

## COMMUNITY VALUES AND VISION CHAPTER

### Community Values

Through extensive public participation in *Imagine Olympia*, members of the public have expressed the values they wish to see reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. These are distilled for each of the chapters in the Plan.

**Public Participation:** Olympia residents value meaningful, open, respectful, and inclusive dialogue as a shared responsibility to make our community a better place.

**Natural Environment:** Olympia residents value our role as stewards of the water, air, land, vegetation, and animals around us and our responsibility to our children, our children's children, and all life to restore, protect, and enhance our environmental birthright.

**Land Use:** Olympia residents value accommodating growth without sprawl and excessive reliance on automobiles; neighborhoods with distinct identities; historic buildings and places; a walkable and comfortable downtown; increased urban green space; local production of food; and public spaces for citizens in neighborhoods, downtown, and along shorelines.

**Transportation:** Olympia residents value moving people and goods through the community in a manner that is safe, minimizes environmental impacts, enhances connectivity, conserves energy, and promotes healthy neighborhoods.

**Utilities:** Olympia residents value a water supply under the ownership and control of the City, effective treatment of wastewater and stormwater prior to discharge to the Puget Sound, and the role that reuse, reduction and recycling plays in conserving energy and materials.

**Public Health, Parks, Arts and Recreation Chapter:** Olympia residents value the role of parks, open space, and the arts to our physical, spiritual and emotional well-being and to our sense of community.

**Economy:** Olympia residents value our community's businesses as a source of family wage jobs, goods and services and recognize the importance of our quality of life to a healthy economy.

**Public Services:** Olympia residents value protection provided by police, fire, and emergency medical services, code enforcement to maintain neighborhood quality, adequate and affordable housing for all residents, and use of schools as community gathering places and recreational centers.

## Vision Statements

**Natural Environment:** Recognizing that gifts of nature define in large measure its greatness, Olympia works closely with the surrounding governments to preserve, protect and-restore our natural heritage.

A dense tree canopy throughout the City provides aesthetic, health, environmental, and economic benefits. Despite the increased population, Olympia's air and water are cleaner. Seals, sea lions, orcas, and otters roam the waters of southern Puget Sound. Wildlife habitat has been preserved to maintain a biologically healthy diversity of species. As a result, salmon return to the streams where they were born to spawn and to die.

**Land Use and Urban Design:** Pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, livable and affordable neighborhoods, safe and meaningful street life, and high-quality civic architecture have made Olympia a showcase, fulfilling its potential as the capital city of the Evergreen State. Olympia has collaborated with Tumwater and the Port of Olympia to make our urban waterfront a shared and priceless asset. This shoreline follows the Deschutes River from Tumwater's historic buildings, past Marathon and Heritage parks to Percival Landing and the Port Peninsula.

People walk throughout downtown, shop at its small businesses, enjoy its artistic offerings and gather at its many fine restaurants and meeting places. The historic Capitol Way boulevard linking the waterfront and downtown to the Capitol Campus invites and attracts residents to enjoy the City's civic space. Plazas, expanded sidewalks, and art in public places have stimulated private investment in residential development, which, in turn, has greatly increased downtown's retail and commercial vitality.

Olympia has established "urban nodes" characterized by higher density and mixed use development, walkability, transit feasibility and lower costs for urban services.

Infill projects and remodels help to meet the demands of population growth while creating more walkable communities. Older neighborhoods have been rejuvenated. Historic buildings are valued, preserved and adapted to new uses.

Olympia achieves its development and redevelopment goals through "sub-area planning." These plans determine where and how to increase density, how to retain green space, and how to enhance mobility. They assure safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life - grocery stores selling local products, schools, neighborhood parks, community gardens and neighborhood gathering places.

**Transportation:** Olympians, young and old, walk and bike to work, school, shopping, and recreation. Bike lanes and sidewalks are found on arterials and collectors throughout the city, many of them separated from vehicular traffic by a buffer. Pedestrians and bicyclists also use trails and pathways through open areas, between neighborhoods, and along shorelines.

