



Executive Summary

1/3/2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This comprehensive plan was prepared by the City of Langley in accordance with Section 36.70A.070 of the Growth Management Act (GMA). The plan guides future growth and development in the city while conserving Langley's essential character, not only in the city limits, but also in the Joint Planning Area. This plan embodies the community's goals to guide how the City will develop over the next 20 years.

WHY THE CITY OF LANGLEY PLANS

1) To Implement the Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Growth Management Act, passed in 1990 in response to rapid population growth, concerns with suburban sprawl, environmental protection, and quality of life, requires local governments to adopt Comprehensive Plans, establishes mandatory elements together with more detailed requirements that must be included in these Plans. The GMA also contains goals to guide the development of Comprehensive Plans and development regulations. Through the planning process local governments prepare goals and policies for these elements that are relevant and address the specific needs of the jurisdiction. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan the local government prepares and adopts development regulations and other strategies to implement the Plan.

2) To Promote Desired Changes and Preserve Community Assets

Planning is a technical, political and public process concerned with the development and use of land, planning permission, protection and use of the environment, public welfare, and the design of the urban environment, including its infrastructure. In order to preserve valuable community assets and promote desired changes, the city must actively plan and effectively implement those plans. A plan is a set of actions taken towards a desired outcome whether that outcome is preserving a historic building, an infill development project, or paving a street. Each of these actions, to be successful, requires vision, planning analysis, and community engagement. A plan is only good to the extent to which it is implemented. Therefore, the City plans to guide its future for the benefit of the entire community and for future generations.

3) To Involve the Citizens in the Decision-Making Process

Planning is both a process and a product. The process component of planning requires active civic engagement to make good decisions and gain public support and ultimately leads to faster implementation of local plans. The process aspect of planning should not be confused as an end, but rather a means to an end, which is the realization of local plans.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a broad statement of the community's values and vision for its future. It is a policy road map that directs orderly and coordinated physical development of the City for the next 20 years. It anticipates change and provides guidance for action to address and manage that change. The City of Langley's Comprehensive Plan is specifically intended to sustain and enhance the City's character and identity as a unique and vibrant small historic coastal town.

Langley's Comprehensive Plan contains goals and policies to guide growth issues in the City of Langley, unincorporated land in its Urban Growth Area and to a lesser extent lands in the Joint Planning Area. The City of Langley is interdependent with other communities in the county, the unincorporated county area, and the Puget Sound region. In such circumstances, the long-term planning for the city needs to be adapted to unexpected or rapid changes. Therefore, rather than simply prioritizing actions, this plan assists the management of the city by providing policies to guide decision-making, capital improvement plans and budgeting. The plan includes the following elements:

- Sustainability
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Capital Facilities and Utilities
- Parks, Open Space, and Trails

Incorporated by reference are the following plans and documents:

- Island County, County-Wide Planning Policies, approved July 2017
- City of Langley Comprehensive Water System Plan, approved 2012
- City of Langley Comprehensive Sewer System Plan, approved 2015
- City of Langley Comprehensive Storm Drainage Plan, approved 2009
- Critical Area Ordinance approved 1992 and including subsequent amendments
- Shoreline Master Program, approved 2013

County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP)

The County-Wide Planning Policies provide guidance in the planning process. The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the CWPP adopted on November 3, 2015 by the Island County Commissioners with subsequent amendments adopted on July 11, 2017.

Highlights of the CWPPs are as follows:

- The unincorporated part of the Urban Growth Area has been reduced based upon a lower population increase than was previously projected.
- Overlay designations have been modified and a process established to prioritize which lands in the UGA should be expanded into first (designated as PGA), which areas should be expanded into second, undesignated areas, and which area should be expanded into last (designated as AGA).
- Development outside of the UGA's shall be consistent with the County's definition of rural character.
- Urban growth shall occur only within designated UGA's and shall be orderly, compact, contiguous, and adequately served by urban services.
- A methodology has been created to guide future population projections and allocations to ensure consistency in addressing future growth needs.
- Guidance for the designation, location, expansion and modification of facilities of Countywide or Statewide significance to ensure compliance with GMA requirements.

