



Memorandum

February 1, 2018

TO: Longview Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Langdon, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update – Staff Recommendations Regarding Emphasis Areas

There are five emphasis areas that are being considered during the Comprehensive Plan update. Each one of the emphasis areas is listed below followed by an initial staff recommendation. An open house was held for each of the emphasis areas. For your information, attached are handouts for each of the emphasis areas plus open house summaries. I will give the reasons for the recommendations at the meeting.

- **SR411/First Avenue & 3rd Avenue Corridor**
North of Hudson Street the corridor primarily has a High Density Residential classification. South of Hudson Avenue the corridor primarily has a Light Industrial classification.
Staff recommendation: Keep the classifications as is.
- **Barlow Point**
This area is classified as Mixed Use – Residential/Commercial (MU-R/C) in the Planning Area Boundary and primarily classified as Heavy Industrial inside the City limits.
Staff recommendation: For inside the City limits, keep the Heavy Industrial (HI) classification and add the one property that is not classified as HI to that classification. For outside City limits, convert the MU-R/C to HI. This is consistent with the recently adopted Cowlitz County Comprehensive Plan.
- **West Longview Lagoons**
This area is classified as Public/Quasi-public/Intuitional.
Staff recommendation: Keep the classifications as is.
- **36th Avenue (south of Ocean Beach Hwy)**
Staff recommendation: Keep the classifications as is.

- **Highlands Neighborhood Including Oregon Way**

The half block facing Oregon Way between Nichols Boulevard and the Railway is classified as Community Commercial. The Highlands Neighborhood is classified as High Density Residential and Low Density Residential.

Staff recommendation: Keep the classifications for the properties adjacent to Oregon Way as is. Develop a new classification for the Highlands Neighborhood that would guide the development of a zoning district specifically for the Highlands Neighborhood.

As mentioned above, the staff recommendations are initial ones. Staff will make their final recommendations when drafting the staff report(s) for the public hearing(s).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 442-5083.

Cc: Jim McNamara, City Attorney
Steve Shuman, Assistant City Attorney
Craig Bozarth, City Engineer
John Brickey, Community Development Director

SR 411/FIRST & THIRD AVE.

2016 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

About Longview's Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today's Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview's strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

Only a small part of Washington's growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City's plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it's time to assess what's going well, and what we should change.

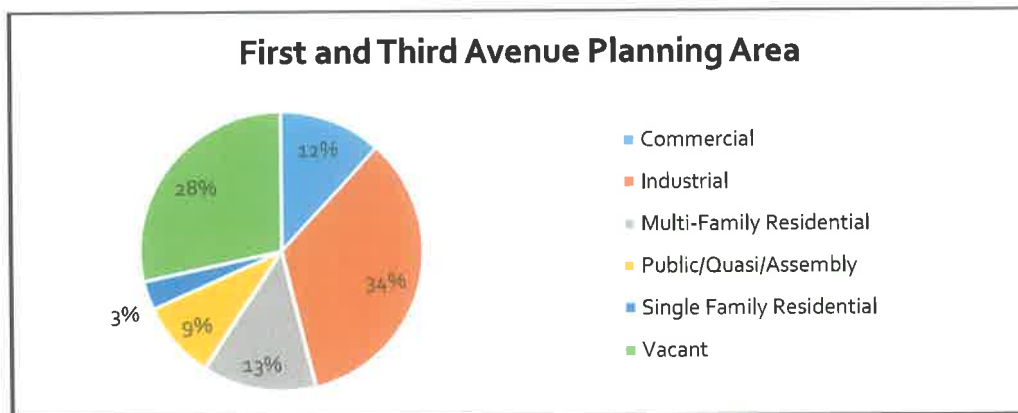
These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview's public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About the SR 411/First and Third Avenue Corridor

Between Washington and Tennant Way, the First and Third Avenue corridor contains an industrial zone and the "Riverfront District" zone, which was enacted in the mid-1970s and intended to incorporate residential, multifamily, and limited commercial uses with recreational uses. Included in the vision for the Riverfront District was the potential of marinas and leisure boating on the properties adjacent to the Cowlitz River. Mother Nature had different ideas, in 1980 sending tons of sediment down the river stemming from Mount St. Helens' eruption. At this point, heavy siltation along that stretch makes it extremely shallow and impassable to all but the smallest craft.



