

Olympia Northeast Neighborhoods Alliance (ONNA)

Subarea Plan

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Introduction

The Subarea Plan in Context

The City of Olympia's 2014 Comprehensive Plan states:

"Subarea planning is conducted through a collaborative effort by community members and the City, and is used to shape how neighborhoods grow and develop."

Reasons for Completing a Plan

A subarea plan allows residents to work more *proactively* with city staff to achieve their identified needs instead of *reacting* to new development or proposals in their neighborhoods. Determining needs through neighborhood activism and community involvement and working with the city through its decision-making process benefits all parties. The subarea plan legitimizes a system where community needs are supported and considered before city decisions are made.

Neighborhood planning goes beyond just developing a document that a community can refer to. The process fosters establishing relationships amongst neighbors and learning more about the neighborhood. It also increases the understanding of local government processes, helps identify real issues that our community faces and, through community involvement, helps to prioritize the needs of the community.

Acceptance by City Council of the ONNA subarea plan sets forth an agreement/understanding that our goals, objectives and action steps will be used by city departments as reference points to improve the decision making process.

Summary of Plan Contents

This document identifies the basics for completing a subarea plan which other neighborhoods in Olympia might use as an example for their own subarea planning efforts. It also describes the process that ONNA used to come up with a strategy to develop a plan, our community involvement efforts, a summary of our neighborhood profile and the goals, objectives and actions steps that are important to our community in NE Olympia.

Subarea Profile Summary

The ONNA subarea is a vibrant neighborhood of 7,134 residents located northeast of Downtown Olympia (Figure 1). This civically engaged community is served by neighborhood associations that are formally recognized by the City of Olympia. Most of the area falls within the municipal boundary of Olympia but the subarea also includes land in the Urban Growth Area. Mostly residential in nature, the subarea is bounded by more rural areas to the north and east, an urban corridor to the south, and waterfront to the west.

This part of Olympia has a number of significant natural, civic, and cultural amenities. In addition to following East Bay Drive along Budd Inlet, the subarea is home to a number

of parks, including Priest Point Park and Mission Creek Nature Park. There are a number of urban farms and community gardens in the area as well. Reeves Middle and Roosevelt Elementary Schools not only serve as educational institutions but also provide additional public open space. Roosevelt Elementary is also at the heart of one of the City’s two designated Neighborhood Centers, which also includes a convenience store and bakery/wholesaler. The other Neighborhood Center is anchored by another convenience store.

