

# *Why Retire at Ocean Shores, WA*

By trade I am a Systems Engineer so our retirement location search was very detailed, assimilating all the requirements I could get access to via the internet, magazines, and other sources. After 10 years of searching both within the United States and other countries my wife and I are choosing to retire in Ocean Shores, WA. In the U.S., we have checked out numerous certified retirement cities, retirement communities, and potential retirement communities Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas (where we lived for a number of years), New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada. We ended up back in Washington state, for family, friends, and the green outdoors. Within Washington state we have looked at numerous areas and have lived or owned property in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Kittitas counties. We had settled on a retirement location, but then after five years of trying decided to choose one that better fills our needs, wants, and desires located in Washington state, specifically within a four hour drive of Seattle. To do that we researched a number of locations in Washington from 2008 through 2013, determined the pluses and minuses of each location to our requirements, specifically from our subjective perspective and based upon this analysis we selected Ocean Shores, WA as our future retirement location.

Let me first state that whether by intention or not it appears to the consumer that the governments within Washington state, at all levels, seem to portray a very laissez faire attitude toward attracting active retirees to the state for relocation to their retirement destination. The best attempt I have seen so far that is actively describing the benefits of Washington State locations is the 2014 Ocean Shores Community Profile, available on-line (<http://osgov.com/documents/profile2014.pdf>).

If one desires to see a state run program that actively attracts retirees, one can look to Mississippi for a start (<http://visitmississippi.org/retirement.php>). To the best of my knowledge, other states active in this arena include, Texas, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Louisiana. Per [TopRetirements.com](http://TopRetirements.com) the purpose of "these retirement community programs and lists is to encourage economic development. The prospect of 76 million baby boomers nearing retirement has caught the attention of many states and communities because the economic benefits to the places where they end up retiring are enormous. States not only want to encourage new residents to retire in their communities because of the "mail box" economy (pension checks arriving by mail), but they also want to keep existing residents. Louisiana estimates that the economic impact of a retiree household is the equivalent of 3.7 factory jobs. Texas estimates that each retiree household who moves to the state creates 1.5 jobs." I include this because I think that it is time Washington state and its counties and cities get on the bandwagon and advertise what this state has to offer, which is much more than can be ascertained via the internet.

Back to defining/documenting our decision process in selecting Ocean Shores, WA, I have asked myself why it is the place for our active retirement. The answer we have come up with is that it is a series of compromises in the factors of what makes a "good retirement location" or a very livable retirement location that works for my wife and me. Is it the best place in the world to retire? Most probably not, but weighting the positives and the negatives it has more than enough to offer us than any of the alternatives we researched. So far we have found out that Ocean Shores residents are able to enjoy many amenities, for example the ocean, Duck lake, Gray's Harbor, golf course, numerous local tourist activities, the casino, parks, and wild life refuges that surround the community. As far as wildlife goes, I have never before seen a community that is blessed with such a diverse population of wild life. At first I thought the local deer were lawn ornaments, since they are so used to humans being around them.

The purpose of this writing is to provide a compilation of the information my wife and I were looking at about this area during our retirement location search, which was accessed from many on-line sources (I would like to thank all of the on-line sites that provide this information via the internet). Thus this is a small attempt at providing available information in a "one stop shopping" format.

First, a short summary of the "what, where, and why" of Ocean Shores, Washington, which I have extracted from writings available on the internet. It is a small community located right on the coast of the Pacific Ocean in Washington State, some say that it is the most popular ocean community in Washington state. The city occupies a 6-mile-long peninsula bordered by the Pacific Ocean and Grays Harbor (a 17 mile long by 12 mile wide bay, which is located 45 miles north of the mouth of the Columbia River, on the southwest Pacific coast of Washington state.). Ocean shores also includes Duck Lake, which has 278 surface acres and 11 miles of shoreline, and a 23 mile interconnected canal system. The lake offers fair fishing for rainbow and cutthroat trout, largemouth bass, crappie and bluegill. It is open to fishing year-around. There are parks located on Duck lake which provide parking and boat launch facilities. The main boat launch is a very nice concrete launch.

