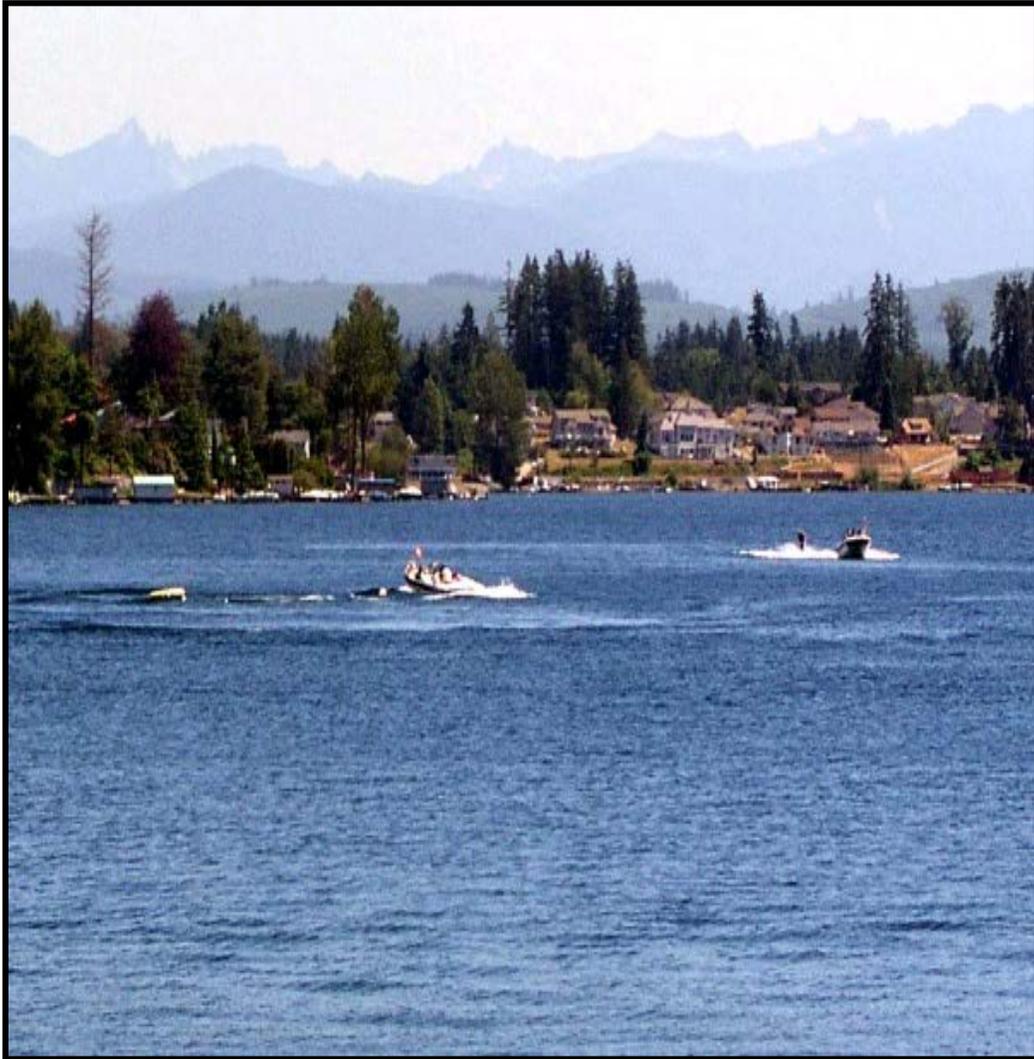


Chapter 1: Introduction





CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A VISION FOR PLANNING

The city will integrate the Growth Management Act (GMA), defined in Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), as an essential planning framework for the Lake Stevens Comprehensive Plan. The GMA principles will help direct community, regional, and statewide efforts to enhance the quality of life, environmental protection and economic vitality for the city, its residents and its interests in and around the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area and Rural Transition Area as a unique lakeside community.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Lake Stevens is a rapidly growing community located around the northern, western and northeastern banks of Lake Stevens in central Snohomish County and situated on a gently sloping terrace rising east from the flood plain of the Snohomish River to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. The current city boundaries, established in December 2009 following a series of annexations between 2000 and 2009, encompass an area of approximately 5,760 acres (8.9 square miles). Small pockets of unincorporated areas comprise the remainder of the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area (UGA) with an area of 2,192 acres (3.4 square miles), including the lake. The current Lake Stevens UGA provides sufficient capacity to accommodate population and employment forecasts considering environmental constraints, existing development, infrastructure and services, existing and/or planned transportation corridors and areas where urban services could be extended logically. Beyond the UGA, the city and Snohomish County have established a Rural Urban Transition Area (RUTA) as a future planning area to accommodate growth beyond the 20-year planning horizon.

The population of the Lake Stevens area, both inside and outside of the city has been steadily increasing since the city incorporated in 1960, when the city's population was 900, through development and annexation. The housing stock is relatively new, with significant portions of the housing inventory built in each subsequent decade since incorporation. In 2014, the estimated population was 29,170. Snohomish County predicts the Lake Stevens UGA population will grow by 5.5 percent through 2035 to a population of 46,380. A clear community vision, consistent with state and local planning polices will be essential to ensure population and employment growth occurs successfully over the next 20 years. The city also



recognizes that it must anticipate growth in the UGA and RUTA and plan jointly with Snohomish County to ensure that these transitional areas can responsibly accommodate future urban capacities in the future. Therefore, the city's vision should encompass the lands bordering the city and consider these areas in future planning studies.

