



2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Chapter Summary – Natural Environment

STAFF NOTES:

- Not a required chapter per RCW 36.70A (Growth Management Act).
- You can find a ~~strikethrough~~ and underline (with notes) version online [here](#) and a “clean copy” of the chapter allowing for ease of reading [here](#).
- Community “Key Goals” integrated into the goals and policies.
- The majority of amendments proposed to meet state, regional, and county requirements.
- Streamlined narrative and eliminated or combined redundant policies.
- Urban Forestry goals and policies currently in the Land Use Chapter relocated to the Natural Environment Chapter.

BACKGROUND:

While the Natural Environment Chapter is an optional element from those required by GMA, it is home to many required policies related to natural systems, critical area protection, shorelines, watershed planning, water quality, air quality, climate change, and urban forestry. This element is a bit more technical, primarily due to many layers of environmental policy requirements from the state, regional and local levels.

Therefore, proposed amendments are primarily derived from: 1) review of Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) [Vision 2050 Consistency Tool](#), 2) review of the [Washington Department of Ecology shoreline consistency checklist](#), 3) review of [Washington Department of Commerce 2024 comprehensive plan update checklist](#), and 4) 2021 Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies' Natural Environment section.

NOTABLE AMENDMENTS:

New Section Titled “Water Quality and Basin Planning”:

Added to address PSRC Vision 2050 requirements and to address ongoing water quality and watershed basin efforts/planning.

New Policy:

Policy NE-11.4

Cooperate with regional and state governments and agencies in the development and implementation of watershed management plans or other types of basin plans which are upstream or downstream from Poulsbo.

New Section Titled “Climate Change”:

Added to address PSRC Vision 2050 requirements.

Additional Information: Legislation passed and signed into law in 2023 ([HB 1181](#)) adds a climate goal to the Growth Management Act (GMA) and requires local comprehensive plans to have a climate element with resilience and greenhouse gas emissions mitigation sub-elements. This climate change work is due in 2029 for Poulsbo.

- The resilience sub-element must include goals and policies to improve climate preparedness, response and recovery efforts. This is mandatory for all cities fully planning under the GMA and encouraged for others.
- The greenhouse gas emissions sub-element must include goals and policies to reduce emissions and vehicle miles traveled. This sub-element is mandatory.
- Climate elements must maximize economic, environmental, and social co-benefits and prioritize environmental justice in order to avoid worsening environmental health disparities.

New Section Titled “Air Quality” (page 17):

Added to address PSRC Vision 2050 requirements, which states” Ensure all federal and state air quality standards are met and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases (WAC 173-420-080)

Moved Section Titled “Urban Forestry” (page 18):

Moved from Land Use Chapter, with amendments.

New Urban Forestry Policies:

Policy NE-15.8

When funding is available, complete an assessment of the urban tree canopy to evaluate the extent, health, and diversity of trees across the city.

Policy NE-15.11

Maintain the city's status as a Tree City USA as designated by the Arbor Day Foundation through the following measures: a. Maintain certification through various programs and activities long term. b. Strive to achieve annual growth awards from the Arbor Day foundation as a part of long-term implementation of the Tree City designation. Consider programs and policies which will further recognize the city's efforts in relation to community forestry.

Policy NE-15.12

Upon consultation with the City Arborist, consider additional planning or resource documents (such as tree stewardship guide) related to ongoing tree stewardship and protection.