

# Chapter 1. Introduction



## 1.1. Vision

The City of Poulsbo Comprehensive Plan is a reflection of the wide variety of individual and community desires, needs and aspirations, all within the context of the goals and requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Poulsbo’s heritage is a quality of life that is unique and highly valued by its people. The continued welfare of current and future residents is the paramount goal of the City of Poulsbo leaders. In the face of continued growth, the City seeks to shape its future in ways that will maintain the quality of life that makes Poulsbo a special place to live and work. The Comprehensive Plan is a set of guidelines, goals, policies, and strategies to give growth and development both context and direction. To guide the City in its decisions is its vision of the future – which is shared by citizens and elected officials:

***Poulsbo is a vibrant community distinguished by its unique location on the shore of Liberty Bay, access to natural beauty and urban amenities, and historic, small-town quaint character. Situated at the cross-roads of Puget Sound, Poulsbo is a locally based economy with a strong sense of community and heritage, where civic groups, local government, families and neighbors work collaboratively to continually maintain and improve high quality of life.***

This Vision Statement has guided development of this Comprehensive Plan and expresses citizens’ wishes for the future in a general sense. It is the basis for all that follows. Further, Poulsbo’s seven guiding principles are integral to and support Poulsbo’s vision. These guiding principles are the foundation for the other goals and policies enumerated throughout the plan.

### ***Poulsbo’s Guiding Principles***

1. Respect Poulsbo’s identity, including the historic downtown and existing neighborhoods and districts, while allowing new areas to develop.
2. Improve and sustain the beauty and health of the surrounding natural environment.

3. Develop an economically sustainable balance of services, amenities and infrastructure.
4. Promote community interaction by supporting gathering places, open spaces, and parks and recreation.
5. Support community members of all ages in their efforts to promote active lifestyle choices.
6. Connect the City, neighborhoods, and neighbors through complete streets designed to provide safe mobility for all users.
7. Establish processes that engage citizens and community partners and implement policies that reflect the desires and concerns of community members.



*Single family home in Old Town Poulsbo residential neighborhood.*

### ***Poulsbo’s Community Key Goals***

Poulsbo’s Community Key Goals provide specific refinements to the City’s Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. Therefore, the following Key Goals are also presented at the beginning of each applicable Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and establish the policy framework for each chapter.

#### ***LAND USE***

- Achieve a mix of commercial land uses that serve the needs of the City’s residents, businesses and visitors.
- Plan for residential development that compliments the built environment and the city’s neighborhoods, while we change and grow.
- Plan and provide for public utilities and infrastructure to support the geographic and population growth of the City.
- Plan for mixed-use to encourage proximity and diversity in living and working options and decrease transportation challenges.



*Public plaza at Downtown Poulsbo.*

#### ***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.

### ***TRANSPORTATION***

- Emphasize development of complete streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation.
- Develop standards to improve the function, safety, and appearance of the City's street system.
- Maintain a consistent level of service on the City's street system that is appropriate for existing and future growth to improve traffic flow.
- Participate in efforts to enhance the City's connectivity to the region, including telecommuting.



*SR 305*

### ***NATURAL ENVIRONMENT***

- Support standards that maintain or improve environmental quality.
- Preserve the City's natural systems to protect public health, safety and welfare, and to maintain the integrity of the natural environment.
- Support regulation of activities in sensitive and hazardous areas to ensure high environmental quality and to avoid risks actual damage to life and property.
- Coordinate implementation of regulation and preservation efforts through the Comprehensive Plan, Critical Areas Ordinance, Shoreline Master Program, and other applicable City plans and regulations.



*Shoreline at American Legion Park*

### ***CAPITAL FACILITIES***

- Proactively plan and invest for critical public facilities, such as water, storm water, sanitary sewers, streets, sidewalks, bike paths, parks and other necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of existing population and future growth.
- Ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development is adequate and available at the time of new development, without decreasing the adopted level of service.
- Provide the necessary public facilities identified through



*Vinland Pointe*

the Capital Facilities Plans within the City's ability to fund or within the City's authority to require others to pay, or fundable through strategic partnerships.

### ***HOUSING***

- Achieve a mix of housing types to meet the needs of owners and renters at various income levels and ages.
- Achieve a mix of housing types and densities while maintaining healthy neighborhoods and guide new housing development into appropriate areas.