On the main road entering the community (Pt Brown Road) there is a surf shop that rents wetsuits and surfboards by the day or by the hour. If you don't know how to surf, lessons are available.. Bogie or Skim boards can be a great way to enjoy the surf without. There are scooter rentals to get out and see the area, just watch out for the wildlife. If amusement facilities are your choice they are readily accessible. If you fancy kite flying on the beach, there is a fantastic kite shop to get equipped for the days events. If shopping is more your speed there are numerous boutique

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type shops, antique shops, and resale shops available to browse and enjoy. If watching wild life is your cup of tea, there is the Weatherwax forest, the Oyehut wildlife reserve, and just driving around the 121 miles of roads to see deer, raccoons, and many other animals. Or, if you are really daring there is wind surfing on the bay side of the peninsula. If you dream of riding a horse next to the ocean, several stables that bring horses to the beach for rent throughout the summer and fall. If you have a dog, there is an area designated just for dogs so you can allow your pet to run and play in the surf without a leash. On the south end of the peninsula, at Damon Pt. State Park, one can search for agates, which range in color from pale gold to deep orange to carnelian red or even blue. If you need something but can't figure out where to find it, check out the Ace hardware store by the IGA grocery. My wife has to pull me away from there, it is entertaining to visit and just browse.

Per the internet Ocean Shores is Washington State's number one destination for beach enthusiasts, as it features easy access to over six miles of sandy beaches and there are many fun activities for people of all ages that can be done at Ocean Shores. Of course other coastal Washington cities (e.g., Long Beach, Westport) may dispute this fact. Beach combing one can find sea shells, sand dollars, driftwood, and multicolored pebbles throughout the year.

Ocean Shores welcomes more than 3 million visitors annually. Its climate is mild; never too hot or cold. Summers stay pleasantly just under 80 degrees. In the heart of Ocean Shores there is a 121 acre temperate rainforest, called "The Weatherwax" that has many paths to enjoy the flora and fauna of a coastal rainforest, as well as a plethora of wild animals and birds. Wherever you go along the forest areas there are lots of wild animals especially an abundance of deer, which you might just think are lawn ornaments, at least until they move around. The 6-mile-long peninsula of Ocean Shores hosts over 120 miles of flat roadways on which to ride a bike. The beach is a state highway, thus allowing the driving of motorized vehicles by the ocean.

If there is anything a person wants to locate or needs to know about the area, they can go to the very helpful Visitors Center located in the Ocean Shores Convention Center to find maps, brochures and people to answer questions. So far in my experience, the people in Ocean Shores are friendly and welcome tourists part-timers, and locals with a smile.

Features of this area include two lakes, 23 miles of canals, a rain forest in the center of the city, and a wildlife preserve at the south end of the peninsula. Residents and visitors to Ocean Shores will find plenty to do besides go to the beach. Among other options, they can enjoy miniature golf, horseback riding, boating and hiking. Facilities at Ocean Shores include:

- The state provided (1) the Oyehut wildlife recreation area, (2) Damon point state park, (3) the ocean beach, which is a Washington State highway/park, and (4) just outside of Ocean Shores the Ocean City campground.
- The city provided modern convention/events center, numerous hotel complexes, library, movie theater, golf, horseback riding on the ocean beach, multiple scooter/bike rental locations, arcades, bumper boats, go-cart racing, art galleries, antiques, bicycling, billiards, boating, bowling, bird watching, fishing (ocean surf, lake, bay), clam digging, beach combing, and a host of curious "touristy" shops. Additionally, the city has three public parks, including a boat launch, fishing pier, tennis courts, baseball field, playgrounds, picnic areas, and public rest rooms.
- Separate from the city government is the Ocean Shores Community association, which offers, indoor swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, exercise, and sports facilities, as well as outdoor pool and park facilities. You need to check out the scenic vistas from the pools and the hot tub.
- Separate from the state and city government is the Quinault tribe, which has a marina/RV park at the south end of the peninsula and if that isn't enough, just outside of town is the Quinault beach resort and casino, offering a wide range of gaming, entertainment, restaurant, and resort options.

