encourage preservation of our historic resources? How can we create a city known not as a "city of concrete", but rather a "city of trees?" How can we ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels? What utilities and public services will we need? How will we pay for all this?

This Comprehensive Plan for Olympia and the Olympia Growth Area includes background information, goals, policies, maps and other information to guide the City of Olympia's governmental actions over the next 20 years. The Plan also applies, in part, to unincorporated Thurston County lands; hence, it will also guide Thurston County governmental actions within the Urban Growth Area for Olympia. The parts of this Plan that apply to unincorporated Thurston County lands are often referred to as the "Joint Plan" for Olympia's Urban Growth Area, since

both the City and the County have adopted these portions.

The parts of this Plan that apply within unincorporated Thurston County are part of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan. If any parts of this Plan that apply within unincorporated Thurston County conflict with any other provisions of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, the parts from this Plan shall govern. The parts of this Plan that have been adopted by Thurston County are so marked; all other parts apply only to the City of Olympia.

The chapters in this Plan have many formal policy statements. These policies are used by the City and County to review development applications under our zoning and subdivision regulations. State law also requires that new or revised zoning and other regulations be prepared as needed to carry them out; some of the new provisions in the Plan addressing development may be difficult to implement until those regulations are adopted. This means there will inevitably be a frustrating period of time--a matter of some months--when development applications must be reviewed using both old regulations and new policies. During the period between the adoption of this plan and the effective date of any implementing regulation, the authority of the State Environmental Policy Act will be utilized to ensure that development conforms with this plan. In the event of a clear conflict between this plan and the development regulations, this plan shall govern. Every effort shall be made to reasonably conform development regulations with this plan.

Because the Plan itself does not directly regulate the use of land, most of the goals and policies are not expressed in a mandatory tone. Rather, they suggest what should be. In writing them we have tried to make them more direct and emphatic than was often true of previous comprehensive plans.

The Plan also sets a clear framework for where to spend money on capital facilities, how much, and from what funding sources.

## SUMMARY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

During the 1980's, rapid growth and suburban sprawl in many parts of the state had caused a decline in the quality of life. (Suburban sprawl is defined as uncoordinated, scattered low density development which cannot be efficiently provided with urban services.) Especially in western Washington, traffic congestion had soared. Forest land, agricultural land, and critical areas such as wetlands and wildlife habitat conservation areas were threatened. Drinking water sources were being contaminated, overused, or both. Flooding and landslides had occurred in areas of new development.

In 1990 and 1991 the Washington State Legislature responded by passing a series of laws known as the Growth Management Act.

The Act requires that fast-growing counties--and the cities within them--upgrade their comprehensive plans to meet new standards. Olympia and Thurston County have already accomplished many of these upgrades. For example, the Act requires us to establish an urban growth area; we did that in 1988. The Act requires policies and ordinances protecting environmentally sensitive areas; Olympia completed this in 1992, Thurston County in 1993.

In other areas we must make changes to the Comprehensive Plan to conform to the new Act. We need a chapter on housing, with a strategy to assure affordable housing for all income groups. We must expand our utility chapter to incorporate plans for power, natural gas, phone and TV cable. We must identify open space corridors within and between urban areas. Perhaps the biggest new challenge will be assuring that adequate public facilities are available when needed for new development.

The Growth Management Act provides both a challenge and an opportunity for Olympia and Thurston County. We must examine many complex issues at once and incorporate visions and policies established since the last major revisions of the Olympia and Thurston comprehensive plans in 1988. The Olympia City Council directed the Planning Commission to update the Plan incorporating four major new concepts:

1. **The Philosophy of Sustainability.** Consider how today's decisions will affect the quality of life for future generations. Think 20, 40, 100 years ahead, and beyond. The goal is to establish ways of living that can be sustained indefinitely.
2. **Accommodate Olympia's Share of Regional Growth.** Converting rural areas into sprawling suburbs is not a sustainable way to manage growth. The Growth Management Act says that cities and urban areas have a responsibility to accommodate most of the growth, and do it in a compact, urban manner. By interlocal agreement, Olympia's share of anticipated 20-year regional growth is 30,000 people in the City and its Growth Area.
3. **The Urban Design Vision and Strategy.** In the fall of 1991 Olympia hosted a four-day visioning workshop to define what principles of urban design would make the Olympia of tomorrow a sustainable city. In a way, this answers the question, "What would a sustainable Olympia *look like*?"
4. **The Regional Transportation Plan.** For many years cars have been multiplying faster than people in Thurston County. On average, each car logs more miles per year. Our current policies, if continued, will result in a Los Angeles-style transportation system. The 1993 Regional Transportation Plan identifies aggressive strategies to reverse those trends. It emphasizes ways to build a community and a transportation system that can rely less on the auto.

This Plan is presented in three volumes. **Volume One** is this Overview, summarizing the contents of the rest of the Plan. **Volume Two** is the Technical Plan, with detailed background and policies for City and County decision-making. **Volume Three** is the Capital Facilities Plan, with the detailed budget for capital spending on parks, roads, stormwater facilities, sewer, water, schools, and other major public facilities.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

The history of Olympia is, in many respects, the history of nearly every young city in the Pacific Northwest. Its beaches and forests were first home to American Indian people who fished for salmon and harvested shellfish along the shores of Budd Inlet. In the 1840s and 50s, as the United States pushed westward, American immigrant settlers were attracted to the potential of a small peninsula, rich in timber and oysters, set at the southernmost tip of Puget Sound.

Olympia loaded up sailing ships with shingles for San Francisco. It crossed its fingers and hoped for a railroad—and was disappointed when the trains passed it by. It built itself mills and factories, fraternal lodges, an opera house and modest frame homes in neighborhoods that stretched along streetcar lines. When the age of the automobile arrived, the city tore up its trolley tracks and sprawled further south, east and west.

In one fundamental way, of course, the city of Olympia is unlike anywhere else. In 1853, when it was little more than a muddy frontier village, Olympia was named as capital of the recently created Washington Territory. Rival towns have repeatedly tried to capture the coveted title, but Olympia has staunchly remained the capital ever since.

### **Natural Setting and Topography**

The frontier settlement of Olympia was built on a small peninsula at the shallow head of Budd Inlet, squeezed between the tidal mouth of the Deschutes River and a smaller marine estuary known as the Swantown Slough. By 1860 the neighborhood to the east of Olympia, originally

known as Swantown, was linked to downtown by a footbridge. The west side neighborhood, called Marshville, was accessible only by boat until a wagon bridge was finally built in 1869. Steep hills on both the east and west were eventually reshaped and graded to accommodate wagons and streetcars.

Dredging of the shallow Olympia harbor began as early as the 1890s. The most extensive dredging took place in 1910-11, when 2 million tons of mud were scooped from the floor of Budd Inlet and used to create new waterfront blocks and to fill in the Swantown Slough.

Another major change in Olympia's surroundings occurred in the 1950s when a small dam was built at the mouth of the Deschutes, turning what had once been saltwater estuary into freshwater Capitol Lake.

### **Native American Settlement**

The original inhabitants of the Olympia area were bands of Coastal Salish people who wintered in permanent villages and moved around in summer between established food-gathering camps. After the Puget Sound Indian War of 1855-56, most local American Indian people were relocated onto tribal reservations at Nisqually or Squaxin Island, although autonomous bands remained in Olympia as late as 1879.

Archaeological remnants of seasonal Salish campsites have been found at Priest Point Park, along the shores of Capitol Lake and along the coves of Budd Inlet. No trace of a permanent village is known to have survived the extensive dredging and filling that reshaped Olympia's waterfront nearly 100 years ago.