While some new development and redevelopment has happened in the past 40 years, the various uses in both the industrial zone and the Riverfront District zone don't particularly integrate with one another. Public uses such as the courts, jail, and work-release facility have no relationship with the senior housing and assisted living to the south, which in turn have little relationship with the commercial, light industrial, and heavy industrial uses nearby. The corridor does have some areas zoned for residential use. Marine View Drive, a private road, is zoned for medium density residential development (one- to four-unit buildings). The west side of Third Avenue between Hudson Street and Peardale Lane is zoned for high-density residential and office uses.



As a state highway corridor, SR 411 is heavily traveled, but a lot of the traffic doesn't originate or isn't destined for places along the corridor. This changes the relationship of the traffic to the area itself, resulting in a limited sense of place. Transit service and sidewalks are focused north of Hudson, and there are no bike facilities. South of Hudson, industry like the CalPortland concrete plant site and the waste transfer station take advantage of easy access to SR 432 and I-5 and make use of a rail spur that runs along the SR 411 and SR 432.

What could the future bring?

Because much of the developed land has been taken up with uses that do not interact with the river, the envisioned "Riverfront District" seems unlikely to come about even if a major dredging initiative were undertaken. It's also probable that travel behavior through the area will not change in the future. People will continue to use SR 411 as a cut-through between the Allen Street bridge area and Tennant Way, and they may or may not intend to stop at any of the businesses or other places along the corridor. The current mixture of uses provides viable employment, regional-scale commercial uses, and dense housing in the form of condominiums and retirement communities. Options to consider are personal services; professional offices north and south of Hudson; and industrial uses such as small-scale manufacturing, industrial services, contractor showrooms, and storage with limited yard spaces. These can range from relatively small standalone or "outpad" buildings to about 50,000 square-foot flex space buildings that may host multiple tenants and take advantage of proximity to multiple regional transportation systems, as well as the Port and heavy industrial areas these businesses might serve.

What do you think?

- How could the zoning be changed to be more relevant to the area as it is today?
- What would best integrate with the existing land uses in the area?
- How should the waterfront property be used?

Later thoughts? E-mail steve.langdon@ci.longview.wa.us

October 17, 2016 Public Workshop Synopsis

There were 17 members of the public in attendance. Following a staff presentation, they were invited to review displays, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff.

Steve Langdon presented a slideshow reviewing issues related to the corridor that will have some bearing on the area's comprehensive plan classification and will ultimately drive its zoning. For discussion purposes, the corridor was split into two parts, north and south of Hudson Street where the character, development, and uses are different. Questions and comments from those present focused on the following:

- Traffic backs up near the River Suites Building (1801 First Avenue), and a left turn onto Hudson is problematic. It appears the peak-period level of service may be low or failing at the First/Hudson intersection.
- What additional commercial uses and levels of use (example: small athletic facilities) are appropriate south of Hudson? Property owners want more flexibility. There are currently two car sales lots that are grandfathered, but this isn't seen as an appropriate use for this area. (Someone added that the two car businesses are gone.) There was a little response to a question about allowing personal services in the area.
- Is there the possibility of public access to the river across the dike? There should be public access to the riverbank. Staff indicated that the City has been asking for an easement with development permits for land the City would like to purchase. More water-dependent uses could be included but siltation is a problem.
- The builder of River Road condominiums bought more property north of the condos, but shoreline setbacks increased and the Army Corps of Engineers became more restrictive. The commenter felt this rendered his property "worthless."
- Newer regulations don't allow parking between buildings and the street; however, parking between apartments and the street better buffers the traffic impact. The City has been good to work with, but the density limit is "putting [the developer] out of business." The 25 dwelling-unit-per-acre cap doesn't work with assisted living and other higher density housing. Yet the median income is low, and people who can't afford to buy are dependent on rentals. (Staff note: In the R-3 and R-4 residential zoning districts, the assisted living development density limit is 35 units per acre.)
- The issue of homeless living in the area along the riverbank was raised. A church in the corridor is exploring the possibility of hosting a shelter. Staff stated that the City does not allow residential

uses in industrial zoning districts such as the area south of Hudson Street. At this time, City staff does not support allowing any residential uses in industrial districts. There is a moratorium on shelters in place, and the City will be revisiting the regulations using an ad hoc committee for outreach. The observation was made that the homeless are still living in this area even if a shelter isn't allowed. Discussion refocused on the issue of homelessness, shelters, and proximity to services.