With more than 17 annual shows and festivals, there is always something to do in this small town. Honestly, after trying a suburban retirement location, I wanted a location that gave me the option of being able to attend events that could entertain me, without having to go all over the state. So what does Ocean Shores have to offer, in one word - choices.

We ranked Ocean Shores against factors important for a retirement location, such as (1) affordable housing options for retirement; (2) cost of living (excluding housing); (3) most tax-friendly state/location; (4) best retirement towns for the arts/cultural/entertainment events/activities (e.g., theater, entertainment events, ballet, symphony); (5) best retirement towns for public events; (6) best retirement towns for mobility (e.g., biking accessibility, public transportation availability, walking, vehicle rentals); (7) easy access to out-door physical activities (e.g., golfing, boating, fishing, clamming, bird watching, nature viewing, kite flying, horseback riding, surfing, boogie boarding, miniature golf, go cart riding); (8) easy access to in-door physical activities (e.g., swimming, hot tubing, weight lifting, bowling); (9) easy access to in-door activities (e.g., bumper boats, game arcade, movie theater, antiques, jewelry making, glass blowing, wine tasting); (10) availability of bookstores; (11) availability of shopping; (12)

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availability health care; and (13) availability of sight-seeing activities (within 100 mile trip). When we added up our subjective evaluation of Ocean Shores against these factors, the sheer diversity of what is or may be available in Ocean Shores, made us make our decision to say yes to Ocean Shores.

The below provides the criteria for retirement location livability that we have found published throughout on-line and printed media. Below we show what we think Ocean Shores has to offer, compared to these 19 criteria:

1. **Affordable housing available** - Under a number of view points, Ocean Shores, WA can provide affordable housing, whether one defines that as a \$20,000 plus manufactured home in a residential wooded area, \$70,000 plus "stick built" home in a residential wooded area, a \$100,000 plus home on the golf course, a \$150,000 plus water front home on a canal, a \$250,000 plus lake front home, a \$250,000 plus bay front home, or a \$300,000 to \$900,000 plus ocean front home. Housing is significantly lower in Ocean Shores than in the Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia area. As an example, in 2013 we purchased a new appx. 1900 sq ft lake front home with a dock for \$249,000. So for most people you can afford to live here, and you do get good value for your housing dollar. There is a very wide spectrum of types of housing to choose from and the town is basically one big neighborhood where all types of housing are available.
2. **Cost of living (excluding housing)** - per the on-line cost of living calculators I found the Ocean Shores, WA cost of living is at the lower end of the US national average, about 15% below the Olympia, WA area and 30% below the Seattle, WA area. However, in my experience (only short visits so far) some goods and services are slightly lower, while the price of most food and gasoline seems higher than in the Puget Sound area. It should be noted that most larger purchases need to be made in Aberdeen, Olympia, Tacoma or on-line with delivery to your door.
3. **Tax friendly state/location** - Washington state is one of the few states that does NOT have a state income tax; however there are (1) a state and local sales tax (around 8.7%) on goods and services, less food items and (2) real property tax. Property taxes for Ocean Shores are about \$1.09985 per \$100 assessed valuation (e.g., \$2888.72 for a \$262,645 assessed valuation).
4. **Best Towns For Arts/Cultural/Entertainment Events** - Ocean Shores has a large art community that already exists, including several beautiful galleries as well as many individuals who excel in their artistic media. The Washington coast is known as an artist's community, with art taking form as theater, paintings, of various media, photographs, sculptures, jewelry, chain saw sculptures, sand castles, or written media. The Associated Arts of Ocean Shores (AAOS) is a focal point for the arts at Ocean Shores it is the oldest organization here and has federal non--profit status as a 501 (C) 3. Some of the current artistic activities already in place are: (a) the Monthly Art Walk, occurring on the 3rd Saturday of each month, five galleries and the library; and (b) monthly art shows in the library featuring different local artists. The AAOS is responsible for (1) promoting and organizing the Visual, Literary and Performing Arts; (2) promoting knowledge and informing the citizens of the area of these performing and visual arts; (3) sponsoring programs and activities to be undertaken to facilitate the Arts in Ocean Shores; and (4) leading and cooperating in the development of programs for the visual, literary and performing arts.
  - a. **Live Theater:** Ocean Shores is the home of Stage West Community Theater, which offers live theater. If that isn't enough, in near-by Hoquiam there is the "7th Street Theater" and the "Driftwood Players" in Aberdeen.
  - b. **General Arts:** Ocean Shores offers numerous art galleries, a few include (1) the Gallery of Ocean Shores; (2) Gallerie Timbuktu; and (3) the Muse Art Gallery. From an "arts" perspective there are numerous events occurring in Ocean Shores all year long. The third Saturday of each month is an Ocean Shores Art Walk through some of the local galleries. Nearby Comoplis hosts the Opal Art Glass studio and gallery. April brings the Associated Arts of Ocean Shores "Photo and Fine Arts" show. June brings the Sand and Sawdust festival covering sand sculptors and chainsaw carvers. While September brings the Arts and Crafts festival. Finally, October brings the Whale of a Quilt show. See below for complete event listing.
  - c. **Movies:** Ocean Shores Cinema 3 provides access to current movies.
  - d. **History/Museums:** Ocean Shores offers the Coastal Interpretive Center, the only nature interpretive center on Washington's outer coast. Near by there is the (1) Museum of the North Beach in Moclips; (2) Grays Harbor historic seaport and learning center with the tall ships Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain; (3) Aberdeen Museum of History; (3) Polson Museum in Hoquiam; (4) Lake Quinault Historical Society and Museum in Quinault; (5) Quinault culture museum in Taholah; (6) Westport Maritime Museum in Westport; McLeary Museum at Carnell House.
5. **Best Towns For Public Events** - The Ocean Shores Convention Center provides one of the major focal points for entertaining and educational community events.
  - a. **Ocean Shores Convention Center:** The convention center provides a 29,900 square-foot center, designed to accommodate groups of all sizes, complete with state-of-the-art communications and audio/visual equipment. The following events are planned for 2014: (1) Antique & Collectible Show; (2) Beachcomers' Fun Fair; (3) Razor Clam Festival; (4) Fine Arts, Photography, and Electronic Media Show (largest juried and

