

# Land Use and Urban Design



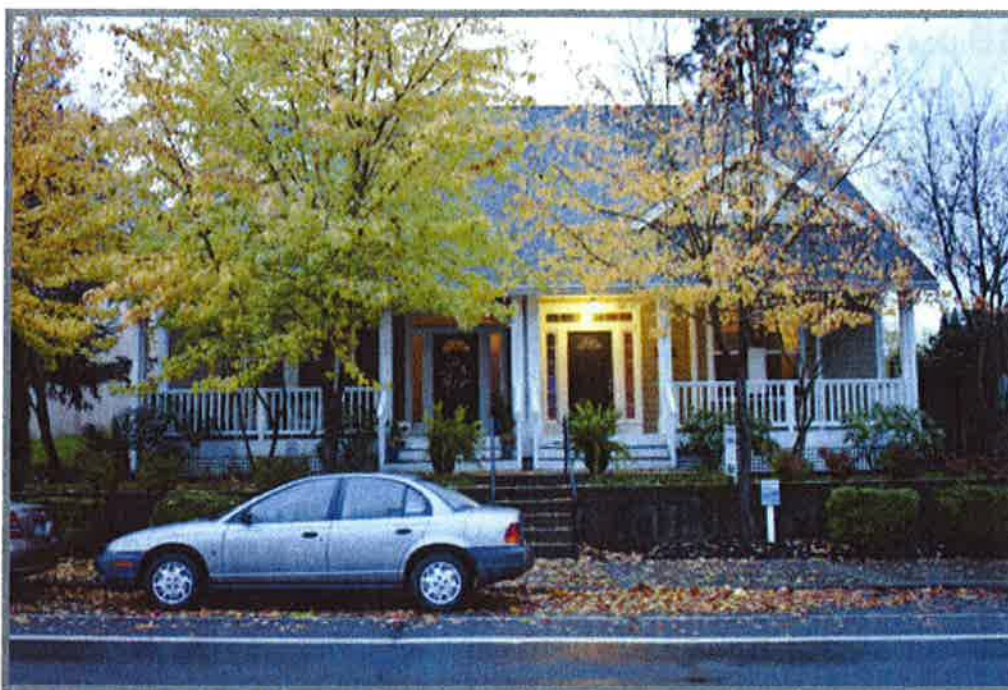
Aerial view of Olympia's west side near the Harrison Avenue roundabout

Our community's future will be shaped by the land and environment, local and global population and economic trends, state planning laws and county-wide policies, and especially by community preferences and choices. How we choose to live within and how we alter our landscape is critical to our quality of life, and to whether that quality of life can be sustained and improved. We can choose to isolate land uses and neighborhood, or blend them into a single vital community. We can create spaces separated by long travel distances, or provide for a variety of experiences in each part of the city. We can choose to use land efficiency for recreation, housing, and business while setting aside selected areas for open space and communing with nature, or we can create homogenous subdivisions and isolated commercial areas. We can employ architecture and distinct urban forms consistent with Olympia's unique character, or we can build places with little regard to the local landscape and climate. These choices will determine Olympia's form for many generations.

The State's Growth Management Act calls for Olympia to establish land use designations and densities sufficient for at least 20 years. [County-Wide Planning Policies](#) adopted by Thurston County and the seven cities describe a common goal of concentrating growth in the urban areas "in ways that ensure livability, preservation of environmental quality and open space, varied and affordable housing, high quality urban services at least cost, and orderly transition of land from County to City."

Our community seeks to:

- Encourage infilling in urban areas where public services and facilities are present
- Phase urban development and facilities outward from the downtown area
- Establish land use patterns that ensure residential densities sufficient to accommodate 20-year population growth
- Focus higher residential densities downtown, along urban corridors, and near neighborhood centers
- Employ innovative development techniques that create a better community



A new duplex on the fringe of downtown Olympia.

Olympia's Urban Design Vision and Strategy and sustainable community philosophy provided additional direction for this chapter. The sustainability policies call for us to consider the long-range implications of our land use decisions and to provide for a pattern of development that can be sustained and enjoyed by future generations. Mixed-use 'villages' and opportunities for residential development in commercial areas serve increasing densities by blending land uses. By enabling less reliance on automobiles; providing for compact development that requires less land and can be cost-effectively served by streets, utilities, and services; and by establishing development densities and site designs that protect environmentally sensitive areas and reflect the capacity of natural systems, we can provide a quality community for coming generations.

We envision:

- Spaces that are safe and pedestrian-friendly
- Development that minimizes or mitigates harm to the environment
- Densities and land use types consistent with many modes of transportation
- Places for quiet residential uses, and places where economic activity is emphasized
- Planning for walkable neighborhoods with centers and identity
- Development that complements the historic character of the community
- Recognition of the importance of lands near water
- A Plan-consistent process for exploring the unique possibilities of each area with attention given to Downtown, the Westside core area, the eleven planning 'subareas,' and other special geographic areas within the community

The focus here is on 'built' land uses such as housing and commercial structures and development patterns. Complementary parks, open spaces and natural areas are addressed in the City Vitality and Natural Environment chapters. These land uses cannot be isolated from economic topics, and employment in particular, addressed by the Economy chapter. Facilities and services to support this urban development pattern, including the critical transportation system, are described in the Transportation, Utilities, and Services chapters. In many cases the special area plans described in this chapter will touch on all of those topics and more.

The City of Olympia, in cooperation with Thurston County, plays a major role in determining the location, intensity, and form of land uses in the community. This chapter addresses the proposed uses of land in

Olympia's Urban Growth Area and the design and locations of buildings and other structures within that landscape. It includes:

- The location and quantity of those land uses and their relation to each other
- The functional design of those land uses including buildings and surrounding spaces
- The aesthetic form of the built environment

**CHANGE:**

Future Land Use Map amended by aggregating 34 categories into 14 with less definite boundaries. Result would be that zoning is more flexible and more detailed land use decisions will be made when zoning is adopted or amended. Note: High-Rise Multi-family category deleted because it was all within Heritage Park.

**CHANGE:**

Capitol Campus/Commercial Services - High Density deleted. Henderson Park development site at interchange changed to General Commercial (this was only private property in the designation) and Capitol Campus designated a planned development; the two Professional Office blocks near Justice Center added to City Center. Light industry on South Bay Road changed to Auto Services; Industry designation of LOTT wastewater treatment facility changed to Urban Waterfront.

The Future Land Use Map shows the approximate locations for a variety of land uses in Olympia's Urban Growth Area. This map is not a zoning map. Rather it provides guidance for zoning and other regulations to ensure uses of land and development consistent with this Plan. Although these map lines are approximate, all future land uses should be consistent with the intent of this map and the land use category descriptions in Appendix A as well as the goals and policies of this Plan. In general, zoning and land uses should not deviate from the Future Land Use Map boundaries by more than about 200 feet. Compatible and supporting land uses, such as parks, schools, churches, public facilities and utilities, streets and similar features, are expected within these areas. See map below regarding acreages, densities, and building heights of each use category.

[View Future Land Use Map of Olympia and its Urban Growth Area](#)

- Chart In Progress: Land Use districts and zones associated with each Future Land Use Map designation.

The community employs regulations, such as zoning, design review, stormwater, engineering, building, and subdivision standards, to ensure that new development conforms to the goals and policies described in this chapter. The regulations are administered by City staff and a Hearing Examiner selected by the City Council. Equally important to this land use and design vision is capital facility planning and construction by the City of Olympia and other public agencies of the area. Continuing cooperation between the State and the City, among the local governments, and with special function agencies such as the Port of Olympia and the school districts is critical. And, as envisioned, substantial resources and the support of everyone in the community will be needed to focus more detailed efforts in neighborhoods and other special places.

## General Land Use and Design

To achieve our vision of Olympia while accommodating our share of the region's population, we need to plan for quantity at the same time as we pursue quality. Such a community is one in which pattern and mix of land uses supports healthy lifestyles, such as walking to nearby services instead of driving. We need to consider the implications of climate change, and how we can minimize our community's contribution. We must be prepared to adapt our built environment to changing resource availability. And, at the same time, we need to consider the character of Olympians today, and those of the future. The needs and interests of a more diverse, more urban, and generally older population will differ from those of today.



During the last 50 years Olympia's land use pattern has gradually changed from a port-oriented community with a central business district and compact single-family neighborhoods to a more suburban pattern with commercial development outside of downtown and lower density neighborhoods with fewer street connections. Over the next 20 years, as Olympia becomes a more urban place, the pattern of land use and design of urban areas must be modified to accommodate the expanding population while retaining our city's character and heritage.

View Map - Olympia has gradually expanded from a central core on Budd Inlet

This Plan envisions gradually increasing densities in Olympia accompanied by attractive streets and buildings arranged for the convenience of pedestrians. The location, mix and relationship of land uses to each other and to our streets will be crucial as will be the character of commercial and residential areas, parks, and open spaces. The Plan envisions new development that will reinforce the community's identity, urban design preferences, and historic form. Selected major streets will gradually transform into attractive, higher density, mixed residential and commercial "urban corridors" with frequent transit service.

Housing will be available within and near shopping and employment areas. Development will be carefully designed to integrate with the adjacent transportation system, and with key features such as downtown and the hospitals. Neighborhoods and commercial areas will gradually be woven together into a cohesive urban fabric. The "ten-minute" neighborhoods will provide ready-access from homes to supporting business, and to parks, schools and other gathering places.

The relationship between the transportation system and other land uses plays a key role in urban life. The Transportation chapter addresses the specific design of streets, such as the number of travel lanes, the presence of bike lanes, transit pull-outs, pedestrian amenities, street trees, and sidewalks. The relationship of these street features to adjacent land uses, the location and supply of parking, and the proximity of buildings to the street is critical to the experience and choices of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists. Thus, to integrate the streets and trails with adjacent uses, development must be carefully designed to integrate with the adjacent transportation system. Details must be suited to all users and to the form of the street. For example, major building entrances must face or be conveniently reached from streets, rather than parking lots.

In addition to private activities, such as homes, businesses and industry, some of the lands within the City will be used for public purposes and facilities. Although some of such lands are identified in this Plan, such as the locations of future streets, other specific needs are identified in more detailed planning documents of the City, such as the Water System Plan which identifies utility's need for new water tank sites. Olympia works with Thurston County and other local agencies to identify areas of shared need for public facilities.