The city's primary development pattern is that of residential suburban community, which belies its roots as an early 20th century logging and mill town. Amidst the newer subdivisions, shopping centers, schools and state highways, there are a few clues remaining of its earlier form. At the south end of downtown where the Rucker Mill was located in the first half of the 20th century are the remaining pilings that once supported the mill over the lake. Lakefront homes and public open space now cluster where the heavy industrial activity once occurred. Most of the historic downtown is now gone, although a few of the buildings remain and are used for commercial and civic purposes.

There are a few significant areas where single-family residences do not predominate including the downtown business district, the Hartford Industrial area and the Lake Stevens Center (AKA Frontier Village). Over the next few years, the 20th Street SE Subarea will also experience commercial and industrial growth. This dynamic will continue to evolve as the city's growth centers grow and develop.

PLANNING CONTEXT

State Planning

In 1991, the Washington State Legislature enacted the GMA to guide local planning. The GMA recognizes the diversity of challenges facing jurisdictions depending upon population and growth rates. Within comprehensive plans, jurisdictions develop goals and policies to guide local decision-making for growth, development and necessary public services and facilities. The GMA directs local jurisdictions to consider specific planning goals (RCW 36.70A.020) to guide policy development and the implementation of development regulations:

1. Guide urban growth to areas where urban services can be adequately provided.
2. Reduction of urban sprawl.
3. Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems.
4. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population.
5. Encourage economic development throughout the state.
6. Assure private property is not taken for public use without just compensation.
7. Encourage predictable and timely permit processing.
8. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries.
9. Encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities.



10. Protect the environment and enhance the state's quality of life.
11. Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process.
12. Ensure adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development.
13. Identify and preserve lands and sites of historic and archaeological significance.
14. Support the goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act as set forth in RCW 36.70A.020.

These planning goals have been the basis of the city's comprehensive planning process and development regulations, as articulated through inclusion of the following mandatory planning elements (RCW 36.70A.070) into the city's plan:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Land Use | 5. Rural Element (counties) |
| 2. Housing | 6. Transportation |
| 3. Capital Facilities | 7. Economic Development |
| 4. Utilities | 8. Parks and Recreation |

The Lake Stevens Comprehensive Plan addresses the applicable elements as specific chapters. The GMA also allows jurisdictions to consider optional elements (RCW 36.70A.070) related to conservation, solar energy, recreation and the adoption of specific subarea plans that affect the physical development within its jurisdiction. The city will consider optional conservation and sustainability goals within specific chapters. Recreation goals and policies are provided within the Parks and Recreation chapter. Finally, the city has adopted two subarea plans and may consider additional subarea plans for defined growth centers. The city believes that its updated Comprehensive Plan, as amended, meets the consistency requirements under GMA. Future decision-making and interpretations of its policies will adhere to these consistency requirements.

Another requirement of the GMA is to coordinate planning efforts with other jurisdictions and agencies. This is an important step for the city of Lake Stevens because within the city and its UGA there are many special purpose districts, and as mentioned previously, several unincorporated pockets and transitional areas remain under Snohomish County authority, and Lake Stevens has neighboring cities to the northwest and south. Long-term planning for the city is coordinated with Snohomish County, the Lake Stevens School District, Lake Stevens Fire, the Lake Stevens Sewer District, Snohomish County PUD, neighboring cities and others.

Regional Planning

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is an association of cities, towns, counties, ports, and state agencies that serves as a forum for developing policies and making decisions about regional growth and transportation issues in the four-county central Puget Sound region.



PSRC administers distribution of transportation funds, develops a regional transportation plan, coordinates economic development activities, provides data and forecasting information, helps ensure coordination between jurisdictions' land use and transportation plans, and provides technical assistance to its members.

The primary coordination tool PSRC uses as endorsed by local governments, public agencies, interest groups, and individuals to implement the GMA in the Puget Sound is the regional planning document, VISION 2040. VISION 2040 establishes the regional vision for the Puget Sound to augment GMA goals related to environmental protection, focused development patterns, housing affordability, sustainable regional economy, integrated transportation systems and adequate public services. VISION 2040 emphasizes growth centers as areas to concentrate future employment and population growth, linking regional and local centers with efficient multi-modal transportation systems, promoting sustainability in decision-making and allocating population and employment growth within regional geographies based on community size. The PSRC strategy reinforces GMA goals to contain sprawl and encourage development where public facilities and services exist or can be provided efficiently.

Countywide Planning

The GMA requires counties to adopt countywide planning policies in cooperation with affected cities (RCW36.70A.210). Countywide planning policies provide a local planning framework to ensure consistency among cities and a regional vision. Snohomish County facilitates collaborative countywide planning through Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), which is comprised of staff, local citizens and elected officials from every jurisdiction. The cities, towns, tribes, and county have worked together through SCT since 1989 to address local planning issues. SCT provides a forum in which jurisdictions can address growth management issues best suited for multi-jurisdictional coordination in such functional areas as transportation, utilities, housing and population and employment distribution.