### **American Pioneer Period 1850-1869**

A pair of pioneer business partners, Edmund Sylvester and Levi Lathrop Smith, arrived on the shores of Budd Inlet in 1846, less than a year after the first American immigrants to Puget Sound had settled at Tumwater Falls. When Smith died unexpectedly in 1848, Sylvester inherited the land Smith had claimed on the beach just above the

high tide line. In 1850 Sylvester platted the townsite of Olympia. He set aside specific lots for several traditional elements he thought a city should have: a Masonic Temple, a church, a school and the central public square now called Sylvester Park. A post office was soon established, giving the U.S. Government its first presence on Puget Sound.

By the mid-1850s Olympia had sawmills, churches, mercantile stores, a newspaper office, a two-story schoolhouse and steamship service along the Sound to Steilacoom and Seattle. In its earliest decades the city was centered near Olympia Avenue and Capitol Way, which marked the northern edge of the natural peninsula.

When Thurston County was established in 1852, Olympia was named as the new county seat. In 1853, when Congress created Washington Territory out of “north Oregon,” Territorial Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens chose Olympia as the temporary capital city—an arrangement that was made permanent in 1855.

### **Territorial Period** **1870-1889**

Railroad fever reigned in the early years of the 1870s as every town along Puget Sound dreamed of becoming the terminus of the transcontinental railroad. Olympia’s hopes were dashed in 1873 when the Northern Pacific Railroad made Tacoma its choice instead. By 1878 the capital city had made the best of a bad situation by laying a spur of narrow gauge tracks to Tenino, the closest stop on the main line, some 16 miles away.

After flames raced through downtown Olympia in 1882, the city ordered a new steam fire engine and installed 10 municipal fireplugs. Many local business, meanwhile, were inspired to rebuild their charred wooden buildings in durable brick or stone. As Victorian style began to appear in Olympia, downtown buildings began to feature lavish decoration: bay windows, cornices, mock columns (pilasters) elaborate cast-iron details. Commercial buildings were no longer seen as utilitarian structures but as ornaments to the town.

By the end of 1886, downtown Olympia basked in the glow of 15 gaslit streetlamps. It also had new a shipping wharf, three-quarters of a mile long, which stretched to deep water across the tidal mudflats. By the close of the decade the town boasted telephone lines, electric power, a new water reservoir and a small fleet of horse-drawn streetcars.

In 1889, the year of Washington statehood, local residents cheered when Washington voters went to the polls and—despite stiff competition from Ellensburg and North Yakima—named the town of Olympia as the new state’s capital city.

### **The Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century** **1890-1909**

The early years of statehood were a heady time for Olympia. Electric streetcar service arrived in 1892, replacing the earlier horse-drawn trams. Trolley tracks ran east up Fourth Avenue, south on Main Street to Tumwater, and later up Harrison Hill to the west. Cheap public transportation meant that people could live farther from the town center, and new neighborhoods began to evolve along the streetcar routes.

Downtown, across from Sylvester Park, a fabulous new county courthouse was completed in 1892. Though it was the pride of Thurston County, it cost so much to build that the County found itself strapped for cash when the nation suffered a serious economic depression the following year. At the same time the State of Washington found itself in need of a new state capitol, but without enough funds to build one. In 1901 both problems were solved when Washington purchased the elegant courthouse and added a wing at the rear to accommodate state offices. The former courthouse served as Washington’s capitol from 1905 to 1928.

As wooden storefronts disappeared, substantial buildings of brick, stucco and stone brought a sense of permanence to downtown Olympia. By 1909, worn wooden boardwalks throughout the central business district had been replaced with concrete sidewalks, and the muddy expanse of Fourth Avenue had been tidily paved in brick.

## **Shaping the City to Come**

### **1910-1929**

The tidal mudflats of Budd Inlet had long posed a problem for ships in Olympia's harbor. By 1911, after two year of work, two million cubic yards of mud had been dredged from the floor of the shallow bay and rearranged into 40 new city blocks. Local sawmills quickly moved onto the vacant land near the harbor and soon were rafting 500 million board feet of lumber up Puget Sound every year.

A desperate need for new shipping docks in the years after World War I led to the formation in 1922 of the first local Port District. Within a few years the new port was serving 30 lumber mills, five shingle mills, two large veneer plants and the Olympia Door Company. Other harborside industries included a fruit-canning plant and oyster-opening houses that shucked Olympia oysters and shipped them around the world.

By the close of the 1920s, most of downtown Olympia's familiar historic business blocks were in place. Victorian fussiness had given way to a new, symmetrical architecture inspired by the Classical buildings of ancient Greece and Rome. Architect Joseph Wohleb, who moved here from California in 1911, also peppered the downtown core with stucco storefronts and red tile roofs in the Spanish-Colonial style.

Up on the hill to the south of downtown, a new Capitol Group of buildings was taking shape at last. The Temple of Justice, first to be built, was completed in 1917. Lawmakers finally moved out of their remodeled courthouse and into the magnificent domed Legislative Building in 1928.

During the 1920s many homes were built in the Arts and Crafts style popular nationally. In the Olympia area, the Tumwater Lumber Mills Company which began in 1922 produced kit homes under the brand "Ready Cut Homes," that were constructed throughout the city. The firm eventually supplied the materials for over 500 homes in Olympia.

## **Hard Times, War and a Major Quake**

### **1930-1949**

In the deepening Great Depression after the Wall Street crash of 1929, orders fell off at local mills and banks began closing their doors. As hard times grew even harder, beach shacks and floating shanties sprang up on the tideflats near the Northern Pacific rail yards (where Heritage Park is now). This rough-and-tumble community, known with a touch of irony as "Little Hollywood," survived for nearly a decade while practical city officials simply looked the other way.

During the years of World War II, servicemen and their families flooded the towns near Fort Lewis. A new United Service Organizations center established on Olympia's east side was soon serving up coffee, donuts and conversation to 2,000 soldiers each week. A shortage of ready milled lumber, both during and after the war, led to the construction of dozens of practical concrete-brick homes in new residential neighborhoods of southeast Olympia.

On April 13, 1949, the strongest earthquake yet recorded in Olympia's history struck the capital city with a force of 7.1—killing two local residents and damaging scores of buildings. Fancy cornices, balconies and ornamental trim tore loose from landmark structures and shattered on sidewalks below. In an age that had not yet come to terms with historic preservation, few of the affected buildings were restored to their former glory. Many were modernized instead, and a number were simply replaced.

During the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration and Civil Works Administration worked on the Olympia watershed, built trails and improved Priest Point Park., landscaped Maple Park and worked on city and port infrastructure projects including the water system, dock repairs and construction of the airport hanger.

## **The Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **1950-1979**

The 1950s and 60s brought tremendous change to Olympia. In 1951 after several years of construction, a small dam at the mouth of the Deschutes Waterway transformed the town's saltwater estuary into freshwater Capitol Lake. The modern highway of Interstate 5 looped to the east and south of downtown, diverting long-distance travelers and relieving the traffic jams they had caused in the heart of Olympia.

By the 1950s the headquarters of many state departments had drifted out of Olympia to the bigger City of Seattle. In 1954 a group of local business leaders successfully sued the State for return of those offices, claiming that their removal had violated the Washington State Constitution by separating state agencies from the capital city. That legal victory brought rapid growth in Olympia as state agency offices expanded here and workers poured in to staff them. To accommodate this expansion, a new annex to the original Capitol Campus was developed in the 1960s on the east side of Capitol Way.

Another major earthquake, registering a magnitude of 6.5, slammed Olympia in 1965, further damaging the historic fabric of the city.

Construction of the first regional shopping mall in Lacey in 1966, followed by an even larger mall on Olympia's west side in 1978, drew major department stores away from downtown Olympia and spurred new, widespread development outside the central core.

## **The Recent Past**

### **1980-Present**

Serious civic efforts to revitalize a fading downtown district included the construction of the Washington Center for the Performing Arts (1984), Percival Landing (1977-1988), a larger and permanent facility for the Olympia Farmers Market (1995) and the Heritage Park Fountain Block (1996). Also key was the adoption in 1982 of a municipal Historic Preservation Ordinance (OMC 18.84 and 18.12) that recognizes the importance of older Olympia landmarks and

encourages property owners to restore and maintain such buildings.

