

Natural Environment Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Preservation and protection of the natural environment is an essential element of the City's livability. By integrating the natural and built environment, Longview will preserve and enhance a high quality life for its residents with clean water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and safe and secure places for people to live and work. Longview is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural environment at the same time that it meets its other land use, economic development, housing, and infrastructure goals.

Conservation

Goal NE-A To reduce consumption of resources, minimize waste, and reduce pollution.

Objective NE-A.1 Assess city properties by 2009 to identify areas or sources of pollution. Based on this assessment, develop a schedule for clean up, as appropriate.

Policy NE-A.1.1 Minimize the quantity and toxicity of materials used and waste generated from City facilities and operations through source reduction, reuse, and recycling.

Policy NE-A.1.2 Participate in the restoration of the natural environment on and around City-owned property, where appropriate (e.g., in conjunction with City capital projects).

Objective NE-A.2 Promote and lead education and involvement programs to raise the public awareness about environmental issues, and demonstrate how individual and community actions can create significant improvements to the environment. Key activities and programs shall be identified biennially in conjunction with the adoption of the City's budget.

Policy NE-A.2.1 Promote the use of alternative fuels in vehicles and equipment by the City, transit operators, fleet operators, and the public.

Policy NE-A.2.2 Promote and support energy conservation by:

- supporting planting trees along street edges to reduce heat absorbed by asphalt;
- promoting higher density and infill development near transit;
- encouraging rehabilitation of existing buildings; and
- enforcing the State Energy Code.

Objective NE-A.3 Fund programs annually for the acquisition, preservation, restoration, and/or beautification of valuable critical area, open space, and shoreline resources to

result in a net increase in ecological functions. This objective may be accomplished through updates of the City's Park/Recreation/Open Space plan or by the City's capital facility plan being updated every 6 years.

- Policy NE-A.3.1** Provide incentives for landowners to retain, enhance, or restore important wildlife habitat such as reduced permit fees, expedited permit review, and reduction in property taxes.
- Policy NE-A.3.2** Recognize and support the educational value of public access to critical areas and shorelines when compatible with the critical area sensitivity and public safety.

Protection and Mitigation

- Goal NE-B** To ensure the proper management of the natural environment to protect critical areas and conserve land, air, water, and energy resources.

- Objective NE-B.1** Review and update (as necessary) the City's Critical Areas Ordinance to promote the City's quality of life, and, as required by State and federal mandate, to ensure protection of known critical areas. This review and update shall occur no less than every 7 years consistent with RCW 36.70A.130(4)(b), or as amended.

- Policy NE-B.1.1** Define critical areas consistent with RCW 36.70A.30 or as amended, including:
- floodways of 100-year floodplains;
 - landslide, erosion, and seismic hazards, including steep slopes of 30 or 40%;
 - wetlands and their protective buffers;
 - streams and their protective buffers;
 - critical Aquifer recharge areas; and
 - fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

- Policy NE-B.1.2** Modify critical area management practices and regulations over time to address changing conditions and best available scientific information gained from monitoring activities and research.

- Policy NE-B.1.3** In the critical area ordinance update that occurs first following the adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan (2006), efforts to update the critical area regulations should incorporate:
- updates to the stream and wetland classification systems;

- detailed technical information regarding Longview’s aquifers and aquifer recharge areas as resources are identified and become available;
- identification and mapping of geologically hazardous areas within the City and its Planning Area;
- collaborative efforts with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify more area specific Priority Habitat and Species mapping applicable to the Longview area;
- verification that the City’s existing flood regulations are consistent with the State model; and
- ensure exemptions to critical area regulations are sufficiently limited to prevent harm to critical areas.

Policy NE-B.1.4 In the City’s zoning and critical area regulations, encourage design solutions such as planned residential developments, cluster housing, and other innovative techniques in order to protect the sensitive features/critical areas of a site.

Policy NE-B.1.5 Limit development and activities in critical areas that would damage their functions, except to the minimum extent necessary when there is no reasonable alternative and subject to Best Management Practices.

Policy NE-B.1.6 Implement and preserve critical area buffers based on Best Available Science adjacent to critical areas to adequately protect such areas from development and land use impacts. Require enhancement where feasible.

Objective NE-B.2 Prepare clearing and grading regulations by 2009 to help prevent unnecessary stripping of vegetation and loss of soils and to reduce the need for additional resources to be brought in from offsite.

Policy NE-B.2.1 Regulate development activities to avoid clearing of vegetation that maintains slope stability, reduces erosion, shades shorelines, buffers wetlands and stream corridors, and provides wildlife and aquatic habitat.

Policy NE-B.2.2 Ensure prompt restoration of land after grading and vegetation removal through phased clearing and grading, replanting requirements, and other appropriate revegetation and engineering techniques.

Water Resources

Goal NE-C To enhance water quality; protect environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes, riparian areas, and aquifer recharge areas; and manage floodplains.