The GMA requires each local comprehensive plan to demonstrate consistency with the countywide planning policies. The SCT Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) forwarded amendments to the countywide planning policies to the SCT Steering Committee, comprised of elected officials, in 2013 to recommend approval to the County Council. The Snohomish County Council subsequently adopted these policies. The Snohomish County countywide planning policies provide guidance in the planning process for local jurisdictions.

The county's plan addresses many issues in the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area that are similar to those addressed in the city's updated plan.



Lake Stevens Planning

Under the GMA, jurisdictions are required to develop comprehensive plans as a framework to manage localized growth over the next 20 years. All of the planning mandatory elements must be integrated into a single, internally consistent plan, which balances the goals in each element and considers regional and countywide planning strategies and policies. Done correctly, the Comprehensive Plan should be an effective tool in implementing state, regional and countywide regulations and goals while achieving the community's vision.

The city of Lake Stevens adopted its initial GMA Comprehensive Plan in 1994 to address growth in the city and its UGA. In the initial adoption of this plan in the mid 1990's, the city held numerous public "visioning" exercises within the city and the UGA for the purpose of obtaining input from the community, public meetings, resident mail-in survey and public hearings. Local jurisdictions in Snohomish County are required to update their plans every eight years after June 2015. The first major update to the Lake Stevens Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2006, which highlighted the city's changing status from small community to a growing city. This plan introduced and described specific growth centers as the focus for the plan following workshops and meetings by the Planning Commission and direct contact with affected property owners. The 2006 plan recommended developing subarea plans for the defined growth centers including the Downtown, South Lake (AKA 20th Street SE Corridor), Frontier Village (AKA Lake Stevens Center) and the Hartford Road Industrial Area. Each subarea plan will focus on a mix of uses to enhance the character and economic quality of those areas. In 2012, the city adopted two subarea plans that identify specific preferred development strategies for two of the city's growth centers. This process went through significant outreach culminating in the adoption of two Planned Action subareas.

The GMA recognizes that cities should be the primary providers of urban services. It also establishes a necessity for providing adequate land to support 20 year growth targets, including the city and the UGA, which acts as a future annexation area. As mentioned previously, the RUTA is a future planning area outside of the UGA to accommodate growth beyond the 20-year planning horizon. The Countywide Planning Policies establish provisions for joint planning in these transitional areas. Snohomish County remains the controlling agency until annexation into the city is complete. The city and county executed a Master Interlocal Agreement in 2005 setting the terms for future annexation of unincorporated areas into the city. As part of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, the city developed an annexation plan that calls for eventually annexing the remainder of the unincorporated area within its UGA. Figure 1.1 shows the city's proposed Annexation Plan. On December 31, 2009, all of the UGA west and southwest of the lake was annexed. Only the areas southeast of the lake, small areas east of downtown and one parcel west of Lundeen Parkway are still located in the unincorporated UGA. The intent of the future annexation efforts will be to ensure practical boundaries to provide public services in a logical, effective and efficient manner. It has become apparent that the city and adjacent unincorporated areas function as a larger community and should work toward common goals to maintain and improve the quality of life as a single entity.