The purpose of the goals and policies below is to direct land use patterns, densities, and design standards which:

- Reflect the community's urban design vision
- Maintain or improve the character of established neighborhoods
- Provide for a variety of transportation alternatives
- Provide people with opportunities to live close to work
- Create desirable, livable neighborhoods with a variety of housing opportunities, different lifestyles and income levels, and a sense of community
- Provide for a compact growth pattern
- Promote energy efficiency
- Reflect the land's physical and environmental capability
- Provide space for parks, open spaces, and other community facilities
- Protect valued views and features of the community's landscape

**Land use patterns, densities and site designs support decreasing automobile reliance.**

**PL1.1** Ensure that new development is built at urban densities or can be readily modified to achieve those densities; and require that development lacking municipal utility service be designed to cost-effectively transform when services become available.

**PL1.2** Focus development in areas that enhance the community and have capacity and efficient supporting services, and where adverse environmental impacts can be avoided or minimized.

**PL1.3** Direct high density development to areas with existing development where the terrain is conducive to walking, bicycling and transit use and sensitive drainage basins will not be impacted.

**CHANGE:**

New policy.

**PL1.4** Require functional, efficient and sustainable development by adopting and periodically updating zoning consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

**PL1.5** Require development to meet appropriate minimum standards such as landscaping and design guidelines, stormwater and other engineering standards, and buildings codes; and require existing development to be gradually improved to such standards.

**PL1.6** Provide for a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in commercial districts and village sites that enables people to walk to work and shopping, supports transit, and includes convenience businesses for residents. Integrate adjacent uses with walkways and bike paths leading from residential areas to commercial districts and neighborhood-oriented businesses.

**PL1.7** Enable frequent transit service, utilize existing infrastructure, provide public improvements and concentrate new major shopping, entertainment and office uses downtown, in the medical services area of Lilly Road, near the Capital Mall, and in the urban corridors.

**PL1.8** Buffer incompatible industrial, commercial and residential uses by requiring landscaped buffers or transitional uses, such as plazas, offices, or heavily landscaped parking; use natural buffers where possible and require clustering where warranted.

**PL1.9** Require direct and convenient pedestrian access from streets, bus stops and parking lots to commercial and public buildings; and encourage provision of sheltered seating and infilling of vacant sections of the street edge.

**PL1.10** Require sidewalk awnings or other weather protection on new and substantially remodeled buildings, in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas.

**PL1.11** Require businesses along transit routes to accommodate transit use by including building entrances near bus stops or other features such as transit shelters or on-site bus access.

**PL1.12** Encourage display windows, small shops with separate entrances, and plazas with seating and other well-landscaped gathering spaces in major commercial projects.

**CHANGE:**

Former policy encouraged bike parking in commercial areas, but did not require bike parking.

**PL1.13** Require new, and encourage existing, businesses to provide bicycle parking.

### **Land Use Patterns and Building Forms Determine Whether Energy is Used Efficiently**

Land use patterns and development influence energy use and consumption. Blending of residential units with work places promotes energy efficiency. Higher densities contribute to the success of bus systems. Higher densities close to offices and commercial districts help reduce fuel consumption by reducing overall commuter and shopper mileage. In contrast, suburban densities and sprawl result in spending a lot of time and energy on transportation.

With a more compact development pattern and other transportation improvements, Thurston County's percentage of drive-alone commuters can be reduced from 85 to 60 percent. Park-and-ride lots, vanpooling, ridesharing and flexible work schedules can help reduce the number of vehicle miles and congestion. Both the public and private sectors can encourage transit use by offering bus passes and other incentives to employees. Over a decade or two we could accomplish a 10-15 percent energy savings from more use of transit and similar types of transportation. A well-laid-out transportation system will also aid in conserving energy. Smoother traffic flows can increase vehicle efficiency by up to five percent. Provisions for pedestrian and bicycle traffic can promote use of these energy saving means of commuting.

The primary residential use of energy is for space-heating. Thus, strengthening building code requirements for energy efficiency is an effective way to reduce energy consumption. When combined with appropriate insulation levels, solar energy can meet half the heating needs of a home in Olympia. Effective layout of subdivisions can also increase energy efficiency by allowing for solar access and protection from winter winds. Public education on energy conservation promotes further reduction in consumption.

The competitive environment stimulates energy efficiency to reduce production costs. Thus the combined industrial and commercial sectors do not use as much energy as either the transportation or residential sectors. Local governments can influence industrial and commercial energy use through education and incentives.

The government sector is a very visible part of the energy picture and can set an example for efficient and conscientious energy use. Education in this sector includes both educating users, such as employees, and informing the public. Government buildings and equipment can be models of efficiency in the use of construction methods and materials, as well as utilizing efficient pumps, heating systems, and lighting. Government operations can also be models of use of alternative fuel sources and by encouraging non-motorized travel.

## **GL2**

### **Buildings, commercial and industrial processes, and site designs use energy efficiently.**

**PL2.1** Promote energy efficient construction and lighting, low-energy designs such as readily-accessible stairways as an alternative to elevator use, and weatherization including subsidizing materials for low-income citizens.

**PL2.2** Promote public education and provide energy conservation and solar and other renewable energy information in cooperation with local utilities and others.

**PL2.3** Encourage local ‘cogeneration’ of energy when environmentally sound and not in conflict with other land uses.

**PL2.4** Encourage buildings and site designs that result in energy efficiency and use of solar and other renewable energy.

**PL2.5** Support efforts to protect and use solar access.

## Urban Design and Built Form

Olympia’s Urban Design Vision and Strategy of 1991 identified the design and architectural desires and preferences of community residents. This study continues to provide guidance for this Comprehensive Plan and future development. The Vision and Strategy identified the types of development that citizens feel are appropriate and inappropriate for our community. Some of the images from the urban design vision are included in this chapter. People participating in the study particularly valued the waterfront, downtown, the Capitol Campus, the older established neighborhoods, and views to the Olympic Mountains and the Black Hills. They favored streets that provide an attractive, safe, and inviting place for pedestrians, as well as provide for efficient traffic flow. Specifically, they liked the portions of downtown where buildings form a continuous edge along the street, where it is interesting to walk, and where awnings protect people from the rain.

Further studies of Olympia and other communities indicate that including open space and appropriate landscaping within site designs improves developments by providing places for relaxing, restoration and outdoor activities in general. In particular trees provide a valuable public resource, enhance the quality of the environment, provide visual buffers and natural beauty, preserve the natural character of an area, and soften the impact of buildings and streets. Trees and other landscaping help reduce air pollution, noise and glare, provide cooling in summer and insulation in winter, and in some cases provide materials and food for wildlife and humans.

### CHANGE:

Formerly Parks Goal 1.

GL3

**Community beauty is combined with unique neighborhood identities.**

### CHANGE:

Design review extended to all commercial structures along public streets. Removed for projects adjacent to historic structures.

**PL3.1** Require highly visible development—such as commercial development adjacent to freeways and public streets, in urban corridors, downtown, and at the Port, and all housing except detached homes on conventionally-sized lots (5,000 square feet or larger) outside areas developed before WWII—to be designed to maintain or improve the character and livability of each area or neighborhood.

**PL3.2** Require commercial and residential buildings to face the street or a courtyard or other common area.

**PL3.3** Require multi-family housing to incorporate architectural forms and features common to nearby housing; to include porches, balconies, bay windows and similar details; to have entries oriented to streets or a courtyard, and include accessible open space; and to be reduced in size near lower density residential districts.

**PL3.4** Ensure that parking areas do not dominate street frontages nor interrupt pedestrian routes and are screened from single-family housing.

**PL3.5** Prohibit fences and walls that inhibit walking or isolate neighborhoods from streets, except to reduce noise, provide buffers, or create private rear yards.

**PL3.6** Create attractive entry corridors to the community and neighborhoods, especially downtown and along urban corridors; to include adopting design standards and installing significant special landscaping along community entry corridors.

**PL3.7** Enhance neighborhood identity by encouraging interested groups to beautify open spaces, streets and private property.

**PL3.8** Require that buildings complement and enhance their surroundings, appeal to and accommodate pedestrians, and facilitate transit use.

**CHANGE:**

Expanded from Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet to all water bodies.

**PL3.9** Preserve and enhance water view corridors by retaining public rights-of-way that abut or are within one block of water bodies and by not siting public buildings within associated view corridors.



Percival Landing is enjoyable to view and to enjoy the view.

**CHANGE:**

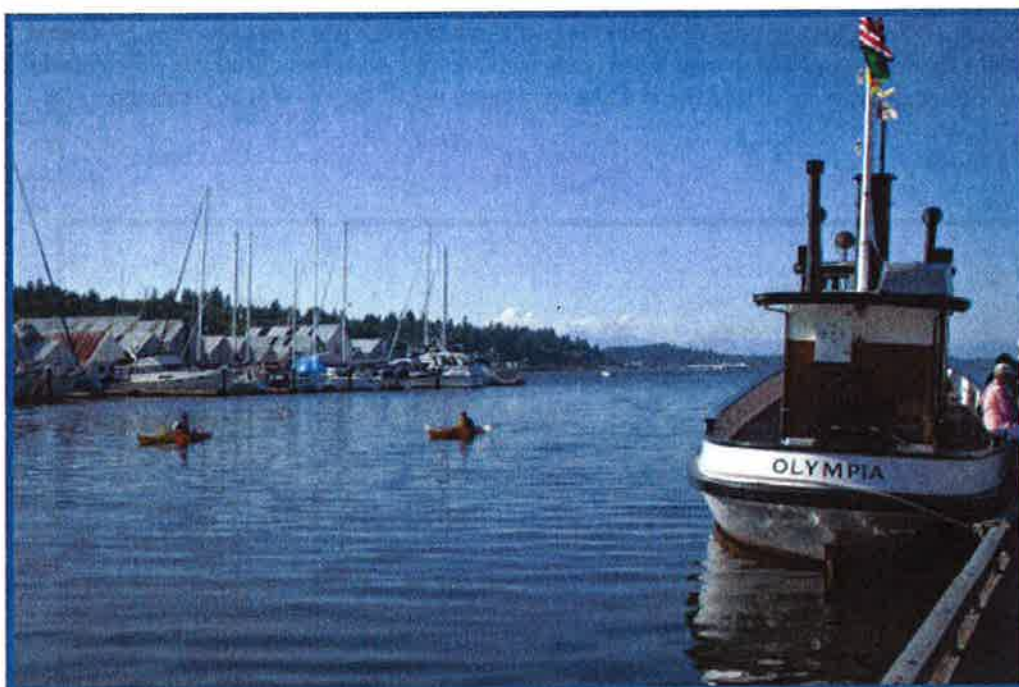
View protection narrowed to certain views; and view of downtown added.