- Restriction for expansion of urban services and facilities outside of UGAs.
- Guidance for the administration of the Countywide Planning Policies between the County and Municipalities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As required by the GMA a comprehensive plan must be adopted and amended with public participation. The City of Langley adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1994 and associated development regulations in 1995. The Plan was updated again in 2002 and a substantial review was completed in 2006. This 2017 Comprehensive Plan uses the 2009 version with revisions made in 2013 as its base. As required by the State, the City began its periodic review of the document in 2015. The Planning Advisory Board (PAB) together with Planning staff worked together to update the Plan. Feet First, Washington state's only pedestrian advocacy non-profit organization, reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan and provided valued input. Public input has been sought and received throughout the process and is documented in the summary of public comments held on file at City Hall.

From December 2015 until October 2017 the following events/meetings were held to discuss the Comprehensive Plan:

- 24 PAB meetings
- Two Parks and Open Space Commission meetings
- Four public hearings
- 15 Council workshops
- One joint PAB/Council meeting
- One public open house
- Three Intergovernmental Working Group meetings
- The Comprehensive Plan was discussed at eight regular Council meetings; and
- Draft documents have been posted on the website.

VISION OF FUTURE FOR THE CITY OF LANGLEY

The City of Langley maintains its small town historic charm and unique sense of place that is characterized by the convergence of beautiful and inspiring natural and built environments. Because of these wonderful assets Langley has been called the "Village by the Sea". It continues to be a vibrant, artistic, human-scaled, and walkable community that supports social and cultural connections amongst locals and visitors. Due to these assets, Langley continues to be the artistic, cultural, retail, service and entertainment center for South Whidbey, attracting visitors, retirees, businesses and new families to the community.

Langley's assets have been strengthened by new development and growth that fits with the strong sense of place and community identity while preserving key cultural, historical and environmental assets including:

- The marina has been further expanded to support economic development and marine access to the city as well as greater access to the waterfront for locals and visitors.

- New mixed-use, multi-family and single-family housing has been integrated seamlessly into the community in appropriate areas with high quality design that respects the local character and minimizes impacts on critical areas.
- The city continues to support a number of non-profit organizations that meet the needs of the local community.
- Knowledge workers, those that have the freedom to work anywhere, have increasingly chosen to locate in Langley with their families due to broadband access and the variety of artistic, natural, and cultural amenities.
- The city has preserved land in and around the city for recreation and environmental benefits.
- Artisan manufacturing and associated cottage industries have integrated into the city and are driving new investment in the local economy.

The City has continued investing in public infrastructure with new street design and public space investments that provide placemaking opportunities to be capitalized on by local community stakeholders as a means to increase the vibrancy, economic activity, social interaction and amusement in the downtown core.

To achieve the above vision the City of Langley has the following goals:

1. **Environmental Stewardship.** The City of Langley provides an effective stewardship of the environment to protect critical areas and conserve land, air, water, and energy resources as well as shoreline views.
2. **Downtown Vitality.** The City of Langley maintains and enhances the downtown core as the economic, cultural, retail and social hub of the community to attract residents, organizations and businesses to the community.
3. **Community Design.** The City of Langley encourages changes that promote livability, pedestrian orientation, and thoughtful design, and that limit stress factors such as noise, air pollution and traffic congestion.
4. **Local Economy.** The City of Langley uses local resources whenever possible to encourage local involvement in community actions and to enhance community pride. This should include continued encouragement of public and private involvement in community traditions, as well as encouragement of volunteerism and activism.
5. **Diverse Economy.** The City of Langley encourages the local economy by providing a timely review of projects and allowing a diversity in the range of goods and services. The City recognizes that as the economy changes, employment opportunities should be balanced with a range of diverse housing opportunities.
6. **Diverse and Affordable Housing.** The City of Langley actively plans for diverse and affordable housing options that promote innovative styles of development that integrate seamlessly with existing development patterns.
7. **Recreational Amenities.** The City of Langley enhances the opportunities for enjoyment of recreational activities, providing a range of activities for all ages. The enjoyment and educational value of such activities is enhanced by diversity in the available choices.
8. **Arts + Culture.** The City of Langley encourages and supports cultural activities and the arts as an integral element of the community.

