

Chapter 3. Community Character



3.1 Community Key Goals – Community Character

- Improve quality of life and create places where both adults and youth can live, work, learn, shop and play.
- Maintain the positive identifiable images and features that make Poulsbo memorable.
- Encourage community cohesion by providing a range of spaces and places for civic functions, such as public meetings, ceremonial events, and community festivals.
- Provide a well-designed, pedestrian friendly and community-oriented downtown center.
- Respect the character of the City’s downtown, waterfront, and residential areas, while allowing for new development, expansion, and renovation that considers the scale and character of the area.
- Accommodate infill development and redevelopment that enhances the quality of city neighborhoods and business areas.

3.2 Plan Context

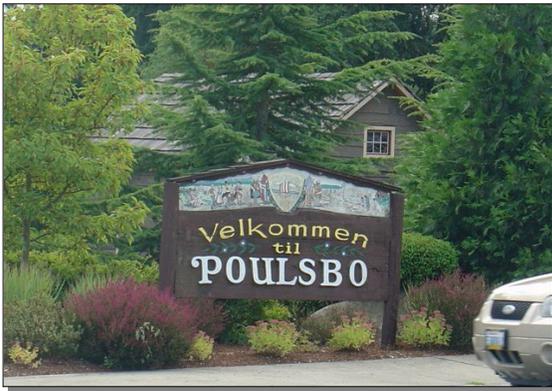
Community cohesiveness develops in many ways. It can come from a shared vision for the community. It can be nurtured by community events. It can be developed through the use of public places for interaction. The Community Character Chapter provides a design framework for new development and construction, and is meant to address the goals of retaining Poulsbo’s distinct character, and creating gathering places and cultural opportunities. It is intended to help achieve the vision of keeping Poulsbo a safe, friendly and attractive city in the future.

Poulsbo faces a number of challenges in continuing to achieve the community’s desired land use vision, while accommodating the growth that is expected over the next twenty years. These include:

- Maintain the desired scale and character of Poulsbo’s downtown core.
- Refinement of commercial design standards and guidelines.
- Preservation of the unique scale and character of Poulsbo’s existing residential neighborhoods, while allowing redevelopment and improvement.
- Encouraging and allowing mixed use development in the city, while ensuring compatibility and appropriate scale.
- Improvement of the City’s aging sidewalk system, while also providing for new pedestrian opportunities and linkages.

3.3 Goals and Policies

This chapter is complimentary to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and many of the policies identified in this chapter may be included or further refined in other chapters.



This element considers the following aspects of Community Character:

- People and Public Places
- Entrances, Gateways and Landmarks
- Buildings and Design Review
- Streets and Pathways
- Downtown Poulsbo
- Historic Resources and Landmarks

PEOPLE AND PUBLIC PLACES

The best public places appeal to the broadest number of people: young and old, residents and visitors, workers and shoppers. Public places should draw people because they are comfortable, attractive and convenient. Public art and cultural activities also draw people together and express the diversity of a community’s character.

GOAL CC-1

Provide residents and visitors with positive activities and interesting and quality public places.

Policy CC-1.1

The City will continue supporting traditional and non-traditional community festivals and events. Emphasize events that are important to Poulsbo's history or Scandinavian heritage to be held in Downtown Poulsbo, such as Viking Fest.

Policy CC-1.2

Support the development of a diverse set of recreational and cultural programs that celebrate Poulsbo's heritage and diversity, such as:

- *An active Sons of Norway;*
- *Special events that celebrate Poulsbo's Scandinavian heritage, such as Viking Fest, Yule Log and Lucia Bride holiday events;*
- *An active and attractive Port of Poulsbo and marina;*
- *An active parks and recreation program;*
- *An active historical society;*
- *An active farmer's market;*
- *A community theatre; and*
- *Public art displays.*



Poulsbo's Centennial Street Dance

Policy CC-1.3

Preserve and develop informal community gathering places in Downtown and the city's residential neighborhood parks. This can include techniques such as:

- *Requiring seating opportunities, with tables and attractive landscaping;*
- *Small plazas or squares, especially in commercial areas;*
- *Encouraging art or water features;*
- *Providing for active uses, such as chessboard or public performances in these public spaces; and*
- *Facilitating partnerships, where appropriate, to create public places.*

Policy CC-1.4

Design and build Poulsbo's public buildings with quality materials and construction techniques to serve as a model to the community, and to enhance their function as community gathering places.