**PL3.10** Identify and designate significant public- viewpoints and – with consideration of trees and other enhancing landscaping—protect, preserve and enhance particular views of the Capitol Campus, Budd Inlet, Downtown skyline, Mount Rainier, the Black Hills, Capitol Lake and surrounding treed slopes, and



the Olympic mountains, such as:

- Capitol Group views of the Olympic Mountains
- West Bay Park views of Capitol Group
- Existing West Bay Park views of Olympic Mountains
- Olympic Way sidewalk and Fourth Avenue bridge viewpoint views of the Capitol Group
- Existing Fourth Avenue bridge views of the Olympic Mountains
- Upper Sunrise Park views of Mount Rainier
- Pacific Avenue sidewalk views of Mount Rainier from Boulevard Road to Steele Street
- Priest Point Park views of Capitol Group and Olympic Mountains
- East Bay Waterfront Park views of Olympic Mountains
- Existing Brawne and Foote intersection view of Budd Inlet
- Upper Madison Scenic Park views of Capitol Campus and downtown
- Capitol Boulevard west sidewalk views of Capitol Lake



Percival Landing with the Olympics in the distance.

**PL3.11** Plant and protect trees that contribute to Olympia's visual identity and sense of place.

**PL3.12** Separate incompatible land uses and activities with treed areas, including buffering residential areas from major streets and freeways.

**GL4**

**Built and natural environmental designs discourage criminal behavior.**

**PL4.1** Incorporate crime prevention principles in planning and development review and educate designers regarding those principles.

**PL4.2** Modify public facilities and properties to enhance crime prevention.

## Industry

Industrial uses represent a relatively small but key component of Olympia's jobs. Olympia's waterfront has supported forest-related industries and maritime shipping for decades. The Olympia area also contains a few scattered, relatively small, light-industrial districts which support a variety of uses. Industrial districts in Tumwater, Lacey, and in the County will likely absorb most of the area's new, non-waterfront-dependent industrial uses. However, the industrial land along Budd Inlet provides the only sites in the area for water-dependent industrial uses. This Plan focuses industrial development in our community in this area, at the Mottman Industrial Park and along Fones Road, while encouraging opportunities for small-scale industry integrated with other uses of land.

In particular, the Port of Olympia owns approximately two hundred acres and adjacent tidelands of what is known as the 'Port peninsula,' an area equivalent to about 80 city blocks. The Port peninsula is a mixed-use industrial, commercial, retail, and recreational facility. The centerpiece of the Port peninsula is the international marine or ocean terminal which is used for the import and export of products. The main feature of the East Bay waterfront is the East Bay Marina which offers moorage, boat launch, and support facilities. A 17-acre [Cascade Pole](#) site on the northern end of the peninsula was used by several companies from 1940 to 1986 to treat wood poles with creosote and other chemicals which contaminated the soil. Although clean-up of that site is underway, future use of the site will be restricted.



Batdorf and Bronson Coffee Roasters at the Port of Olympia.

The industrial portion of the Port peninsula is to continue to be a key industrial center of the community. It has been and is expected to continue to be a source of local family-wage jobs. It will handle inbound and outbound cargo by rail, truck and ship. Large buildings are anticipated for boat building and repair. A one-stop, full service marine facility with a large vessel haul-out and repair center may be added.

GL5

**Industry and related development with low environmental impact is well-located to help diversify the local economy.**

**PL5.1** Encourage industry that is compatible with surrounding land uses and diversifies and strengthens the local economy.

**PL5.2** Designate and preserve sufficient land for industry consistent with the regional strategy and ‘build out’ of the community and competitive land prices.

**PL5.3** Encourage full, intensive use of industrial areas while safeguarding the environment. Ensure land use compatibility by buffering, transitional uses and height limits, landscaping, traffic routing, building design, operation and maintenance standards.

**CHANGE:**

Non-conflicting, non-industrial uses would be allowed in industrial areas. Former policy limited to industry and uses supporting industry.

**PL5.4** Limit non-industrial uses in industrial areas to those which do not conflict with industry; and eliminate or reduce the size of industrial areas only if not expected to be needed or not suitable for industry.

**CHANGE:**

South Bay changed from industry to auto services; specific option for someday designating a fourth major industrial area deleted.

**PL5.5** Focus major industries in locations with good freeway access, adequate utilities, minimal environmental constraints, sufficient space and minimal land use conflicts. Specific areas identified for industrial use include the Port peninsula, the Mottman industrial park, and the vicinity of Fones Road.

**PL5.6** Coordinate with Port of Olympia to ensure long-term viability of Port peninsula industry, compatibility with surrounding uses, and continuation of marina uses along East Bay. Such coordination should at least address transportation, pedestrian and recreation facilities, environmental stewardship, and overwater development.

**PL5.7** Design industrial areas for convenient freight access.

**CHANGE:**

New policy regarding light industry.

**PL5.8** Provide opportunities for light industrial uses in commercial areas consistent with the commercial and multi-family uses of those areas, such as low-impact production within buildings with retail storefronts.

## Commercial Uses and Urban Corridors

Greater development intensity and activity in commercial areas will increase their vitality and facilitate provision of an excellent transit system and make better use of the street system. To encourage more intensive use of these established commercial areas, major new commercial areas are not to be created. Instead, any new commercial areas will be limited to neighborhood-oriented businesses and services in the neighborhood centers of residential areas that reduce the need for residents to leave their neighborhoods for convenient shopping.

Over time, our vision is for existing commercial areas to become more attractive to pedestrians and other customers, and to accommodate a more balanced mix of commercial, residential, and recreational uses.

Significant changes will need to occur in some of our commercial areas to increase their appeal as places to shop, live, work, and visit and to become more inviting for pedestrian and transit users, these higher-density, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use areas.

**GL6****Adequate commercial land conveniently serves local and regional trade areas.**

**PL6.1** Encourage increasing the intensity and diversity of development in existing commercial areas with a mix of commercial and multi-family development plus entertainment and cultural centers sufficient to reduce reliance on cars and enable people to work, shop, recreate and reside in the same area.

**PL6.2** Provide incentives for housing in commercial districts near transit stops.

**PL6.3** Work with developers to identify commercial areas for infill and redevelopment, to remove unnecessary barriers to such development, and to identify and construct needed infrastructure for intensive commercial and mixed use development.

**PL6.4** Locate and size commercial areas to decrease reliance on cars, improve community life, and maintain the tax base.

**CHANGE:**

Policy of not having on-street parking where it would “unduly slow traffic flow” deleted.

**PL6.5** Encourage efficient use and design of commercial parking areas, reduce parking requirements (but avoid significant overflow into residential areas) and support parking structures, especially downtown and in urban corridors, and designate streets for on-street parking where safe.

**PL6.6** Encourage new commercial uses adjacent to the arterial street edge and in mixed-use projects.

**PL6.7** Provide convenient pedestrian access to and between businesses.

**PL6.8** Prohibit new and expanded commercial ‘strips,’ and allow conversion of such existing uses to a multi-use development with greater depth and integration of residential units.

**PL6.9** Provide for low-intensity auto-dependent commerce outside urban corridors; with wholesale businesses near major customers or where resulting traffic will not impact retail areas.

**GL7****Commercial areas are attractive, functional and appealing.**

**PL7.1** Work with businesses and residents to improve the function and aesthetics of commercial areas.

**PL7.2** Establish maximum building heights that are proportional to streets, retain scenic views and are compatible with adjoining development.

**PL7.3** Seek opportunities to create or enhance town squares framed by commercial or civic buildings, pocket parks, plazas and other small public or private spaces in downtown or other high-density areas.

**PL7.4** Ensure compatibility of commercial uses with adjoining residential districts through development regulations. This might include prohibiting reflective surfaces, regulating emissions, and requiring facades with architectural features that reduce perceived building scale, step backs and tiering above three



stories, screening of solid waste and parking areas, and size-reductions and increased setbacks where within 100 feet of residential districts.

**PL7.5** Require commercial and public building and site designs to complement existing development and maintain or improve the area's appearance. This includes buildings with a defined bottom, middle, and top; architectural elements and details appealing to pedestrians such as windows, wall detailing, fountains, vendor stations, and sidewalk features; and use of balconies, stepped back stories, pitched roofs and other elements that reduce the perceived building scale.

**PL7.6** Create visual continuity along arterial streets through coordinated site planning, landscaping, building designs, signage and streetscapes.

**PL7.7** Require screening of unattractive site features such as mechanical equipment and large solid waste receptacles, consistent with access for collection and maintenance.

**PL7.8** Use design standards to ensure direct, convenient access to commercial and public buildings for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**PL7.9** Require parking to maintain aesthetics and minimize pedestrian barriers and inconvenience by requiring screening along streets and residential areas; limiting parking lots to one contiguous acre, and locating them at the rear of buildings, or if the rear is not possible then on the side but with minimal street frontage.

**PL7.10** Ensure that business signs identify the business but do not create visual clutter or dominate the character of the area; require the use of low or façade-mounted signs where possible.

## Urban Corridors

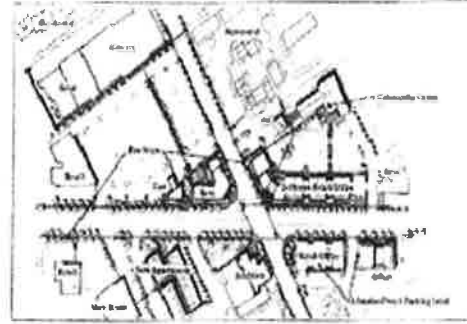
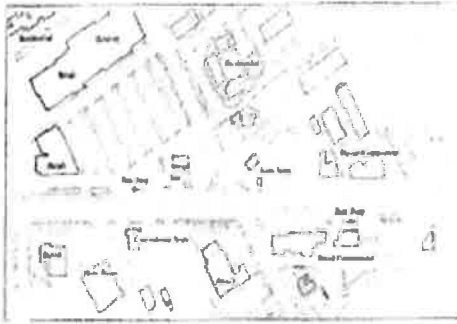
Portions of our major arterial streets are lined with low-density residential and office uses and typical strip commercial development. Driveways to each business interrupt and slow the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; the pattern of buildings setback behind parking lots makes pedestrian access difficult and uninviting; and the disjointed signage, landscaping, and building designs are often unattractive. As a result, these areas have limited appeal as places to live, work, and shop.

