

TO: City Council
FROM: Lisa Parks, City Administrator
DATE: July 8, 2025
SUBJECT: Olympia/Lacey/Thurston County Fan Zone 2026

1) Recommended Action:

This is an informational briefing only.

2) Background:

Every four years, there is an international soccer tournament held called the World Cup. During the summer of 2026, this tournament is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. One of the host cities for the games to be played in the US is Seattle. In addition to being able to watch these matches inside the various stadiums, there are typically a series of "Fan Zones" established around/near the stadiums to allow people to gather and watch the matches together. These Fan Zones are often day-long events that include live music, entertainment and food, in addition to a large screen to watch the event live, as it is happening.

The Seattle-based organizing committee for this event has coordinated and selected nine locations across Washington State where Fan Zones will be established, including Bellingham, Bremerton, Everett, Tri-Cities (Pasco, Richland and Kennewick), Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, Yakima as well as Olympia/Lacey. In Thurston County, the topic of serving as a Fan Zone has been discussed by several local government entities beginning in the fall of 2024. Early in 2025 it was determined that having a non-governmental/non-profit entity to organize and carry out the necessary planning and logistics for these events would be beneficial, and the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce was asked to take on this organizing role.

At a recent meeting that included elected and appointed officials of Thurston County and the Cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater, representatives of the Chamber and the Port of Olympia reviewed the initial details of these events, including an estimate of the expenses and revenues. Because there will be significant resources required to make these Fan Zone events happen – both staffing and financial – the representatives of the three cities and Thurston County agreed to bring the proposal to each of their respective legislative bodies to gauge if there is a willingness to dedicate necessary resources toward this initiative.

While the details are in their initial, preliminary form, to accomplish all that is necessary to implement these Fan Zone events it is important for the Chamber to gain commitments as soon as possible. The summary of resources being requested from Tumwater include staff support to help with planning for and implementing the day-of events, promotional and marketing support through City communication channels, and \$375,000 to be paid in quarterly payments beginning in the third quarter of 2025 and through the second quarter of 2026 (4 quarterly payments of \$93,750 each).

The materials attached to this staff report include additional information and details provided by the Chamber in support of the Council's discussion of this initiative.

3) Policy Support:

TBD, based on Council discussion.

4) Alternatives:

- ☐ Agree to participate as requested
 - ☐ Agree to participate in a modified way
 - ☐ Don't participate in the initiative.
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5) Fiscal Notes:

This initiative includes a request for dedicating a variety of in-kind staff support as well as a request for \$375,000 to be paid over three calendar quarters: Quarters 3 & 4 of 2025 and Quarters 1 & 2 of 2026.

6) Attachments:

- A: Briefing_Olympia_Lacey_Thurston County Fan Zone 2026.pdf
- B: Olympia Lacey TC Fan Zone 2026 Logistics Outline.pdf
- C: Oly Lacey TC Fan Zone_06 23 25 Proposed Budget.pdf