### ***PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE***

- Develop active and passive parks, recreation programs and facilities, and an open space system that benefits citizens of all ages, incomes and physical abilities.
- Establish, maintain and preserve a network of trails, safe walkways, and open spaces throughout the Poulsbo community.
- Provide opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreational activities and team sports in City parks.

### ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

- Guide and enhance Poulsbo's positive economic climate that attracts and supports business retention, expansion and recruitment.
- Attract businesses and foster local entrepreneurship that serves Poulsbo residents, the greater North Kitsap community, and our valued tourists.
- Support the provision and expansion of education at all levels and training opportunities, to maintain and enhance a skilled workforce.
- Support economic development initiatives for Poulsbo residents to have access to family wage jobs, and employers have access to a talented workforce to assist in retaining and growing their businesses.
- Provide sufficient infrastructure and public facilities appropriate to support economic development.
- Encourage business activity that takes advantage of technology and promotes alternatives to commuting, including the increasing trend to work from home.
- Support a healthy and beautiful environment, vibrant and thriving community and high quality of life for all Poulsbo residents and businesses.



## 1.2. The Planning Context

Poulsbo's Comprehensive Plan is a legal and policy document that serves as the vehicle to achieve the City's vision of the future. The Plan has these characteristics:

- *Long Range* – The plan is based on a 20-year vision of the City;
- *Predictable* – The plan is site specific and clearly states how properties will be zoned and used in the future;
- *Consistent* – The plan is internally consistent and is consistent with the Poulsbo Sub Area Plan;
- *Flexible* - The plan will continue to evolve through its annual amendments and updates and the required 8-year review, the plan will be adjusted to changing needs, unforeseen circumstances and new local or regional trends;
- *and as the name implies, Comprehensive* – The plan organizes and coordinates the complex interrelationships among people, land, resources, natural environmental systems and public facilities in such a way as to protect the future health, safety and welfare of the citizens.

### ***The Growth Management Act***

The passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 fundamentally changed the way comprehensive planning is carried out in Washington State. The central premise of the Growth Management Act is that spontaneous and unstructured growth and development is wasteful of our natural resource base and costly to the provision of public services and facilities. By managing growth and development, the negative effects can be minimized, and the benefits can be maximized.

The GMA requires state and local governments to manage Washington's growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations. This approach to growth management is unique among states.

Rather than centralize planning and decision-making at the state level, the GMA built on Washington's strong traditions of local government control and regional diversity. The GMA established state goals, set deadlines, offered direction on how to prepare local comprehensive plans and regulations, and set forth requirements for early and continuous public participation. Within the framework provided by the mandates of the Act, local governments have many choices regarding the specific content of comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations.

GMA enumerated thirteen planning goals that are to be used to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and the development regulations that support the plans. Local plans must implement these goals in a balanced manner:

1. ***Urban Growth:*** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. ***Reduce Sprawl:*** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. ***Transportation:*** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city Comprehensive Plans.

4. **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 stock.
5. **Economic Development:** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans. Promote economic development opportunity for all citizens of the state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities.
6. **Property Rights:** Private property rights 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.
7. **Permits:** Applications for both state and local governmental permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **Environment:** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water.
11. **Citizen Participation and Coordination:** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process to ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
12. **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.
13. **Historic Preservation:** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

In 1991, the state legislature amended the GMA to create the Growth Management Hearings Boards to hear and determine allegations of non-compliance with the GMA. Three Boards were established based on geographic locations, to hear Petitions for Review to local governments' compliance with the GMA. In 2010, the state legislature consolidated the three boards into one; however, the regional structure to hear cases in three regions remains. Poulsbo is within the Central Puget Sound region.

The role of the Board, whose members are appointed by the Governor, is that of a quasi-judicial panel. The Board reviews local actions only when a petition is filed and determines if the local policy choice or action complies with the goals and requirements of the GMA. The decisions of the Board are binding to local governments (unless appealed and overturned by higher court authority); it is for this reason that prudent local governments review and ensure compliance not only with the requirements of the GMA, but also the multitude of Board rulings and decisions further refining the GMA's intent, meaning and requirements. Throughout this document,

references to relevant CPSGMHB’s rulings are included to give further context to the standards and requirements of the GMA.

## ***The County-wide Planning Policy***

To achieve coordinated regional planning efforts, the GMA further required that counties and the cities therein, develop policy framework to guide development of each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan. According to the GMA, each local comprehensive plan should demonstrate that such policies have been followed in its development.