Over time, areas near certain major streets will change from areas dominated by strip commercial development and other low intensity uses into 'urban corridors' with a mix of high-density uses where people enjoy walking, shopping, working, and living. See Special Areas map These urban corridors are a key to the community's strategy for avoiding sprawl by providing an appealing housing alternative for people who want to live in an attractive, bustling urban environment close to transit, work and shopping. Redevelopment along these corridors will be focused in areas with the greatest potential for intensive mixed use development so that public and private investment will have maximum benefit. These corridors, first described in the 1993 Thurston Regional Transportation Plan, should include supporting land uses such as community centers, day care centers, social service offices, educational functions, and parks and other public open space.

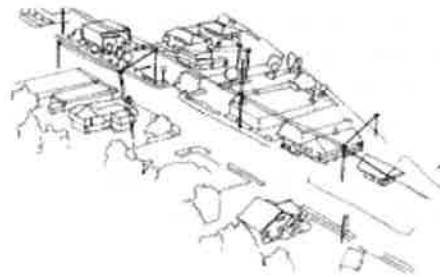
In cooperation with Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston County, this Plan calls for a gradual redevelopment of these urban corridors as described below with:

- A compatible mixture of housing, such as apartments and townhouses, within or near commercial uses
- Excellent, frequent transit service
- Housing and employment densities sufficient to support that transit service
- Wide sidewalks with street trees, attractive landscaping, and benches
- Multi-story buildings oriented toward the street rather than to parking lots

- Parking spaces located behind the buildings or in structures



Urban Corridors - converting from this to that.



Or from this to this.

Slightly less intensive land uses at the fringes of the corridors will provide for a gradual transition from the intense activity of the major street edge to less dense areas about one-quarter mile from the main street. Similarly, areas furthest from the downtown core are expected to infill and redevelop with excellent support for those using alternative transportation to and through the area while continuing to support those arriving by car.

**CHANGE:**

Covered-walkways deleted from "HDC-3."

Features of these outer reaches of the urban corridors will include buildings and walkways located for safer and easier pedestrian access, walkways linking bus stops with stores, pedestrian access from neighboring residences, free-standing businesses located on corners for better pedestrian access, and interior walkways connected with perimeter sidewalks.

**GL8**

**Attractive urban corridors of mixed uses are established near specified major streets.**

**PL8.1** Establish urban corridors as shown on figure 2a with sufficient area (about ½ mile wide) and potential employment and residential density (over 15 housing units per acre) to support frequent transit service, encourage pedestrian traffic between businesses, provide a large customer base and minimize auto

use for local trips.

**CHANGE:**

Revised policy reflects that 1993 regional transportation plan has been superseded.

**PL8.2** Coordinate urban corridor planning and development regionally to ensure a continuous, consistent and balanced approach to redevelopment, and improvement of these areas and associated public facilities and services.

**PL8.3** Transform urban corridors into areas with excellent transit service; multi-story buildings fronting major streets with street trees, benches and landscaping; parking lots behind buildings; and a compatible mix of residential uses close to commercial uses.

**PL8.4** Establish minimum housing densities in urban corridors that provide sufficient density for frequent transit service and to sustain area businesses.

**CHANGE:**

Rewritten regarding outer edge of corridors.

**PL8.5** Ensure appropriate transitional land uses from high intensity land uses along the arterial streets of the urban corridors to the less intensive land uses at the fringe of the corridors; generally the most intensive uses will be within 400 feet of the major streets; corridor redevelopment should enhance both the corridor and quality of life in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**PL8.6** Focus public intervention and incentives on encouraging housing and walking, biking and transit improvements in the portions of the urban corridors nearest downtown and other areas with substantial potential for redevelopment consistent with this Plan.

**PL8.7** Designate different categories of corridors generally as follows:

- Areas nearest downtown should blend travel modes with priority for pedestrian, bicycle and transit systems; these areas should provide for a mix of low-intensity professional offices, small commercial uses and multi-family buildings (not exceeding three stories) forming a continuous and pedestrian-oriented edge along the arterial streets
- The Harrison Avenue corridor nearer Division Street and upper portions of the State Street/Fourth Avenue corridor will provide for a greater range and intensity of commercial uses but with the same three-story height limit; in other respects it will not differ substantially from the corridor sections nearer downtown
- From the vicinity of the Division Street intersection west along Harrison and Fourth Avenues to Kenyon Street and western portions of Martin Way and Pacific Avenues form the third corridor category where the primary transportation mode is by car, but pedestrian and bicycle, as well as transit use, is encouraged; redevelopment of this area is expected with more density and new buildings gradually creating a continuous street edge and more pedestrian-friendly streetscape
- The outer portions of the urban corridors in the vicinity of the Capital Mall and easterly of Phoenix Street will primarily be accessed by motor vehicles with provisions for pedestrian and bicycle travel; gradual transition from existing suburban character is to form continuous pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, but more regulatory flexibility will be provided to acknowledge the existing suburban nature of these areas (see Capital Mall special area below)

### Focus areas

We endeavor to prepare special-area plans and studies to help guide the future of targeted areas within our community. Leadership for plan preparation will vary by location and purpose, and priorities depend on funding availability and the potential for appropriate development or redevelopment. Generally, these

plans feature the location, size and type of land uses; residential and employment density targets; pedestrian amenities; street system and parking location and quantity; and other public improvements. A few specific areas have been identified as described below. More may be identified in the future.

Several of the city's commercial and industrial areas have distinct roles, opportunities, and limitations. This section provides further guidance for the future of some of these areas. As described below, some areas, such as the vicinity of Capital Mall, are envisioned as areas that will gradually convert into urban neighborhoods with a mixture of land uses, while others, such as the Auto Mall area, are to be reserved primarily for one or two primary uses. In three of these areas within the urban corridors the City will focus more detailed planning attention, possibly in the form of a 'master plan' addressing issues such as land uses, infrastructure and design. The City will carry out this planning in cooperation with landowners and other interested parties.

[See Special Areas map](#)

**CHANGE:**

To avoid confusing Port planning with City planning, extensive summary of Port's Plan deleted.

In addition to the focus areas described below, the City works with the State of Washington in its preparation of the [Capitol Campus Master Plan](#) and with the Port of Olympia in its planning of its properties including the Port peninsula. Included in these efforts is the continuing goal of integrating these latter areas with downtown Olympia. The Future Land Use Map frames all of these planning efforts.

### **Capital Mall area**

The Capital Mall area is a regional shopping center, which also includes one of the area's best balances of jobs within walking distance of medium-density housing. This area should continue to be economically viable and contribute to the community's goals with infill, redevelopment, and connections to adjacent areas for all modes of travel. It is to evolve into a complete urban neighborhood with a mix of jobs, housing, and services. Redevelopment and incremental expansion consistent with community goals will allow the mall to flexibly adapt to retail trends. Design standards will encourage continued infill and redevelopment in the vicinity of 4th Avenue and Kenyon Street so that the potential of the mall and its surrounding properties can be fully realized. As illustrated below, redevelopment to the north, south, east and west will incorporate vehicle access and circulation with the addition of building focal points, significant entries and enhanced pedestrian linkages from the adjacent areas to these focal points.

[A plan for linking Capital Mall to its neighborhood.](#)





One of the Auto Mall dealers.

### **Auto Mall Area**

The Olympia Auto Mall is the region's major center for auto sales and specialized services. Most of Thurston County's new and used car dealers are located here, along with firms offering light trucks and motorcycles, auto rentals, body repair and detailing, and other auto-oriented businesses. Because it offers so many opportunities for comparison shopping in one location, it is a highly successful group of businesses, attracting customers from a regional trade area. It is also one of the community's employment centers. It should continue to serve the community successfully with its proven formula for many years to come.

### **Lilly and Martin area**

The Medical Services district along Lilly Road near Martin Way is home to a regional hospital and numerous medical and dental clinics and offices. This area has the potential for additional health-care related uses; complementary uses that serve the needs of area businesses, workers and residents; and carefully integrated multi-family, senior citizen, and assisted-living housing. However, portions of Martin Way remain in the form originally built as a rural highway. The community's vision provides for this area to evolve into a medically-oriented neighborhood with jobs, housing, and supporting services.

### **Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road area**

The vicinity of the intersection of Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road, like the nearby Stoll Road area, has the potential to become a unique area within an urban corridor. This focus area is positioned adjacent to a regional trail and between two shopping centers and includes a nearly complete street grid with many single-family homes. This location provides good access to retail services for daily and weekly shopping needs within easy walking distance, and is large enough for creative designs. There is excellent transit service on both Pacific Avenue and Lilly Road. But the area also includes challenges, such as substandard public improvements, a lack of nearby parks, and surrounding traffic. This area is envisioned as transitioning to higher intensity uses consistent with its location between two urban corridors. The Pacific and Lilly focus area should be developed with a mix of retail, service, and high density residential uses.

## West Bay Drive

Conditions in the West Bay Drive area represent a challenging mix of opportunities and constraints. Several sites along the shore are significant in Squaxin Island Tribal cultural history. Industrial use of this waterfront dates to the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the shallow waters along this shoreline continue to provide crucial habitat for young salmon leaving the Deschutes River basin. Birds, marine and upland mammals, and other wildlife species are relatively common for an urban area. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conservation easement in that area known as the Port Lagoon serves as a fish and wildlife conservancy area.

### CHANGE:

More detailed history of area deleted.

Most of the industries have now relocated and only fragments of the waterborne commerce remain. The community foresees continued transition of the West Bay Drive area toward such a mix of urban uses and habitat improvements, while also allowing existing industries and shipping facilities to remain economically viable. The resulting mix of uses should form the foundation for a vibrant mix of light industrial, office, restaurant, commercial, recreational, and residential uses, that also provides for improved habitat for fish and wildlife in this waterfront location. Future development of land uses and street improvements in this corridor will be consistent with the West Bay Corridor Study of 2005.

### CHANGE:

Urban (overwater) Waterfront Plan section moved to Environment Chapter.

GL9

### **Focus areas are planned in cooperation with property owners and residents.**

**PL9.1** Maximize the potential of the Capital Mall area as a regional shopping center by encouraging development that caters to a regional market, by providing pedestrian walkways between businesses and areas; by increasing shopper-convenience and reducing traffic by supporting transit service linked to downtown; by encouraging redevelopment of parking areas with buildings and parking structures; and by encouraging the integration of multifamily housing.

**PL9.2** Maximize the potential of the Olympia Auto Mall area as a regional auto sales and services center by encouraging its use for auto sales and services and limiting incompatible activities, and by imposing auto-oriented design guidelines along Cooper Point Road that ensure pleasing landscaping, minimal visual clutter, and easy pedestrian and vehicle access.

