

Thurston Chamber's Public Policy Report to the Community 2018



Your Business & Community Advocate

Starting and sustaining a business in the greater Thurston County region can be harder than other communities of similar size. Very few regions in Washington offer the perfect storm of culture, politics, and interests that make up the greater Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater region.

For almost 145 years, the Thurston Chamber has championed business and community interests. In 2016, the Chamber added resources and expertise to create a more unified and precise approach to public policy and issue management.

Today, the Public Policy Division of the Thurston Chamber is your community advocate and provides the skill, acumen, and deep community knowledge to help business forge more successful relationships and stronger partnerships across public, non-profit, and private entities.

When differing cultures, politics, and interests collide, the result is usually time consuming, expensive, and uncomfortable. The Public Policy Division of the Thurston Chamber can help overcome well documented challenges sometimes faced by innovative and industrious business enterprises in the Thurston region.



**David Schaffert, Thurston Chamber
President/CEO**



**Doug Mah, of Doug Mah & Associates,
Director of Thurston Chamber's Public
Policy Division**

Inspired Advocacy

Critical to the work of the Public Policy Division is the specific focus on emerging partnerships, process, and projects. We strive to be proactive and continue to refine how and when we engage in critical community discussions. Looking ahead, success will be defined by how well we execute in these strategic areas:

Partnerships

Successful partnerships demonstrate collaborative advocacy and shared ownership of outcomes. Key objectives for the Public Policy Division include providing a coordinated and collaborative framework for shared/regional priorities and support for projects that span public, private, and non-profit interests.

Process

Successful involvement in public process will create opportunities for input and public impact that clearly articulate the long-term implications. Key objectives include providing timely and valid expert review and analysis of regulatory and policy activities that impact private sector and business interests.

Projects

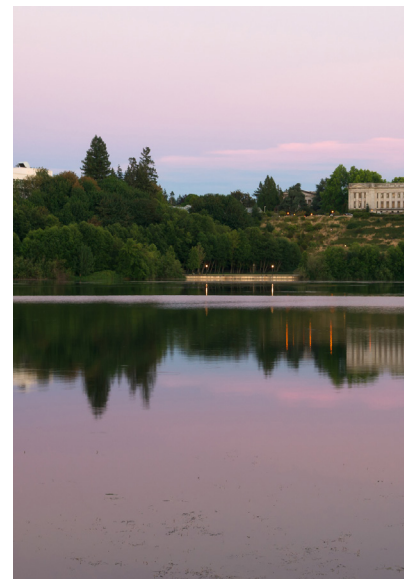
Successful projects are prominent and distinct, create new direct jobs, and demonstrate our shared entrepreneurial culture across the region. Key objectives for the Public Policy Division include providing visible and organized advocacy for projects of regional significance.

Decision makers work their best when they hear and understand a diversity of perspectives. The community benefits when the Thurston Chamber of Commerce is active and visible in the public process. The Public Policy Division helps bring business perspectives, insights, and observations to the public policy discussion and decisions. Sharing our perspectives helps balance competing opinions and work to ensure all voices are heard. With your support, the Public Policy Division helps create a strong, vibrant, and prosperous community.

Building Community

The greater Thurston County Shared Legislative Agenda coordinated by the Chamber's Public Policy Division, advances regional legislative priorities and projects. Working with local governments, we seek to add important infrastructure on which wealth creation will be sustained and enhanced. Often requiring State investment because they exceed local capacity, these critical items provide multiple and broad benefits to the entire region. In 2017 and 2018 the Public Policy Division coordinated successful efforts that include:

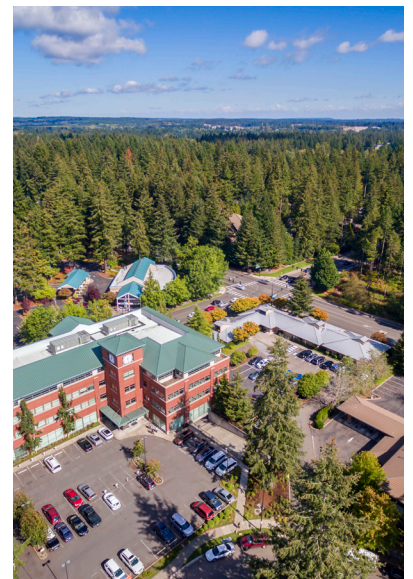
- **Brewing and distilling equipment - Tumwater**
- **Environmental Impact Statement project for Capitol Lake – Olympia**
- **The Southwest Agricultural Industrial Park - Tenino**
- **Begin planning for the modernizing Interstate 5 through Thurston County – Lacey**



Strengthening Advocacy

Public policy is determined by those who participate and share their experiences, ideas, and insights as decisions are made. Increasing the Chamber's presence at public hearings and meetings adds value to the debate by creating a pro-business environment and attitude. In 2017 and 2018, the public policy division mobilized and produced positive public support for projects that include:

- **South Sound Behavioral Hospital - Woodland District, Lacey**
- **Views on 5th – Downtown, Olympia**
- **Westman Mill - East Bay District, Olympia**
- **Brewing and distilling district - Tumwater**



Focus on the Strategic

The Chamber's Public Policy Division finds opportunities to remind decision makers about the needs, abilities, and the capacity of the private sector to help create vibrant communities.

By applying resources, subject matter expertise, and compelling data and analysis, we can influence “game changing” policies around the region. Strategic highlights in 2017 and 2018 include:

- **Habitat Conservation Planning - Thurston County, Tumwater, and Port of Olympia**
- **Shoreline Master Plan - Thurston County**
- **Sea Level Response Planning - Olympia**
- **Briggs Village text amendments - Olympia**

Increasing Resources

Increasing Chamber membership participation ensures that we are building awareness, engagement, and insight in our community that best reflect our values and entrepreneurial work ethic. Since the Public Policy Division's inception, we have added tools and techniques that improves and leverages our greatest asset – our members. New resources added since 2016:

- **Monthly articles in the VOICE Magazine that highlight public policy issues**
- **Membership surveys and polls to better gauge Chamber membership priorities, preferences, and support interests**
- **Enhanced “call to action” emails to members with specific messages & position statements**
- **Timely reminders to vote and engage in the community process**





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