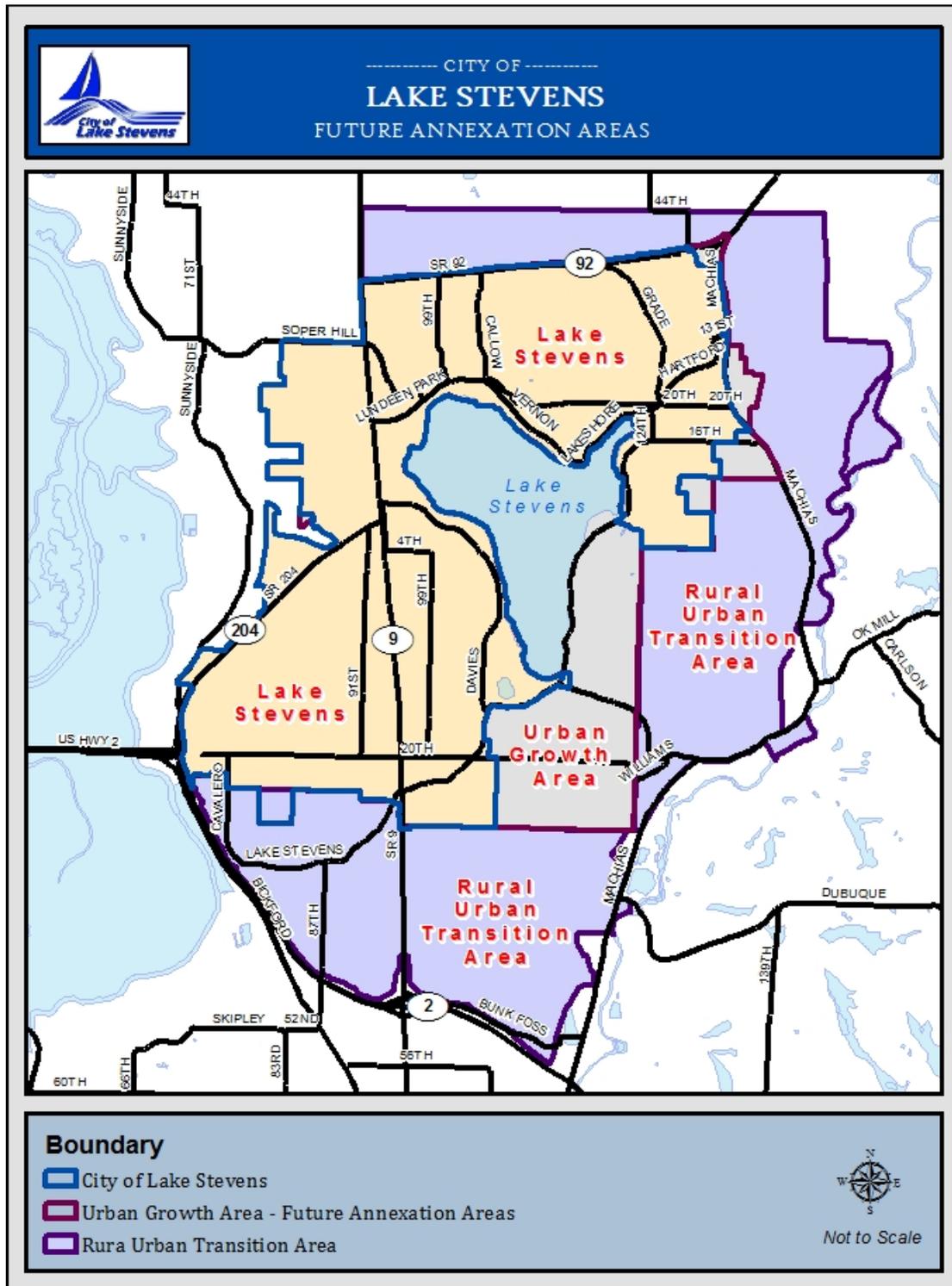


Figure 1.1 – Future Annexation Areas



To keep pace with growth and to respond to changing conditions the city has incorporated annual changes into the plan. Annual updates address specific concerns, clarify inconsistencies identified during the previous year, review the adequacy of the adopted level of service standards, and update any environmental information and capital facilities lists. Annual updates to the plan include public involvement through a variety of advertised public meetings and public hearings.

This update constitutes the second significant GMA plan update for the city. This planning cycle focuses on significant accomplishments since implementation of the last plan, changes in land use status and patterns, and updated vision and revised goals and policies.

After adoption, a process will begin of specific city code updates to meet the plan's goals and policies.

The overall objectives of this update effort for the Comprehensive Plan follow:

1. Staying current with the state law and planning strategies – Integrate revised state regulations and updates to regional and countywide strategies and polices into the city's plan.
2. Implementing the Growth Management Act – Through its plan, the city of Lake Stevens establishes a vision for the community; prioritizes goals and policies to achieve this vision; and defines clear policy to administer local regulations based on defined GMA plan elements and planning goals.
3. Maintaining local decision-making – The city of Lake Stevens continues to experience growth within and around its boundaries, which results in increasing demand for public facilities such as sewer, roads, police and fire protection. The Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations allow the city to assert local control over regional issues with the assurance that state agencies will respect their decisions and will direct growth in a manner, which will reinforce the existing character, scale and identity of the city. A clearly articulated plan will define a clear direction for future development, ensure demands for infrastructure and services are met in an economically responsible and timely manner and inform city residents and elected officials about the implications of its policy decisions.
4. Promoting desired change – Specific development regulations and standards will enable the city to guide development and make consistent land use decisions, throughout the community to meet its vision. These regulations include zoning, subdivision, building and environmental codes, historic preservation and design review guidelines and standards. The city will strive to provide a predictable, efficient and expeditious review process to attract development that meets the community's design, land use and environmental standards.
5. Addressing changes in the community – Regular updates to the Comprehensive Plan enable the city to keep pace with the changing nature of the community, remain



current and ensure that the positive elements of growth outweigh any negatives. Changes come in many forms such as land use patterns, population growth, household characteristics, environmental concerns, economic needs and fiscal considerations.

6. Involving Citizens and Stakeholders – The GMA requires significant opportunity for public involvement in developing a comprehensive plan. The city continues to solicit public input into its planning efforts. As part of the current review cycle a community preference survey was widely distributed, and public open houses and hearings have been held with the Planning Commission and City Council. The city will make every effort to continue involving citizens in the processes to develop and update the comprehensive plan. Broad community support for the plan is crucial for effective implementation. Following any amendments to the plan, city staff will review the city’s development regulations for consistency with the plan and updated state regulations and revise as necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This Comprehensive Plan integrates GMA and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). SEPA (Chapter 197-11 of the Washington Administrative Code) defines the environmental review policy for projects and agency regulations. SEPA requires all state and local agencies to use an interdisciplinary, integrated approach to include environmental factors (natural and built) in both planning and decision-making. Conducting the environmental review at the planning stage allows the city of Lake Stevens to effectively integrate the goals and requirements of SEPA and GMA, while contributing to public knowledge, environmental protection, and the fiscal efficiency of local government.

In accordance with SEPA, an environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared when it is determined that a proposal, such as a comprehensive plan, is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts. An EIS provides an impartial discussion of significant environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures designed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts. As part of the 2006 update, the city issued an EIS and considered a range of alternatives for the plan. Subsequent to the adoption of this EIS, the city has adopted specific addenda to this document as changes occur through annual amendments.