In addition, several written comments were received either at the meeting or via e-mail, the latter from people who were unable to attend the meeting. (Where questions were asked, Steve Langdon has already provided replies to these commenters.)

- From what I can tell from the map legends, it appears that our property ...is colored for high density residential; is that correct? While our building is currently designed for office use, the ground floor is best suited for use as a restaurant-pub &/ or fast food or coffee outlet. Having frontage on both Third Avenue and River Road makes the lot particularly attractive for drive-thru service, welcoming motorists from busy Third Avenue to drive through onto sleepy River Road. Our triangle of property should be classified in such a way as to not preclude its use for food and drink and drive-thru services.
- Cowlitz Youth Outreach Center. Services provided to youth via Janus Youth Program and new outreach center on Washington Street. Services needed for program youth to include all basic needs including shower and laundry facilities.
- Potential traffic issues. Very difficult to turn to the north around 5:00 pm. Should we keep some riverfront property available for water dependent uses? Define "personal services." Please find a way to extend areas of public use of dike road. Many people use it throughout the day. (The above primarily applies to Port road north of Hudson.)
- We support the proposed designation of light industrial for the Third Avenue area. Our business is located in the Stanley Plaza building on Third Avenue, and our business focus is environmental and biological services including natural landscaping and mitigation design and construction. We store and utilize various sized equipment and materials used to support landscaping, forestry and mitigation. Our vehicles include trucks and trailers often hauling equipment, supplies, and landscape plants to and from the building. These types of services, activities and materials are consistent with a light industrial zoning.
- Keep Third Avenue Light Industrial!!! We have limited Industrial spaces, don't deplete this limited resource.
- We have heard from various sources of a proposal to have a homeless support shelter, allowing overnight and full time residential-type accommodations in an industrial building located nearby within this zone. While we are sympathetic to the needs of the homeless, and support all efforts of the City and appropriate agencies and charities to find solutions to a burgeoning homeless population in Longview, we are concerned that allowing full-time residential and/or 24-hour residential-type activities would be incompatible with the light industrial uses of this zone. There is, above all other considerations, a safety issue with residential-type activities occurring in a zone with industry. Our equipment and vehicles are operated in a safe manner by seasoned and trained staff;

however, avoiding additional residential foot-traffic in the area puts an increased burden on staff when loading and unloading materials and equipment as well as travelling to and from the building. Safety must be the primary consideration. For this reason, we ask that the City continue with its planning process for the light industrial zone of Third Avenue and exclude all residential-type uses and activities not expressly related to light industry.

- I have spoken with most of the property owners on Third Avenue between Hudson and Tennant Way. Everyone I have spoken to including myself are 100% against a homeless shelter of any kind on our block. It doesn't seem an appropriate location in any way. We would all like to know when and where we need to be to voice our opposition to this if you could please let us know. As far as changing the current zoning I would also like to know when those meetings are as well. I intended on being at this last meeting but had to be at [the business owner's other store in a different city]. The last zoning update that put quite a few of us in a nonconforming position was very concerning. Had I known about the proposed changes then, I would have been involved in those meetings as well. If you could please let me know the upcoming meetings for this and the Love Overwhelming discussions it would be greatly appreciated. I have interests in property in both the marina district and south of Hudson. Is there any proposed draft for each at this point to discuss, or are we at the idea stages? If there is could I get those for review. I will review the current zoning for each and get back to you on any input I could come up with. I do feel the old zoning, prior to the 2006 change on Third Avenue south of Hudson was much more friendly and flexible for property owners to fill their buildings with tenants also generating revenue for the city. I do remember the marina district zoning was a bit restrictive for building owners as well because you had to be marine related if I remember correctly. Again I will have to review to provide further input.