On February 28, 2001, an earthquake registering a magnitude of 6.8 rocked the capital city, knocking the dome of the Legislative Building out of alignment and seriously damaging a number of downtown structures. The 1921 Fourth Avenue Bridge, already slated for replacement, was damaged beyond repair by the quake and replaced by an entirely new bridge completed in 2004.

## **Diverse Olympia**

Olympia's population has changed over time, tied to the broad patterns of the city's social and economic history. The city has been shaped through waves of immigration and settlement. Minority communities have contributed significantly throughout Olympia's history. Individuals of many diverse ethnicities and backgrounds continue to play prominent roles in the community.

The original inhabitants of the area were the Coastal Salish people. After the Puget Sound Indian War of 1855-56, most local American Indian people were relocated onto tribal reservations at Nisqually or Squaxin Island, although autonomous bands remained in Olympia as late as 1879.

Most pioneer settlers traced their ancestry to European settlement in America. In 1870, the census for Olympia listed 966 native born residents, 237 foreign born, 24 "colored" and 18 Chinese of a total of 1203 total inhabitants.

Olympia's early commercial and industrial development was tied to the contributions of individuals of minority communities. Chinese people made their way here almost as soon as the town was founded—working as laborers, cooks and household servants, opening shops and laundries, or growing fresh produce in well-tended gardens and selling it door-to-door. Rebecca Howard, a Black American woman, purchased the Pacific House hotel on Main Street (Capitol Way) in 1860 and turned it into an important meeting place for locals and legislators

alike. Jewish American merchants opened stores in Olympia as early as the 1850s and have continued to play a vital role in the commercial development of the town. The Jewish community established a cemetery near Olympia in 1870.

Olympia's changing economic base drew first generation immigrants. Japanese immigrants found work in the "opening sheds" of the local oyster industry. Scandinavian workers gravitated toward the logging and lumber industries, rolling up their sleeves in Olympia's wood-products mills.

Life for the Chinese in Olympia grew much more difficult by the late 1800's.

Exclusion laws and harassment for Chinese throughout the region followed national trends and federally- enacted exclusion laws and a regional economic downturn.

Sheriff William Billings helped prevent ouster of the Chinese from Olympia (as had happened in Tacoma and Seattle). Still, with restrictive immigration laws there were few new arrivals to join the aging population. By the 1940s Olympia's Chinatown was vacant. The buildings were razed in 1943-the same year exclusion laws were repealed. By then, many Chinese had left for larger cities in the U.S. or returned to China. Many Chinese residents continue to live in Olympia.

Japanese American residents were subject to the internment regulations during World War II. Some of the local oyster industry workers were sent to camps in California and Idaho. Some families returned after the war and continue to live in the area along with more recent Japanese-American arrivals to the city.

Over time, particularly because of the opportunities for employment with the state of Washington, Olympia has become much more diverse. In the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new groups of immigrants notably from Southeast Asia came to the area. The area's African American population has also grown.

Olympia's growing diversity has become more represented among elected officials. In 1988, Cora Pinson became the first African American Olympia City Council member. Doug Mah was elected as the first Chinese-American member of the Olympia City Council in 2001.

By the 2000 census, nearly 15% of the city's population was non-white and there were 114 different ancestry backgrounds reported. Hispanic and Vietnamese residents made up the largest minority groups.

There are archeological remnants of seasonal Salish campsites, but no permanent village is known to survive today. Other ethnic heritage sites in Olympia include the Shanghai Café Building and the Olympia Hardware Building (both long-time sites of Chinese restaurants) and an interpretive marker near the Heritage Park fountain that honors Olympia's historic Chinese community. The Oyster House at Percival Landing was originally an oyster-opening warehouse that employed many Japanese workers. The influence of Scandinavian mill workers survives in scores of local "kit" houses manufactured by Tumwater Ready Cut Homes, a successful enterprise owned and run by a family of Swedish immigrants. The original Temple Beth Hatfiloh (1938) remains an important landmark of local Jewish history. The Olympia Junk Company Building (1926) was constructed by the Bean family, prominent Jewish storeowners. The recently rehabilitated Harris Drygoods Store (1896) was established by the Harris Family, longtime area Jewish merchants.

### **Planning in Olympia**

The Olympia Planning Commission was established during the administration of Mayor George Mills in 1930. The commission was constituted to plan, review and approve the physical growth of the city. There may have been a quasi advisory planning commission hosted by the Olympia Chamber of Commerce between 1928 and 1930.

The first zoning plan was issued in 1932. The plan was compiled by the commission with the assistance of city employees. In 1935, the Washington State Legislature passed the State Planning Enabling Act which set the fundamental requirements for local jurisdiction planning including the requirement of the planning commission to advise the local government. The first recorded planning consultant for the city was Mr. Charles Elliott who was commissioned to compile a zoning plan with recommendations and he also contributed to the Deschutes Basin Project (Capitol Lake) during the years 1946 — 1947. In 1957, Mr. Felix Reisner was appointed to the newly created position of City Planner.

Although there may have been a Comprehensive Plan developed in 1948, the first documented Comprehensive Plan was done in 1959-60. The accompanying zoning ordinance was completed in 1961.

The 1976 Olympia Comprehensive Plan was the first update of the 1959-60 plan, however the corresponding zoning overhaul was not completed until 1982.

Because of the construction of area malls and concern about downtown, the first chapter in the next Comprehensive Plan update was the Downtown Chapter finished in 1986. The R/UDAT team had first visited the area in 1979 with suggestions for downtown revitalization. A new general Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1988.

During the 1980s Olympia and Thurston County were in the forefront of many growth-management related initiatives including an inter-local agreement of Thurston County jurisdictions in 1983 which established urban growth areas and urban densities, delineated annexation areas and specified that zoning in the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) would not be changed when they were annexed. A second phase of inter-local planning was completed in 1988 with another Urban Growth Agreement which also established where the cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater could annex in the county. Some of these principles

were later incorporated into the state's Growth Management Act.

Important changes in the city's planning efforts were made in response to the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 and 1991 by the Washington State Legislature. For the first time city zoning was required to be consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan. The GMA also required planning in certain counties, set standards for planning, mandated that the city's capital facilities plan be more realistic financially, and prescribed that a transportation plan be developed with a 10 year projection of congestion and accompanying standards.

Urban Growth Boundaries for jurisdictions within the county were required by GMA which are periodically reviewed. 2005 is the next deadline for that review (forecasts of the UGA population are delegated to TRPC, while selection of UGA boundaries remains the purview of the Board).

Olympia was one of the first jurisdictions to comply with the new requirements for a new Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance which were adopted in 1994-95. As part of GMA, the city of Olympia established impact fees for parks, transportation, fire services and schools.

GMA required certain elements be included in Comprehensive Plans, but the City of Olympia also included optional elements as well including Policing, Historic Preservation, Economic Development, Urban Forestry and Energy Conservation.

The city's comprehensive plan under GMA can only be amended once a year although the zoning ordinance can be amended as the need arises. The two must continue to remain consistent.

In 2004, the City completed its required 10-year review of compliance with GMA and determined that the Comprehensive Plan continues to comply with the Growth Management Act. A final element of that compliance is an updated Critical Areas ordinance due to be finalized early in 2005.

The State also established a “Buildable Lands” program in 1995 which requires six Western Washington counties including Thurston County to determine the sufficiency of land for projected growth on a regular cycle.

A long-range GMA requirement is that cities by must incorporate shoreline management into their Comprehensive Plans and regulation by 2011.

Over the years, the role of the Olympia Planning Commission has also changed. Until the late 1970s, the Planning Commission acted as a quasi-judicial body reviewing subdivisions, rezones and land use applications in much the same capacity as the Hearings Examiner does today. After the establishment of the Hearings Examiner system, the Planning Commission has been charged with advising the City Council on long-range planning issues only. (Thanks to Pete Swensson, Olympia Advance Planning Senior Planner for much of this information.)

