

11. ROLE OF PARKS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN TOURISM

Comprehensive Plan policy PR1.1 regarding role of parks and community programs in attracting tourism and private investment to Olympia.

Summary of Comments

Delete the words “attract tourism and private investment to Olympia” in PR1.1: “Continue to provide extraordinary parks and community programs that attract tourism and private investment to Olympia, and contribute to our high quality of life.” Parks and recreation programs should primarily serve existing populations.

Council Direction of August 12, 2014

Councilmembers inquired whether tourism was addressed in the Economy chapter of the Plan. There was also a discussion about the fact that while neighborhood parks are primarily intended for local residents, community parks can serve as an important driver for tourism and private investment.

Staff Analysis

Tourism is indeed addressed in the Economy Chapter of the plan:

GE9 Tourism is a community revenue source.

PE9.1 Provide or support, services and facilities to help visitors enjoy our community's special events and unique character, and work to fully capture the potential economic benefits of their visits.

PE9.2 Continue to support efforts to restore, maintain and improve Olympia's local museums and other attractions.

PE9.3 Support continued tree plantings as a way to continually improve on Olympia's natural beauty and attractiveness to tourists - and to help create a network of scenic roadways and streets.

PE9.4 Implement strategies to enhance heritage tourism opportunities.

Policy PR1.1 as written implied that tourism was primary purpose of parks and community events. Some parks, such as Percival Landing Park, and some events, such as Arts Walk, may attract substantial numbers of visitors from outside Olympia with associated benefit for the local economy. Community parks such as Yauger and LBA, for example, host many weekend softball tournaments which result in players and families contributing to the local economy. In contrast some neighborhood parks function primarily to serve the local community. Proposed rewrite below would clarify that tourism is a secondary benefit of parks and community events and that primary focus is on direct community benefit.

Text of Public Hearing Draft

PR1.1 Continue to provide extraordinary parks and community programs that attract tourism and private investment to Olympia, and contribute to our high quality of life.

Staff Proposed Clarification

PR1.1 Continue to provide extraordinary parks and community programs that ~~attract tourism and private investment to Olympia, and contribute to our high quality of life~~ and attract tourism and private investment to Olympia.

Alternative(s)

None proposed