About Longview's Comprehensive Plan

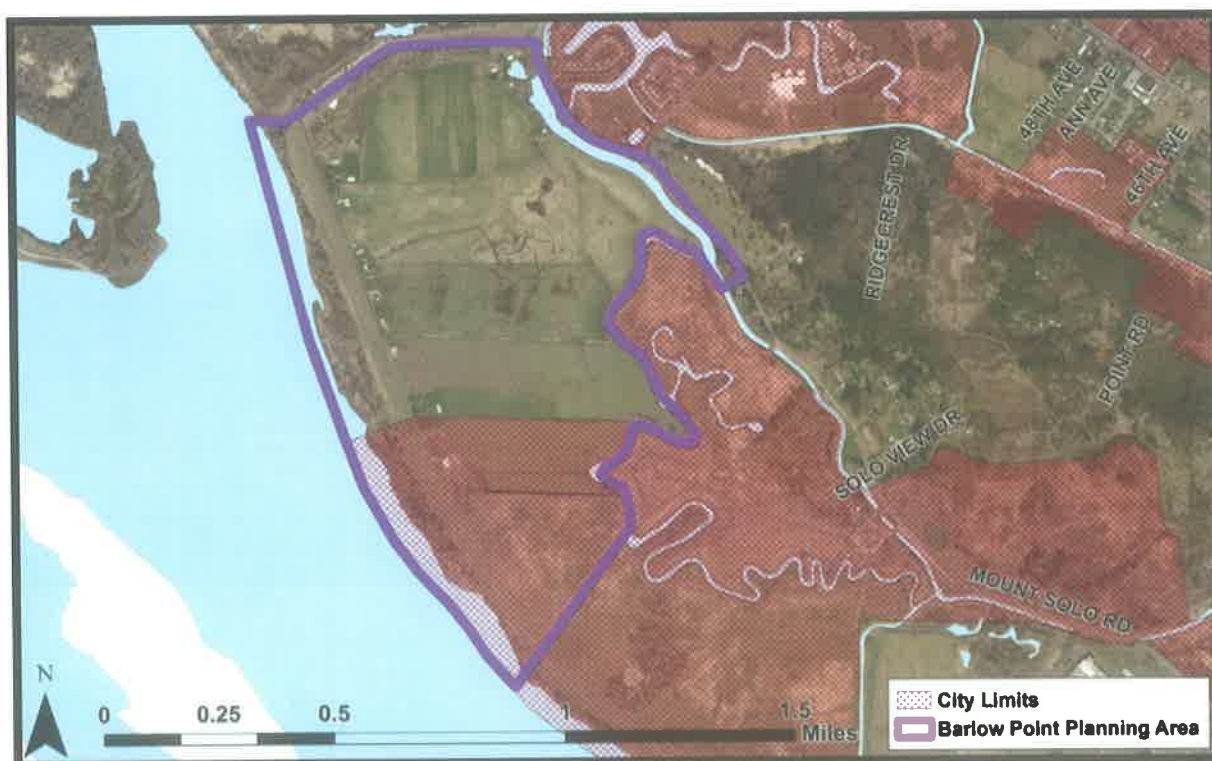
Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today's Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview's strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

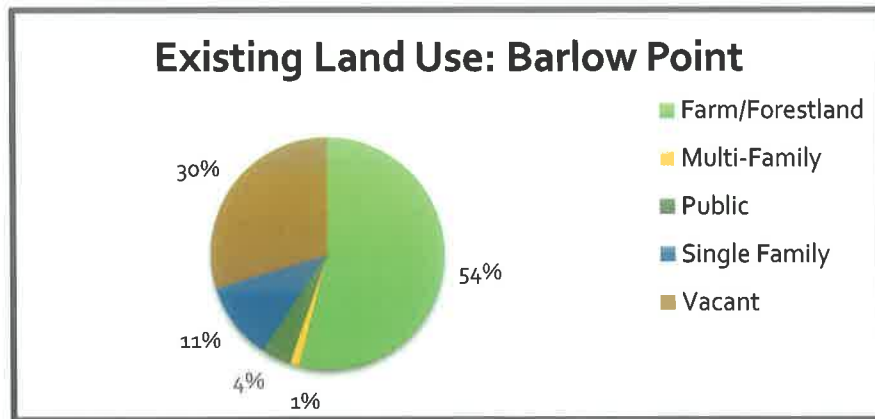
Only a small part of Washington's growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City's plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it's time to take a look at how it's working. What's going well, and what should we change?

These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview's public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About Barlow Point

The Barlow Point planning area contains 480 acres spread among 38 parcels, some very large, some small. Slightly over a quarter of the area is already inside the city limits, but 357 acres are currently in unincorporated county. The City views it all as a consolidated planning area, assuming the portion outside the city limits is likely to be annexed over time. Land assessment records show that a third of the land is now vacant, with a very small amount of existing housing.