### **Olympia City Parks**

As Olympia’s neighborhoods developed, so did the need for public parks. Woodruff Park, the city’s oldest surviving park, was set aside in 1892—the same year that streetcars started running up Harrison Street. Priest Point Park dates from 1905, when the City bought 240 acres of the old French Catholic mission site on the shores of Budd Inlet. Work parties of volunteer citizens labored throughout the summer clearing trails, installing landscaping and shaping the second-growth forest into a usable park.

By the 1930s and ‘40s, the focus shifted to neighborhood parks where local children could play. Harry Fain’s Legion Park (1933), Bigelow Park (1943) and Lions Park (1946) provided outdoor “rumpus rooms” for rapidly growing neighborhoods with more and more family houses and fewer vacant lots.

The idea of preserving natural areas began to gain public support in the mid-20th century. The wooded property surrounding Moxlie Creek—once the water source for the city— was saved in

1955 by a determined group of citizens who opposed a plan by the City to log and sell off the land. Remnants of the old City waterworks can still be seen in the forested tract now known as Watershed Park.

### **Selected Historic Neighborhoods**

#### **East Side Neighborhood**

Originally separated from downtown Olympia by the waters of a tidal slough, this district was first known as “Swantown” after Scottish immigrant John Swan who settled here in 1850. Early east side development consisted mainly of small household farms and orchards. More homes and business followed, especially after electric streetcars began running up Fourth Avenue in 1892. By 1911 the Swantown Slough had been filled, connecting the east side directly to downtown.

#### **Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood**

Prior to 1900 this was an area of small farms and orchards, with most houses located within a block or two of major roads. After the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it developed into a modest working-class neighborhood that was home to hundreds of workers employed in the waterfront mills.

#### **West Olympia**

This neighborhood began as a separate community called “Marshville,” after pioneer settler Edmund Marsh who claimed land here in 1865. Although the first bridge to the West Side was completed in 1869, major development did not take place until after 1880 when the steep, muddy track up Harrison Hill was re-graded into a passable road. As on the east side of town, new electric streetcar service inspired the construction of houses away from downtown Olympia.

#### **South Capitol Neighborhood**

The development of this neighborhood south of downtown was closely tied to the construction of a permanent state capitol on the bluff overlooking Budd Inlet. Although the oldest home here dates from 1878, the majority of houses were built between 1900 and 1928—the year that lawmakers moved at last to the great domed Legislative

Building. Nearly every popular housing style of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is found in this neighborhood. In 1991 the entire South Capitol Neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Southeast Olympia**

This area remained substantially rural well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Streetcars carried crowds to the original Thurston County Fairgrounds (near the present-day intersection of Capitol Way and Carlyon), which later gave way to a horse trotting track. In 1922 developer J.T. Otis platted the first residential subdivision here. Within a decade the horse track, too, had been graded and divided into residential lots. (Ord. 6389, 01/24/06)

## **VOLUME TWO: THE TECHNICAL PLAN**

Volume Two has twelve chapters.

### **Chapter One: Land Use and Urban Design**

This chapter addresses what land uses should go where in the City and its Growth Area. It is intended to address the changing needs of the 1990's and beyond. What are some of these changing needs?

In the decades after World War II, people moved increasingly from cities to suburbs to seek the "American dream": to own an affordable home in a low density setting convenient to work, schools, and shopping. But over the years, chasing the dream has created sprawling subdivisions, traffic congestion, rapid consumption of open space, decline of cities, and skyrocketing housing costs. We look around us and see the loss of open spaces, and increased pollution of water and air in urban, suburban, and rural areas alike.

Most households today are different than they were in the 1950's. Families are smaller. There are more single-parent households with lower

incomes. People live longer, often alone, which means they need access to public transportation and nearby stores and services. We can no longer live in the "Ozzie and Harriet" world of the 1950's and 1960's. The extended family and "mom and pop" stores will not return in the same form, regardless of good planning or design controls.

How can we create real neighborhoods rather than independent subdivisions? Urban residences and communities rather than projects? Towns rather than sprawl?

This Plan locates more concentrated commercial and residential development in the Downtown and along major arterials. The intent is to provide more opportunities for people to live within easy walking distance of work, of daily shopping needs, and of transit lines. The Plan commits to more aggressive support for redevelopment Downtown, of both commercial and residential uses.

The Plan also identifies strategies to encourage more compact development in neighborhoods throughout the City and its Growth Area. At the same time, the livability of existing neighborhoods must be maintained. The key is to achieve a higher quality of design when new development is at higher densities. The Plan also opens the door for additional units on existing lots, sometimes called "accessory units," or "granny flats." These can be new structures, garage conversions, or a new unit in an existing house.

In recent decades, new residential development has been mainly in the form of independent subdivisions, strictly segregated from areas for work or shopping, or even apartments. The Plan identifies a number of places in the City and its Growth Area where neighborhood villages and urban villages could be created.

Focused around a neighborhood center, neighborhood villages would offer a variety of living environments for a diverse population. The majority of housing would be single family, but an increased mix of housing types would bring more choices to people of all income levels.

Neighborhood centers would have small businesses to provide conveniences, a transit stop and an open space or park. Ideally, all residents would be within a 15-minute walking distance of this center so that people can run many of their errands within their own neighborhoods.

Urban villages would be much the same, but at a larger scale. The commercial center would have businesses with a larger service area, perhaps even a significant employment center. Only one urban village site is proposed in the Plan, at Yelm Highway and Henderson Boulevard.

## **Chapter Two: Environment**

The goals and policies in this chapter address seven issue areas that generally cover our environmental concerns. They are environmental education, air quality, ground and surface water, wildlife habitat, environmentally sensitive areas, the City's regulatory and management activities, monitoring progress toward sustainability, and environmental leadership by City government. The policies make a strong commitment to preserving streams and wetlands, steep slopes, and wildlife habitat in their natural condition. They call for strict controls over development on sensitive sites.

The Plan also addresses environmental protection issues in Chapter Five, Utilities and Public Services. That chapter discusses our drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water, solid waste, management challenges, goals and policies. How we manage these systems has enormous impact on our environment.

## **Chapter Three: Economic Development**

This chapter has few changes from the 1988 Olympia Comprehensive Plan. The principal difference is that background data has been brought up to date. The lack of change is because the Port of Olympia is preparing a Strategic Plan during 1994. In addition, the Thurston Regional

Planning Council is addressing regional economic development issues during 1994. The Olympia City Council felt it would be more productive to update the policies in this chapter after those two other initiatives were complete.

This chapter has a very extensive background section analyzing our local economy. It begins by defining economic development as the strengthening of a local economy through diversification of the job base. A more diverse local economy gives a wider variety of jobs and a stronger tax base.

Next, the chapter looks at the structure of our local economy. It determines that the most effective economic development strategy is to expand employment in "basic" industries such as manufacturing. This is because growth in these industries produces more spin-off growth in other sectors of our economy.

Looking at various Northwest economic trends, the chapter analyzes future prospects for our local economy. It concludes that local employment and population will see moderate growth over coming decades. If there is significant broadening of economic base industries, growth would be higher.

Right now Olympia has little potential for growth of manufacturing. Existing sites are small and mostly full. On the other hand, suitable sites could be annexed and utilities extended so that development is feasible. The chapter recommends that Olympia make careful investments in infrastructure designed to generate further economic growth. To be affordable, they cannot be for projects that "leap-frog" out to remote sites. Also, the City must not give away tax base to attract firms, unless careful fiscal analysis justifies it. Years--even decades--of shortfalls can result.

Looking at our tax base, our interdependence with our neighbors becomes clear. Because Olympia is the commercial center of the region, successful economic development anywhere in the region has spin-offs for Olympia.