The SEPA review of the Plan is also a “planning level” analysis as opposed to a “project level” analysis. The latter is done for specific projects on specific sites and is much more detailed. A planning-level analysis is more general in nature. SEPA requires that analysis be as specific as the information available. Because the Comprehensive Plan is more general in its discussion of topics, the analysis will be more general than what might be found in a project-level SEPA review. It is assumed that as specific projects or decisions are made in the future, more detailed information will be provided, and that the policies of this Plan will be considered in decision making.



A. Integration Principles

The integration of SEPA and GMA results in improved planning and project decisions from the environmental perspective. Just as GMA goals cannot be addressed without consideration of environmental factors, the goals of SEPA are benefited by the examination of the "big picture" and identification of mitigation to address cumulative impacts of development that occur during GMA planning.

While planning under GMA, the city of Lake Stevens used the following principles:

1. Consider environmental quality as each community charts its future by involving diverse sectors of the public and incorporating early and informal environmental analysis into GMA planning and decision-making.
2. Utilize SEPA review in conjunction with other analyses and public involvement to produce better planning decisions.
3. Combine to the fullest extent possible the processes, analyses, and documents required under GMA and SEPA, so that GMA planning decisions and subsequent implementation will incorporate measures to promote the goals of GMA and SEPA.
4. Recognize that different questions will need to be answered and different levels of detail will be required at each phase of GMA planning, from the initial development of plan concepts or elements to the creation of implementation programs.
5. Focus environmental review and the level of detail needed for different stages of plan and project decisions on the environmental choices most relevant to that stage of the process, while not duplicating review that occurred for previous decisions.
6. Use environmental review on projects to help: 1) review and document consistency with GMA plans and regulations; 2) identify any impacts and mitigation needs that had not been considered and addressed at the plan level; and 3) provide the opportunity for review by agencies, tribes, and the public.
7. Continue to maintain or improve the quality of environmental analyses for both plan and project decisions, while integrating these analyses with improved state and local planning and permitting processes.

Appendix A includes a complete environmental review of the Comprehensive Plan, amendments, and addenda.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The city has engaged the public throughout the plan update. This has included public open houses, surveys, social media, outreach to service groups, and meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council. The first public open house was a visioning meeting. At this workshop, city staff and Planning Commissioners had breakout sessions with the public in attendance to discuss the mandatory comprehensive plan elements. Based on the public comments received, staff developed vision statements for the plan and each element included in the following section. The next important avenue to receive public outreach was an opinion survey. The survey was posted electronically on the city's website and administered at city events. Through this survey, community members were asked a series of questions to determine public concerns and preferences for growth over the next 20 years. In total 300 respondents took the comprehensive plan survey, which represents approximately a one percent return. Some of the notable responses are included.

- When asked what types of housing, other than traditional single-family housing, community members indicated they would prefer cottage housing and townhomes.
- When asked where residential growth should go, the preference was first for southwest Lake Stevens followed by Northeast Lake Stevens and the Soper Hill area.
- When asked where commercial growth should go the preference was the 20th Street SE Corridor followed by Lake Stevens Center – two of the local growth centers.
- Retail followed by high-tech industry and professional offices were identified as the preferred employment industries.
- Increased traffic was the biggest concern for the community over the next 20 years.
- Community members believed the city's sense of community and residential opportunities are the most positive changes that have occurred over the last 10 years. The greatest strengths were identified as the city's schools and neighborhoods.
- When asked what attracted residents to other cities, community members stated restaurants and shopping.
- Economic development and public services were described as the most important areas for the city to address over the next 20 years. As a follow up, respondents stated shopping and jobs could improve over the next planning period.
- Sidewalks were identified as the most important transportation facility to be improved followed by increased vehicle capacity and expanded public transportation.
- Finally, sidewalks and parks were identified as the most important public facilities.

The second open house focused on significant changes made to the comprehensive plan since 2005, including updates to community demographics and statistics, fresh visions statements and revised goals and policies for each element. The community had an opportunity to



discuss these changes directly with city staff, the Planning Commission and Councilmembers in attendance or provide written comments. The second open house also provided a recap of public participation to date and next steps for completion.

ELEMENT VISIONS

The city of Lake Stevens is a dynamic community blessed with a defining feature – a central lake. There are other lakeside communities in the Puget Sound; however, Lake Stevens is unique because the city and its Urban Growth Area encompass the entire perimeter of the lake. The community remains affordable to families and the lake is an accessible amenity to all residents. The presence of Lake Stevens unifies and directly affects the identity of the community and its residents, which contributes to a positive reputation regionally for its excellent schools and neighborhoods, and provides an attraction for community development. The lake, eastern lowlands and the western plateau have largely influenced land development patterns within the city. In addition to these physical features, three major highways that frame the city also influence development and act as corridors for commuters, commerce and visitors between the city and greater region.

2035 Lake Stevens Vision

As the city contemplates the next 20 years, it must embrace its position as a unified growing city. Lake Stevens will be a vibrant sustainable community that provides a positive development atmosphere and maintains a strong community image with excellent schools and neighborhoods. Sustainability will be manifest through environmental protection, conscientious community development and sound economic policy. The city will continue emphasizing the role of local growth centers and subarea planning as the primary locations for new development – specifically as essential pockets for economic development and focal points for new neighborhood and commercial areas. The city will ensure that the city's infrastructure and public services will meet the demands of the community as it grows in an economically feasible manner. Development will be sensitive to the lake, environment and existing neighborhoods. The community will become a balanced community with sufficient and affordable housing, family-wage jobs and a variety of shopping and service options to meet the needs of Lake Stevens' residents.