The implementing legislation of the Growth Management Act required that counties and cities agree upon policy statements in eight subject areas, including:

1. The designation of Urban Growth Areas;
2. The promotion of contiguous and orderly development and the provision of urban services to such development;
3. Joint county and city planning within Urban Growth Areas;
4. The siting of essential public facilities of county or state-wide significance;
5. The need to develop county-wide transportation facilities and strategies;
6. The need for affordable housing for all economic segments of the population;
7. County-wide development and employment; and
8. Rural areas.

The Kitsap Countywide Planning Policy (CPPs) and its subsequent amendments were developed through a collaborative process between Kitsap County, its cities, tribes, Port of Bremerton, and the U.S. Navy. Through an intensive technical review process, and the ultimate adoption by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, compliance with the county-wide policy ensures that comprehensive plans are consistent, coordinated, and fit the regional vision of Kitsap County.

Kitsap CPPs and the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council play important roles in Kitsap County and its cities’ mandates under the GMA. Important regional policies, such as how the OFM population allocation is to be distributed to the Kitsap County jurisdictions, and the designations of urban growth areas are identified in the CPPs. The regional approach and perspective are mandated by the GMA. Again, as set forth by CPSGMHB: “*The Board has held, and the Supreme Court has affirmed, that CPPs have a binding and substantive effect on local government’s comprehensive plan. [CTED, 03317, FDO, at 13-14].*”

### **1.3. Public Engagement and Involvement**

As required by the Growth Management Act, the City of Poulsbo adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1994. While the Plan was kept compliant with GMA through annual updates, the City Council initiated a comprehensive update to the Plan in Fall 2006, which culminated in a 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update adoption.

As the basis for the 2006 initial kick-off, the City Council recognized not only the physical changes the City had undergone in the previous years, but also the changing demographics and new citizenry that joined the Poulsbo community. The Mayor and Council were unanimous in their desire to start the Comprehensive Plan Update with a proactive engagement of the community

through an extensive visioning and community input effort. The City Council strongly believes a high level of citizen involvement is essential to the successful preparation and eventual adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. A phased public engagement and involvement program was designed and implemented 2007-2009 and resulted in the adoption of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update public engagement and involvement program can be summarized as follows:

*First Phase: Engaging the Community:* The first phase occurred January through June 2007, and focused on reaching out to the interested residents, business owners and citizens through a strong web presence on the City’s website, “Community Conversations,” and a community questionnaire. The new website served as the primary clearinghouse for all information on comprehensive planning, growth management act, frequently asked questions, and opportunities for comment. The “Community Conversations were held May 2007 and sought feedback and suggestions for an updated comprehensive plan. A community questionnaire was hosted on the City’s website and distributed hard copies – with the purpose to seek input and feedback on specific topics and elements of a comprehensive plan. The first phase concluded with a joint workshop with the City Council and Planning Commission, where the key themes from the “Community Conversations” and questionnaire were discussed. Based upon the key themes identified, a vision statement, guiding principles and community key goals were agreed upon, and served and continue to serve as the foundation of the Poulsbo Comprehensive Plan.



*Community Check-in open house held Fall 2015.*

*Second Phase: Draft Comprehensive Plan Review:* The second phase occurred January through June 2009, where opportunities for public involvement were provided during the Planning Commission and City Council review of the Draft Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission served as the central advisory committee for the public review of the January 2009 draft comprehensive plan. The public had opportunities to attend meetings, workshops, open houses and visit the City’s “Project Poulsbo” website, which served as the clearinghouse for all the draft comprehensive plan documents, minutes, meeting announcements, and other project information. Written comments were received throughout the process, and public comment opportunities were provided at all meetings and workshops. At the end of the second phase, a Planning Commission recommended draft comprehensive plan was forwarded to begin the formal public hearing process.

*Third Phase: Public Hearing Process:* The Planning Commission and City Council conducted public hearings to gather and consider public testimony on the Draft 2009 Comprehensive Plan. At the conclusion of the public hearings and extensive deliberations, the City Council adopted its 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update on December 16, 2009.

Since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update adoption, the City has continued keeping its comprehensive plan relevant through the annual amendment process; where additions and revisions have occurred yearly since 2009, including amendments to policies maps, functional plans and the capital facilities plan.

*2016 Comprehensive Plan Update:* The City initiated a review and update to its comprehensive plan in 2015 as part of the GMA periodic update requirement. Because the City underwent a significant update in 2009 and made subsequent annual amendments, the 2016 update is primarily a check-in on the comprehensive plan's policy direction and to identify amendments as needed and appropriate.