**PL9.3** Enhance the Lilly Road hospital area as a medical services center by encouraging health-care supporting uses such as restaurants, florists, child care, and convenience shops, and upper floor and rear multi-family and senior housing nursing homes; and by prohibiting non-medical uses that would generate high traffic volumes or noise disruptive of recuperation.

### CHANGE:

Stoll Road area and minimum residential density added.

**PL9.4** Plan for redevelopment of the Stoll Road area and that area bounded by Lilly Road, Pacific Avenue and I-5 as 'focus areas' adjacent to the Pacific Avenue and Martin Way urban corridors to include retail, office, personal and professional services and high density housing with a minimum residential density of about 15 units per acre; planning for these areas should encompass consideration of redevelopment and improvement of nearby portions of the urban corridor.

**PL9.5** In the West Bay Drive area provide for a mix of recreation and urban uses that enhance wildlife habitat and cultural resources; limit industrial uses to existing sites; minimize blockage of upland views; and connect the area to the south with an urban trail.



South Puget Sound Community College campus entrance.

**CHANGE:**

New policy.

**PL9.6** Work cooperatively with the State of Washington regarding planning for the Capitol Campus and provide opportunities for long-term 'master planning' of other single-purpose properties of at least twenty acres such as hospitals and the college and high-school campuses.

## Housing

Adequate and affordable housing is critical to a healthy community. The Growth Management Act directs that planning for housing:

- Encourage affordable housing for all economic segments of the population
- Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types
- Encourage preservation of existing housing stock
- Identify sufficient land for housing, including government-assisted housing, housing for low-income families, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, and group homes and foster care facilities

The strategies of this chapter depend on well-formulated design standards to promote flexibility and stimulate innovation while preserving and enhancing the character of neighborhoods. We seek to establish and encourage diversity in housing opportunity and link diverse neighborhoods. The housing goals and policies below provide a framework for residential land uses in Olympia's area. The City's related programs for supporting affordable housing are found in the Services for the Public chapter.





An apartment building being added to the City's housing stock.

Many factors contribute to the need for more housing of various types:

- Olympia's growing residential population
- Household incomes vary
- The capitol's legislative session creates a demand for short-term housing
- College students seek affordable housing near transportation corridors and services
- Household sizes are declining
- The proportion of senior citizens is increasing

To meet this need, the community will use compact growth to preserve space for future residents and reduce costs of providing public services. To ensure a variety of options, the community will need to allocate sufficient land for a variety of housing including detached homes, duplexes, group homes, small cottages, apartments, special needs housing, manufactured housing, and accessory dwellings. This approach can provide both variety and affordable options. For example, factory-built manufactured housing governed by federal standards and modular housing built to state standards are often less expensive than site-built housing. This Plan provides for these types of units and more luxurious and higher-priced shared-wall housing, including condominiums and townhouses.

Housing costs in the Olympia area rose rapidly from 1990 until the economic recession of 2008. In general the cost of owner-occupied housing rose more rapidly than income, while rents roughly corresponded to income changes. Those changing costs and availability of land for development, combined with public preferences, resulted in gradual changes in the area's ownership. While county-wide owner-occupancy rose from 65% to 68% between 1990 and 2010, the City of Olympia trended in the opposite direction with owner-occupancy declining from 52% to 50% of all housing units. The type of housing structures being added to the housing stock have varied as a result of similar factors. As a result, multi-family housing county-wide increased gradually from about 16% in 1970 to about 22% by 2010. In the Olympia city limits multi-family structures provided 28% of the housing in 1970, and gradually increased to about 42% by 2010 as most new apartments were being built inside the urban areas.



**The range of housing types and densities are consistent with the community's changing population needs and preferences.**

**PL10.1** Support increasing housing densities through well-designed, efficient and cost-effective use of buildable land, consistent with environmental constraints and affordability. Use both incentives and regulations such as minimum and maximum density limits to achieve such efficient use.

**PL10.2** Adopt zoning that allows a wide variety of compatible housing types and densities.

**PL10.3** Encourage 'clustering' of housing to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

**PL10.4** Disperse low and moderate-income and special needs housing throughout the urban area.

**PL10.5** Support affordable housing throughout the community by minimizing regulatory review risks, time and costs and removing unnecessary barriers to housing, by permitting small dwelling units accessory to single-family housing, and by allowing a mix of housing types.

**PL10.6** Promote home ownership, including by allowing manufactured homes on individual lots, promoting preservation of manufactured home parks and allowing such parks in multi-family and commercial areas, all subject to design standards ensuring compatibility with surrounding housing and land uses.

**PL10.7** Allow single-family housing on small lots, but prohibit reduced setbacks abutting conventional lots.

**PL10.8** Encourage and provide incentives for residences above businesses.

**CHANGE:**

Provisions for small cottages and townhouses expanded from 'higher density' to all residential areas. One ADU limit is from LU 8.2

**PL10.9** In all residential areas, allow small cottages and townhouses, and one accessory housing unit per home—all subject to siting, design and parking requirements that ensure neighborhood character is maintained.

**PL10.10** Require effective, but not unduly costly, building designs and landscaping to blend multi-family housing into neighborhoods.

**PL10.11** Require that multi-family structures be located near a collector street with transit, an arterial, or near neighborhood centers, and that they be designed for compatibility with adjacent lower density housing; and be 'stepped' to conform with topography.

**CHANGE:**

Ten-acre threshold reduced to five.

**PL10.12** Require a mix of single-family and multi-family structures in villages, mixed residential density districts, and apartment projects exceeding five acres; and utilize a variety of housing types and setbacks to transition to adjacent single-family areas.

**PL10.13** Encourage adapting non-residential buildings for housing.

## Downtown and other Neighborhoods

Our community is composed of many neighborhoods. Some, like the downtown area, are composed of commercial, cultural and residential activities and land uses. Others are primarily housing with supporting amenities like parks and schools. This section of the Plan addresses these varied and unique places that together form Olympia.

[View Map - Sub-area Map](#)

### Downtown Olympia

**CHANGE:**

“Vision for Downtown” moved to Downtown Master Plan – a complementary document to be adopted by City Council concurrently with the updated Comprehensive Plan. The Downtown Master Plan may be adopted by reference as part of the Comprehensive Plan or may be a separate Plan.

Given its history, physical location and established identity, downtown Olympia is truly the heart of Olympia and the region. Downtown Olympia thus deserves and receives special attention. A city with a thriving downtown has more potential for bolstering community spirit and providing a healthy local economy. A community needs a “heart.” For our community, the downtown area performs this role, not just for our community, but for the larger region.

Olympia's downtown includes over 500 acres. It is bounded generally by the State Capitol Campus, Capitol Lake, Budd Inlet, and Eastside Street. This area includes Olympia's retail core, State and other office uses, and access to the waterfront, and is the center of most major transportation links. It is the social, cultural, and economic center of the area. Downtown will continue to be an attractive place to live, work and play. Future office, retail and residential development will bolster downtown's role as a regional center and home of state government, commerce, and industry.

GL11

### Regional urban activity is centered in downtown Olympia.

**PL11.1** Adopt a Downtown Master Plan addressing – at minimum – housing, public spaces, parking management, rehabilitation and redevelopment, architecture and cultural resources, building skyline and views, and relationships to the Port peninsula and Capitol Campus.

**PL11.2** Include public art and public places in the downtown landscape.

**PL11.3** Encourage intensive downtown residential and commercial development (at least 15 units and 25 employees per acre) through aggressive marketing and height bonuses to support frequent transit service.

**PL11.4** Encourage development that caters to a regional market.

**CHANGE:**

New policy.

**PL11.5** Coordinate with State of Washington and Port of Olympia to ensure that both the Capitol Campus plan and Port peninsula development are consistent with and support the community's vision for downtown Olympia.



The Farmers' Market, where downtown meets the Port.

**PL11.6** Landscape downtown to support urban activity, including with street trees, planters and baskets, banners, community gardens and other decorative improvements.

## GL12

**Downtown designs express Olympia's heritage and future in a compact and pedestrian-oriented manner.**

**PL12.1** Regulate the design of downtown development with specific but flexible guidelines that allow for creativity and innovation, enhance historic architecture and recognize distinct areas of downtown, and do not discourage development.

**PL12.2** Require that downtown development provide active spaces, adequate sunlight and air-flow and minimize 'blank' walls at street level.

**PL12.3** Encourage development designs that favor pedestrian circulation over auto traffic by including awnings and rain protection consistent with historic architecture, minimizing security and safety risks, creating pedestrian interest, and supporting sociable uses such as cultural events, entertainment and tourism.

### CHANGE:

Provision for private use of right-of-way expanded to other public land.

**PL12.4** Design streets with landscaping, wide sidewalks, underground utilities and a coordinated pattern of unifying details; and provide for private use of public lands and rights-of-way when in the best interest of the community.

**PL12.5** Designate 'pedestrian streets' where most of the frontage will have 'people-oriented' activities, and street-level buildings will have a high proportion of glass. Prohibit parking lots along these streets,

except when preserving scenic views and instead provide for surface parking along other streets.

**CHANGE:**

Buffering Port industry deleted.

**PL12.6** Protect, plant and maintain trees downtown to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide natural beauty; include a coordinated pattern of street trees, and pay special attention to Legion Way and Sylvester Park and a buffer from the Port terminal.

**PL12.7** Limit drive-through facilities to the vicinity of the Plum Street interchange.

**CHANGE:**

New policy supporting existing height regulation.

**PL12.8** Limit building heights to accentuate, and retain views of, the Capitol dome.

### **Neighborhoods, Villages and Planning Sub-Areas**

This section contains the goals and policies that will protect and improve the character and livability of our established neighborhoods and shape our new neighborhoods. All of the City's neighborhoods are envisioned as places where many features are available within a ten-minute walk. A variety of housing types located along pedestrian-oriented streets will provide quality living opportunities. Most housing will be single-family detached homes, but higher density housing will be available near major streets and commercial areas to take advantage of transit, other services, and employment opportunities. Housing types and densities will be dispersed throughout the City to minimize social problems sometimes associated with isolating people of similar means and lifestyles.





One of Olympia's many attractive neighborhoods.

**CHANGE:**

Features of 'villages' deleted from this section.

**CHANGE:**

Alternative place of assembly added.

