

Dear Council Members:

We are very grateful that several of you have taken the time to tour the parcel of land we have under contract, on which we hope to build the West Side Plaza. For anyone else who would like to tour the site or learn more about the project, please contact Wes Weller, President of the West Olympia Community Visioning Group (CVG), for more information.

The CVG is a grassroots community organization of individual citizens consisting of attorneys, architects, businesspersons and neighborhood leaders. We are also an IRS approved 501(c)(3) organization with a public mission that prohibits any personal inurnment or private benefit from our charitable activities. The CVG's Board Members have invested their time and financial contributions in this project for a myriad of reasons. Each Board Member brings a unique perspective and skill set to the CVG, as well as their specific reasons for wanting this project to happen. Attached are statements from each of the Board Members explaining why they are interested in this project in their own words.

The CVG's Board Members have spent thousands of hours developing a solid vision for the Westside Plaza, evaluating the feasibility of numerous locations and negotiating an option to purchase one of the best parcels of undeveloped land in West Olympia. Our only interest and goal for this project is to improve the quality of life for our fellow residents of West Olympia and the greater Olympia community.

To this end, we have sought a partnership with the City to shape this project over the coming years. We strongly believe that this community project will represent a major step forward for the Olympia community and we welcome your support for the West Side Plaza Project.

Sincerely,

Wes Weller, President
West Olympia Community Visioning Group

Name: Wes Weller, President of the West Olympia Community Visioning Group.

I first moved to West Olympia in 1999 to serve as an associate Pastor at Westwood Baptist Church. I served there for several years until my sixth child was 'in the oven' and I needed to earn a little more money. (We since have had our seventh child.) I switched careers and am now a licensed Financial Advisor with Edward Jones Investments and have a beautiful office on the water front on West Bay Drive. My kids, ages 5 to 17 attend several schools, churches, youth sport groups, et al in West Olympia. I serve on the board of WOBA. I am a West Olympia Rotary Red Badge Member. I serve on the Advisory Board at the Evergreen Christian School (the largest K-8th private school in Thurston County, right here on Black Lake Blvd.) I have coached for the West Olympia Soccer program, the Thurston County Youth Football League, the YMCA Youth Flag football league and for the new basketball league in town called Upward. I have three earned degrees and several professional designations. I have been asked to be an Elder at the current small West Olympia church I attend but have declined based on my other commitments. Our home, which we purchased in 1999, is within 3 miles of the proposed CVG site. My favorite title is 'daddy'.

My motivation for volunteering to be a part of the 'CVG' is simple. I wanted to volunteer in my community to serve others in order to *build relationships* with the people of this community. The quality of 'servants' on the CVG board is incredible. Though different in many ways, we are powerfully united in our desire to enhance our community through the CVG. It is an honor to serve alongside them.

Philip W. Schulte, Vice President

Community Activities:

- President, Hidden Creek Neighborhood Association
- Vice President and Treasurer, Gold crest Neighborhood Association
- Secretary and Steering Committee Member, Coalition of Neighborhood Associations
- Vice President, Community Visioning Group
- Member, Thurston County Sustainability Roundtable
- Gold crest Representative, West Olympia Business Association

A. What the Westside Plaza Means is to me

The Westside Plaza is the most exciting community park opportunity in the history of West Olympia. The vision for this park came from the grassroots effort from citizens in many West Olympia neighborhoods. We believe that development of public gathering places where you “bump into” your fellow citizens and enjoy leisure activities together is an essential part of a healthy and growing community.

Like the Farmers Market, the Westside Plaza can become that focal point for civic life in West Olympia. Also, the Westside Plaza presents an unusual opportunity for a park where citizens can learn, especially about the importance of environmental stewardship, enjoy performing arts from the many talented local residents and to stay healthy and connected to nature through walking trails and a Dog Park.

B. Benefits of a Public Private Partnership

Public-private partnerships allow government to use the talents, professional skills and passion that are already present in the community. The Community Visioning Group Board of Directors includes architects, attorneys, general contractors, financiers, businesspersons, planners, and neighborhood leaders, all of the talents and skills necessary to develop major community projects. Together, we can bring the Westside Plaza to Olympia quicker and less expensively than if the city or the CVG undertook this project alone.

C. Enjoying nature and Improving Public Safety

Those of us who have walked the site can sense the calming effect of nature as we move away from the busy everyday world. Also, citizens using the walking trails and other features of the community park will help transform a vacant parcel of land that has become a haven for illegal drug activity. We ask that the Council consider the many benefits of the Westside plaza and allow this public-private partnership to move forward.

Name: Jim Randall, Secretary, West Olympia Community Visioning Group

My name is Jim Randall. I am an attorney in private practice and a member of Bean, Gentry, Wheeler & Peterzell, PLLC. I live in South East Olympia with my wife and three young children. I have also had an office in West Olympia for more than ten years.