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open show on the West Coast); (5) Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Show; (6) Grays Harbor County Expo; (7) Wearable Art Show; (9) Festival of Colors Kite Festival; (10) Flag Day Parade; (11) Sand & Sawdust Festival; (12) Family 4th of July Festival; (13) Ocean Shores Tri & Foot Festival (running, biking and swimming race events! The Ocean Shores Tri & Foot Fest hosts no fewer than eight race events, including a half-ironman relay, half-ironman distance triathlon, an Olympic triathlon, a sprint triathlon, a 13.1-mile half marathon, a 10K and a 5K race, and a triathlon for kids); (14) Sun & Surf Run (Over 2,000 motorcycles converge on the Convention Center. Enjoy a bonfire, fireworks, motorcycle parades, stunt riders and vendors.); (15) Body and Soul Festival; (16) Paddle-A-Thon (an "Old Fashioned Labor Day Picnic & Paddle A Thon"); (17) AAOS Arts & Crafts Festival (the largest Arts and Crafts Festival on the West Coast); (18) the Whale of A Quilt show (Quilt show, with exhibitors, quilt sales, and gift shops); (19) Irish Music Festival (The largest Irish Music Festival on the West Coast of the United States! Venues in Ocean Shores and Hoquiam, Washington - 6 Stages - 4 Venues - 25 Great Bands 6 Stages - 4 Venues - 25 Great Bands); (20) Winter Fanta-Sea Arts & Crafts Show (Over 70 arts and crafts booths feature thousands of unique handmade items just in time for the holidays. Over 70 arts and crafts booths feature thousands of unique handmade items just in time for the holidays.).

b. **Other Sponsored Events:** Ocean Shores has numerous other events through the year, including, but not limited to: (1) The Chocolate on the Beach Festival; (2) "Old Fashion Labor Day Picnic"; (3) Clam Digger Rod Run; and (4) Quinault Beach Resort and Casino's High Rollin' Hot Rods at the Beach.