Policy CC-1.5

Incorporate and provide a gallery-type display opportunity for art in public buildings and provide opportunities for artists to contribute to public art within city-owned parks, bridges or other public facilities.

ENTRANCES, GATEWAYS AND LANDMARKS

People orient themselves in their community by remembering certain features that include unique public views, defined entries and landmarks. These features also can set apart one community from another, and are part of what defines the unique character of a place. Preserving key features and creating new ones can help define and enhance Poulsbo's character.

GOAL CC-2

Provide residents and visitors with positive identifiable images of Poulsbo.

Policy CC-2.1

Identify and support the establishment of gateways at all key entry points into the City, and emphasize these entrances with distinctive design elements such as symbolic markers, signage, monuments, landscaping or other design features.

Policy CC-2.2

Identify public view opportunities unique to Poulsbo such as those of the Olympic Mountains and Liberty Bay, and community landmarks, such as the Muriel Iverson Williams Waterfront Park and Port Marina, and First Lutheran Church, and when feasible, preserve and enhance those views through means such as:

- *Properly pruning trees and brush;*
- *Framing views with structural elements; and*
- *Aligning paths to create focal points.*

Policy CC-2.3

Encourage schools, religious facilities, library and other public or semi-public buildings to locate and design unique facilities to serve as community landmarks.



City directory sign located at Viking Avenue

BUILDINGS AND DESIGN REVIEW

Quality and pleasing design is as important in the details of a building as a development's contribution is to the urban character of the city. As Poulsbo continues to grow, the quality of buildings, sidewalks and vegetation are important. These elements involve a consideration of building bulk and character, lighting, planting, signs and other elements that compose the built environment.

GOAL CC-3

Require high-quality, attractive design that promotes variety and architectural interest in the City's commercial areas.



*Attractive office building
located along SR 305*

Policy CC-3.1

Design standards for commercially zoned areas shall be developed to continue the northwestern architectural style of the existing commercial areas, and the Scandinavian small fishing village scale architectural style of downtown Poulsbo. The City should review its building design standards every five years to ensure it remains relevant and reflects the desires of the community.

Policy CC-3.2

Utilize design standards and design review to accomplish the following for new commercial and mixed use development:

- *Ensure new development includes architectural features that create visual interest;*
- *The height and bulk of buildings are proportional and appropriate to the site;*
- *Roof forms include visual focal points and variation in detail including pitch, terraced and cornice roof forms;*
- *Rooftop equipment is creatively concealed; and*
- *Landscaping which unifies site design and creates character.*



*Restaurant located at Downtown
Poulsbo*

Policy CC-3.3

For large buildings or development with multiple buildings, similar design features and characteristics shall be included in all buildings to create continuity, while also allowing individual architectural designs.

STREETS AND PATHWAYS

Attracting people into the public realm also means supporting them with safe street crossings, sidewalks, walkways, and bicycle routes as important connections between different places in the city. Street corridors tie different parts of Poulsbo together, and should instill public pride through their design.

GOAL CC-4

Provide connectivity and attractive streets that enhance the City's aesthetics and sense of place.

Policy CC-4.1

Design and create sidewalks, bikeways and paths to increase connectivity for people by providing safe and direct, or convenient links throughout the city.

Policy CC-4.2

Identify streets in the city that could be considered for special treatment due to their importance, location, activity, and connection to public spaces. Such treatments could include elements such as:

- *Specially designed landscaped island(s);*
- *Unique crosswalk treatments;*
- *Character defining materials and accessories;*
- *Unique and interesting street lighting;*
- *Sidewalk furniture; and*
- *Street landscaping and sidewalk planters.*



Street furniture along Front Street

DOWNTOWN POULSBO

Downtown Poulsbo is a center for recreation, shopping, dining and a boating destination. One of the main reasons people are drawn to Poulsbo is its charming small-scale downtown. Residents can stop by and buy a coffee with their neighbor, have dinner with friends, or take an evening walk along the boardwalk. Tourists love to stroll along Front Street and enjoy Poulsbo's Norwegian heritage and unique shops and restaurants.



*Front Street and Jensen Way
at Downtown Poulsbo*

Downtown Poulsbo is a special hub that draws local residents, tourists, boaters and employers/employees all together. It is an important component of the city's identity. The City is committed to preserving and enhancing the distinctiveness and vitality of Downtown Poulsbo.