The principal theme of the Vision Statement is that the city of Lake Stevens will embrace its changing identity and work towards an environmentally sustainable community with balanced and quality jobs and housing. The objectives, goals, and policies of the 20th Street SE Corridor Subarea Plan and Lake Stevens Center Subarea Plan echo the overall vision to ensure that future development is sensitive to the natural environment, considers sustainable approaches to development and mitigates related impacts. These central themes carry through the Element Vision Statements as follows:



Planning – The city will integrate the Growth Management Act principles as an essential planning framework to help direct community, regional, and statewide efforts to enhance quality of life, environmental protection, and economic vitality for the city, its residents and its interests in and around the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area and Rural Transition Area as a unique lakeside community.

Environment and Natural Resources – The city of Lake Stevens will provide effective and ongoing investment to ensure water quality and continued environmental stewardship for current and future generations by protecting fish and wildlife habitat, critical areas and open space corridors; conserving land, air, water and energy resources; and integrating the shoreline management of Lake Stevens into land use decisions.

Land Use – As Lake Stevens continues to grow in population and area, the city will strive to create balanced opportunities for residential growth, varied housing types, employment, commercial endeavors and public services for all people to live, work, learn and play throughout the community.

Housing – The city will provide a regulatory framework that supports the creation of high-quality housing (e.g., single-family houses, townhomes and apartments) with a range of densities, which implement community design preferences and are affordable to all community members across the city.

Parks and Recreation – The city of Lake Stevens will create diverse recreational opportunities for all ages to enjoy parks, trails and activities and local events throughout the community and with expanded access to Lake Stevens.

Capital Facilities – The city will develop a realistic and achievable capital facilities plan that ensures an effective use of taxpayer and ratepayer dollars that prioritizes capital investments to maintain adopted levels of service; responds to project urgency and feasibility; is consistent with the city’s growth strategy; and, provides a clear community benefit.

Public Utilities and Services – Lake Stevens will strive to provide excellent public utilities & services to meet the health and safety needs of the community in proportion to future population growth and will continue to coordinate with local service providers such as the Lake Steven Sewer District, Lake Stevens Fire, and the Lake Stevens School District to ensure service continuity as the community grows.

Transportation – The city will develop an effective multimodal transportation system that emphasizes access, direct circulation and safety for vehicles, freight, public transportation, cyclists and pedestrians locally and to the region.



Economic Development – Lake Stevens will embrace a sustainable local economy by supporting a varied job sector for residents, promoting excellent shopping and service options, providing a stable and predictable permitting process and fostering accountable government oversight of public funds.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENTS

Planning is an on-going process; improved data or changing circumstances will require amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, the city will continue to review its plan annually to address minor changes, to adjust to changes in the city’s population counts and to add projects listed in the Capital Facilities Plan. The annual update can also address specific concerns, clarify inconsistencies identified during the previous year, review the adequacy of the adopted level of service standards, and update any environmental information. It is the city’s intent to use the annual review to keep the data up to date and address relatively minor policy issues, so that when the five year review comes due, the community can focus its’ attention on policy issues.

The GMA requires cities within Snohomish County to update their comprehensive plans every eight years, after June 2015, to ensure their plans and policies are current. While the review must be comprehensive, the extent of changes depends on the circumstances involved.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL 1.1 PROVIDE FOR A CONSISTENT REVIEW AND REVISION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Policies

- 1.1.1 Periodically review the Comprehensive Plan to determine if it is effectively implementing the vision of the community.
- 1.1.2 Changes to the Comprehensive Plan should be carefully considered, responsive to the changing needs of the community, and in the best long-term interest of the entire community.

GOAL 1.2 ENSURE THAT THE CITY’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IS CONSISTENT WITH STATE, REGIONAL AND COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES AND ENSURE EACH ELEMENT IS INTERNALLY CONSISTENT.

Policies

- 1.2.1 Periodically review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it reflects changes to state, regional and countywide planning policies and requirements.



- 1.2.1 Discourage piecemeal amendments to the Comprehensive Plan by considering amendments in context with each other to ensure continued internal consistency.
- 1.2.3 Update functional plans and any applicable code provisions in a timely manner following amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents.

GOAL 1.3 ENSURE THAT THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS PROVIDES CERTAINTY AND CLARITY IN TIMELINES AND STANDARDS THAT RESULTS IN A TIMELY AND PREDICTABLE DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS.

Policies

- 1.3.1 Ensure development regulations implement the Comprehensive Plan and describe all significant development requirements and standards.
- 1.3.2 Ensure that the development regulations are clearly written, avoid duplicative or inconsistent requirements, and can be efficiently and effectively carried out.
- 1.3.3 Ensure that appropriate public involvement opportunities and clearly presented information are available during the development review process.

REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. General

Although the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a guide for the public, elected officials, Planning Commission, and city staff in making decisions concerning community growth, land use and development decisions, capital improvements, and other programs, it is not so rigid as to be inflexible or unresponsive to changing circumstances. The policies of the plan should be reviewed from time to time to ensure the plan keeps up with legal requirements, community needs and changing circumstances.