9. **Public Investment.** The City of Langley identifies the public improvements needed to properly serve existing and planned future growth and the means to finance these improvements so that they are implemented in a timely and equitable manner.
10. **Public Participation.** The City of Langley encourages community involvement by ensuring effective communication, providing ample and diverse opportunities for input, and empowering people to be involved in the planning, design and development process.
11. **Partnerships.** The city commits to working with Island County, Port of South Whidbey, Island Transit, South Whidbey School District, and other relevant jurisdictions to coordinate and resolve regional issues.
12. **Preservation.** The City of Langley identifies and encourages the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance. It will continue to preserve scenic entrances into Langley and enhance buffering between roadways and development.
13. **Community Character.** The City of Langley preserves and enhances the existing small town and historic character of Langley.
14. **Knowledge Based Businesses and Workers.** The City of Langley actively promotes Langley as a hub for knowledge based businesses and workers that have the freedom to locate anywhere.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

There are a number of tools used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The main methods are through development regulations, such as zoning and critical area ordinances, and through capital improvement plans, such as sewer, water, parks, and roads. The City's fiscal resources must be factored into the preparation and adoption of these regulations and plans. The Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are the basis upon which development regulations and capital improvement plans are prepared. Regulations and capital improvement plans must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

This section introduces the plan implementation and monitoring procedures to establish a system for measuring progress and success obtained in implementing the goals, and policies in the City of Langley's Comprehensive Plan. This process also prepares the City for updates in the future.

Planning is an ongoing process and improved data or changing circumstances will require amendments to the comprehensive plan. In particular, pursuant to the State Growth Management Act, the plan can be updated no more often than once a year to reflect revisions to the Office of Financial Management population estimate and revisions to the Capital Facilities Plan. The annual update can also address any specific concerns, clarify inconsistencies that were identified during the year, and review the adequacy of the adopted level-of-service standards.

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 plan goals and policies should not be changed more than every five years. However, as

specific objectives or policies are achieved, or as new issues emerge, revisions to the plan may be required to continue progress toward the overall goals.

Any affected citizen or property owner can request amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. However, the plan may not be amended more than once a year and therefore, requests for amendments will be deferred to the annual review. The Planning Advisory Board shall review the comprehensive plan and propose any needed amendment(s). Additional public input may be sought depending on the nature of the amendment. A public hearing must be held to solicit comment. After further review, a formal recommendation is made to the City Council. The Council may hold a public hearing, make modifications if necessary, and adopt the proposed amendment(s) to the Comprehensive Plan. By reviewing and updating the plan on a regular basis, Langley can rely on this document in decision-making and can maintain public interest and support of the planning process.

Plan Monitoring/Amendments

The policies found in the Sustainability Element Goal S-7 direct the City to establish an implementation framework for the Comprehensive Plan and that it be tied to the capital planning and annual budgeting process. To be effective, the implementation framework should also include indicators, bench marks and targets that can be monitored over time to ensure the Plan is achieving its goals, its consistency with the city vision, Growth Management Act requirements and policies, and the County Wide Planning Policies. When necessary amendments shall be made.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT GOALS

Urban Growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

Reduce Sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

Transportation. Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing.

Economic Development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

Property Rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected

from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

Natural Resource Industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

Open Space and Recreation. Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.

Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

Citizen Participation and Coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

Public Facilities and Services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

Historic Preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures which have historical or archaeological significance.

Shorelines.¹ The goals and policies of the State Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58.020) are goals and policies of the Growth Management Act.

¹ Shorelines are added as a GMA goal in RCW 36.70A.020 by a footnote.