

City of Poulsbo

Planning & Economic Development



To: Planning Commission
From: Nikole Coleman, Senior Planner
Date: June 23, 2022
RE: Review of Community Character Chapter

Community Character Chapter

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.”

Community Character is not a mandatory element. For cities and counties fully planning under GMA, there are a number of required elements, though jurisdictions may include other optional elements at will.

On May 24 staff conducted an exercise asking the following two questions:

1. Review the list below of “community character topics” and tell us what most defines community character? Rank your top 10 with 1 being the most important.

- Building Design
- Site Design/Landscaping/Hardscape
- Public Art
- Wayfinding/Welcome Signage
- Streetscape/Street Trees
- Public/Community Spaces
- Parks and Recreation
- Multi-Modal Connectivity
- Small Business
- Community Events
- Schools/Higher Education
- Heritage/History/Culture
- Diversity
- Local Historic Preservation
- Downtown Identity
- Neighborhood Identity
- Pedestrian Friendly
- Public Safety
- Natural Environment
- Commercial District Identity (Viking, SR 305 College Marketplace)

- **Response Summary:** 6 out of 7 commissioners chose Downtown Identity, Heritage/History/Culture, and Natural Environment as important community character topics. Pedestrian Friendly, Public/Community Spaces, and Neighborhood Identity were also ranked high amongst commissioners.

2. Should the name of the chapter be changed? Potential chapter names are provided below.

- Community Character and Placemaking
- Community Character and Design
- Community Character, Culture, and Design

Response Summary: It was a unanimous decision not to change the chapter name. Overall, the Planning Commission felt that the existing chapter title is inclusive of all discussions contained within.

Staff used the responses to these questions in drafting amendments to the Community Character chapter. On June 28 the Planning Commission will review the proposed amendments identified by staff.

Comprehensive Plan Update Background

The City of Poulsbo is undertaking a periodic review and update of its comprehensive plan, as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A.130(5). The GMA requires that cities and counties update their Comprehensive Plans on a periodic schedule (recently increased from every 8 to every 10 years). This is an opportunity to revise population and employment growth forecasts with the most up to date data, review existing policies to ensure they make sense for the communities they serve, write new policies that reflect the priorities of the community, and confirm that all federal, state, and local requirements are met. The next update of the Comprehensive Plan is due



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December 30, 2024 (recently changed from June 30, 2024). The 2024 Update will plan for the next 20 years of population and employment growth through the year 2044.

The Comprehensive Plan describes the 20-year vision for the City of Poulsbo and how that vision will be achieved. The plan covers land use, community character, economic development, environment, housing, transportation, capital facilities, utilities, and parks, recreation, and open space. The City's first GMA Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1994. Periodic updates have occurred since, with the last update taking place in 2016.

Much has changed since the last update in 2016 update, and more change is expected. To plan for 2044, the comprehensive plan will consider the fundamentals of land use, housing, transportation, and capital facilities, in addition to embedding race and social equity into the planning process and plan content, strengthening and preserving a strong sense of community in the face of changes, improving the quality of life for its residents, and considering community resilience as a core value in responding to disruptive regional, national, or global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. The comprehensive plan will address these values and issues in a cohesive, accessible document that expresses continuity in the vision, guiding principles, goals, and policies.

Planning Commission will undertake an initial review of the Introduction, Community Character, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, Natural Environment, Economic Development, and Housing Chapters in 2022. A public engagement process will kick-off in late summer 2022 and will run parallel to the Planning Commission review of those chapters. Additional review of other chapters and technical documents will take place in 2023 in preparation for a release of the draft document in early 2024 for adoption submittal to the state by December 30, 2024.

Comprehensive Plan Update Schedule

Below is a 2022 schedule for Planning Commission review. The red triangle denotes where we are at it in the process. The schedule is subject to change.

Tasks	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Joint PC/CC Kick Off Meeting												
Joint PC/CC Growth Target Meeting												
PC Initial Review of Introduction Chapter												
PC Initial Review of Community Character Chapter							▲					
PC Initial Review of PROS Chapter												
PC Initial Review of Natural Environment Chapter												
PC Initial Review of Economic Development Chapter												
Joint PC/CC Land Use Scenarios Meeting												
PC Initial Review of Housing Chapter												

PEOPLE AND PUBLIC PLACES

GOAL CC-1

Provide well-designed and interesting public places that foster community cohesiveness and interaction while showcasing surrounding natural features, residents and visitors with positive activities and interesting and quality public places.

Policy CC-1.1

The City will ~~e~~Continue supporting to support traditional and non-traditional community festivals and events that reflect the diversity, heritage and cultural traditions of the community. 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 inter-generational recreational and cultural programs that celebrate Poulsbo's heritage and cultural 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.~~*

Policy CC-1.3

Preserve, and develop and enhance informal community gathering places ~~in~~Downtown and the city's residential neighborhood parks~~throughout the city.~~ 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 sustainable 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 and outside of public buildings and provide opportunities for artists to contribute to public art within city-owned parks, bridges or other public facilities.