An area's future land-use classification should drive its zoning, but in this case the two are mismatched. The area inside City limits is currently zoned Heavy Industrial, but the 2006 comprehensive plan designated it – including the county portion – as Mixed Use Residential/Commercial with no corresponding change to the zoning. (The unincorporated segment is zoned Heavy Manufacturing and could be rezoned by the City only if annexed.) Since then, the Port of Longview has acquired 56 acres within the area and more than 200 acres to the south, intending to develop it for port-based activities to further enhance economic development and international trade opportunities. That means the Port controls about 12 percent of the land in the Barlow Point planning area.

What might the future bring?

One goal of this comprehensive plan update is to synchronize Barlow Point's future planning and zoning. If rezoned to residential use, the City's lowest density zoning district (R-1) allows up to 6 homes per acre on minimum 6,000 square-foot lots. If fully built out under the R-1 zone, this could translate to over 3,400 new homes in Barlow Point – or more likely some mixture of different housing types at different densities, or even mixed-use development that integrates residential uses with neighborhood-scale businesses. Meanwhile, the current Heavy Industrial zone has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet; the unincorporated portion has no minimum lot size. This could support larger industrial developments that use 100+-acre sites, or a mixture of smaller and larger commercial/industrial developments.

Of course, the nature and scale of any development that may occur will ultimately rely on decisions made by property owners and tenant needs. Plus, properties in an area rarely develop at uniform lot sizes or densities, and port tenants may be looking for considerably larger properties. A significant portion of the developed area would be taken up by roads, parking, and other set-asides, so just keep in mind that the end result will vary considerably based on development decisions out in the future. Significant infrastructure costs will be involved to develop the site for any planned use, and there are likely to be environmental considerations associated with wetlands, shoreline, and the river itself. Riverfront wetlands, for example, are proposed for protection as part of the Millennium project's environmental mitigation.

What do you think?

- Heavy industry and homes are generally regarded as incompatible neighbors. Considering just one or the other, what do you think the Barlow Point area should be used for?
- Whether developed as housing/mixed-use or heavy industry, there are bound to be impacts if Barlow Point is developed. What kind of impacts do you see if the area is developed as a regional job center with ship access? What if it's developed with housing and some neighborhood and/or river-oriented commercial uses?

About Longview's Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today's Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview's strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

Only a small part of Washington's growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City's plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it's time to take a look at how it's working. What's going well, and what should we change?

These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview's public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About the Lagoons

Located a bit northeast of Barlow Point is a series of old sewer lagoons totaling about 60 acres in size. What's a sewer lagoon, you might ask. There is no pretty answer: they are the effluent ponds into which sewage flows as part of a treatment system. The sewage is then broken down by bacteria, algae, and the elements. These particular ponds have not been used since 2012. They have been cleaned up, and the area is ready for reuse as...what?



(This aerial image shows the ponds when they were still in use.)

What could the future bring?

Under the 2006 comprehensive plan, the lagoons were designated Public/Quasi-Public/Institutional, but they are zoned R-1, the City's lowest-density residential zone. A maximum of 6 homes per acre could be built on lots that are at least 6,000 square feet in size. which would translate to about 360 new homes in the lagoons area. There is already a residential neighborhood abutting the area to the east and across Ocean Beach Highway to the south.

At this point, this is only a "guesstimate" because irrespective of the zoning, the nature and scale of any development that may occur will ultimately rely on decisions made by the City, which currently owns the property, and any potential buyer(s). Plus, properties in an area rarely develop at uniform lot sizes or densities. An estimated 40 percent of the developed area would be taken up by roads, parking, and other set-asides, so just keep in mind that these numbers will vary considerably based on development decisions out in the future. If the City wants to make the property marketable, a substantial investment must be made to grade the property. While there are already stop lights at the Ocean Beach/Coal Creek intersection, the more likely traffic issue stemming from additional development would be at Pacific Way/Coal Creek.

Alternately, the area could be used for some public purpose such as a regional park, which is consistent with the future land-use designation that's currently applied to the site. This is what the Town of Cathlamet is proposing for its old sewer lagoon, although it is much smaller.

What do you think?