Each neighborhood should have:

- Narrow tree-lined streets for easy and interesting walking, bicycling, and travel by transit
- A system of open space and trails with a neighborhood park
- A readily-accessible elementary school or other place of public assembly
- Diverse housing types that accommodate varying income levels, household sizes, and lifestyles
- Sufficient housing densities to support frequent transit service and sustain neighborhood businesses
- A neighborhood center with businesses serving area residents



A neighborhood grocery near the Capitol.

A large portion of Olympia's residents are to live within a quarter-mile of a neighborhood center. These centers will be the focal point of neighborhoods. Although they will vary by location, they generally should contain small-scale convenience and service businesses, a transit stop and a neighborhood park and be bounded by moderate or high-density housing. These neighborhood centers will serve as activity hubs or small-scale town squares that foster social interaction and a sense of community and accommodate nearby residents' routine shopping needs. Where possible, a network of walking and biking routes that provide both recreational and commuting opportunities will connect these neighborhood centers to parks, schools, and downtown. To minimize traffic impacts and provide for transit service, these centers will be near major streets. Approximate locations for these centers are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Although neighborhoods will have some common features, we recognize that each place is unique. Therefore, a public process for planning for distinct areas within the community is envisioned. This process is described in the Public Participation Chapter and will focus on the planning areas of the map below. [Sub-areas Map](#) In addition, as described below, site-specific plans will be prepared for a few select other areas of the community. All of these areas are critical to the successful implementation of this Comprehensive Plan and thus deserving of extraordinary attention.





Shady sidewalks provide neighborhood character.

GL13

**Development maintains and improves neighborhood character and livability.**

**CHANGE:**

Details of policy deleted.

**PL13.1** Require development in established neighborhoods to be of a type, scale, orientation, and design that maintains or improves the character, aesthetic quality, and livability of the neighborhood.

**PL13.2** Prohibit conversion of housing in residential districts to commercial use; instead, support redevelopment and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods to bolster stability and allow home occupations (except convalescent care) that do not degrade neighborhood appearance or livability, create traffic, noise or pollution problems.

**CHANGE:**

Seniors-only housing added.

**PL13.3** Allow elder care homes and seniors-only housing and encourage child care services everywhere except industrial areas; but limit hospice care to multi-family and commercial districts.

**CHANGE:**

Urban ag support added.

**PL13.4** Support local food production including urban agriculture, and provide for a food store with a transit stop within one-quarter mile of all residents.

**CHANGE:** New policy.

**PL13.5** Encourage development and public improvements consistent with healthy and active lifestyles.

**CHANGE:**  
New policy.

**PL13.6** Discourage 'fortress-style' and unnecessarily secure designs that isolate developments and separate neighborhoods.

**GL14**

**Neighborhood centers are the focal point of neighborhoods and villages.**

**PL14.1** Establish a neighborhood center at each village site, encourage development of designated neighborhood centers as shown on Future Land Use Map and allow designation of additional centers where compatible with existing land uses and where they are more than one-half mile from other commercial areas.

**PL14.2** Locate neighborhood centers along collector or arterial streets and within about 600 feet of a transit stop.

**CHANGE:**  
Requirement for day care in neighborhood center removed; specific commercial size limits deleted.

**PL14.3** Include housing, a food store, and neighborhood park or civic green, at all neighborhood centers. Allow churches, schools, and convenience businesses and services that cater primarily to neighborhood residents. Prohibit auto-oriented uses. Vary the specific size and composition of such centers for balance with surrounding uses; focus commercial uses on the civic green or park, and limit the size of commercial uses. (Note: A larger urban center is permitted in the Briggs Urban Village.)

**PL14.4** Allow neighborhood center designs that are innovative and provide variety, but that ensure compatibility with adjoining uses. Consider appropriate phasing, scale, design and exterior materials, as well as glare, noise and traffic impacts when evaluating compatibility. Require buildings with primary access directly from street sidewalks, orientation to any adjacent park or green and to any adjacent housing, and signage consistent with neighborhood character.

**PL14.5** Locate streets and trails for non-arterial access to the neighborhood center.

**GL15**

**Trees help maintain strong and healthy neighborhoods.**

**PL15.1** Use trees to foster a sense of neighborhood identity.

**PL15.2** Identify, protect and maintain trees with historic significance or other value to the community or specific neighborhoods.

## Sub-area Planning



**CHANGE:** “Sub-area planning” is a concept formerly in Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan, but deleted many years ago. It’s being reinserted to provide a public process for focusing on smaller portions of the Olympia area with contiguous geographies and some common challenges and opportunities.

Much of this Plan applies to the entire Olympia community. However, this is a large area of over ten square miles with tens of thousands of residents. Thus this Plan cannot address all of the details of our community. Planning areas, as depicted on the map below, are established to provide that opportunity. The Planning Areas Map displays the eleven planning areas of the City. In general, planning areas are comparable to the scale of an elementary school service area with five to ten thousand residents. As described in the [Public Participation and Partners chapter](#), this scale will provide the opportunity for the community to do more detailed planning for these areas. Although more detailed, these sub-area plans must be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

[View Map - Focusing on these Planning Areas, plus the Downtown Master Plan, provides a more detailed planning perspective](#)

**CHANGE:**

New goal and policies.

GL16

**Each of the community’s major neighborhoods have their own priorities.**

**PL16.1** In cooperation with residents, landowners, businesses, and other interested parties, prepare special area plans for the subareas shown on the Planning Areas Map. The specific area, content, and process for each is to be adapted to the needs and interests of each area. (See public involvement regarding public involvement goals.)

**PL16.2** Create subarea plans that address provisions and priorities for community health, neighborhood centers and places of assembly, streets and paths, cultural resources, forestry, utilities and open space and parks.

**CHANGE:**

Formerly a City-wide policy.

**PL16.3** Develop neighborhood and business community approaches to beautification that include activities in residential and commercial areas.

### **‘Villages’ and other Planned Developments**

Sites for ‘neighborhood villages,’ one ‘urban village,’ and the older Evergreen Park planned unit development, each with a compatible mixture of single and multi-family housing and businesses, are designated within the urban area. [See Future Land Use map](#) These mixed use projects are to provide for a coordinated, compatible mixture of single and multi-family housing arranged around a readily-accessible neighborhood center. See Neighborhood Center description above. The locations and mix of land uses and the design of the street and trail system in these areas are to create an environment that encourages walking, biking and use of transit, while providing direct, pleasant routes for motorists. These ‘villages’ will foster efficient land use through compact, higher density development with residential uses near bus stops and basic retail and support services.

The smaller ‘neighborhood villages’ will typically consist of single-family detached homes, townhouses

and multi-family units, surrounding a small neighborhood center. The 'urban village' will be more diverse and intensely developed. The businesses of the urban village will serve a larger area and may include a supermarket, offices, and a broad array of predominantly neighborhood-oriented businesses and services. Both the neighborhood villages and urban villages are to be designed as coordinated, integrated projects with a compatible mix of land uses. Development phasing requirements will ensure that each project component and amenity is developed at the appropriate time. While these villages and Evergreen Park PUD will have many characteristics in common, the design and composition of each project will vary in response to site conditions, location, market demand, available street and utility capacity, and the character of the surrounding neighborhood, and will evolve over time.

**GL17**

**Mixed use developments, also known as "villages," are planned with a pedestrian orientation and a coordinated and balanced mix of land uses.**

**PL17.1** Require planned development sites shown on the Future Land Use Map to develop as coordinated, mixed-use projects.

**PL17.2** Provide for any redevelopment or redesign of planned developments including the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development to be consistent with the 'village vision' of this Plan.

**PL17.3** Require 'master plans' for villages that encompass the entire site and specify the project phasing, street layout and design, lot arrangement, land uses, parks and open space, building orientation, environmental protection and neighborhood compatibility measures.

**PL17.4** Provide for a compatible mix of housing in each village with pleasant living, shopping and working environment, pedestrian-oriented character, well-located and sized open spaces, attractive well-connected streets and a balance of retail stores, offices, housing, and public uses.

**PL17.5** Require a neighborhood center, a variety of housing, connected trails, prominent open spaces, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas in each village.

**PL17.6** Require that villages retain the natural topography and major environmental features of the site and incorporate water bodies and stormwater ponds into the design to minimize environmental degradation.



New landscaping beautifies a stormwater pond.

**PL17.7** Locate parking lots at the rear or side of buildings, to avoid pedestrian interference and to minimize street frontage. Landscape any parking adjacent to streets and minimize parking within villages by reducing requirements and providing shared parking incentives.

**PL17.8** Require village integrity but provide flexibility for developers to respond to market conditions.

**PL17.9** Limit each village to about 40 to 200 acres; require that at least 60% but allow no more than 75% of housing to be single-family units; and require at least 5% of the site be open space with at least one large usable open space for the public at the neighborhood center.

**PL17.10** Require that 90% of village housing be within a quarter mile of the neighborhood center and a transit stop.

**PL17.11** Provide for a single “urban village” at the intersection of Henderson Boulevard and Yelm Highway; allowing up to 175,000 square feet of commercial floor area plus an additional 50,000 square feet if a larger grocery is included; and requiring that only 50% of the housing be single-family.

## Appendix A - Future Land Use Map Designations

The land use designations of the Future Land Use Map and summarized in the Land Use Chart are described below. Note that those indicated as symbols on the Future Land Use Map generally are not to exceed ten acres in those locations.

**Low-Density Housing.** This designation provides for low-density residential development—primarily single-family detached housing—in densities ranging from eight units per acre to one unit per five acres depending on environmental sensitivity of the area. Barring environmental constraints, densities of at least four units per acre should be achieved. Supportive land uses and other types of housing, including townhomes and small apartment buildings, may be permitted. Specific zoning and densities are to be based on the unique characteristics of each area with special attention to stormwater drainage and aquatic habitat. Clustered development to provide future urbanization opportunities will be required where urban utilities are not readily available.

**Medium-Density Housing.** This designation provides for detached single family homes, townhouses and apartments at densities ranging from six to twenty-four units per acre. Specific zoning is to be based on proximity to bus routes and major streets, land use compatibility, and environmental constraints. Specific zoning will include minimum and maximum densities to ensure efficient use of developable land and to ensure provision of an adequate variety of types of housing to serve the community. Higher densities should be located close to major employment or commercial areas.

**Mixed Residential.** This designation requires a mixture of single and multifamily housing at densities ranging from seven to eighteen units per acre. Specific density ranges and mandatory mixes should be based on land use compatibility and proximity to bus routes and major streets, while also ensuring availability of a variety and blending of housing types and choices.