Policy CC-1.6

Explore the creation of an Arts Committee to review and make recommendations on public art, secure funding, and identify locations suitable for art installations.

ENTRANCES, GATEWAYS AND LANDMARKS AND WAYFINDING

GOAL CC-2

Provide residents and visitors with positive identifiable images of Poulsbo that reflect Poulsbo's unique characteristics and create a sense of place and belonging.

Policy CC-2.1

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

Policy CC-2.2

Enhance the visual appeal of the city by developing a signage and wayfinding program that identifies Poulsbo, is cohesive throughout the city, and links the community's resources to its citizens.

Policy CC-2.23

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, 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-2.34

Encourage schools, religious facilities, library and other public or semi-public buildings to locate and design unique facilities that reflect Poulsbo's unique characteristics and to serve as community landmarks.

BUILDINGS AND DESIGN REVIEW SITE DESIGN

GOAL CC-3

Require high-quality, attractive human-scaled design and development that respects the surrounding built environment, promotes variety of building types and architectural interest, and builds on the character of the existing architectural fabric of the community, while allowing for the addition of complementary new urban design elements in the City's commercial areas.

Policy CC-3.21

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;
- Use of high-quality, durable, and sustainable materials;
- Architectural elements that provide protection from the weather;
- The height and bulk of buildings are proportional and appropriate to the site and surrounding natural and built environment;
- 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.

Policy CC-3.42

Design standards for commercially zoned areas shall be developed enhanced 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-3.3

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.

Policy CC-3.4

Encourage new development to incorporate art in building and site design that reinforces community identity, creates unique places, and provides a basis for community pride and ownership. Encourage diversity in content, media, and siting to reflect an array of cultural influences.

Policy CC-3.5

Require landscaping that contributes to and is an integral part of how a site interacts with the built and natural environment, and:

- Retains, enhances, and creates character and a sense of place;
- Utilizes native trees and plants, when feasible;
- Enhances water and air quality;
- Minimizes water consumption;
- Provides aesthetic value;
- Softens or disguises less aesthetically pleasing features of a site; and
- Provides buffers for transitions between uses or helps protect natural features.

Policy CC-3.6

Consider Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles when developing industrial, mixed-use, commercial, high-density residential uses, and parks and open space.

STREETS AND PATHWAYS

GOAL CC-4

Provide connectivity and attractive streets that promote physical activity and 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; and.

- Low Impact Development (LID) features, such as rain gardens and permeable pavers.

Policy CC-4.3

Promote the planting and maintenance of landscaping and street trees to enhance City rights-of-way and improve the pedestrian environment.

DOWNTOWN POULSBO DISTRICT AND NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

GOAL CC-5

Preserve and enhance district and neighborhood characteristics recognized both within the community and throughout the region—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-5.21

Maintain and reinforce 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 Preserve the existing character of Front Street, with its two-story buildings, awnings, and store fronts located at the sidewalk, provide an appealing pedestrian scale that should be preserved.

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-5.62

Update and 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-5.9

Encourage mixed use by allowing residential units to be located in association with commercial frontage in Downtown Poulsbo. New mixed use buildings shall be designed to complement the existing character and pedestrian scale of Downtown Poulsbo, shall be limited in height to an average of 35', and have a mix of both commercial and residential uses incorporated within the building.

Policy CC-5.3

Promote the revitalization of existing commercial centers by encouraging property owners to maintain and improve the appearance of individual buildings and commercial centers through building façade improvements, landscaping, and pedestrian improvements.

Policy CC-5.4

Encourage walkable and strategically located commercial areas that provide adjacent neighborhoods with goods and services.

Policy CC-5.5

Provide a variety of attractive, well-designed housing choices that reinforce the character of established neighborhoods and meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Policy CC-5.6

Support contextually appropriate residential infill development and redevelopment that is sensitive to surrounding residential areas, and that supports community character goals.

HISTORIC RESOURCES AND LANDMARKS

GOAL CC-6

Protect, conserve, celebrate, 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

~~Incentivize the protection and conservation of designated historical, archaeological and cultural sites and resources by allowing for adaptive reuse and providing incentives for historic preservation 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 interpretive 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 assist developers, landowners, and interested citizens in obtaining grants and tax incentives for the reuse and rehabilitation of designated historic sites and buildings.~~

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Policy CC-1.2

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Policy CC-1.3

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Policy CC-6.3

Incentivize the protection and conservation of designated historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and resources by allowing for adaptive reuse and providing incentives for historic preservation.

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

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