This chapter also has sections examining particular elements of our economy that are significant for the Olympia area. An analysis of demand for office space identifies both public and private needs over the next twenty years. The Port's role in our local economy is detailed. The potential for high technology is touched on briefly. Opportunities for tourism are discussed extensively.

Goals and policies reflect the background discussion summarized above.

#### **Chapter Four: Urban Growth Management and Annexation**

The Olympia area is a fast-growing community. Thurston County has more than doubled in population in the last 20 years. This growth--caused by factors discussed in the Economic Development Chapter--has not been an accident. We will surely continue to grow.

Growth management in Thurston County has been a model for the rest of the state. The chapter discusses how Olympia and its neighbors work together to manage the overall patterns of growth within the region. It also identifies the share of the regional growth which Olympia will accommodate in the next 20 years. Olympia and its growth area had a population in 1992 of roughly 45,000. This is expected to reach roughly 75,000 by the year 2015.

During the 1970s and 1980s about three-fourths of our county's growth took place outside the cities and towns. Most of this development has been low-density suburban sprawl. It has created demands for urban services and utilities farther and farther out into the county. Not only is this pattern inefficient, it threatens wildlife habitat and natural resource lands we need for farming and forestry. Our sewer studies have also shown us that the phasing of growth (i.e., developing close-in areas on sewers before moving farther out) is also important to the protection of groundwater.

Recognizing these concerns, officials from Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Thurston County prepared a Memorandum of Understanding on Urban Growth Management. It is based on a phasing concept, with a short-term growth area and a long-term growth area. Outside these areas,

the countryside should remain rural. The agreement also provides for a process of joint planning by each city and the County for the growth area outside that city. The agreement itself is found in an Appendix to the Comprehensive Plan.

This chapter also analyzes the room for future growth in the City and its Growth Area, and the growth trends themselves. The Growth Area boundaries set in 1988 recognized earlier land use commitments made by Thurston County. They were based on suburban densities, not urban ones. Since then, Olympia has honored its agreements to provide City utilities to these areas. This Comprehensive Plan, recognizing that low suburban densities are not sustainable, now establishes higher urban densities. This means that there is now room to accommodate more growth inside the Growth Area. In fact, there is room for perhaps 40 or more years' growth, using current trends and the new densities.

We have several options for dealing with this situation:

1. Go back to lower densities so that we have about 20 or 25 years' worth of capacity. One drawback is that we would be guaranteed never to reach transit-compatible densities. In addition, at the end of 20 years or so, the Growth Area would be completely full. The next generation would have no choice but to expand the urban area into the rural areas. Finally, this approach would limit home-ownership opportunities for income groups that cannot afford quarter-acre lots.
2. Keep the urban densities, but reduce the size of the Growth Area to provide about 20 or 25 years' room for growth. Significant reductions are probably not feasible, since the existing growth area boundaries reflect existing development patterns and utility services, as well as planning and zoning commitments made by the County over the last 15 to 20 years. But if it could be done, this would allow us to reach transit-compatible densities within 20 years.

3. Set densities at urban levels, with both maximum and minimum requirements, and leave growth area boundaries more or less where they are in the Plan. At the end of 20 years, we would have filled in around half of the remaining vacant developable residential land, at transit-compatible densities. Around half would still be available for the next generation to make decisions on: more development versus park land, versus wildlife habitat, or whatever they see as needed. This is the strategy identified by the Plan.

Annexation is also a tool of the process of urbanization. Cities grow in area, and ultimately in population, by annexing adjacent lands. In doing so, however, they must be careful to avoid certain pitfalls. For example, illogical, sprawling boundaries lead to higher costs to provide utilities, police, and fire protection. Trying to serve such areas can cost a city more in expenses than it raises in taxes from the area. This can lead to years of financial drain. If "islands" of unincorporated land are created by annexations, cities find themselves providing services to areas that pay no city taxes. Finally, an annexation may transfer land use authority from a county to a city, but the property has not moved anywhere. It is still in the same neighborhood. How it is developed will still affect the same area. This implies a need for coordinated planning by the City and County both before and after an annexation.

This chapter addresses annexation concerns in a series of goals and policies.

## **Chapter Five: Utilities and Public Services**

Along with streets, utilities are the core of a city's infrastructure. We must build and maintain an adequate infrastructure in order to accomplish our environmental, economic, and land use goals--in short, to keep our community healthy. Careful planning for our future utility needs is essential to ensure that adequate utilities are provided as we grow. Planning can also reduce public costs by

encouraging the most effective use of existing facilities and cost-effective service extension.

This chapter addresses both publicly and privately owned utilities and services. It looks at our drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water utilities; solid waste management, cable television service, fire protection, police protection, and schools. It addresses both facility planning, and service delivery.

The section on privately owned utilities required by the Growth Management Act, looks at power, natural gas, telephone, cellular phone and cable television. The focus in this section is mainly on facility planning.

This chapter has two purposes. The first is to identify the major issues attending each of these services. The second is to state Olympia's broad goals and policies regarding them. For most of these services the appropriate agency has adopted a more detailed plan or equivalent document. These "functional plans" are to guide facilities design and daily administration by the agencies that are responsible for them. This chapter is intended to provide a bridge between those more detailed functional plans and the generalized land use plan they support.

The section on public utilities begins by setting policies for all public facilities and utilities in general. Utility plans should support and be consistent with land use plans. Urban service levels should go along with urban development. New development should pay for itself. We should encourage infill development since compact utility systems are less costly. New utility lines should be put underground whenever possible. The City should continue to use public education programs to promote resource conservation, and citizen involvement in utility planning. After setting general policies like these, the chapter looks at each service in particular.

The subsection on the drinking water utility affirms its overall mission of providing a safe and sustainable supply of drinking water and reclaimed water for the community and ensuring a

sufficient supply for firefighting needs. Long-term goals are to protect ground and surface water resources; to provide adequate supplies for future needs; and to conserve water as a source of supply, a means of ecosystem protection, and an alternative to future capital facilities. Other goals are to provide leadership in efficiency and innovation, use integrated and regional approaches to resource management, allocate costs equitably, and develop an informed, empowered citizenry.

The subsection on the wastewater management utility affirms its overall mission of protecting public and environmental health by ensuring that wastewater is collected and conveyed to treatment and disposal facilities with minimal risk. The wastewater system is managed to accomplish the City's land use, environmental, economic development and growth management goals. Long-term goals are to maximize the gravity sewer system so that the City and its growth area are ultimately served entirely by a City-owned gravity sewer system; and gradually replace STEP systems and onsite sewage systems through extension of gravity sewers. Other goals are to facilitate use of alternative technologies, ensure that the system is managed efficiently and effectively, and ensure that costs are shared equitably.

The subsection on the storm and surface water management utility affirms its mission of minimizing flooding, maintaining or improving water quality, and protecting or enhancing aquatic habitat. Long-term goals are to reduce the frequency and severity of flooding so hazards are eliminated; to improve water quality in all degraded streams and wetlands while maintaining high quality conditions in priority basins; and to slow the decline of aquatic habitat health in all degraded streams and wetlands while protecting healthy habitat from additional impacts. Other goals are to ensure that the system is managed efficiently and effectively and meets federal, state and regional standards; to ensure that costs are shared equitably, and to practice integrated and regional approaches to storm and surface water management.

The subsection on solid waste management examines the environmental hazards of sanitary landfills and the benefits of recycling. The Plan details ways the City reduces wastes and reclaims useful materials, to reduce reliance on landfills and move toward a more sustainable future.

The subsection on television cable service takes note of technological advances in this rapidly changing field. It summarizes our cable communications "enabling ordinance" and the provisions in our franchise with TCI Cablevision. It describes the operations of our public access television channel, and the contents of our Community Television Plan. The goals and policies in this section address service issues. Television cable facility issues are also briefly addressed in the later section on privately owned utilities.