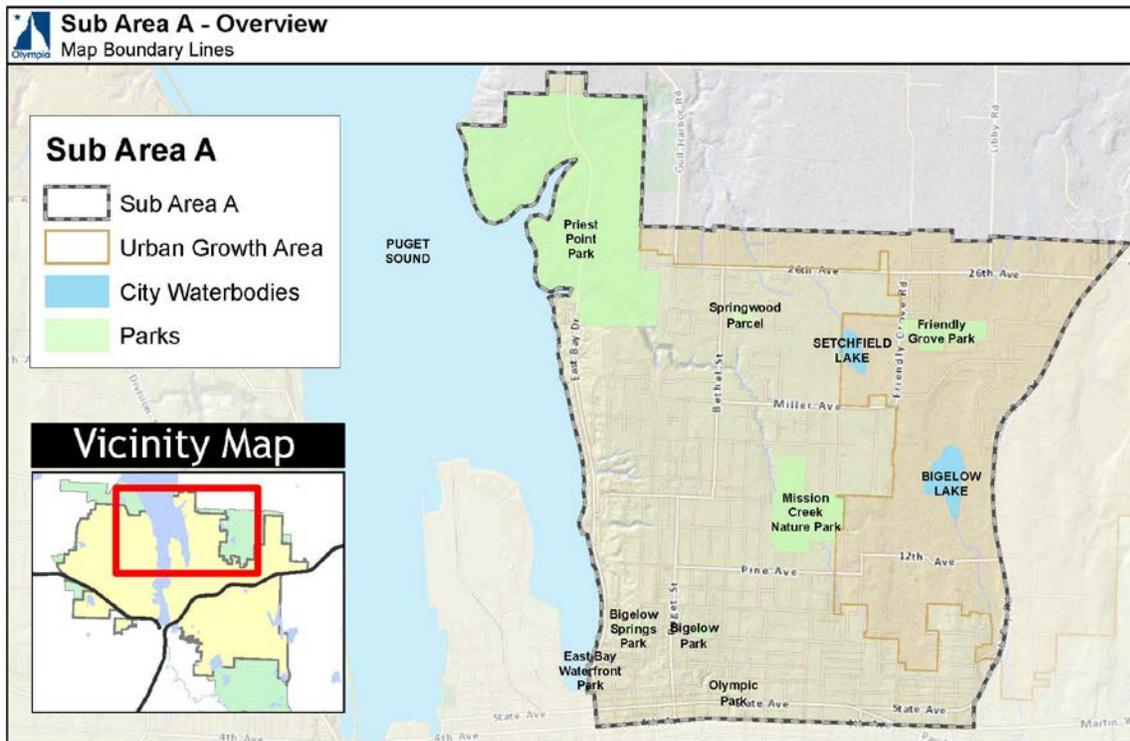


Figure 1: Overview Map of Sub-Area A

With the southwestern part of the subarea in easy walking distance of downtown Olympia, it has long been a residential area and is home to some of Olympia’s most significant historic landmarks including the Olympia Avenue Historic District (dating from 1850 to 1954). Priest Point Park is also of historical and tribal significance. For further detail, see Appendices.

Neighborhood Identity and Description

Bigelow Neighborhood

The oldest neighborhood in Olympia is the Bigelow Neighborhood, lying just east of East Bay. Dan and Elizabeth Bigelow built the Bigelow House on their land donation claim there in 1860. Most of the Bigelow neighborhood sits on this claim today.

This neighborhood boasts Bigelow Springs Park, four artesian wells, the Olympia



Avenue Historic District, as well as dozens of renovated houses built between 1859 and 1930. Soon, the Bigelow Orchard community-garden will be completed. About half of the 297 Bigelow Neighborhood living units are apartments, but there is still much open space. Most of the neighborhood is zoned R-4-8, and our average unit density is 8.1 (14.8 excluding streets, alleys and parks).

Bigelow neighborhood residents are diverse in many ways, yet cohesive. They are vigilant in monitoring impacts to their quality of life, yet tolerant of different lifestyles. They value historic preservation and view preservation, and enjoy being within walking distance from downtown. Many share a hands-on style, building sweat-equity into their homes, volunteering for neighborhood cleanups and park and trail enhancement, and keeping current on City issues. This is a low-crime, pleasant neighborhood where people come to stay.

Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood

The Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood Association (BHNA) formed in 1993. Its purpose is to maintain and enhance quality of life in the Bigelow Highlands neighborhood through collective action of its residents. We strive to strengthen ties among the people in our neighborhood, and between our neighborhood and the city of Olympia. We welcome all residents and business owners in our area as members of this non-profit organization; both renters and property owners are welcome.

The borders of the Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood are Puget Street NE on the West, 4th Ave. E. to the South, Fir Street NE on the East and Yew Street NE on the North. This area, historically known as Working Man's Hill, has affordable housing, good neighborhood schools, and is within walking/biking distance to downtown Olympia, neighborhood businesses and bus routes. Residents of the approximately 550 homes within BHNA boundaries choose to live here because it has a diverse feel, welcoming residents of all ages and interests. Neighbors are friendly and willing to help each other.

BHNA leadership works continually to increase neighborhood engagement and participation, using cost effective means that increase neighborhood involvement, safety and quality of living.

East Bay Drive Neighborhood

The East Bay Drive Neighborhood is noted for scenic views of the Capitol dome, Swantown Marina, the Black Hills and the Olympic Mountains. Olympia's narrowest neighborhood, it stretches from the bottom of Budd Inlet's East Bay to Priest Point Park. There are only four points of entry: East Bay Drive on the north and south and San Francisco and Berry Streets on the east. A northbound East Bay driver will first encounter condominium complexes to the right and Olympia's finest unobstructed waterfront view on the left. Further north are a mostly wooded hillside on the right and

waterfront homes on the left.

The East Bay Drive Neighborhood has about 270 residences, two thirds of which are condominiums. Not surprisingly, a very high percentage of people who live in the Neighborhood are retired.

The Neighborhood does have a few historical homes. Almost all of them are at the north end near Priest Point Park because for most of the last century the view from the south amounted to lumber and veneer mills on what was then a smaller Port peninsula.

During the 1950s and 1960s they shut down as the owners moved to southern states. The last industrial site, Cascade Pole, closed in 1986. In the early eighties the Port dredged out and constructed the Swantown Marina.



The Olympia Area Rowing boathouse is located at the north end of the Marina. For the last 15 years East Bay water views regularly include competitive rowing shells filled mostly with enthusiastic high school students.

Northeast Neighborhood

The Northeast Neighborhood Association (NENA) is the largest of the five recognized neighborhood associations that make up the subarea. Approximately 1,800 residential homes and businesses live within our neighborhood boundary. Many years ago the community was a popular area for cultivation of fruit trees which is the reason for the neighborhood logo.

Popular destinations within our boundary include the San Francisco Street Bakery, Mission Creek Nature Park and the Olympia Little Theatre. It is a popular area for families as two schools are located here: Roosevelt Elementary and Reeves Middle School.

