Olympia, the capital of Washington, is located at the southern basin of the Puget Sound. The peninsula known as Olympia was “Cheetwood” (the black bear place) to the Coastal Salish who occupied the site for many generations before the American settlement was established. Originally platted in 1850, the town was named Olympia in appreciation of the majestic Olympic Mountains located to the north. The capitol campus includes the Washington State Capitol building, also known as the Legislative Building; the Temple of Justice, which is home to the Supreme Court, Law Library, and Attorney General’s Office; and the red brick Georgian-style Washington State Governor’s Mansion, which is furnished primarily with antiques from the English Regency and American Federal periods. The Medal of Honor Monument, the World War II Memorial, Winged Victory Monument, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Law Enforcement Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, and POW/MIA Memorial are among the many monuments located on the capitol grounds.

Although currently closed for renovations, public programs at the State Capitol Museum and Outreach Center continue. The museum is located in the historic Lord Mansion and is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history and culture of Washington. Gardens featuring native Northwest flora surround the building, which also houses outreach programs of the Washington State Historical Society. Built in the Carpenter Gothic style, the Bigelow House Museum is the oldest residence in Olympia and is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the early history of Olympia and Washington Territory.

Other museums include the Hands On Children’s Museum, Olympic Flight Museum, WET Science Center, and Sand Man tugboat, which is a 103-year-old vessel. Olympia has several performing arts venues. The Washington Center for the Performing Arts hosts the Olympia Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Northwest, Masterworks Choral Ensemble, and Olympia Family Theater. Harlem Productions is a theater company located in the State Theater. Olympia Little Theatre is the oldest theater company in the city, Olympia Chamber Orchestra performs at South Puget Sound Community College’s Minnaert Center.

Neighborhoods

Downtown Olympia primarily consists of governmental and commercial buildings; however, some single-family and multi-family residences are available.

Located near the state capital buildings, the South Capitol Neighborhood has more than 400 historic homes situated on tree-lined streets and built in such architectural styles as Craftsman, Tudor, English Revival, and Victorian or a combination of styles popular before 1930. After World War II, infill homes adopted suburban ranch styles with garages placed in front, unlike older homes with garages located in the rear of the property and accessed by alleys.

The Bigelow and Bigelow Highlands neighborhoods are historic neighborhoods located in Olympia’s Eastside; these areas contain mostly craftsman-style homes in various sizes that were built between the 1920s and 1950s. The East Bay Drive area contains condominiums as well as single-family homes and features views of the city, Capitol Dome, Budd Bay, the marina, and mountains. Providence St. Peter Hospital is located at the eastern border of the city.

In West Olympia, the heavily wooded Ken Lake neighborhood offers a private lake and homes built in ranch and two-story styles that date from the 1960s and 1970s. The Goldcrest neighborhood near Grass Lake is also heavily wooded and features single and two-story homes built in the 1970s and 1980s. Nearby, the recently constructed Evergreen Pointe community has two-story homes on smaller lots. Single-family houses and condominiums are available in the West Bay Drive area that features views of Budd Inlet, Mt. Rainier, West Bay Park, and the downtown area; some properties were recently built and others date to the 1980s. Capitol Medical Center is located at the western edge of the city.

Briggs Village is a new master-planned community consisting of single-family homes, townhomes, and multifamily residences.

Education

The Olympia School District educates more than 9,000 students in 11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. The Olympia Regional Learning Academy provides support for home schooled students, online classes for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, and a Montessori-based elementary school. Tech Prep is an instructional partnership between South Puget Sound Community College and the district’s Career & Technical Education program.

In the city, higher education is available at South Puget Sound Community College, which offers technical and transfer degree programs. Evergreen State College, which is a public liberal arts and sciences college with three graduate degree programs, and Saint Martin’s University, which is a Benedictine-tradition private university with undergraduate and graduate degree programs, are located nearby.

Health Care

Olympia is served by Providence St. Peter Hospital with 390 beds and Capital Medical Center with 110 beds.

City Stats 2012

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<td>Metropolitan Statistical Area Population</td>
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<td>Per Capita Personal Income, Olympia-Tumwater, WA, MSA</td>
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