**Neighborhood Centers.** This designation provides for neighborhood-oriented convenience businesses and a small park or other public space. Although, the locations shown on the Future Land Use Map are approximate, these centers should be along major streets and generally near areas of higher residential densities. The exact location and mix of uses of the centers in these areas will be established at the time of development approval. In general they should be focused on serving nearby residents, be well integrated with adjacent land uses, and have excellent pedestrian and bicyclist access with minimal car parking.

**Residential Mixed Use.** To provide opportunities for people to live close to work, shopping, and services, this designation provides for high-density multifamily housing in multistory structures combined with limited commercial uses in parts of downtown, near the State Capitol Campus, and near urban corridors and other activity centers. This designation helps to achieve City density goals, to create or maintain a desirable urban living environment for residents of these areas, and to ensure that new urban residential buildings incorporate features which encourage walking and add interest to the urban environment. The commercial uses are intended to help support the residential use of the area by providing retail and personal services within walking distance of the housing. Housing in these high amenity areas will contribute to community vitality, include well-designed buildings on continuous street edges, link one area with another, encourage pedestrian activity, and include visible public spaces that increase safety and decrease vandalism.

**Planned Developments.** This designation includes areas of mixed uses where specific 'master plans' are required prior to development. These master plans are prepared and proposed by one or a few parties and subject to review and confirmation by the City. This designation is intended to achieve more innovative designs than in conventional developments but which are also compatible with existing uses in the area. Innovative designs much include offering a wider variety of compatible housing types and densities, neighborhood convenience businesses, recreational uses, open space, trails and other amenities. Generally residential densities should range from seven to thirteen units per acre, but the specific mix of land uses will vary with the zoning, environment, and master plan of each site. In addition to a variety of housing types, these areas may include neighborhood centers as described below. Each of the two planned developments along Yelm highway may include a larger neighborhood-oriented shopping center with a supermarket. The planned development designation also includes retaining certain existing, and potentially new, manufactured housing parks in locations suitable for such developments. Two unique planned developments include substantial government office buildings and related uses—these are the Capitol Campus; and Evergreen Park, which includes the site of the Thurston County courthouse.

**Professional Offices & Multifamily Housing.** This designation accommodates a wide range of offices, services, limited retail uses specifically authorized by the applicable zoning district, and moderate-to-high density multifamily housing in structures as large as four stories.

**CHANGE:**

Urban Corridors were formerly called 'high density corridors' – a term that sometimes led to misunderstanding and confusion with a regulatory zone of the same name but different geography.



**Urban Corridors.** This designation applies to areas within about one-quarter mile of certain major streets. Generally more intense commercial uses and larger structures should be located near the street edge with less intensive uses and smaller structure farther from the street to transition to adjacent designations. Particular 'nodes' or intersections may be more intensely developed. Opportunities to live, work, shop and recreate will be located within walking distance of these areas.

**CHANGE:**

Reference changed from Shoreline Management Program to Shoreline Management Act.

**Urban Waterfront.** Consistent with the State's Shoreline Management Act, this designation provides for a compatible mix of commercial, light industrial, limited heavy industrial, and multifamily residential uses along the waterfront.

**City Center.** This designation provides for a wide range of activities that make downtown Olympia the cultural, civic, commercial and employment heart of the community. A dense mix of housing, pedestrian-oriented land uses and design and proximity to transit make a convenient link between downtown, the State Capitol, the waterfront, and other activity centers in the region. The scale, height and bulk of development reinforce downtown Olympia's historic character, buildings, places and street layout.

**General Commerce.** This designation provides for commercial uses and activities which are heavily dependent on convenient vehicle access but which minimize adverse impact on the community, especially on adjacent properties having more restrictive development characteristics. The area should have safe and efficient access to major transportation routes. Additional "strip" development should be limited by filling in available space in a way that accommodates and encourages pedestrian activity.

**CHANGE:**

Although Auto Services already appears on the map and the Auto Mall is discussed elsewhere, this description of the designation is new.

**Auto Services.** This designation conserves areas for concentrating land uses associated with automobile and other motor vehicle sales and services. Alternative uses such as professional offices may be permitted if compatible with the primary purpose of the designation.

**Medical Services.** This designation conserves areas in the vicinity of hospitals for concentrating medical services and facilities, associated uses, and moderate to high-density housing.

**Industry.** The designation provides for light industrial uses, such as assembly of products and warehousing, and compatible, complementary commercial uses; and for heavy industrial development, such as manufacturing, transportation terminals and bulk storage, and complementary commercial uses in locations with few land use conflicts, minimal environmental constraints, and adequate freight access.

## For More Information

- The [Buildable Lands Report](#) prepared for Thurston County by the staff of the Thurston Regional Planning Council helps Olympia to determine the quantity of land to provide for population and employment growth
- The [Capitol Master Plan](#) prepared by the Department of General Administration describes the State's plans for certain lands within and adjacent to downtown
- The [Port of Olympia's Planning documents](#) describe the Port's vision for the future of its lands within Olympia, as well as its role within Thurston County in general
- The Downtown Master Plan focuses on the city center and was formerly a part of this Comprehensive Plan. It is now a separate document adopted by the City Council
- The [Briggs Village Master Plan](#) is an example of an owner-prepared and City-approved plan for

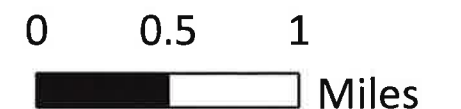
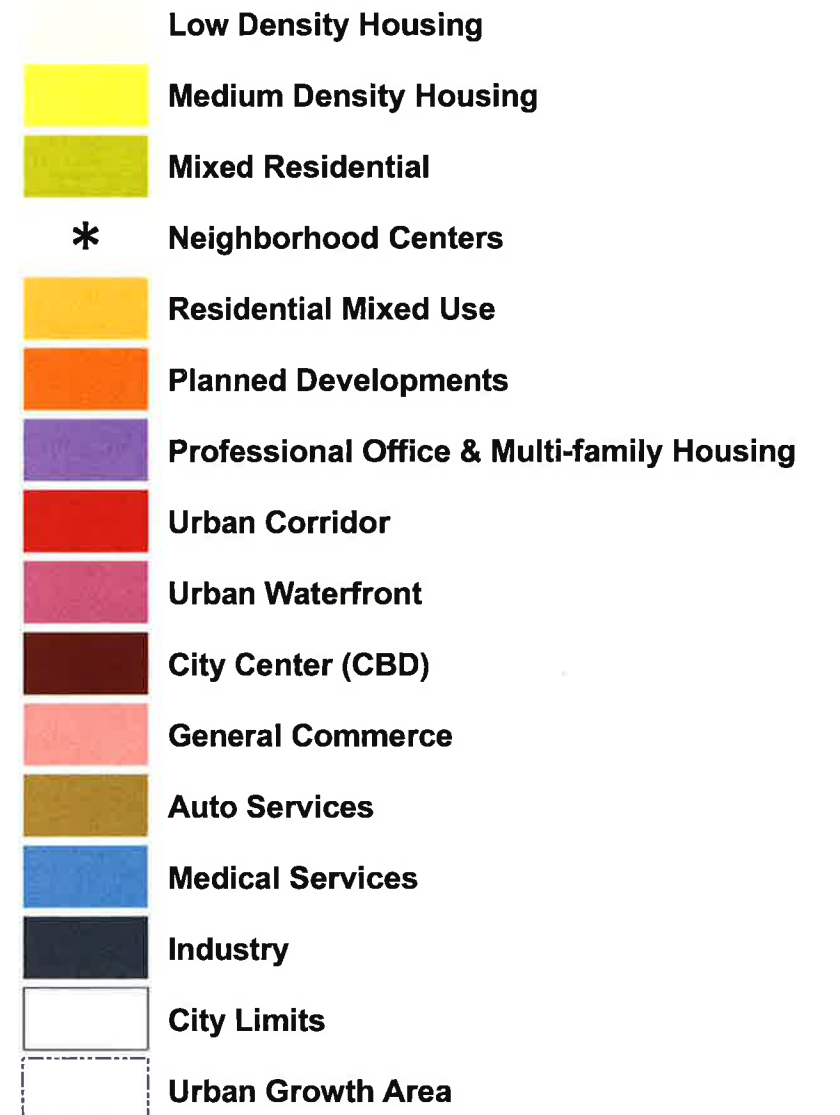
- a specific property within the City
- The [Urban Corridors Task Force Recommendations](#), adopted by Thurston Regional Planning Council in 2012, describes challenges and opportunities for the urban corridors of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater

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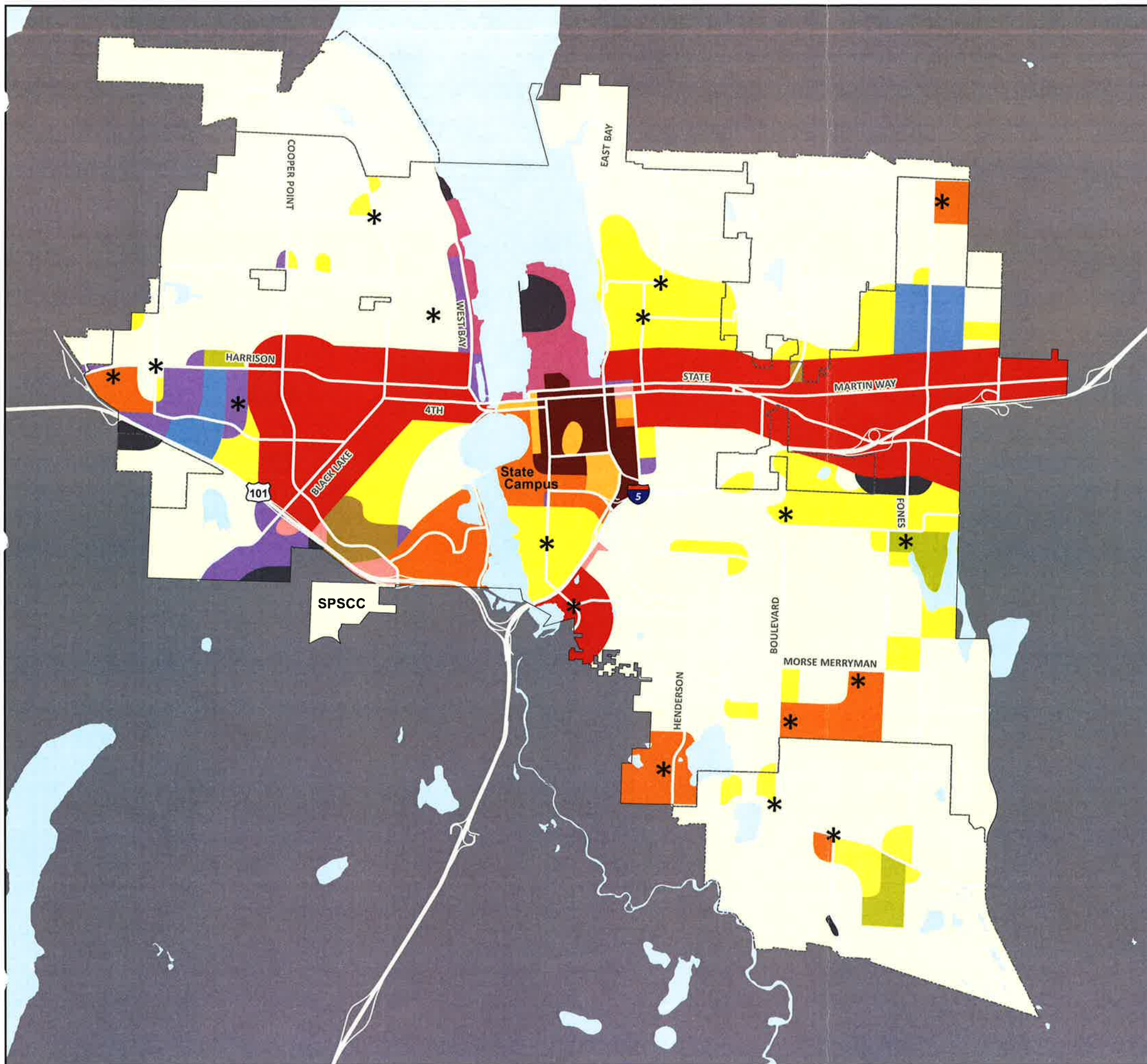
The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources.