- We recognize there's an "ick" factor associated with former sewer lagoons. Do you think it's significant enough to deter housing development on the site, even though there are no environmental concerns?
- If the site isn't used for housing, what do you think it should be used for instead?
- Should the City make an effort to fill in the ponds before selling the property, or sell it "as is" and leave that up to a future developer?



BARLOW POINT/LAGOONS

2016 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

November 29, 2016 Public Workshop Synopsis

There were approximately 45-50 members of the public in attendance. Following a staff presentation, they were invited to review displays, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff.

Steve Langdon presented a slideshow reviewing issues that will have some bearing on the area's comprehensive plan designation and will ultimately drive its zoning. For discussion purposes, the presentation was split into two parts, one about Barlow Point and one focused on the lagoon. Questions and comments from those present focused on the following:

- There are water/sewer capacity issues in the Barlow Point area. There is only a six-inch water line and not much extra capacity.
- There was a clear preference that the lagoons be reused for open space, not only in terms of comments but also visual and audible feedback during the presentation. Numerous comments and questions were received about the type of wildlife to be found in the area and environmental review. One participant expressed concern about safety even though the lagoons had been cleaned up.
- Was there a noncompliant landfill in the lagoons area? (Answer: don't know.) It may need filling and re-leveling.
- Participant expressed concern about his own property in the Barlow Point area, stating that since 2011 he cannot do anything with his 11+ acres because of the dike.
- Barlow Point should be residential and open space with public access. If the City annexes Barlow Point, it would make it more difficult to develop residential there. What would mixed use be like at Barlow Point? (Answer: A combination of single- and multi-family, with convenience commercial and other commercial intended to take advantage of the ambiance of the river; possibly an urban village.
- What is the real bottom line? The City should consider health and happiness. Answer: Balancing environment with economic development and other planning factors.
- Where will kids from any new housing go to school?
- There is a high water table in the lagoons area, with "rusty" groundwater surfacing.

In addition, numerous written comments were received either at the meeting or via e-mail, the latter from people who were unable to attend the meeting. Some of the written comments received overlapped discussion during the meeting.

- Questioned why this planning is being done now, and what gave birth to “this prepared action.”
- Barlow Point should remain agricultural/park/open space.
- Commentator lives in a home off Mt. Solo Road that overlooks the Barlow Point area and expressed concern with air, noise, light, and vibration pollution on his/her property; traffic on an already dangerous highway; and loss of agricultural land.
- Make room for water for the birds and accessibility for public enjoyment (lagoons).
- Light pollution/water pollution/life pollution
- Would like lagoons to become some kind of green space.
- Lagoons area cannot hold more traffic; please retain as green space.
- Use this area to grow cannabis (Barlow Point).
- Clean air and water.
- The land that is already prepared for residential should be developed. As far as adding commercial/industrial, use and protect our current port property. “Wait until zoning use Barlow Pt. and other close properties zoned until needed.” (intent unclear)
- Expressed concern about additional filling in lagoons, reflecting on own experience living in Heron Pointe. The soils are rocky, contain debris, and do not drain well, so additional filling of the lagoons would not be good. Expressed preference for green space for birds.
- Expressed concern about the impact of residential development of the lagoons upon wildlife population that has become accustomed to using them, including geese, ducks, cormorants, herons, kingfishers, hawks, and eagles. A wildlife preserve would be a beautiful and environmentally sound plan.
- The lagoons belong to the birds! We need to protect all the nature we can. Let’s take care of what we have.... (over)
- Barlow Point represents the last ten percent of riverfront property that the City of Longview owns. Believes this last ten percent should remain a multi-use area for future urban development in keeping with the current comp plan. Multi-unit housing, a riverfront restaurant, and a mini mart will do great in that location.
- Longview has a lot of industry and proposed industry but needs more areas of recreation area that protects creatures, whether endangered or not.