Sidewalks in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods, including downtown, are filled with walkers who stop at small shops and squares in lively centers near their homes. Trees lining the streets and awnings on storefronts provide comfort and protection for walkers. Nearly all residents are within easy walking distance of a transit stop.

Most people commute to work on foot, bicycle, transit, or carpool. Those who drive to work do so in small vehicles fueled by renewable resources. Comfortable electric buses arrive every ten minutes at bus stops along all major arterials.

Parking lots are located on the edges of downtown, hidden from view by storefronts and office space. Convenient short-term bike parking for visitors/shoppers and long-term bike parking for employees is found onsite or near all developments. Large areas of the parking lots are devoted to secure bicycle parking. Street faces are no longer broken up by surface parking lots.

Variable pricing of street meters and off-street lots ensure that street spaces are available for downtown shoppers and visitors, while workers who car-commute makes use of the off-street lots.

Driving lanes throughout town are not excessively wide and streets provide room for bike lanes and parking and slow down traffic. System efficiencies demand management and intersection improvements allow smooth traffic flow.

Due to slower speeds, frequent safe crossings, and well-managed intersections, deaths and serious injuries from car/pedestrian and car/bicycle collisions have dropped to almost zero.

**Utilities:** Olympia has been able to meet the water needs of an increased population through increased water use efficiency, conservation based rates, and use of reclaimed water. As a result of the improved treatment and reduction of wastewater and stormwater prior to discharge, Budd Inlet and our streams support increased aquatic life.

A majority of Olympia households use urban organic compost on their landscapes. Artificial fertilizers no longer contaminate local water bodies.

State and national packaging standards and local solid waste incentives reduce the volume of materials in Olympia requiring landfill disposal.

**Public Health, Parks, Arts and Recreation:** Parks and other public open space in every neighborhood play a key role in maintaining our health. The Olympia School District works with the City to allow maximum feasible public use of School District gyms and playgrounds.

The School District, local and state health agencies and the City provide programs to encourage good nutrition. These programs complement the City regulations to encourage both urban agriculture and markets for sale of local and regional produce.

Olympia has continually expanded and upgraded the bicycle facility network and has witnessed major increases in bike use for both commuting and recreation. The City has provided separated bike facilities on selected streets where there are high levels of use or potential conflict with motorized traffic.

All neighborhoods have sidewalks on at least one side of major collector streets. This, together with continued pedestrian crossing improvements and neighborhood pathways, use of traffic calming devices and enforcement of traffic laws, contributes to the dramatic increase of walking in Olympia.

The City sponsors and supports music and art events and festivals. These attract widespread involvement of Olympia residents and residents of surrounding communities. The City takes advantage of provisions in state law to fund art throughout the City.

**Economy:** The Olympia economy is stable in relation to the economies of comparable cities throughout the state and region. The City's investment in the downtown has led to many specialty or boutique stores. Regional shopping nodes, such as Capital Mall, provide high-density housing and easier transit and pedestrian access.

Young entrepreneurs, attracted by the amenities of the City and its open and accepting culture, have created new businesses and helped existing businesses expand.

The increased commercial activity and the number of small start-ups have diversified the job market and the economy, making it less vulnerable to downturns in state government employment.

Continued expansion of small farms at the urban fringe and local food producers provide additional diversity in local employment and reduces the vulnerability of local residents to the rising cost of imported food.

**Public Services:** The City has assured that all residents have achieved their basic housing needs by adopting "affordable" housing program criteria. One consequence has been the virtual disappearance of homelessness. This, in turn, has reduced the cost of City police and social services and has made the downtown more attractive for commercial activity. The City's diverse housing typology accommodates the needs of young adults, middle class families, and aging populations.

Within each neighborhood, a strong code enforcement program has assured the protection of the distinct identity of all neighborhoods. Code enforcement emerges from citizen and neighborhood involvement.