The first step in the update process was a "Community Check-in", where the City hosted an online community questionnaire July through September 2015 to solicit feedback from residents and business owners. A community open house was also held for interested citizens to provide opinions and feedback on the comprehensive plan update.

An interesting fact of the online community questionnaire is that many of the same questions from the 2007 comprehensive plan questionnaire were included in the 2015 questionnaire, in order to gauge changes in community desires and sentiment.

A wealth of feedback and opinions were expressed through these forums. The following are the key themes:

- A desirable quality of life is what brings people to live and own businesses in Poulsbo.
- Poulsbo has a strong sense of community and heritage, and it is important not to lose this as the city grows.
- Reinvention and revitalization of Viking Avenue was identified as a top priority.
- Improving existing infrastructure, sidewalks and streets is very important, and should not be overshadowed by the needs of new growth.
- Full utilization of vacant land and buildings should be completed before new development occurs.
- Traffic congestion, especially on SR 305, continues to be a concern.
- Protection of Liberty Bay, environmental features and tree retention are a top priority as the city grows.
- A citywide trail system is a highly-desired amenity.
- Increased family wage jobs, professional services and tech jobs were identified as employment needs.
- Expand the Olympic College/Western Washington University presence in Poulsbo.
- Concern about the timing and pace of new growth.

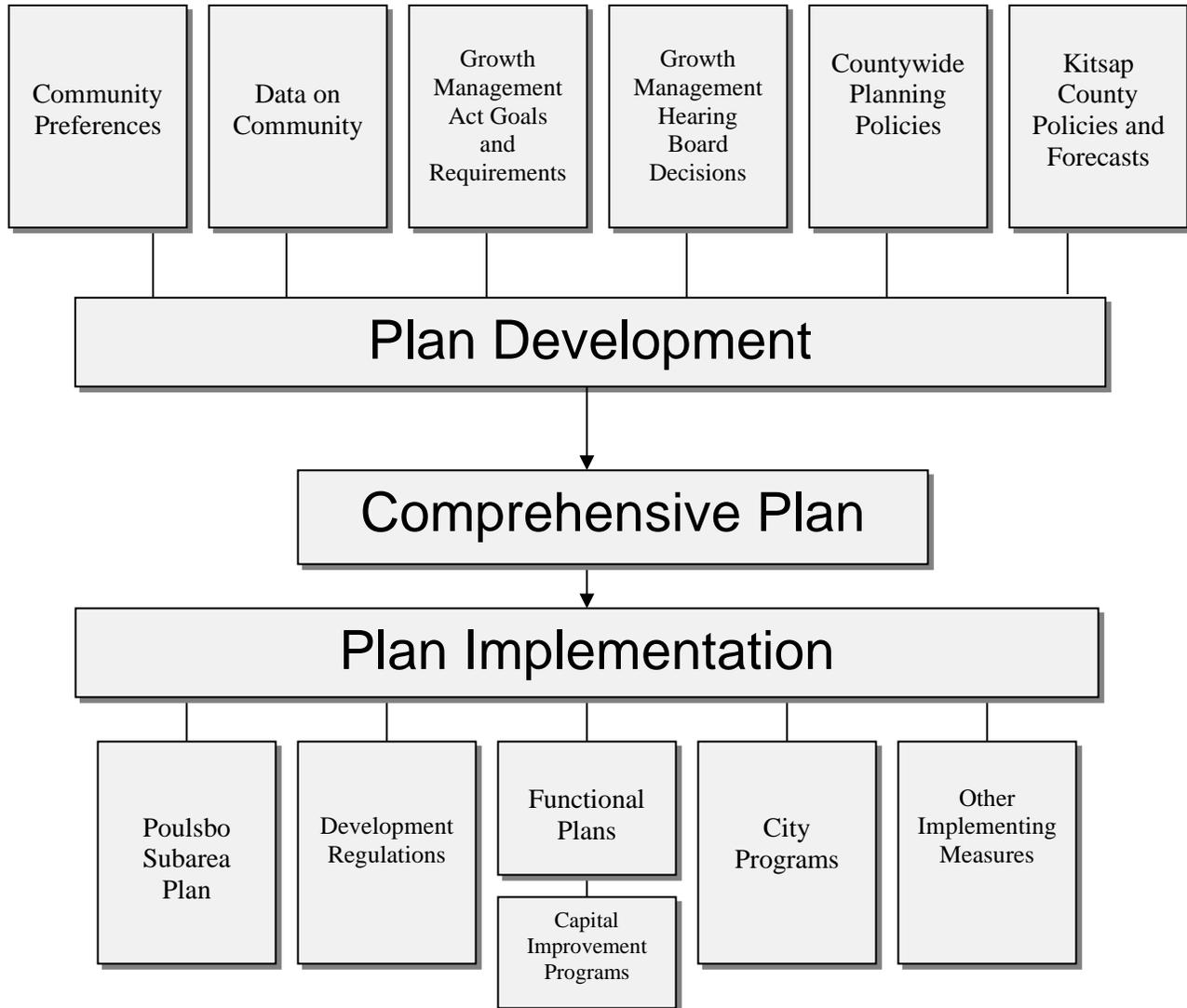
Many of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update amendments were identified from the feedback received through the Community Check-in as well as policy direction from the Mayor and City Council. The Draft 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update public engagement and involvement program continues the goal from the 2009 update process with similar strategies and opportunities, to ensure that every interested person who wishes to express an opinion has the ability to do so.