## Future Land Use



The City of Olympia and its personnel cannot assure the accuracy, completeness, reliability, or suitability of this information for any particular purpose. The parcels, right-of-ways, utilities and structures depicted hereon are based on record information and aerial photos only. It is recommended the recipient and or user field verify all information prior to use. The use of this data for purposes other than those for which they were created may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The recipient may not assert any proprietary rights to this information. The City of Olympia and its personnel neither accept or assume liability or responsibility, whatsoever, for any activity involving this information with respect to lost profits, lost savings or any other consequential damages.





## Developed Areas

### Year Developed

-  Before 1970
-  1971 to 1990
-  1991 to 2012
-  Unknown Year
-  Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area








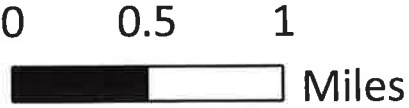
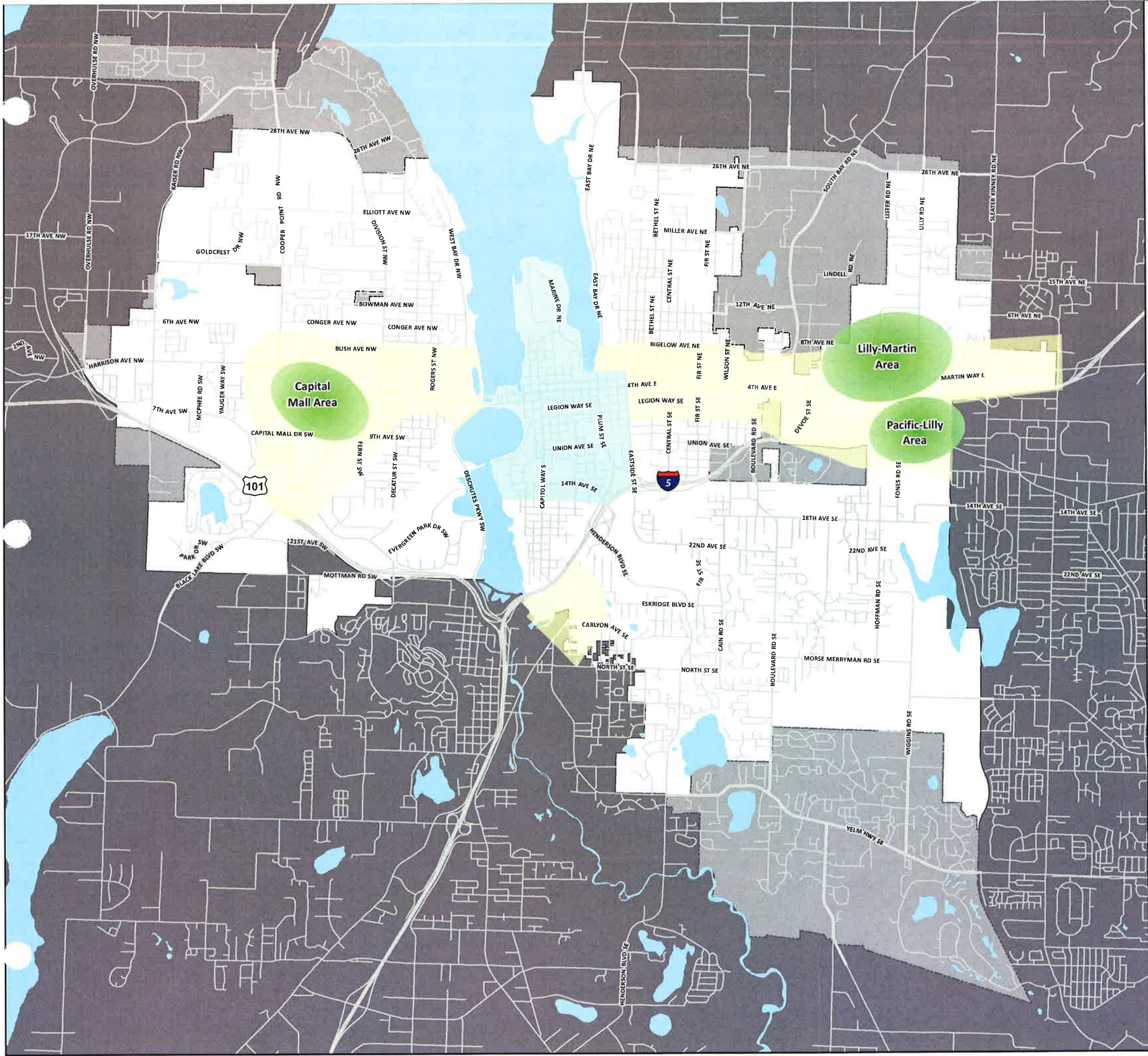
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# Special Areas

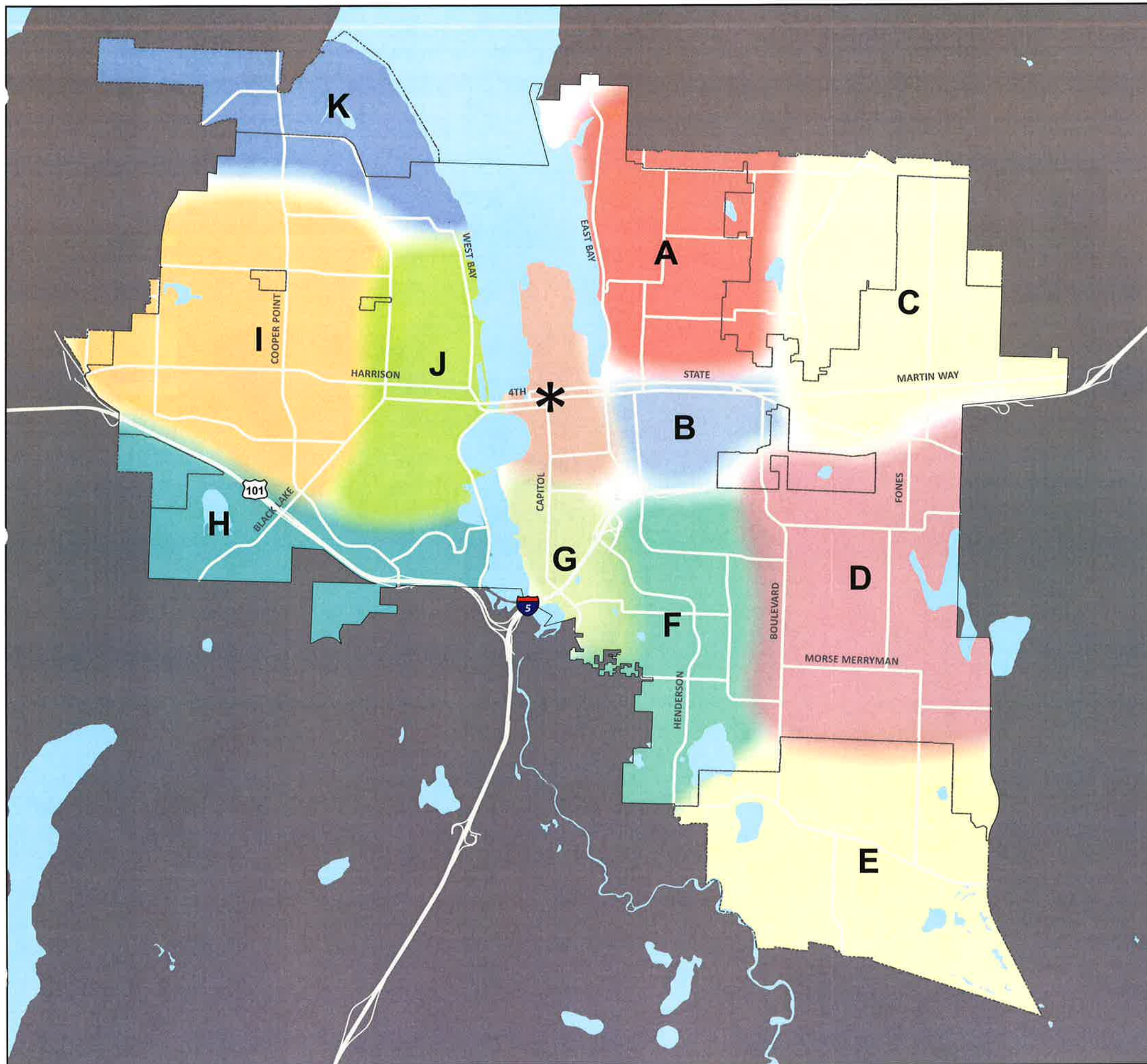
-  Focus Areas
-  City Center
-  Urban Corridors
-  Urban Growth Area
-  City Limits



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## Olympia Subareas



\* Downtown Olympia

City Limits

Urban Growth Area



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