

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. {Key goals are integrated into the goals and policies of this chapter}

3.12 Plan Context

The character of a community is influenced by a variety of factors, including its citizens, social network, schools, community and business organizations, history, built environment, and natural resources. Although it is not possible to legislate community character, public policy can provide a framework that supports desirable characteristics. Community character cohesiveness can develop in many ways, such as. It can come from a shared vision for the community, It can be nurtured by community events, or. 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 shaping the future form and character of Poulsbo and is meant to address the goals of retaining Poulsbo's distinct character and creating gathering places and cultural opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds. 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. {Addressed in 3.2}~~

Community Character is not a required Comprehensive Plan chapter under state law; however, because of the value Poulsbo places on its character, the City has chosen to include it as an optional chapter. This chapter plays a critical role in maintaining and improving the quality of the environments that define the City's identity and give character to its commercial districts and residential neighborhoods. 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.

3.23 Goals and Policies

Poulsbo faces the challenge of continuing to achieve the community's desired character, while accommodating the growth that is expected over the next twenty years. This element considers the will require a particular focus on the following aspects of Community Character:

- People and Public Places
- Entrances, Gateways, and Landmarks and Wayfinding
- Buildings and Design Site Review
- Streets and Pathways
- Downtown Poulsbo
- Districts and Neighborhoods
- 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 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 c~~ontinue 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 and 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 Poulso'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

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 Poulso's character.

GOAL CC-2

Provide residents and visitors with positive identifiable images ~~of Poulso~~ that reflect Poulso'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 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 Poulso, is cohesive throughout the city, and links the community's resources to its citizens.

Policy CC-2.32

Identify public view opportunities unique to Poulso such as those of the Olympic Mountains and Liberty Bay, and community landmarks, such as the Muriel Iverson Williams Waterfront Park, ~~Port~~ Marinas, 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-2.43

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

Buildings and Design Site 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 Poulso 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 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, business employment, and residential multi-family zones, in addition to planned residential developments and infill projects areas.

Policy CC-3. 12

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

- Ensure new development ~~it~~ 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~~ that unifies site design and creates character.

Policy CC-3. 21

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 ~~C~~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

Encourage 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

Streets and pathways can be more than just a means of getting from one point to another. They can define how the city is viewed as one passes through it and create a sense of unique character. Elements of design, such as width, provisions for different users, material treatments, and vegetation, affect the quality of a traveler's trip and the sense of place. 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 and pathways tie different parts of Poulso 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; and*
- *Low Impact Development (LID) features.*

Policy CC-4.3

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

Downtown Poulso

Downtown Poulso is a center for recreation, shopping, dining and a boating destination. One of the main reasons people are drawn to Poulso 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 Poulso's Norwegian heritage and unique shops and restaurants.

Downtown Poulso is a special hub that draw 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 Poulso.

GOAL CC-5

Promote an economically healthy Downtown that is unique, attractive and offers a variety of retail, office, service, residential, cultural, and recreational opportunities. ~~Preserve and enhance the existing character and scale, pedestrian-friendly and community-oriented Downtown Poulsbo. {Moved to CC-5.1 and amended}~~

Policy CC-5.21

~~Preserve and enhance the existing character and scale of downtown through control of height, scale, and design while reinforcing the area as a primary identifying feature of Poulsbo, setting it apart from the rest of the city.~~

~~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

~~Preserve the existing eclectic character of Front Street with its individual small storefronts located at the sidewalk, street-facing building facades, awnings, unique design elements, and up to 35 feet height limit.~~

~~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 store fronts located at the sidewalk, provide an appealing pedestrian scale that should be preserved. {Moved to CC-5.1 and amended}~~

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-5.35

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-5.46

Update and implement the Downtown Parking Management Strategy, which identifies short and long-term strategies and alternatives for providing additional downtown public parking. **Strategies should consider nonmotorized access and enhanced transit service downtown.**

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. {Repetitive with new 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2}~~

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.~~ {Repetitive with 5.1 and 5.2}

Districts and Neighborhoods

Many residents identify where they live, work, or spend their free time as a particular neighborhood. Neighborhoods have differing characteristics and often specific identities. Someone who lives in Old Town experiences a different flavor of the city compared to one who lives off Viking Ave on the north edge of town, and different still from one living in a subdivision on Noll Rd. It is important that each of these neighborhoods be recognized and appreciated for the unique qualities that they add to the overall character of Poulsbo.

GOAL CC-6

Establish and enhance the character and diversity of existing commercial and employment districts and residential neighborhoods in order to attract long-term residents and businesses and to ensure the city's residential quality, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality.

Policy CC-6.1

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-6.2

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

Policy CC-6.3

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-6.4

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

Policy CC-6.5

Encourage a variety of uses and mixed-use development within buildings, or sites. Ensure that mixed-use development complements and enhances the character of the surrounding residential and commercial areas.

Policy CC-6.6

Continue to improve and enhance code enforcement functions by identifying and evaluating best practices and providing resources for program administration.

Historic Resources and Landmarks

Historic resources and landmarks offer a way to connect with the city's past and provide a sense of continuity and permanence. Those resources represent development patterns and places associated with Poulsbo's notable persons and community events. The historic fabric together with unique qualities of new development patterns define the character of a city. It is essential to preserve some historic resources to maintain the character of Poulsbo and to continue to honor its past.

~~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.

GOAL CC-67

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

Policy CC-67.1

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-67.2

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-67.3

~~Incentivize the P~~rotection 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-67.4

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-67.5

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-67.6

~~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.