## **1.4. How the Comprehensive Plan is Implemented**

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 second through capital improvement plans, such as sewer, water, parks and traffic. These two tools constantly weigh the City's financial ability to support development against its minimum population

obligations and environmental protection. It is the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies that the development regulations and capital improvement plans are based upon.

**Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive Plan**



**Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary from time to time to respond to changing conditions and needs of Poulsbo citizens. The Growth Management Act requires that amendments to a comprehensive plan be considered no more frequently than once per year. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan shall be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of various proposals can be ascertained. In considering proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, proposals will be evaluated for intent and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, and whether a change in conditions or circumstances from the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, or new information is present which was not available at the

time of the initial adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission reviews proposed amendments to the plan, which forwards recommendations to the City Council.

## ***Updates to the Comprehensive Plan***

The Growth Management Act requires that comprehensive plans be reviewed and updated as necessary, at least every 8 years, outside of the optional annual review process. Further, Kitsap County must review, at least every ten years, its designated urban growth areas. Kitsap County reviews the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County for the Buildable Lands Report the year prior to the 8-year periodic update cycle. In conjunction with this review by the county, each city located within an urban growth area shall review the densities permitted within its boundaries, and the extent to which the growth occurring has located within a city or within the unincorporated portions of urban growth areas.

## **1.5. Organization of the Plan**

### ***Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan***

The Comprehensive Plan is a legal document consisting of text, goals and policies that are adopted by the City Council to guide public and private land use decisions, and a series of maps. Section 1 of the Comprehensive Plan is the plan's policy document, which contains all goals and policies.

Section 2 of the Comprehensive Plan is the City's Capital Facility Plan; Section 3 is review of past development trends and an evaluation of the city's available land capacity. Section 4 includes the Comprehensive Plan's References and Appendices including background technical data and the City's Functional Plans, which are included to support the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan consists of ten elements. The GMA prescribes seven specific elements that must be contained in a city comprehensive plan. The City has added three optional elements:

#### **Required**

Land Use

Housing

Transportation

Utilities

Capital Facilities

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Economic Development

#### **Optional**

Natural Environment

Community Character

Participation, Implementation and Evaluation

The goals and policies contained within each of the chapters of Section 1 are the heart of the plan, and present direction for guiding Poulsbo's growth. A **goal** is a direction-setter. It is an ideal future end, condition or statement related to the public health, safety or general welfare towards which planning, and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, is abstract in nature.

A **policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is based upon a comprehensive plan's goals and the analysis of the data. A policy is put into effect through implementation measures such as zoning, land division, and environmental ordinances.

### ***Plan Interpretation***

This Plan provides a guide and framework for regulatory and non-regulatory actions for growth that express the vision of Poulsbo residents. In order to maintain internal consistency between the general Plan policies, the following general rules of construction are intended to be used for interpreting the Plan:

- Policies are intended to be mutually supportive and are to be read collectively, not individually.
- More specific policies shall control over more general policies.
- Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map re-designation proposals should reflect and be based on the policies of the Plan. Any amendment of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use map is subject to the annual Plan amendment process, the Poulsbo Subarea Plan amendment process, or the 8-year Comprehensive Plan review, as applicable.