

Memo

Project: Hands On Children's Museum Expansion
Project #: 2524900
Subject: Presubmission Conference Narrative
Date: 03/09/26
Attachments: Preliminary Site Plan, Preliminary Utility Plan, Vicinity Map

This narrative references Olympia Shoreline Master Program Narrative from 8/14/2025. It addresses 4 themes:

- Water Enjoyment – how the project celebrates and engages with the water
- Public Access & Design – how visitors experience the shoreline visually/physically
- Environmental Protection & Stormwater – how impacts are mitigated
- Shoreline Master Program Consistency

The Hands On Children's Museum expansion is consistent with the City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program as a public-serving water-enjoyment use that enhances visual access to the shoreline environment of Budd Inlet while supporting environmental protection of adjacent marine resources. The project builds on the museum's existing maritime and marine ecology programming by strengthening the visual and educational connection between visitors and the Puget Sound environment. Architectural design elements, including a pedestrian "pier" connection between the existing and proposed buildings and interior spaces oriented toward the water, reinforce this relationship while maintaining responsible stormwater management and landscape strategies that protect shoreline water quality.

The Hands On Children's Museum expansion supports the intent of the City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program (SMP) by providing a water-enjoyment use that enhances public awareness, appreciation, and visual connection to the shoreline environment of Budd Inlet while incorporating design strategies that protect water quality and shoreline ecological functions.

The existing museum already maintains a strong thematic relationship to Olympia's maritime setting and the Puget Sound ecosystem. Through interactive exhibits such as the schooner play structure, lighthouse feature, and Snug Harbor exhibit, the museum introduces young visitors to nautical navigation, working waterfront traditions, and the ecological systems of the Puget Sound. These exhibits create opportunities for children and families to explore the region's relationship to the water while fostering an early understanding of marine ecology and environmental stewardship.

The proposed expansion continues and strengthens this water-oriented educational mission through both architecture and site design. The new building will be connected to the existing museum by a pedestrian bridge designed to evoke the structure and character of a maritime pier. This architectural element reinforces the nautical identity of the museum while creating a physical and visual experience that extends toward the shoreline environment. As visitors move between the existing and new buildings, the bridge element reinforces the sense of approaching the water and engaging with Olympia's waterfront context.

The design of the addition also prioritizes visual access to Budd Inlet and the surrounding shoreline landscape. Building orientation, glazing, and interior public spaces frame views toward the water and shoreline environment, allowing visitors to maintain a visual connection to Budd Inlet throughout their experience in the museum. These views reinforce the educational mission

of the facility by situating exhibits about maritime history and marine ecology within direct sight of the shoreline environment they interpret.

As a regional destination serving families, school groups, and visitors, the museum provides a public-serving recreational and educational use that is consistent with shoreline policies encouraging water-enjoyment uses. These uses allow the public to experience and learn about shoreline environments without requiring direct physical access to the shoreline itself. Recreational and educational uses that promote awareness and appreciation of shoreline resources are supported within the Shoreline Master Program because they strengthen public connection to the shoreline while maintaining protection of shoreline ecological functions.

Environmental protection measures are also incorporated into the project design. Stormwater from the site will be managed in accordance with the City of Olympia Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS), including treatment and flow control measures designed to protect water quality prior to discharge. Landscape improvements will incorporate native and climate-appropriate plantings that support infiltration, soil stability, and habitat value while minimizing irrigation demand.

During construction, erosion and sediment control best management practices will be implemented to prevent sediment or construction-related pollutants from entering nearby drainage systems or shoreline waters. These measures will protect Budd Inlet and the surrounding shoreline environment during site development.

Through the integration of water-oriented educational programming, architecture that reinforces maritime themes, design strategies that prioritize visual access to Budd Inlet, and stormwater and landscape measures that protect environmental quality, the Hands On Children's Museum expansion is consistent with the goals and policies of the City of Olympia Shoreline Master Program. The project enhances public understanding and enjoyment of Olympia's shoreline environment while ensuring that shoreline ecological functions and water quality are protected.

City employees the team has previously worked with on this project include:

- Jim Rioux, Project Manager, Public Works Engineering
- Jeff Johnstone, City Engineer
- Eli Cole, Facility Manager
- Ira Lomon, Facility Operations Supervisor
- Jimmy Grostick, Assistant Fire Marshal, Olympia Fire Department
- Staff from a Preliminary Permitting Discussion on 12/10/25
 - Paula Smith, Associate Planner
 - Tim Smith
 - Nicole Floyd
 - Brittany Gillia
 - Tiffani King
 - Erik Jenkin
 - Jeffrey Finch
 - Brittney George