

Chapter 11. Health and Human Services

11.1 Plan Context

The Health and Human Services Chapter is not required by the Growth Management Act (GMA); even so, Poulsbo feels strongly that planning for the health and wellness of the community is just as important as planning for other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Health and Human Services encompasses a wide spectrum of programs and functions aimed at promoting the well-being and vitality of individuals and communities alike. It demonstrates our shared commitment to a city where every person has access to the resources and support; they need to lead a fulfilling and healthy life.

Poulsbo has made a commitment to providing services and assistance to those considered more vulnerable and/or at risk of poor health outcomes, displacement, or involvement in emergency systems including low-income youth and adults, isolated older adults, people struggling with mental health disorders and chronic health conditions, and people struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. In 2020, the Housing, Health, and Human Services (HHH) Department was added as a way to strengthen the City's social safety net and improve services to residents. This new chapter serves as a landing place for the work already underway, as well as a framework for making future decisions regarding health and human services.

11.2 Goals and Policies

Human Services

Human services are an essential part of the fabric of a community. The City of Poulsbo is no exception. The dedication and commitment of the city is shown by the creation of the Housing, Health, and Human Services Department (HHH) in 2020. The HHH Department provides space and opportunity for direct services and funds, promotes, and enhances the work of other departments, agencies, and nonprofits and works with partners to understand current and emerging human service needs—and find new opportunities to address them.

Human services are services that enable individuals and families to meet basic human needs (physical, economic, and social) and offer a continuum of support including intervention, prevention, and enhancement.

GOAL HH-1

Support an effective and efficient system of human services that addresses and anticipates needs within the community.

Policy HH-1.1

Continue to support the Housing, Health, and Human Services Department, which partners with other departments, agencies, and nonprofits to understand current and emerging human service needs and find new opportunities to address them.

Policy HH-1.2

Conduct an initial community needs assessment to understand gaps in community human services, as well as the strengths and assets available in the community.

Policy HH-1.3

Support efforts to increase community awareness of community-based human service resources.

Policy HH-1.4

Encourage human services to become accessible to all in the community by removing any barriers, including but not limited to architectural, cultural, language, communication, and location.

Policy HH-1.5

Promote volunteerism as a way to involve citizens in meeting the needs of their neighbors, stretch funding resources, and build a sense of pride in the community.

Policy HH-1.6

Encourage human services organizations to locate facilities near commercial centers where transit and non-motorized facilities exist.

Policy HH-1.7

Provide training to City employees who interact frequently with the public, including but not limited to police, public works operations, development services, and parks staff, to detect potential human services needs and offer contact information, while respecting citizens' rights to privacy.

GOAL HH-2

Recognize the interrelationship between housing and human services.

Policy HH-2.1

Support programs designed to allow people who need assistance to remain in their homes or maintain their independence as long as possible.

Policy HS 2.2

Encourage the creation of a mix of housing alternatives for people at different levels of independence.

Policy HS 2.3

Support the creation of residences for people in recovery from drug and alcohol use disorder; ensure that these residences provide adequate recovery support for residents and access to educational/vocational skills.

Healthy Living

Healthy, sustainable, and safe communities do not just happen — they are the product of people working together and investing time, energy and commitment. Health is a major determinant of quality of life and the ability to participate fully in the community. The city recognizes the importance of health for all of Poulsbo's residents, particularly the most vulnerable and/or at risk.

GOAL HH-3

Create a healthy environment where community members may practice healthy living, are well nourished, and have access to quality health care.

Policy HH-3.1

Work with the medical community and providers to promote access to high quality healthcare, including physical and mental health, emergency medical, and addiction services.

Policy HH-3.2

Collaborate with community organizations and health providers to advocate for quality health care and broader accessibility to services.

Policy HH-3.3

Support the increased availability of home care and appropriate assisted-living opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities, including appropriate support and resources for caregivers of older adults and people with disabilities.

Policy HH-3.4

Support organizations that help provide food assistance to low-income residents.

Policy HH-3.5

Promote the development of home and community gardens, farmers' or public markets, and other small-scale collaborative initiatives in order to provide citizens with a diverse choice of locally based food products.

Policy HH-3.6

Continue to develop a robust pedestrian and bicycle network that safely accommodates walking and biking for commuting, school, shopping, and recreational trips by those of all ages and levels of experience.

Policy HH-3.7

Encourage development of new parks, plazas, gardens, trails and paths, and open space amenities concurrent with approvals for new development to increase opportunities, encourage physical activity, and help mitigate urban heat island effects.

Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

Emergency preparedness and resiliency are essential pillars of any community's ability to withstand and recover from unforeseen crises and disasters. Being prepared for emergencies, whether natural or man-made, is not merely an option but a responsibility.

GOAL HH-4

Develop an increased level of emergency preparedness among all segments of the population to help coordinate governmental response and recovery efforts that seek to minimize the adversity of a major emergency or disaster.

Policy HH-4.1

Develop a plan to evaluate the City's ability to withstand and recover from natural disasters and human-made disruptions in order to minimize disruptions to public services.

Policy HH-4.2

Develop a climate change risk assessment and impact analysis for city government facilities and operations.

Policy HH-4.3

Provide community education and outreach on wildfire smoke mitigation best management practices. Ensure outreach is accessible and prioritizes vulnerable communities, including those who work outside. {to address RCW 36.70A.070(1), as amended in 2023}

Policy HH-4.4

Work with community partners to establish hubs that can serve as clean air shelters for use by the public during wildfire smoke events. {to address RCW 36.70A.070(1), as amended in 2023}