GOAL CC-5

Preserve and enhance the existing character and scale, pedestrian friendly and community oriented Downtown Poulsbo.

Policy CC-5.1

Encourage preservation of character and enhancement of distinctive focal points within Downtown Poulsbo, including the Muriel Iverson Williams Waterfront Park, boardwalk and piers, Sons of Norway building, storefront designs and pedestrian scale of Front Street.

Policy CC-5.2

Maintain the Downtown as a primary identifying feature of Poulsbo, setting it apart from the rest of the City through control of such characteristics as height, scale, and intensity. The existing character of Front Street, with its two-story buildings, awnings, and storefronts located at the sidewalk, provide an appealing pedestrian scale that should be preserved.



Poulsbo Boardwalk along Downtown shoreline

Policy CC-5.3

Encourage interspersed landscaping, public plazas with seating and tables, pleasing street frontage design and colors, and inclusion of public art throughout Downtown Poulsbo.

Policy CC-5.4

Continue to support and assist the Historic Downtown Poulsbo Association in its efforts for the promotion, preservation and enhancement of Downtown Poulsbo.

Policy CC-5.5

Identify and improve walking and biking routes to Downtown Poulsbo as a pedestrian and biking-friendly destination. Provide safe methods such as textured crosswalk paths and pedestrian islands where people can cross major streets at regular and convenient intervals.

Policy CC-5.6

Implement the Downtown Parking Management Strategy, which identifies short and long-term strategies and alternatives for providing additional Downtown public parking.

Policy CC-5.7

New development and redevelopment in Downtown Poulsbo shall retain its pedestrian-friendly scale and be limited in height to an average of 35’.

Policy CC-5.8

The City’s design standards for Downtown Poulsbo should be evaluated to ensure that redevelopment in the Downtown will retain its intimate, pleasant and pedestrian-scale character. Height, street frontage design and colors, building design, placement of buildings, and view of rooflines (from below and above), at a minimum should be assessed.



Downtown street banner and hanging basket

Policy CC-5.9

Encourage mixed use by allowing residential units to be located in association with commercial frontage in Downtown Poulsbo.

HISTORIC RESOURCES AND LANDMARKS

History is a major aspect of Poulsbo that gives it depth, diversity and uniqueness. Different parts of the city have their own individual mixture of past events, people, buildings and celebrations.

Most people are familiar with many visible historic landmarks in Poulsbo, such as First Lutheran Church. There are other places throughout the city that are reminders of the past as well. For example, in 1930 a brick North Kitsap High school was constructed along Front Street. It is now the Poulsbo Parks and Recreation building. Moe, Bjermeland, Eliason, Hostmark, and Iverson Streets were all named after the first Mayor (Andrew Moe) and some of his council members. And church services were first held in 1888 at Fordefjord Lutheran Church, known today as First Lutheran Church.

The City can enrich the lives of its citizens and its appeal to visitors by commemorating its past.

In some cases, this may mean active involvement in the preservation of landmarks, or continued support of the efforts of the Poulsbo Historical Society’s important task of retaining the link with previous generations.



Martinson House Museum commemorates Poulsbo’s past

GOAL CC-6

Protect, conserve and enhance historical, archaeological and cultural resources throughout the City of Poulsbo.

Policy CC-6.1

Cooperate with the Poulsbo Historical Society, Suquamish Tribe, other organizations and interested citizens in identifying historical, archaeological and cultural resources that provide unique insights into the history and the development of the city.

Policy CC-6.2

Cooperate with the Poulsbo Historical Society to identify Poulsbo’s heritage residences and buildings. Develop a walking tour brochure and map of these heritage buildings for residents and visitors to learn about Poulsbo’s history. Where feasible, install historic signs/markers for Poulsbo’s heritage residences and buildings.

Policy CC-6.3

Protect and conserve designated historical, archaeological and cultural sites and resources using the City’s regulatory power as appropriate and necessary.

Policy CC-6.4

Acquire historical or cultural resources when feasible. Consider cost sharing for acquisition, lease, or maintenance with other public or private agencies or governments.

Policy CC-6.5

Incorporate interpretative signage, historic street names, and features reflecting original historic designs into park projects, transportation projects, and buildings when feasible, as a means of commemorating past events, persons of note, and City history.

Policy CC-6.6

Provide assistance to developers, landowners, and interested citizens in obtaining grants and tax incentives for the reuse and rehabilitation of designated historic sites and buildings.