The subsections on fire protection and police protection identify some of the considerations that go into planning for these services. They set general policies to support the effective delivery of these services.

The subsection on schools describes the modest role cities have in school planning. It provides guidelines for locating elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. It calls for new development to take into account the impact on schools. It calls for the City and School District to continue their cooperative relationship and joint use of facilities for such uses as recreation.

The second part of this chapter addresses the privately owned utilities providing electrical power, natural gas, telephone service, cellular phone service, and television cable. These utilities are regulated by a complex system of state and federal laws and administrative procedures, which are briefly described. Future facility plans are identified.

The goals and policies focus on ways to better coordinate among the private utilities and the local governments. They emphasize the City's interest in placing utilities underground whenever practical. They advocate consideration of

potential effects from electromagnetic fields (EMF) whenever Puget Power expands its system.

## **Chapter Six: Transportation**

The road we are traveling today leads to Los Angeles. We are driving more miles and we are driving more often. We drive because houses are getting farther away from where we work and both are farther away from where we shop. After a while, spread out building patterns become sprawl. We become even more dependent on cars and end up widening our roads.

In today's transportation system, traffic is funneled onto a small number of existing roads. Widening those roads moves more traffic quickly at first, but congestion and complicated intersections eventually slow the pace. Current subdivision and roadway design isolates those people who are without cars. Four-lane and six-lane roads discourage people from walking or riding a bicycle. Sprawl also means that rapid transit and other alternatives to cars become too expensive to build and operate. Once built, road systems require the commitment of public funds for upkeep and maintenance. Sidewalks are built and not very well used. Over time, we will have fully committed to a cars-only transportation system and it will become more difficult and costly to make another choice.

This Plan paints a different future for our transportation system. It is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), recently adopted by the Thurston Regional Planning Council. The RTP sets a goal of decreasing drive-alone commuters from the present 85 percent to 60 percent of all commuters by the year 2010.

To accomplish this goal, the Plan identifies ways to provide more opportunities and support for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and car/vanpoolers. It suggests strategies for education, incentives and disincentives, to encourage alternatives to drive-alone commuting.

Consistent with Chapter One, Land Use and Urban Design, the Transportation chapter

emphasizes development and redevelopment in the Downtown and along major arterials. These are referred to as High Density Residential Corridors. They are intended to become dense areas with a mix of activities, where people can live, work, and shop within walking distance. Other policies also apply. More vehicle congestion would be tolerated in these areas; wherever possible, rather than widening streets to favor autos, they would be kept narrow to favor pedestrians. The City would spend more money on sidewalks, street trees, other pedestrian connections, and support services for bike and transit riders.

Throughout the City and its Growth Area, the Plan defines an arterial network of many two-lane roads to carry cross-town traffic, rather than a few very large arterials. This provides more options for transit routes, as well as bicycle and pedestrian travel. It also is less expensive than a network based on large arterials, even though it can carry the same volume of traffic.

The Plan also connects neighborhoods with one another with a network of small local streets. New street design standards are proposed: make street pavement as narrow as possible; and require sidewalks, landscaping, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting on all new streets.

The Plan also calls for preserving rail right-of-way to allow future high capacity transportation options. Finally, it favors consideration of trolleys in the city center and in close-in areas with higher densities.

## **Chapter Seven: Parks, Arts and Recreation** (Ordinance #6276, 09/23/03)

This chapter integrates key elements of Olympia's Parks, Arts, and Recreation Plan (2002) into the Olympia Comprehensive Plan to ensure the congruency of these planning documents. It first sets the context for park planning. It describes the requirements of the Growth Management Act and the County-Wide Planning Policies. It notes the connections between this chapter and the urban

design principles in Chapter One. It discusses how good park service helps a city sustain its quality of life.

Then the chapter identifies our goals and policies for parks, arts, and recreation under three broad categories:

- Park Facilities and Management
- Arts Program Management; and
- Recreation Programs Management.

Next it lists our current park and recreation system inventory. How many neighborhood parks, community parks, public open space areas, and other facilities do we have?

To develop a park system that will meet our goals and achieve our vision, it is desirable to set target outcomes so that, as the population grows, we have park standards to help forecast needs. How much park land do we need per thousand population? Where are we now deficient? Where will we need new parks in the future? A needs assessment and target outcomes are included that identify the park and recreation facilities that are required to serve projected demand.

Next, the chapter assesses our existing Arts and Recreation Programs and describes the opportunities and challenges of providing quality programming to Olympia's growing population.

The chapter concludes with an enhanced Implementation section, outlining strategic priorities and a sequence of land acquisition and development for Plan implementation from 2003 through 2025.

The Parks, Arts and Recreation Chapter is the same as the previous plan in some ways, but different in many others. Significant changes and additions to the chapter include:

1. Adding a Parks, Arts and Recreation "vision," that expands upon "*Olympia's Future Vision*," depicted in the Plan Overview;

2. Including new sections covering Olympia's Arts and Recreation programs;
3. Identifying "Target Outcomes" rather than establishing Levels of Service for parks and recreation facilities;
4. Reorganizing the PAR (Parks, Arts & Recreation) Goals and Policies Section, and adding new Goals and Policies for the Arts and Recreation programs;
5. Proposing and "Open Space Network" consisting of Open Space Areas, Trail Greenways and Trail Corridors;
6. Providing strategic priorities for implementing the "Land-Emphasis" Approach;
7. Incorporating a new "Facilities Plan Map," and including a Prioritized Park Project List.

## Chapter Eight: Energy

Society spends a lot of money on energy. Most of these dollars leave town--some even leave the country. The community is better off if these dollars can stay in the local economy and be spent on other goods and services. Besides, the energy we waste is the cheapest energy we can buy."

In 1979, state legislation added energy conservation and solar access protection to the list of permitted optional elements to local comprehensive plans. This chapter looks at what Olympia can and should do regarding energy conservation. First we analyze the sectors of energy demand and the types of uses in each sector. Then we set out goals and policies on the wise use of energy.

The transportation sector is the largest user of energy in Thurston County. We can affect transportation energy use in several ways: (1) by encouraging compact urban development rather than sprawl; (2) by encouraging transit, car pooling, walking, bicycling, and other alternatives to driving alone; and (3) by using traffic engineering to make traffic flow more smoothly and efficiently.

The residential sector is our next largest energy user. Home heating uses the most energy and hot water the second most. Energy-efficient building construction and using solar energy can cut energy use dramatically. This can be accomplished with a combination of actions through the building code, zoning and subdivision codes, and education.

The industrial and commercial sectors can also benefit from conservation measures. Advances in lighting technology can cut office energy use. So can improvements in building design and construction.

The City and other institutional users are but a small part of the picture, but they are highly visible. They can promote energy conservation by practicing it themselves in the operation of their own buildings and vehicle fleets. They can also provide public education.

The supply of energy in Olympia is heavily dependent on outside sources. However, some energy sources do exist which can be promoted at the local level. These include solar and recycling.

## **Chapter Nine: Historic Preservation**

This chapter briefly retells Olympia's history, showing how early patterns of development shaped the Olympia we know today. It also takes a look at each of our historic residential neighborhoods. Some of our most notable historic homes are highlighted. It describes the City's historic preservation programs. Finally, it states goals and policies for historic preservation.

The policies emphasize the importance of preserving our outstanding views. They call for the City to foster neighborhood pride by preserving our historic identity. The work of the Heritage Commission is supported, as it promotes preservation and teaches people how to rehabilitate properties. The policies call for zoning to be compatible with historic preservation. They call for continued use of property tax benefits and building code mitigations for historic properties.

Finally, this chapter identifies other City documents that address historic preservation.

## **Chapter Ten: Urban Forestry**

There are cities whose reputation for attractiveness and livability rests heavily on the abundance of "stately trees" and "tree-lined streets." This chapter sets our vision for becoming such a "City of Trees." It describes the importance of trees to the quality of our daily lives and to the economic health of our community.