For the past 15 years NENA has been very active in city politics and is always looking for ways to improve the look, livability and walkability of the neighborhood. We have an active and engaged community membership and value the diversity of our community.

Upper Eastside Neighborhood

Situated at the top of the NE hill, the Upper Eastside Neighborhood Association is composed of 400 or so single family homes with a few duplexes here and there.

UENAers value the ability to walk to the goods and service providers situated along their south border. Neighbors walk to work and shop at Ralph's Thriftway, the Bike Peddler, and the Eastside Urban Farm Store, among others.

UENAers value community and come together for neighborhood cleanups, garage sales, and the annual picnic. With the help of Neighborhood Matching Grants, neighbors created a neighborhood logo and welcome signs. Grants have also helped in

beautification projects such as a street mural and community hedgerow plantings.

While UENAers are generally laid-back in regards to the curb-appeal of their neighbors' homes, they are united in their lack of tolerance for crime. In recent years, neighbors have worked with the City to condemn and tear down a derelict drug-house. By following the "friendly neighborhood model" of greeting passersby (as recommended by the OPD), neighbors were able to identify and help Police find a residential burglar within days of the attempted crime.

Anecdotally, homes in the UENA don't often turn over, with neighbors logging years, even decades, in their little corner of Olympia.

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Goals, Objectives and Actions

What is a goal? A broad statement of intention, which can be carried out by defining objectives and actions. The broad statement should link to the Comprehensive Plan in a general area. For example:

- *Goal23 Each of the community’s major neighborhoods has its own priorities.*

What is an objective? A specific, tangible, and measurable standard that will promote the goal. For example:

- *Develop prevention strategies to reduce crime rates by 20% within five years.*

What is an action? A statement describing a task, carried out by a person or group. For example:

- *Work with the Olympia Police Department to increase police patrols and visibility.*

ONNA’s Top Three Goals: Safety, Mobility, Land Use

Using the information gathered from the survey of Northeast residents, we identified the top three issues of interest and concern. We recognize that some of the actions can be completed by ONNA on its own, while other actions require the cooperation of other agencies and groups. We also recognize that the level of the City’s participation in reaching our goals is subject to available funding.

Safety: Reduce personal and property crime in NE Olympia.

- *Objective: Develop prevention strategies to reduce crime rates by at least 20% by 2021, comparing the average rate in 2012-2016 with the average rate in 2017-2021.*

Action Steps	Potential Partners
Create more neighborhood block watch programs.	Code Enforcement, Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Police, Parks
Increase police patrols and visibility.	Police
Abate crime at Bigelow Park.	Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Police, Parks
Improve outdoor lighting to deter theft and increase pedestrian safety at night.	ONNA, Public Works
Establish a welcoming culture throughout Northeast Olympia.	ONNA
Encourage residents to identify problem houses (drug,	Code Enforcement, Neighborhood

nuisance, code violations) and homeless camps and notify police and code enforcement.	Assns, ONNA, Police
Facilitate educating residents about preventing car prowls and home burglaries.	Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Police

Mobility: Promote improvements to make NE Olympia more walkable and bikeable

- *Objective:* Add 5,000 linear feet (nearly one mile) of new sidewalks, pathways and/or bike routes by 2021 to encourage non-motorized transportation.

Action Steps	Potential Partners
Promote neighborhood cleanup days to cut back vegetation obstructing passage on City rights-of-way, including streets and sidewalks.	Code Enforcement, Neighborhood Assns, ONNA
Host work parties to maintain existing trails such as Mission Creek Nature Park and Joy Ave trail.	Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Parks
Develop a safe walking route along 26th Ave from Bethel St NE to the east entrance of Priest Point Park.	ONNA, Parks, Public Works
Develop a scenic overlook and trails along the San Francisco Ave hill.	ONNA, Planning, Public Works
Encourage walkable routes by identifying alternatives to sidewalks, such as pathways along road easements, with a focus on links to parks, schools, and other key destinations in our neighborhoods.	Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Planning, Public Works
Promote aesthetically pleasing walking routes.	Neighborhood Assns, ONNA, Planning, Public Works

Land Use: Promote a place for people to gather by developing a neighborhood center at Bethel St NE and San Francisco Ave NE.

- *Objective:* In collaboration with the City, conduct research, explore development options/limitations/opportunities, and prepare a vision for the neighborhood center by December 2017.

