



7832 Ostrander Court SE, Olympia, WA 98501



P.O. Box 1683, Olympia, WA 98507

March 11th, 2014

The Honorable Stephen Buxbaum, Mayor of Olympia
And Members of the City Council
City of Olympia
PO Box 1967
Olympia, WA 98507-1967

Re: Support for rectangular sports fields near LBA Park

Dear Mayor Buxbaum and Members of the City Council,

We send this letter by resolution of the Board of the Thurston County Youth Soccer Association (TCYSA).

TCYSA is the umbrella organization for seven youth soccer clubs in Thurston County: Olympia United, Black Hills, Chinqually Booters, Prairie, Rochester, Tenino, and Tumwater. We have 5,000 registered players, representing more than 10% of all youth in the 5-18 age group. Youth soccer is a family oriented sport; games involving our teams generally attract support from members of the players' extended families.

There are significant benefits to our community from youth participation in organized sport and TCYSA is working with clubs on improving facilities, growing the volunteer base and recruiting families to soccer. A critical component for youth soccer to take place is the availability of appropriately-sized rectangular fields. The City of Olympia park plan has identified the acquisition of rectangular fields for soccer, football, rugby and other field sports as a high priority goal, but this remains an unfulfilled aspiration.

Olympia United is the largest youth soccer club in Thurston County, with more than 1,500 players. The club's volunteers have worked hard to attract players from the city and it has grown more rapidly over the past three years than the other clubs in our association. Teams from Olympia United will participate in 430 spring league games commencing mid-March 2014. Because of the absence of any City of Olympia fields all of these games will be played in other cities and towns; not one game will be hosted in Olympia. TCYSA currently pays field rental fees to other cities in the county for these facilities, money that could be channeled to the City of Olympia if appropriate sports fields can be provided.

We are writing to express our support for the LBA Woods Park Coalition's efforts to create a multi-use community park from the undeveloped lands near LBA Park in Southeast Olympia. A portion of these lands would provide an excellent central location for the rectangular fields needed for soccer, football, rugby and other field sports.

In particular, the open, flat area along Morse Merryman to the east of the LBA Park parking lot and the Scotch Broom area along Boulevard Road appear to be well suited to the development of rectangular sports fields. The LBA Woods Park Coalition believes such fields can be placed in a manner that will not impair the integrity of the trail system in the beautiful woods and provide for a dog park and other important uses. The trail system would allow parents to get a healthy walk while their children are practicing.

As we understand, time is critical to act to acquire these parcels, as the two land owners who are currently open to selling may proceed anytime with development.

We respectfully request that you proceed as fast as possible to complete a preliminary conceptual feasibility review of this potential uses of LBA Woods for park purposes. Such feasibility review is important for the City to be able to meet deadlines to file applications for state, federal, and county grant funding which would help support the land acquisition.

Olympia is a growing city. The urban growth area is expected to reach 84,000 residents by 2035. The longer the City takes to acquire suitable properties, the less land will be available, especially *larger centrally located* parcels like the LBA Woods. This facility could host tournaments for soccer and other sports, bringing visitors and revenue to the city.

Please provide City Staff the direction and support they need to perform a conceptual feasibility study to acquire the properties and move forward with the creation of a legacy park that will be a joy to thousands of soccer families in the years and decades to come.

Sincerely,



Brian Cregg
President

Thurston County Youth Soccer Association



Carla Borgaard
Manager
Olympia United Soccer Club