I am deeply committed to working to improve our community and I participate in several community organizations. My partners share my views and our firm is very involved in various non-profits and service organizations in our community.

I have been involved with the West Olympia Visioning Group (CVG) since its inception. Like everyone on our board, my goal is to use my expertise and energy to help create a wonderful public space in West Olympia that will be a focal point for the west side, and a great asset benefitting the whole community.

I don't stand to receive any financial benefit from this project. I have devoted substantial time, energy, and resources to the CVG because I believe in its vision.

Name: Kristin Dunham, Treasurer, Community Visioning Group
Occupation: VP Financial Sales Manager
First Citizens Bank – West Olympia Branch

Affiliations: Board Member – Treasurer, West Olympia Community Visioning Group
Member - Thurston County Chamber of Commerce
Board Member – Treasurer, Olympia Symphony Orchestra
Member – West Olympia Business Association

My husband and I left southern California and moved to Olympia in 1979 specifically, to raise our children in this community. We cherish Olympia because we have lived in and experienced a completely different kind of city living. We have seen what over development and poor planning can do to a city.

I am in favor of the vision the WOCVG has for the property sometimes called the Westside Plaza for several reasons. The Plaza proposes a unique, interactive and environmentally responsible use of the land. To have a piece of property like that available, close to schools, retail shopping and neighborhoods is a rare and exceptional opportunity. The Plaza would benefit the entire community, with environmental education, trails and a new venue for the arts.

I am a board member of the Olympia Symphony Orchestra. I hold on to the hope that one day the Olympia Symphony Orchestra will be able to bring its remarkable talents to residents of Olympia in the proposed amphitheater.

Without a doubt students will benefit from the planned Plaza. With so many schools (elementary through SPSCC), hundreds of students would have access to the Environmental learning center and all that the Plaza has to offer.

I am also a banker with First Citizens Bank and I would like to emphasize that the Bank as a corporate entity supports the vision for the property as well. First Citizens is a commercial bank. We have financed many large commercial buildings, projects and businesses. However, First Citizens sees the value of preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the communities we serve. The proposed purchase is a good deal. It makes sense and it is a responsible use of the land. First Citizens stands in firm support of this project which will benefit the citizens of Olympia and our Olympia customers.

Kristin Dunham - Kristin.Dunham@firstcitizens.com
Home - 360-489-1683
Work – 360-455-6000

Name: Jim Morris

Position: Board Member (Past President)

Occupation: General Contractor

Interest In This Project: With several commercial properties in West Olympia, Jim has been interested and involved in the West Olympia community for over 25 years. He strongly believes in giving back to the community, a belief that was instilled in him by his parents, both of whom were elementary school teachers. He has put this belief into practice with past financial support of organizations that help kids, including the OSDEF's Principal's Checkbook Fund, Griffin School District Education Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Thurston County, among others.

He was able to put this belief into practice in a more applied way when he helped found the West Olympia Community Visioning Group. His vision for this project stems from the belief that all kids should have the opportunity for hands-on learning. When the OSD considered cutting funding in 2009 for Outdoor School, he was motivated to see if there would be a way to provide an opportunity for outdoor education closer to home and run independently from the school district, so that this program would not be an annual budgeting decision. It was with this in mind that he began working with other CVG Board Members to find and acquire a site that is close to area schools with capabilities for indoor and outdoor education.

The proposed site meets all of Jim's criteria for outdoor learning opportunities, including its close proximity to all West Side OSD schools: three elementary schools (Garfield, Hansen, and McLane), two middle schools (Marshall and Jefferson), and Capital High School are all within 2 miles of the site, and one elementary school (LP Brown) is within 3 miles; the variety of natural resources on the 24 acres, and subsequent opportunities for learning; and the possible future creation of an Environmental Learning Center. He is excited to continue working as a Board Member, and hopes to contribute his knowledge and experience in collaboration with the City for the responsible development of this site so that all Olympia School District students will have the opportunity of outdoor education.

Name: Thera Black

Occupation: Transportation Planner

West side affiliation: I live, work, shop and play on the west side

Interest in this project: Thinking ahead about the needs of Olympia's fast growing west side community is a major motivating factor behind my participation in this project. The older 'street car neighborhoods' on the west side, such as the Northwest Olympia neighborhood where I live, enjoy numerous parks, trails, and community gathering places, anchored prominently by Rotary Park and the future West Bay trail. We need to think now about these same amenities for our neighborhoods further west. This parcel provides an opportunity for passive recreation, chance meetings with neighbors, and a natural connection between the active recreation fields of Yauger Park and the environmental richness of Grass Lake. It provides a wonderful environmental learning venue for the many nearby schools and offers a logical connection in the Capitol-to-Capitol trail network, while providing significant hydrological benefit for this part of the City. Intentional open space surrounded by the emerging City, instead of housing for which it is zoned. Public ownership of this site will enrich existing neighborhoods and adjacent employment centers, and over the decades will increase in community value as Olympia's west side grows - that is what I hope to get out of my involvement with this project.