The city of Lake Stevens is committed to following its adopted Comprehensive Plan and will allow for an adequate period of time for policies and actions to take effect prior to considering changes to it. The city is also committed to working with the county and other relevant jurisdictions to coordinate and resolve regional issues. The policies and financial plans demonstrate how the city intends to resolve problems, and thus can be used to inform residents and businesses.

The community's vision and quality of life goals provide long-range guidance for the city. To maintain consistency and allow sufficient time for decisions to take effect these general



guidelines should not be changed except during the five-year UGA boundary review or the ten-year Comprehensive Plan review allowed by the Growth Management Act.

B. Annual Amendment and Update of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a document which guides the nature and intensity of development in the city. An amendment to the Plan is a mechanism by which the city may modify its land use, development or growth policies. Any amendment of this Plan is a legislative act requiring City Council approval and must be done in compliance with the statutory requirements of the Growth Management Act for amending plans (RCW 36.70A.130). As such, except where allowed by the GMA, amendments of the Plan may not be considered more frequently than once per year and must be done so according to the procedure outlined below. The revisions will be reviewed as a comprehensive package of amendments so the cumulative effect of all proposed amendments is fully understood.

Annual amendments shall not include significant policy changes which would be found inconsistent with the adopted Vision Goals (VG-1 through VG-7); rather, they are intended to address the following:

- Major or minor land use and road classification changes
- Amendments to Plan text including support data and implementation
- Changes to Element maps
- Minor changes to policies or clarification
- Other minor text changes

C. Exceptions to the Annual Plan Amendment Process

The city may consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan outside of the annual amendment process under one or more of the following circumstances:

- The initial adoption of a subarea plan that clarifies, supplements, or implements jurisdiction-wide comprehensive plan policies, and may only be adopted if the cumulative impacts of the proposed plan are addressed by appropriate environmental review under Chapter 43.21C RCW;
- The development of an initial subarea plan for economic development located outside of the one hundred year floodplain in a county that has completed a state-funded pilot project that is based on watershed characterization and local habitat assessment;
- The adoption or amendment of a shoreline master program under the procedures set forth in Chapter 90.58 RCW;
- The amendment of the capital facilities element of the Plan that occurs concurrently with the adoption or amendment of the city's budget; or



- The adoption of comprehensive plan amendments necessary to enact a planned action under RCW 43.21C.031(2), provided that amendments are considered in accordance with the public participation program established by the city under RCW 36.70A.130(2)(a) and all persons who have requested notice of a comprehensive plan update are given notice of the amendments and an opportunity to comment.

D. Who May Initiate Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan?

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan can be requested by the City Council, Planning Commission, city staff member, or by any private party including any Lake Stevens resident, property owner or other person with an interest in the city's Comprehensive Plan. Because the Plan may not be amended more than once a year, multiple requests for amendment must be consolidated into a single review process or Docket. The Docket is a compilation of proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

E. Application Deadline

All applications for Comprehensive Plan amendments must be received by Planning and Community Development by January 31st of any calendar year to be considered during the next amendment cycle.

The various types of applications for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are subject to the following time considerations:

- Amendments shall be considered annually. In addition, the city shall undertake a comprehensive review of land use, densities, urban growth areas, and potential annexation areas at least every 10 years after the date of adoption (1996).
- Major changes to the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies may only be considered every five years after the date of adoption (1996).
- Changes to any other text of the Comprehensive Plan may be made annually as necessary to reflect changes to population growth, other State laws, errors, or refinement of community goals and needs.
- The addition or deletion of a new or old element or subarea plan shall be considered annually.

F. Process

Proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan undergo a two-step review: a threshold review and a final review, as described below:

1. **Threshold Review.** The threshold review process will determine those proposals that will be included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program and will determine their geographic scope.



- a. **Planning Commission Review.** Complete applications to propose an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan submitted during the time period set forth in subsection E of this section will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council, using the criteria set forth in subsections G and H, as to which amendment proposals initiated by the public should be included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program.
 - b. **Consideration of Geographic Scope.** Prior to the public hearing, the Planning Commission shall review the geographic scope of any proposed amendments. Expansion of the geographic scope may be recommended if nearby, similarly situated property shares the characteristics of the proposed amendment's site. Expansion shall be the minimum necessary to include properties with shared characteristics. If expansion is recommended, the notice for the public hearing shall describe the geographic scope of the proposed amendments and notice shall be expanded to include each owner of real property within 500 feet of any boundary of the originally proposed area and of the recommended expansion.
 - c. **City Council Review.** The City Council will review the Planning Commission recommendations and the criteria set forth in subsections G and H. and determine which amendment proposals will be included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket and their geographic scope. Those proposals included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket will then be referred back to the Planning Commission for further proceedings.
 - d. **Alternative Disposition.** Proposals not included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket may, at the city's discretion, be considered as part of the Department's ongoing work program or a Comprehensive Plan Update.
2. **Final Review.** The final review process will evaluate the proposed amendments included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket and culminate in Council action on the proposed amendments.
- a. **Planning Commission Review.** The Planning Commission will review the proposed amendments included in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket, hold a public hearing, and make a recommendation to the City Council as to each proposed amendment, using the criteria set forth in subsection I.
 - b. **City Council Action.** The City Council will review the Planning Commission recommendations and the criteria set forth in subsection I and take action on each proposed amendment in the Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket.