The goals and policies encourage the use of trees to strengthen our sense of community identity and to buffer and separate incompatible land uses. They encourage tree planting along our entry and exit corridors. They emphasize the importance of planting and retaining trees downtown. They recommend establishing on-going educational activities in urban forestry. They recommend greater sensitivity to tree protection during development. The policies recognize the important economic value of trees. They also focus on the value of the urban forest for its contribution to wildlife habitat and recreation, its contribution to healthy neighborhoods, and its effect on energy use.

Finally, there is a set of recommendations for an Urban Forestry Resource Management Program. The purpose of the Program is to establish regulations, educational programs, volunteer tree planting, improved internal coordination, and other actions to accomplish our vision for Olympia as a "City of Trees."

## **Chapter Eleven: Housing**

The Housing Chapter is a new section in this Comprehensive Plan as required by the State Growth Management Act. It acknowledges that communities have not been meeting the housing needs of all their citizens and that adequate and affordable housing is critical to a healthy community.

The first housing goal is to meet the current and future needs for housing. Variation in the type, location, and cost of housing increases housing choices for the full range of incomes and households in the City and its Growth Area. Affordable housing means that housing should cost no more than 30 percent of gross household income. Local housing and income statistics show that finding affordable housing is becoming a challenge for more and more people. Incomes are not keeping pace with housing costs.

Providing for the changing housing needs of a changing population is the second goal. It acknowledges the changing demographics of this area where households are getting smaller and where less than a third of our households have children living in them. More people are living alone and are living longer. Many prefer to live in condominiums or townhouses to be free of the maintenance requirements of a detached house. The Plan provides support for:

- Building smaller houses on smaller lots;
- Allowing manufactured housing on individual lots and in manufactured housing subdivisions throughout the City and its Growth Area;
- Allowing accessory units (a second unit in an existing house or a separate smaller unit adjacent to an existing house);
- Accommodating Olympia's fair share of low income housing needs in the region; and
- Encouraging mixed use developments with housing and commercial uses in the same building or in close proximity to one another.

The third housing goal identifies the need to provide housing for people with special needs such as low income households, the

developmentally disabled, the frail elderly and the homeless. To do this the City and County will work together, and with other cities, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, private businesses and nonprofit organizations. This goal points out the importance of expanding housing opportunities near essential services, work places and transportation services. Good access and mobility for low and moderate income households reduces the need to own multiple vehicles and helps us reach other transportation and environmental goals in the Plan.

## **Chapter Twelve: Public Involvement**

Healthy communities face their challenges through vigorous and open public discussion. Without the successful participation of citizens in community decision processes, it is all too easy to descend into political gridlock when struggling with difficult problems.

This chapter identifies the City's goals and policies for public involvement in City decision processes. It commits to support for neighborhood organizations and other groups as a way to help citizens participate. It commits to broad dissemination of information via publications, direct mail, the media, and other opportunities. It calls for the development of public participation plans for major projects or decision processes, using a variety of outreach techniques besides hearings. It identifies the basic procedures for amending the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, it calls for the City to work with neighborhood groups to monitor the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan and develop proposals for capital projects to meet neighborhood needs, to be incorporated into future Capital Facilities Plans.

## **VOLUME THREE: CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN (CFP)**

According to the Growth Management Act, Olympia and Thurston County must provide

adequate urban facilities and services to meet the need for all current development and future growth within their planning areas. These facilities and services provide a clear framework for urban development and are important management tools that direct the location and intensity of future growth. The CFP ties together planning for transportation, parks and open space, utilities, and other urban facilities to ensure a high quality of life for citizens of Olympia and its Growth Area.

The CFP balances facilities needs against Comprehensive Plan requirements, level of service standards, and available funding resources. The CFP is the mechanism that implements and reinforces the community vision as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan and other vision documents. The CFP is a planning document that integrates capital improvements from all funding sources into one comprehensive, six-year program with construction and funding schedules.

A capital facility is defined as a structure, improvement, piece of equipment, or other major asset having a useful life of at least five years. Level of service standards have been established for streets, parks and recreation facilities, utilities, and various other City facilities and services. However, concurrency (ensuring adequate public facilities are available when the impacts of development occur) is only required at this time for streets. The Growth Management Act requires a moratorium on new development in their respective jurisdictions if Olympia or Thurston County fail to maintain street facilities concurrent with growth.

The key limiting factor of capital facilities planning is always the amount of money available to actually pay for the projects. When funding shortfalls occur the following options or contingencies are available to consider: increase revenues, decrease the cost of the facility, decrease the level of service standard, and several other considerations. The end result must be a **balanced** CFP.

The goals and policies of the Capital Facilities Plan address the following general topics:

- Providing needed public facilities and services by annually developing a balanced six-year Capital Facilities Plan;
- Providing for existing capital facilities needs and facilities to serve future growth;
- Providing adequate funding for capital facilities; and
- Ensuring the CFP is current and responsive to the community vision and goals.

This Plan includes a detailed CFP for Olympia. It also includes that portion of the County CFP for those County-funded facilities within the Olympia Growth Area. Each facility in this combined CFP is identified as to whether it is a City project, a County project, or a joint one. Olympia has the final say over the Olympia CFP; Thurston County has the final say over the County one.

The Olympia CFP is ambitious, but achievable. It identifies major expenditures for a multi-modal transportation strategy; that is, major amounts would be spent not just on facilities for autos, but also on bikeways, sidewalks, and other facilities serving pedestrian and transit needs. The Olympia CFP includes street impact fees so that new growth will pay its own way. Even so, the intent is to accept higher congestion rather than spend endless amounts on roads. At the same time, funds will be doubled for street maintenance, to slow the deterioration of our existing network.

With higher densities for future development, improved park services are imperative. The Olympia CFP commits to substantially increased park acquisition to meet our future needs. The top priorities would be neighborhood parks, urban trails, and open space. Park impact fees would continue to be collected from new development. The park funding program would use general City revenues to buy parkland now to allow a high future standard of service, but actually develop most of the sites later, as growth occurs and funding permits.

To do all this will also require higher taxes in Olympia. The Olympia CFP includes both increases in the utility tax and putting bond propositions before the voters. Voters could choose whether to pay for park bonds, library bonds, public safety bonds, or all, or none.

The County CFP includes lower taxes and fewer facilities. Thurston County does not provide neighborhood parks; Olympia will fund such parks in the unincorporated Growth Area. Thurston County does provide trails, including a segment of the former Chehalis-Western railroad right-of-way in the Olympia Growth Area. The County CFP also identifies a number of road projects.

The CFP will be updated and adopted into the Comprehensive Plan along with the adoption of the operating budget in December each year. The Growth Management Act allows only one update annually. The first update will come in December of this year.

## **OLYMPIA'S FUTURE VISION**

This Comprehensive Plan makes some difficult choices. Our modern lifestyle based on suburban sprawl is not suitable for carrying us into the future. Accommodating more population within our City and its Growth Area means that the Olympia of tomorrow will be a higher density city than the Olympia of today. It will not be adequate merely to build higher density housing; we must take advantage of growth as a tool to reshape our community into a more sustainable form. In order to grow gracefully and remain a healthy and desirable community, tomorrow's higher-density must also be accompanied by improved amenities for urban life. It will be difficult to strike the right balance.

How we deal with these challenges today will determine what kind of city Olympia will be tomorrow. What is our vision for tomorrow?