6. **Best Towns For Mobility** (e.g., biking accessibility, public transportation availability, walking, vehicle rentals) - to me mobility includes six major areas: (1) a good roadway system that is driveable; (2) accessibility to good public transportation that is convenient and reliable; (3) a good roadway system that provides biking accessibility (Can you ride a bike anywhere you want?); (4) an infrastructure which provides the ability to rent a vehicle if necessary; (5) an infrastructure which provides the ability to walk where you need (Can you walk to the store, recreation, the movies, parks, etc.? Or do you need to drive everywhere.); and air transportation accessibility.

a. **Driveability:** All of the over 120 miles of flat roadways within Ocean Shores were repaved during the 2007 to 2009 time period, with funding through a Local Improvement District (LID). So the roads within the town are in very good condition, especially compared to other cities in Washington state. The two major north/south thoroughfares (Ocean Shores Blvd and Pt Brown road) are mostly four lane divided roads. The rest are two lane roads. The old Pt Brown road runs parallel to the new road for a long stretch and provides a nice path for biking or walking.

b. **Public Transportation:** Ocean Shores is serviced by the Grays Harbor Transit system, currently including Route 50 (Ocean Shores to Aberdeen, with stops in between) and Route 51 Local Ocean Shores "Dial a Ride".

c. **Biking:** Ocean Shores offers excellent biking with very little elevation change (Ocean Shores is virtually flat), and with numerous bike trails. The roads have bicycle lanes throughout the city area for safe biking. With 120 miles of picturesque roadways, this is the perfect place to bring your bikes for a relaxing sojourn. There are marked bike routes, and some of the best and most scenic are on the bay side of Ocean Shores. Cycle your way from one side of the peninsula to the other, stopping to appreciate the sites normally missed in a car. Most of the major roads have marked bike lanes for your safety. With more roads than many large cities, you'll want to bring along a map just in case you lose your way. If that is not enough, there are numerous businesses in Ocean Shores where you can rent bike of all sorts, 2 wheelers, tandem 2 wheelers, three wheelers, and four wheeled "surreys".

d. **Vehicle Rental:** For larger vehicle rentals there is a U-haul in Ocean Shores. The Home Depot in Aberdeen has a rental truck to pick-up your large purchases there. There are a few businesses in Ocean Shores where you can rent mopeds, 3-wheelers, bicycles, and 4-wheeled surreys for travel about town and/or the beach.

e. **Walkability:** One can walk around the main district in Ocean Shores and to/from the beach - many do. To be fair, currently there are not enough sidewalks. The city has recognized this issue and established Ordinance 916 calling for "Complete Streets", which describes a comprehensive, integrated transportation network with infrastructure and design that allows safe and convenient travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicle drivers, transit users, emergency service providers and freight. The city is also working on innovative solutions such as a boardwalk.

f. **Air Transportation:** There is a General Aviation airport within Ocean Shores city limits. Commercial Air Transport is available via either Seattle-Tacoma International airport (Sea-TAC, WA appx. 120 miles/2.5 hours) or Portland International airport (Portland, OR appx. 166 miles/3 hours).

g. **Other:**

(1) **Moped riding on the beach:** It's a total blast bombing down the beach on a moped, and there are several places in Ocean Shores where you can rent mopeds by the hour. The rental shops also rent out all sorts of other pedal-operated vehicles: 3-wheelers, bicycles, and 4-wheeled surreys that up to four people can ride which don't operate too well on the sandy beach but are much fun pedaling around town.

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Located throughout downtown Ocean Shores are vendors who rent novelty bikes, surreys, carts and mopeds. These rentals are nearly as popular as horseback riding on the beach. They are rented in 30 minute increments. Moped rentals do require a driver's license to rent and drive, and they must obey the laws of the road.

(2) **Horseback riding on the beach:** Horseback riding is available on the beach where you ride slowly down the beach as a group. Horseback Riding is available on the beach as well as trail rides. A very popular activity for non-riders as well as the pros. Available year round, but call to make sure. Chenois Creek Horse Rentals (360) 533-5591. Honey Pearl Ranch offers horseback riding for children and adults. You can ride on the ranch year-round, on the beach from February to September or choose pony rides for children under age 7. To ride the horses, the weight limit is 240 pounds, only one person is allowed on a horse at a time, and horseback rides on the beach must be at a walking pace. No running or cantering on the beach is allowed. Honey Pearl Ranch 32 Humptulips Valley Road Ocean Shores, WA 98569 360-580-1150 honeypearl.com.