Action Steps	Potential Partners
Establish an ad hoc committee with City and ONNA representatives to develop steps to develop a neighborhood center.	ONNA, Planning, Public Works
Promote mixed-use building that supports community life.	ONNA, Planning
Research the contamination at the old gas station site at 1400 Bethel St NE. Work with other partners to identify funding options for cleanup.	ONNA, Planning, Local gov't, Federal gov't
Seek opportunities for public and private funding to purchase the properties at 1400 Bethel St NE.	ONNA

Implementing the Plan

- Engage with City during annual Capital Facilities Plan and other City plans' development
- Identify community resources and volunteers to assist in implementing goals
- Maintain communication (website, social media, email list)
- Recruit investors or donations for certain projects
- Investigate funding sources other than city funds (EPA, state, county, etc.)
- Transfer information to new ONNA and city leaders to guide future plan implementation
- Meet regularly with city departments to discuss the ONNA goals and ensure the plan is embraced and implemented by city departments

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Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The December 2014 Olympia Comprehensive Plan, Land Use and Urban Design Chapter, Subarea Planning specifically states:

Much of this Plan applies to the entire Olympia community. However, this is a large area of over twenty-four square miles with tens of thousands of residents. Thus, this Plan cannot address all of the details of our community. Twelve planning areas, including downtown, are to be established to provide that opportunity. In general, planning areas will be 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 interested parties to focus on furthering the community's plan for these areas. These subarea efforts must be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

Subarea plans will not be adopted as part of the City's comprehensive plan, but will identify the neighborhood's strategies and actions to help the City prioritize its projects and programs. Creating a subarea plan does not guarantee funding, however the subarea may be eligible for various City neighborhood planning grants and/or private, federal and state funding programs.

Primary Subarea Planning Goal and Policies

GP5 Subarea planning is conducted through a collaborative effort by community members and the City, and is used to shape how neighborhoods grow and develop.

PP5.1 Work with neighborhoods to identify the priorities, assets and challenges of designated subarea(s), as well as provide information to increase understanding of land-use decision-making processes and the existing plans and regulations that could affect them.

PP5.2 Encourage wide participation in the development and implementation of subarea plans.

PP5.3 Define the role that subarea plans play in City decision-making and resource allocation.

PP5.4 Allow initiation of subarea planning by either neighborhoods or the City.

PP5.5 Encourage collaboration between neighborhoods and City representatives.

ONNA's Process for Plan Development

1) Formation of the Subarea team

- Elected officers and board members from each existing, recognized neighborhood were solicited to become members of the new subarea team. A chairman was selected. These subarea team members kept their respective neighborhood

association's (NA) members informed of the subarea team's activities.

- Team members met monthly for three years to get acquainted, encourage cohesion and describe each neighborhood's history, assets, recurring issues and current needs.
- The subarea team identified issues and needs that its component neighborhoods have in common to strengthen and maintain our community. Initial thoughts shared for action needed to meet these needs.
- The team had enough energy, need, commitment, and interest to proceed with involving the community to draft a plan.

2) Recognition by the City Council to Proceed

The team sent a letter to City Council asking to be recognized as a subarea group ready to plan, which would include commitment of budget for City staff time and coverage of some expenses. For Council's response, which outlined expectations, see Appendices.

3) Outreach and Information Gathering

- Demographic profile: City staff and interns used demographic data to create a subarea profile.
- Website creation: The subarea team created a website that describes the subarea and the concept of subarea planning, explains the team's function, highlights subarea assets, enables viewers to give their contact info, educates readers about how City process works, and how the subarea can affect it.
- Information gathering: The subarea team created an online survey to solicit residents' opinions on subarea needs, priorities, and suggested projects.
- Outreach begins: The City created a mailing list of nearly 3,000 subarea residents, businesses, property owners and tenants. A post card was mailed to all on the address list, encouraging them to visit the website, leave their contact information, and fill out the survey. The team created and maintained an email list to keep people informed of progress.

4) How ONNA Used Community Input to Create a Plan

- Each of the five neighborhood associations communicated with their respective Boards and sought individual neighborhood association input.
- Surveys were used to gauge *general support* of the plan
- Yes or no votes were not solicited from NE Olympia residents/businesses to approve the plan. Rather, feedback from surveys informed the process for subarea leaders to come to consensus on goals, objectives, and action steps.
- Based on survey results, the team chose specific projects as a focus to achieve goals. To qualify, a project had to be feasible, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and benefitting the entire subarea. Projects considered fell into one of the following general categories:
 1. Safety needs - improve safety and reduce crime.

2. Mobility needs - improved sidewalks, pathways, and general transportation improvements.
3. Land use needs - an improved neighborhood center which might include better access to a community center, activities, retail services, shops, and/or restaurants.

The team created a draft plan, which was reviewed by residents. Their comments were used to finalize the plan.

References

Boise Neighborhood Planning Guide
City of Eugene, OR
Vancouver, WA Planning Kit for a Neighborhood Action Plan

Appendices

- A. Northeast Area Profile
- B. Letter to Council and Council response letter to ONNA
- C. Postcard Example
- D. Survey Questions Used and Results

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