*Olympia will be a showcase in the years to come, fulfilling its potential as the capital city of the*

*Evergreen State. This role will be reinforced by more pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, livable and affordable neighborhoods, safe and meaningful street life, and high-quality civic architecture.*

*Growth and change in Olympia and its Growth Area will be accommodated in a sustainable manner. A sustainable community is one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Decades of commitment to the philosophy of sustainability will pay off by maintaining Olympia's healthy environment, healthy economic base, and healthy social and cultural systems. The City will view every major decision in light of the consideration, "How will this affect not just us, today, but the next seven generations? And the next seven after that? Are we moving toward a pattern of living that can be sustained indefinitely?"*

*Our future city will be compact; in that respect Olympia's fine new neighborhoods will be a lot like our fine older neighborhoods. And they will be just as satisfying as places to live. People will still know their neighbors, talking over the back fence about kids, politics, gardening, sports. They will look out for each other; neighborhoods will still be safe places to raise our families, and good places to grow old.*

*Olympia neighborhoods will offer housing for people of all ages and incomes. The compact development pattern will make it easy and cost-effective to provide a high level of urban utilities and other services. We will also develop other strategies to keep housing costs affordable. Older neighborhoods will be rejuvenated as historic homes are renovated and attractive new homes and townhouses, apartments and condominiums replace deteriorating structures or are built on infill sites.*

*Historic resources will be valued and preserved. Historic buildings will be adapted to new uses, rather than bulldozed. New development next door will be designed to complement historic buildings, rather than clash with them. All our*

*citizens, young and old, will be able to see reminders of our community's heritage, and take pride in it.*

*Because our city will be compact, the rural areas outside it will still be rural, instead of being consumed by low density suburban development. The rural countryside will still be just minutes outside of town. Farmers will still raise animals and crops; many will still sell their products at the Farmers Market in Olympia.*

*Our future growth area will have a balance of types of development. There will be single-family homes, townhouses, apartments, commercial areas, and job centers. This balance and mix of uses will make it a lively and healthy community. People will be able to meet their daily needs close to home. This mix will also enhance the opportunities for people to walk, bicycle, or take transit to the places they go. This will minimize air pollution from cars.*

*New development will fit in comfortably with existing neighborhoods. The qualities of neighborhoods that brought people to live in them will be respected and protected. Even though some parts of the area will be set aside for the healthy bustle of commerce, residential areas will remain calm, buffered by natural features, landscaping, or other means.*

*Trees of all kinds and sizes will be growing in all parts of town. Evergreen trees will be a visual reminder of the special character of the Pacific Northwest. Deciduous trees will mark the seasons, connecting us visually with the passage of time. Their graceful branches will arch over busy thoroughfares and quiet residential streets. Shady areas in public places will welcome citizens on a summer's day and provide shelter from the rain. These trees will help ensure that this Olympia of the future will remain a most livable city.*

*Each neighborhood will contain a "center" that has service uses, a transit stop, and a neighborhood park or neighborhood common. All residences will be within a 15-minute walking*

*distance of the neighborhood center, so people can run errands in their own neighborhoods. Viewpoints from which the magnificent views of Mt. Rainier, the Olympics, and the Black Hills can be seen will be provided at various places throughout the city so that all citizens can appreciate Olympia's superb location.*

*With more people living in this area, there will be more traffic on the roads. But because there will be alternatives to the auto, traffic will not be unbearable. The auto will still be with us. But it will not dominate our community. Major roads will be designed to be more than just barren strips of asphalt, crowded with rushing cars and trucks. They will be stately tree-lined boulevards, proper entry-ways into our city and neighborhoods. Even most major roads will be two-lane facilities rather than four-, six-, or eight-lane monsters. The transportation network will rely on a larger number of small arterials rather than a small number of large ones.*

*Olympia will be known for healthy neighborhoods connected to one another by quiet, narrow streets with street trees, pedestrian-scale street lamps, and sidewalks on both sides. Residents will wander across them to drop in on neighbors. Our quiet residential streets will encourage neighborhood "block watch" programs, helping to prevent crime. Connected neighborhoods will be less isolated. There will be a greater sense of membership in the larger community. All our streets, large and small, will accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists in safety and comfort.*

*In addition, there will be a network of urban trails specifically for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists. People will be able to travel safely throughout the city without relying on the automobile, as well as to find a bit of the "country" at their doorstep. These trails will provide a variety of experiences in wooded areas, along shorelines, and in flat and hilly areas. They will link the neighborhoods with key destinations such as schools, parks, commercial areas, and centers of employment. This will contribute to reducing our dependence on the auto.*

*Although we are planning a city, it will be one that still respects nature. Not every corner of the city can support urban development. Places with critical environmental limitations--such as wetlands and steep, unstable slopes--will be off-limits to development. All development will incorporate appropriate measures to minimize environmental impacts. With environmental limitations directing our actions, new development also will be more cost-efficient than it otherwise would be.*

*Continual efforts to repair environmental damage from earlier development will also show great benefit. Improved stormwater management, improved sewage treatment, less-polluting vehicles, reduced garbage output per person, an ethic of resource conservation, and other advances will pay off. In spite of our increased population, Olympia's air and water will be cleaner than they are today. Seals, sea lions, orcas, and gray whales will roam the waters of southern Puget Sound in greater numbers than today.*

*The most important wildlife habitat areas will be preserved to maintain a biologically healthy diversity of species. Children will still find quiet places to hear the arguments of frogs around a pond at dusk, the rustle of the leaves of spring and the humming of insects' wings. On misty spring mornings deer will still stand silently at the edge of the woods. When the leaves turn golden, salmon will still return to the same shaded, rippling streams where they were born, to spawn and to die, as they have for thousands of years.*

*Providing parks in every neighborhood will help to awaken a new neighborhood spirit in Olympia. These parks will provide for both active and passive recreation, with playground equipment, basketball hoops, tennis courts, play areas, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, and shelters. There will be places for children and adults to play, and quiet places to just relax on a sunny day. They will become the focal point of every neighborhood.*

*Community parks will also be enhanced. Our centerpiece will be Heritage Park, envisioned in 1911 by the designers of the original Capitol Campus. Stretching from Budd Inlet to the Temple of Justice, it will be a unique memorial to the lands, waters and people of our great state. Percival Landing will be extended. At Priest Point Park, hikers will find new twisting trails around our evergreen giants; nature lovers will stroll through a botanical garden that rivals Seattle's Arboretum. Other sites will be developed as well. The historic Bigelow House will commemorate our own local history of settlement.*

*To meet the recreation demands of a growing population, the City will develop new ballfields and soccer fields. These facilities will accommodate league play, along with friendly church, office, and family leisure competition, and programs of individual family fitness. The Olympia School District, private groups, and the City will join together to improve recreation and education activities in neighborhood schools. In addition, an aquatic center and outdoor volleyball courts will be built. The Olympia Center will be a hub for arts and crafts, teenage leisure activities, educational programs and citizen meetings. (Ordinance #6276, 09/23/03)*

*Olympia will remain the business and economic center of the region. A bustling downtown area with tree-lined sidewalks in front of attractive shops and offices will provide a full range of urban services and activities. Visitors and residents alike will walk the tree-lined shores of Capitol Lake and the boardwalks of Percival Landing and admire the boats moored in the harbor. Shipping facilities in the Port, manufacturing in our industrial parks, and vigorous retail and medical services in other parts of the city and its Growth Area will add to our economic base.*

*Olympia's capital facilities (parks, roads, sidewalks, schools, etc.) will be planned in advance and integrated with development and redevelopment throughout the City and its Growth Area. Capital facilities will be phased in along with new development. This way new growth will*

*be accommodated without reducing the quality of service to existing residents.*

*Olympia will be an increasingly united community which solves problems through full communication and community decision-making. The City and County will be partners in Capitol Campus and Port decision-making. We will work closely with our neighbors--Tumwater, Lacey, and others--in implementing solutions to common problems. Neighborhood groups will take an intimate role in the planning and decision-making affecting their neighborhoods. Area-wide interest groups will be closely involved as well. Each segment of the community will understand the larger picture and help determine the best interests of the whole.*

This vision will not be achieved easily. It is an ambitious one. But if we work together--the public sector, neighborhood groups, businesses, individuals--with effort and dedication, we can achieve it. In fact, our vision is already emerging in the steps being taken by creative, farsighted people in our community.