I am a long-time supporter of Capitol Land Trust, Habitat for Humanity, Safe Place, and GrUB. I've been a Big Sister, and am an active member of NWOONA. I'm proud to be a member of the diverse CVG Board that welcomes participation by business, residents, faith-based and civic organizations, and am inspired by the generosity and vision of its members.

Name: Jeffrey B. Glander

Occupation: Landscape Architect

Statement in Support of the Westside Plaza: As a resident and business owner in the Olympia area for over 30 years, I believe strongly in giving back to the community that is both my home and my livelihood. As a member of the West Olympia Rotary, I donated the design work for the Rotary Point area at West Bay Park. My experience is that grass-roots volunteer efforts are almost always embraced and appreciated by the community they serve. I would hope that the City of Olympia would take advantage of this unique opportunity being presented to them.

Name: Laurel Gonzalo

As a freelance musician, living and working in the greater Olympia area I was very interested in the Park Plaza proposal when I first heard about it. The wide range of opportunities of community involvement drew me in. The idea of a high quality, outdoor performance space on the west-side of Olympia as well as walking trails, a dog park, art space and meeting rooms appeals to me. All of these activities will promote a healthy, community interaction. I joined this group to promote a thoughtful, community focused gathering space.

Other community groups I serve are:

- Union Gospel Mission Free Dental Clinic Fundraising Concert planning committee;
- Martin Luther King, Jr Yearly Commemoration planning committee;
- Save Black Lake Community Group; and
- Member/musician of Church of Living Water.

Name: Dale Kamerrer

My interest in this project is as a member of the Rotary Club of West Olympia. I am currently the Immediate Past President of that club. We are constantly on the lookout for projects to support that will benefit the community. The Westside Plaza has all the attributes of the kind of project our club would like to support through funding, planning, and development activities. We have recently participated with other area Rotary clubs in the development of the Rotary Point portion of the new West Bay Park.

The Westside Plaza has similarities to it, and is worthy of our support. I am not a property or business owner in West Olympia, but I do shop there and am familiar with Yauger Park and the Mud Bay Road and Cooper Point Road area. We think the site of the proposed Westside Plaza is ideal for the addition of a public facility that is accessible and integrates well with Yauger and Grass Lake parks.

Name: Janet Jansen Knoblach AIA

Position: Board Member

Occupation: Architect, Partner Morton Safford James III AIA Architects

Interest in This Project: I have worked in West Olympia for almost eight years. I moved my family to West Olympia from King County three years ago when I became a partner in MSJIII AIA. This is a great city with many wonderful features. I joined the Community Visioning Group as an advocate to create a community center that will give West Olympia further expansion and an identity beyond the retail and educational nodes that occur here. A location for nature trails and a community gathering place that is close by for the many families that live here and the many schools on the west side of the city.

I am a Sustainer Member of Junior League of Olympia, The Parents group at Jefferson Middle School, The South West Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Member of the St. Michaels' Parish and a part of the Walnut Loop Neighborhood Association on the west side of Olympia.

Name: Evan Parker

Position: Board Member

Occupation: Commercial Real Estate Broker, Kidder Mathews, Vice President

Interest in This Project: I am a lifelong resident of Olympia. Because of the product type I sell and lease in our market, I have been very active in the West Olympia Commercial Real Estate market. I work with all types of clients from local, to regional, national credit and government. Location, Location, Location is not the only important thing in real estate. Community services are also very important such as restaurants, grocery stores, post offices, parks etc. When employers look at areas within Thurston County for office and retail space, they put a large emphasis on these services. I see this project as an asset to the community and to the economic vitality of not only West Olympia, but Olympia as a whole.

As the Real Estate Broker involved in site selection and negotiation for the CVG, I was not compensated nor will be for any transactions related to this project. I believe West Olympia is the perfect location for such a project. I believe the success of this project will not only better the quality of life of those in our community, but it will also help the economic vitality of our city.

Name: Patty Seib

Position: Board Member

Occupation: Director of Public Affairs, Capital Medical Center

Volunteer Work: Board Member- Capital High School Booster Club, Olympia School District Education Foundation; Member- West Olympia Business Association, Olympia Downtown Association, Olympia Rotary.

Interest in the Project: I initially became involved in the project as the representative for the hospital. Capital Medical Center is deeply committed to this community and the projects which enhance, support and grow it. On the personal side, I have lived in west Olympia for over 20 years and have been actively involved in the schools which my son has attended, most recently Capital High School. I believe this project offers a myriad of resources to not only the surrounding neighborhoods, the numerous schools in walking distance from the site and the community as a whole. I do not stand to receive any financial benefit from this project.