All amendments shall require a public hearing by the Planning Commission, who shall make recommendations to the City Council. In addition to the Commission's recommendations, the Council shall also solicit input through a public hearing prior to amending the Plan.



All privately-initiated rezones related to a requested plan revision are considered a quasi-judicial action allowing for only one open-record hearing. The rezone request will not be discussed during the authorization hearing process, but will be noted in the staff reports and hearing records. The open-record hearing may be held by the Planning Commission or the City Council in a separate rezone public hearing held after the associated adoption hearing by either body.

G. Submittal Requirements

Any complete application for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan shall contain all the information as required by the Planning & Community Development Director in the Comprehensive Plan amendment submittal requirement checklist and responses to the appropriate questions and issues listed below. The burden of proof is upon the proponent to demonstrate the long-term benefit to the city.

All applicants for Plan amendments are responsible for providing any environmental information necessary to process the request per the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the Comprehensive Plan Master Environmental Document.

Reasonable fees and deposits for processing Plan amendments shall be charged to the applicant. Such fees and deposits are specified in the city's Fee Schedule Resolution.

The factors listed below should be considered in reviewing map amendment requests.

- How is the proposed land use designation supported by or consistent with the existing policies of the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan? If it isn't, the development should demonstrate how the change is in the best long-term interest of the city.
- How does the proposed land use designation promote a more desirable land use pattern for the community? If so, a detailed description of the qualities of the proposed land use designation that make the land use pattern for the community more desirable should be provided to enable the Planning Commission and City Council to find that the proposed land use designation is in the community's best interest.
- What impacts would the proposed change of land use designation have on the current use of other properties in the vicinity, and what measures should be taken to ensure compatibility with the uses of other properties in the vicinity?
- Comments received from affected property owners and residents.

The foundation for the Plan policies should be grounded in legal requirements, such as the Growth Management Act, sound planning and land use principles, the community's vision and values, and the community's anticipated future growth needs. Policy amendments should include a discussion of how the proposal is related to:



- Changing laws, economic conditions or social values,
- Changed socioeconomic conditions,
- Shifts in land use needs due to growth trends,
- Shifts in community opinion and priorities, or
- Significant changes to the amount and characteristics of anticipated future growth.

H. Ratification of Docket and Authorization Hearing

All amendment requests will require an authorization hearing before the City Planning Commission and a recommendation shall be forwarded to the City Council for consideration before a docket is ratified by the City Council. The purpose of the authorization hearing is to determine whether or not a proposal merits consideration.

The city shall use the following decision criteria in selecting proposals for further analysis and consideration. Proposals must meet subsections 1 through 4 below and either subsection 5 or 6 below.

1. Is the proposed amendment appropriate to the Comprehensive Plan rather than implementation as a development regulation or program?
2. Is the proposed amendment legal? Does the proposed amendment meet existing state and local laws?
3. Is it practical to consider the proposed amendment? Reapplications for reclassification of property reviewed as part of a previous proposal are prohibited unless the applicant establishes there has been a substantial change of circumstances that support a plan or regulation change at this time.
4. Does the city have the resources, including staff and budget, necessary to review the proposed amendment?
5. Does the proposed amendment correct an inconsistency within or make a clarification to a provision of the Plan OR
6. All of the following:
 - a. The proposed amendment demonstrates a strong potential to serve the public interest by implementing specifically identified goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan; and
 - b. The public interest would best be served by considering the proposal in the current year rather than delaying consideration to a later subarea plan review or plan amendment process.



I. Granting or Denial of Amendments

For both city and privately-initiated amendments, the city shall take into consideration, but is not limited to, the following factors when considering approval of a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan:

1. The effect upon the physical, natural, economic, and/or social environments.
2. The compatibility with and impact on adjacent land uses and surrounding neighborhoods, including whether the amendment would create pressure to change the land use designation of other properties in the vicinity.
3. The adequacy of and impact on public facilities and services, including utilities, roads, public transportation, parks, recreation, and schools.
4. The quantity and location of land planned for the proposed land use type and density.
5. The effect, if any, upon other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

The city may amend the Comprehensive Plan only if it finds the amendment meets all of the following:

1. The amendment must be consistent with the Growth Management Act and other applicable State laws;
2. The amendment must be consistent with the applicable County-wide Planning Policies;
3. The amendment must not be in conflict with the Community Vision or other goals, policies and provisions of the Comprehensive Plan;
4. The amendment can be accommodated by all applicable public services and facilities, including transportation;
5. The amendment will change the development or use potential of a site or area without creating significant adverse impacts on existing sensitive land uses, businesses, or residents;
6. The amendment will result in long-term benefits to the community as a whole, and is in the best interest of the community.

J. Public Notice of Hearings

Since public involvement is critical regarding plan amendments, notice of the date, location and time of the Planning Commission's and City Council's hearings must be published in the city's designated newspaper. In addition to publication, notice of hearing date, place and time shall be posted on or near properties proposed for a plan change. Notice of public hearings for properties to be rezoned shall comply with the noticing requirements for Type VI review in Chapter 14.16B LSMC.