

October 11, 2012

Mr. Don Hoch, Director  
1111 Israel Road SW  
P.O. Box 42650  
Olympia, WA 98504-4250

Dear Mr. Hoch,

We are pleased to present the attached Fort Worden Public Development Authority's (FWPDA) *Draft Business and Management for Fort Worden State Park* (dated October 11, 2012) for your review and consideration. This plan was approved for submission to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission by a unanimous vote of the board of directors of the FWPDA on October 9, 2012. With extensive documentation from local, state and national sources, this 2012 plan indicates a co-management partnership at Fort Worden State Park can be successful for State Parks and can accelerate the development of a Lifelong Learning Center utilizing the enterprise approach possible through the FWPDA. Indeed, the plan finds that Fort Worden is unique in the nation among similar state parks in that the partnership model is not yet in place for this jewel of Washington State's park system.

The plan makes explicit the fact that Fort Worden will always remain a Washington State Park, and will always be accessible to the public. Further, the plan shows why and how State Parks and the FWPDA would divide up responsibilities along the lines of what they are each most capable of doing. State Parks will continue to manage the 300-plus acres of campgrounds, trails, beaches, recreational and public access opportunities, and public safety needs of the entire park. The FWPDA would energize the development of the Lifelong Learning Center in the 100-acre campus area of the park, and would move toward being financially self-sustaining. The plan points to ways that State Parks can control its expenses and receive substantial help on future capital needs for the 100 historic buildings. The plan shows how the partner entities would work together in a collaborative fashion to support each other and to support the upward spiral of capital facilities needs.

The resources and skills that the FWPDA can bring to the park are of immediate and long-term value. The FWPDA has committed to raise over \$550,000 to support the transition toward a working partnership, and to fund needed improvements in the campus hospitality functions. The FWPDA can bring new skills to marketing efforts for increased conferences and events, increased marketing and improvements of the accommodations at the park (especially in the shoulder seasons) and better coordinate the 15 existing partner organizations to expand programs and services at the park.

However, it must be noted up front that financial and governance challenges remain, with additional details awaiting more formal negotiations between State Parks and the FWPDA as they begin to work on specific management and capital facilities plans, the documents that must follow approval of this general business plan. The best news, from the perspective of the board of the FWPDA, is that the ethic of co-management of Fort Worden is already a fact. Top administrative officials of State Parks have been our active and progressive partners in our dozens of hours of discussions, deliberations, board meetings and public forums to date. The groundwork of trust and collaboration has been laid that all of us recognize are essential to the success of this unique venture. We want to particularly thank Assistant Director Larry Fairleigh, Assistant Director Mike Sternback and Regional Manager Ed Girard for their many hours of work with the FWPDA, all of it conducted under the guidance of Director Don Hoch.

Is there more work to be done? *Yes.* Have these two entities built the foundation for that work to be successful? *Yes.*

Some background: The PDA has been working since April to prepare a business plan that addressed the concerns of the Parks Commission regarding the FWPDA's ability to manage the Lifelong Learning Center planned by Parks for Fort Worden. The Governor's Office authored and the Legislature adopted a budget proviso (3ESHB 2127) at the close of the 2012 session calling for a report to the Governor and appropriate legislative committees that includes a governance and business plan and supporting materials on the long-term governance of Fort Worden State Park. This letter and the attached plan fulfill these directives.

This 2012 business plan is the latest and most comprehensive document on the exciting prospect of the State partnering with another entity to help Fort Worden realize its potential. This prospect has been under study for seven years, and included State Parks' 2008 approval of the Lifelong Learning Center vision for Fort Worden. Even then, State Parks found Fort Worden should not be managed as a traditional state park but instead identify a partner capable of an enterprise approach to accomplish the State's mission. Fort Worden is unique in both its opportunity and its challenges. The challenges include how to finance the future maintenance of historic buildings and infrastructure and provide enhanced services and programs to residents of the entire State with little or no General Fund support.

This 2012 business plan has had the benefit of many informed perspectives. The PROS consultant Brian Trusty has done, in our view, an exceptional job of drawing from local, regional and national sources to show the potential for Fort Worden in a larger context of its peer entities around the country. He has also provided powerful data and background to support his basic finding that this partnership can work to the benefit of both entities and the people of the State of Washington. A dozen public meetings have been held since this work began, with commentary from stakeholders, community members and state officials informing important changes and edits (meeting minutes and associated documents can be found at: [www.fwpda.org](http://www.fwpda.org)).

Finally, both OFM staff, Jim Cahill, and an independent business consultant, Prof. Rick McPherson of the University of Washington School of Business, went through the most recent draft in great detail to offer their edits and comments. In the plan before you, approved for submission by the FWPDA, most of these suggestions and edits have been incorporated as appropriate. We are grateful for the intense interest of the public, the stakeholders and the expert reviewers—the plan is better for their input.

The FWPDA, its staff and its consultant, have worked very hard over these past several months to produce a business plan that is realistic, that is logical, that incorporates the best thinking of the public, key stakeholders and expert reviewers, and that can transform Fort Worden State Park into both a center of lifelong learning and a model of a successful enterprise partnership with State Parks. We have accomplished this within the tight deadlines sought by State officials. Recognizing there remains hard work yet to be completed, we are pleased to present this plan to you for your careful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Hill-Finnie, Chair  
Fort Worden Public Development Authority