(3) **Boat Rentals.** Check out the Ocean Shores Electric Boat Company (located at 952 Point Brown Ave SE, Ocean Shores). Ocean Shores Electric Boat Co. rents all-weather, 21-foot electric Duffy Cruisers. The boats hold up to 10 people. They're stable and easy to maneuver on Ocean Shores' 23 miles of interconnected waterways. Livingstons, canoes and paddle boats are also available to rent.

7. **Out-Door Physical Activities:** Ocean Shores provides easy access to a very wide range of out-door physical activities, for example:
  - a. There is golfing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, clamming, bird watching, nature viewing, kite flying, horseback riding, surfing, flying, wind surfing, swimming, fishing, boogie boarding, tennis, skate boarding, miniature golf, and go cart riding.
  - b. The Ocean Shores Community Club's park system provides access to two outdoor heated swimming pools (equipped with indoor facilities providing changing rooms, showers and lockers), picnic areas, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis court, pickleball courts, horseshoe pits, and a pond and nature trail.
  - c. The Pacific Paradise family fun center includes a 36 hole miniature golf course and a 90,000 gallon bumper boat pond.
  - d. The Playtime Family Fun center includes four acres of fun, including out-doors go-karts.
  - e. About the only outdoor activity you can't do in the city limits is hunting, but that is available just a short distance away on the Olympic Peninsula.
8. **In-Door Physical Activities:** Ocean Shores provides easy access to in-door physical activities for example:
  - a. The Ocean Shores Community Club was established in 1960 to provide recreational facilities for the benefit and enjoyment of its members. For example at the Bayshore Clubhouse (which has a beautiful bay view) access is provided to indoor heated swimming pool, saunas, spa, changing rooms with showers and lockers, gymnasium, fitness center, meeting room, TV room, outside deck and play areas, game room, a cafe with free wireless Internet service, fitness classes, hobby groups, special events, group travel opportunities, luncheons and much more.
  - b. The Shores Bowl, in Ocean Shores, WA provides access to bowling, pool (billiards), in door shuffleboard, darts, "Tap Room" bar, and pizza.
  - c. The Pacific Paradise family fun center includes a 5000 sq ft entertainment complex with video games, air hockey, pinball, and much, much more.
  - d. The Playtime Family Fun center includes four acres of fun, including in-doors (1) bumper cars; (2) mechanical shark rides; and (3) the Peppermint Parlor (houses a large Gaming Arcade featuring Air Hockey, arcade bowling, Western Shootout, and many video games).
  - e. The Ocean Shores Cinemas provides a three screen movie theater and all that comes along.
9. **Other In-door Activities:** Ocean Shores provides easy access to other "non-physical" in-door activities (e.g., antiquing, shopping, jewelry making, glass blowing, wine tasting):
10. **Bookstores/Library:** Ocean Shores provides easy access to a community public library and multiple book stores, providing a wide range of services as well as books:
  - a. Community Library provides books, movies, access to programs for adults, teens, and kids, and art.
  - b. There are at least five local bookstores as well as local authors, and a local book publishing company.
11. **Shopping:** Ocean Shores provides easy access to numerous shopping stores - The "Manta" search engine listed 93 results under shopping and stores addressing everything from bakery to sporting goods, to bicycles, sewing, gifts/novelties, to book stores. But if they meet all of your needs is up to you to determine. For example:
  - a. **Grocery:** There is one major grocery store, the IGA and one Farmer's Market, but Hoquiam and Aberdeen are within a 25 mile drive. Within that area there are numerous grocery stores, e.g., Top Food, Swansons, WalMart, Red Apple Thompson's, Grocery Outlet, Thriftway, Safeway, and many, many more. Also there is Michaels Farm Fresh Meats located in Aberdeen and multiple Farmer's Markets. We talked to people who drive to Lacey to go to COSTCO or to Joint Base Lewis/McChord (JBLM) to go to the commissary.