- Objective NE-C.1** In the application of wetland and stream regulations and restoration programs, strive for no net loss of ecological function within the City of Longview. This objective should be assessed biennially based on permit records and any regional restoration plans and activities.
- Policy NE-C.1.1** Protect existing hydrologic connections between water bodies, watercourses, and associated wetlands. The City should consider the hydrologic continuity between ground and surface water when reviewing development proposals.
- Policy NE-C.1.2** Allow enhancement or restoration of degraded wetlands and riparian corridors to maintain or improve ecological functions. Approve wetland mitigation proposals if they will result in improved overall wetland functions. Preserve land used for wetland mitigation in perpetuity. Monitoring and maintenance should be provided until the success of the site is established.
- Policy NE-C.1.3** Review the effects of development proposals on anadromous fish and other species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act and require mitigation such as riparian habitat enhancement and water quality treatment.
- Policy NE-C.1.4** Actively participate in the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board Planning Unit for WRIs 25 and 26, which focuses on the long-term strategic watershed planning, management, conservation and restoration, and addresses water quality, water quantity, and fish habitat.
- Objective NE-C.2** In the next update of the City's critical area regulations following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan update in 2006, designate and provide for the protection and management of groundwater and aquifer recharge areas based on Best Available Science.
- Policy NE-C.2.1** Protect groundwater quality and prevent aquifer contamination, degradation, and depletion through the comprehensive management of groundwater in conformance with the Clean Water Act, the Washington State Department of Ecology's Guidance Document for the Establishment of Critical Aquifer Recharge Area Ordinances, and all other applicable federal, State, and local water quality regulations.
- Policy NE-C.2.2** Promote low-impact development that allows for infiltration and recharge where appropriate. Use open space and natural systems such as vegetative swales, french drains, wetlands, drywells, and rain gardens that promote water quality and infiltration.
- Objective NE-C.3** Protect lives and public and private property from flooding by continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Policy NE-C.3.1** The city should review and update, as necessary, Chapter 17.24 Flood Damage Prevention regulations, based on the Washington Model Flood

Damage Prevention Ordinance, to ensure that the minimum State and federal standards required as a condition of participation in the NFIP are met.

Policy NE-C.3.2 Protect, enhance, and restore existing flood storage and conveyance functions and ecological values of floodplains through maintaining dikes, protecting wetlands, and maintaining riparian corridors.

Policy NE-C.3.3 Regulate development in the 100-year floodplain to avoid substantial risk and damage to public and private property and loss of life. These regulations shall at a minimum comply with State and FEMA requirements for flood hazard areas.

Geological Hazards

Goal NE-D To minimize the loss of life and property from landslides and seismic, volcanic, or other naturally occurring events, and minimize or eliminate land use impacts on geologically hazardous areas.

Objective NE-D.1 By 2011, after mapping of geological hazards within the City and its Planning Area has been completed consistent with Policy NE B.1.3, the City Manager should form a staff task force to review new mapping information of the areas within the City identified as geologically hazardous areas to ensure that current performance standards are adequate.

Policy NE-D.1.1 Regulate uses and activities that occur within or near geologically hazardous areas in a manner that minimizes the potential for property damage or loss of life.

Policy NE-D.1.2 Restrict development on potentially unstable land to ensure public safety and conformity with natural constraints.

Policy NE-D.1.3 Apply the International Building Codes, as amended by the State of Washington, and any other necessary special building design and construction measures to minimize the risk of structural damage, fire, and injury to occupants due to geological hazards.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Goal NE-E To balance the requirements of an urban area with protection of fish and wildlife habitats, including salmonid habitat, by preserving, restoring, and enhancing critical areas, open space and parkland; and linking habitat for wildlife and native ecosystems.

Objective NE-E.1 Identify remaining linked habitat in the City and incorporate this in the Parks/Recreation/Open Space Plan. Establish an open space target for

preservation of key habitat for fish and wildlife in the next update of the Open Space Plan, which is updated every 6 years.

Policy NE-E.1.1 Manage fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas to protect overall habitat functions and values (e.g., food, water, cover, space), except where a listed species requires targeted habitat management. Rely on federal, State, and County agencies to identify “special status” wildlife species, but allow for a process to identify species of local importance to the City of Longview.

Policy NE-E.1.2 Develop strategies for preserving, protecting, or restoring important habitats and corridors, particularly if they are at risk of significant degradation. These strategies should include:

- public acquisition of habitat;
- linking habitats using parks, greenways, open space areas, riparian corridors, and other natural features;
- encouraging the use of conservation easements for long-term habitat protection;
- promoting land use plans and development that avoid impacts on habitat; and
- protecting native plant communities by encouraging management and control of non-native invasive plants, including aquatic plants.

Shorelines

Goal NE-F Plan and coordinate land uses, public access, and natural resource protection along shorelines of the State in accordance with the State Shoreline Management Act and the Longview Community Vision.

Objective NE-F.1 Coordinate with Cowlitz County and the City of Kelso to determine if a joint Shoreline Master Program will be prepared to meet the Shoreline Management Act deadline of December 2012. Coordination should occur by the end of 2009 in order to ensure that a work program can be prepared, grants and funding can be secured, and adequate time is available to conduct either a joint program update or create an individual city program if a coordinated program is not prepared.

Policy NE-F.1.1 Continue to implement the adopted Shoreline Master Program for the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers until such time as it is amended or replaced.

Policy NE-F.1.2 Ensure that the updated Shoreline Master Program is consistent with the City of Longview Comprehensive Plan and its goals, objectives, and policies that promote connections between Longview and its waterfront.