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- b. **Retail:** There is one major retail store, the ACE hardware store (which has a lot of what you would be looking for), but Hoquiam and Aberdeen are within a 25 mile drive. Within that area there is a mall as well as numerous retail stores, e.g., Sears, JC Penney, WalMart, Home Depot.
- c. **Farm Fresh:** Within the county of Grays Harbor, in which Ocean Shores is located there are over 30 locations to get "farm fresh" produce, meats, flowers, seafood, and Christmas trees. See: <http://visitgraysharbor.com/files/2013/04/2013FarmFreshBrochure.pdf>
- d. **General:** Lots and lots of tourist gift shops abound in the town of Ocean Shores, and you guessed it: most of them sell beach related items! Check out the two-dollar store where you can buy puke shell necklaces, sun glasses, sand pails, and kites which typically cost much more in all the other shops. Lots of pirate-related gear for sale here, for you pirate types. There's also one large grocery store in town and several smaller convenience stores, so you really don't need to bring any food or snacks along with you on your trip, it's all here, everything you need! There is a Lumber store (Levee Lumber) and the largest ACE hardware store I have ever seen.
12. **Health Care:** Ocean Shores itself provides limited but sufficient access to health care. There are two medical clinics (SeaMar Clinic, Lighthouse Family Clinic), a chiropractic clinic (North Beach Chiropractic), a dental clinic (Ocean Shores Dental Clinic), a physical therapy clinic, an optometrist and a pharmacist within Ocean Shores. However there are numerous medical clinics, doctors, dental clinics and dentists as well as a hospital in the greater Hoquiam/Aberdeen area, about short a 25 mile drive. Ocean Shores also contains the Harbor Point Shores (Emeritus) Retirement and Assisted Living which provides personalized care and services. Should it be necessary to go to the hospital on an emergency basis there is an outstanding EMS service at Ocean Shores to get you to the Grays Harbor Community Hospital. In the rare cases that the medical need is beyond the Grays Harbor Community Hospital the EMS either takes you to St Peter's Hospital in Olympia or you are air lifted to one of the outstanding trauma hospitals in the greater Seattle area. It is up to you to determine if this meets your needs. People we have talked to go to doctors located in either the Hoquiam/Aberdeen area, Olympia/Lacey area, JBLM, American Lake VA center, Tacoma area, Seattle area, or the Bellevue area. They say they just make a trip of it. For us, our opinion is that proximity to medical care is probably the weakest area for Ocean Shores, but it we judged that it acceptable as is for us.
13. **Sight-Seeing Activities** (within 50 mile trip): Using Ocean Shores as your kick off location you can sight see via, RV, motorized vehicle, bike, commercial boat, canoe/kayak or hiking.
- a. **Walking/hiking:** Just within Grays Harbor county there are over 40 walks and trails that you can take. Going a little further there is Lake Quinault (It lodge and hiking trails); Kalaloch (Its lodge and beaching hiking around Kalaloch rocks); the HOH rain forest, Forks, WA (if you are in to the Twilight series of books/movies or logging); SolDuc Hot Springs Resort; Lake Crescent Lodge; the Elwa dam restoration; Hurricane Ridge; Dungeness wildlife refuge; Victorian Port Townsend and its coastal artillery Ft Worden; or take a ferry from Port Angeles to Victoria British Columbia.
- b. **Biking:** The **Olympic Discovery Trail** is a designated non-motorized, multi-use trail spanning the north end of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. The route spans 120 miles between Port Townsend, Washington and La Push, Washington. As of 2011, 40 miles of this trail are complete between the towns of Blyn and Port Angeles.[1] The remainder of the route can be ridden using a combination of public roads. Grays Harbor county has the "**Pedal Our Paths!**" tour itinerary to hit some of the favorite bicycling areas in Grays Harbor County, WA. Ride the Hurricane is an annual event allowing bikers to have a recreational bike ride up the 12 miles of road up to Hurricane Ridge and its magnificent vistas.
- c. **RV/ motorized vehicle:** Ride US Hwy 101 with dozens of great routes that spoke off into the Olympic Peninsula or WA State route 112, the 250 curve, 60 mile long National Scenic Byway to Cape Flattery. While driving US 101 stop at Lake Quinault (It lodge and hiking trails); Kalaloch (Its lodge and beaching hiking around Kalaloch rocks); the HOH rain forest, Forks, WA (if you are in to the Twilight series of books/movies or logging); SolDuc Hot Springs Resort; Lake Crescent Lodge; the Elwa dam restoration; Hurricane Ridge; Dungeness wildlife refuge; Victorian Port Townsend and its coastal artillery Ft Worden; or take a ferry from Port Angeles to Victoria British Columbia. Or you can head south to the Cranberry coast of Washington, out to Westport to the fishing village, down to Long beach and FT Columbia state park and on to Astoria, OR. Or you can head east to Mt Rainier or Mt St Helens.
- d. **Commercial Boat Tours:** Drive to the southbeach at Westport, WA and board one of the many commercial fishing boats that also give boat tours.
- e. **Canoe/Kayak:** There are plenty of opportunities to paddle around Ocean Shores, either on the ocean, on the bay, on the lakes, or on the lengthly canal system. Also there are numerous opportunities to paddle in Grays Harbor county and the Olympic Peninsula.
14. **Scenery:** What can you say about the scenery at Ocean Shores - you have the Pacific ocean, a beautiful bay, multiple lakes, views of the Olympic mountains and if you have good view of Mt Rainier and the Olympic mountains. If you want really good bay/mountain views go to the Ocean Shores Community Club's Bayshore clubhouse or to the "airport" and look out across the bay, what more could you ask for?

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15. **Safety/Crime:** Ocean Shores has its own police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) departments. In addition to the commissioned police officers, the police department has volunteers that staff programs such as Neighborhood Watch. So there is active community involvement. According to City-data.com the crime rates have dropped every year since 2001 and in 2011 (last year recorded) was about 50% of the national average, with violent crime being significantly below the national average, while property crime bounces around the national average, some years (e.g., 2001 through 2007 and 2010) being above. Official Ocean Shores crime statistics are available at <http://www.osgov.com/police/stats.html>
16. **Good neighbors:** So far the locals seem to be very welcoming to us as outsiders, especially if you intend to become a "full-timer" as opposed to a part-timer or tourist. Our next door neighbors seem really nice and very friendly, they even provided us with pictures of the house we bought as it was being built. I really appreciated them for doing this. It seems that Ocean Shores contains a very wide spectrum of people politically, socially, and religiously, so finding a good fit here should not be very difficult, as long as you are friendly. From the Community Club news paper it seems that there are a lot of other transplants, who probably are interested in making new friends. As to whether or not there is the right blend of diversity/homogeneity, that is for each person to decide for themselves. We think so.
17. **Weather and Climate:** Ocean Shores, WA climate is mild; never too hot or cold. Summers stay pleasantly just under 80 degrees. Winters may occasionally have a snow and freezing weather. Ocean Shores, WA has a good mix of winter and summer temperatures, with very little noticeable humidity. Unlike most of western Washington Ocean Shores doesn't have a close mountain range to "back-up" the clouds and the rain and since it is right on the coast there is enough breeze to move the clouds along the clouds and the rain – so it seems to be a good mix of sunshine and precipitation.
18. **Recreation:** As identified above, Ocean Shores has the beach, the bay, lakes, parks (state, city, and community club), the community club, and a golf course, which provide a lifetime of recreational opportunities. Additionally, there is the Ocean Shores Community Club's Bayshore clubhouse, and a senior center. There is an Elks lodge, an Eagles lodge, and a Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) unit. Plus there are numerous religious groups, a senior center, and various theme Pubs. So there are a vast array of recreational opportunities.
19. **Restaurants:** From what we have experienced so far, Ocean Shores has a good selection of restaurants within the city limits and nearby cities. Per the Ocean Shores community profile the community offers 28 restaurants with a wide variety of choices — fine dining, coffee houses, ice cream parlors, pub food, family fare and fast food. The only chain restaurants are fast food (e.g., McDonalds, Subway). There are standalone restaurants, Pubs, Hotel restaurants, and Resort/casino restaurants. There are many different types of restaurants available and we have been satisfied at all of the ones we have tried so far.