- Longview is not attracting new residents and is getting a bad reputation. The jobs are few and very low level.
- Would support the City of Longview annexing the Barlow Point area. The mixed-use concept would be beneficial for county and city residents alike and would create lots of jobs and tax money for the county & cities.
- Thousands of migrating birds come through the lagoons area. Their breeding grounds are within the sloughs. There are some breeding eagles that have a nest alongside of the lagoons, as well as otters, nutria, and flocks of diverse wildlife.
- For Barlow Point, upscale real estate development of retail and residential would ultimately benefit the City of Longview in the long term. No tax incentives would be given to industry. Residential properties would have good turnover rate providing excise tax revenue as well as the yearly property taxes. High end real estate would translate into higher property values throughout the city and would bring new interest in other properties as well. Developers would start to remove the blight and crime and nefarious behaviors would be pushed to outlying areas.
- Regarding Barlow Point, we live on three rivers with no restaurants, hotels, shops, and very little residential on the rivers. Our area needs something new besides industrial. It would be in this community's interest to make some of our beautiful riverfront an enjoyable place to live, work, and shop and even vacation to. Have some high-end condos as well might bring people in with money who will spend in our community. Longview needs something we can take pride in. I envision it to be how Vancouver has built a community on the river: an enjoyable place for people to visit and live.



REGIONAL COMMERCIAL CLASSIFICATION - 36TH AVENUE

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

About Longview's Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today's Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview's strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

Only a small part of Washington's growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City's plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it's time to assess what's going well, and what we should change.

These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview's public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About the Regional Commercial Zone

Today's Regional Commercial (RC) zoning district is the product of the 2006 comprehensive plan, which noted increased development interest in large commercial centers and concluded that if Longview wanted to strengthen its position as a regional retail hub, it needed additional commercial land for large-scale uses. Areas intended to allow for growth of higher intensity, large-scale commercial developments were designated on Ocean Beach Highway at 38th Avenue (Walmart) and at 30th Avenue (today's Fred Meyer/Safeway/ Lowe's).

The RC zoning district was meant to include regional shopping, offices, professional services, entertainment facilities, and hotels. Allowed uses include big-box retail or grocery stores (at least 20,000 in size, or more as part of a large development, with no cap on size); large entertainment facilities, offices, and personal services (20,000 square-foot minimum); sit-down restaurants (5,000 square-foot minimum); and smaller retail or grocery stores (5,000 square-foot minimum), restaurants (including fast food), and fueling stations as part of a large development. Separate design and landscaping standards are in place to minimize the impact on nearby homes.

The RC zone covering Walmart and surrounding businesses also includes an approximately 26-acre residential area to the southeast that has some larger, undeveloped or underdeveloped tracts. It is only that latter portion that we're reevaluating as part of this comprehensive plan update. The existing single-family development is rather sparse, with considerable land that could be developed with additional homes.



What are we looking at?

While Ocean Beach Highway is heavily traveled, a lot of the traffic originates or is destined for places along the corridor. Most major retailers want to take advantage of not just customer demographics, but also proximity to their distribution centers and major freight routes such as I-5. Plus, prospective developers want shovel-ready properties rather than having to buy out individual lots and demolishing existing buildings. This has resulted in little or no additional development interest in this area, despite the zoning. Policies in 2006 allowed the RC zone to be expanded when, in part, conditions had changed since the original commercial boundary was set. Notably, this was before the economic downturn. Now, we're considering whether conditions have changed in a way that calls for scaling back the RC zone and returning the single-family portion to residential zoning, or modifying it in some other way.

What do you think?

- Is more regional commercial development along Ocean Beach Highway desirable today?
- Should the RC zone be scaled back to exclude the single-family portion, or left as is?
- If the residential area is removed, should it be zoned for higher-density residential?

Later thoughts? E-mail steve.langdon@ci.longview.wa.us



REGIONAL ZONE – 36TH AVENUE

COMMERCIAL

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

March 15, 2017 Public Workshop Synopsis

Approximately a dozen members of the public attended. Following a staff presentation, they were invited to review displays, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff.

Steve Langdon presented a slideshow reviewing issues that will have some bearing on the area's comprehensive plan designation and will ultimately drive its zoning. Questions and comments from those present focused on the following:

- Is there a conflict with the Long-Bell covenants? Potentially. Mr. Langdon referenced the Columbia Valley Gardens #4 CC&Rs, which restrict commercial development. He thinks that Wal-Mart may have gotten signatures to remove the restriction from its site.
- Does City staff have an opinion? No, but the City will be working toward formulating a recommendation. Does that mean the classification will change? Not necessarily.
- There was discussion around changing the code versus changing the designation. Leave the Regional Commercial designation in place but change the suite of uses that are allowed under the zoning. There is no zoning amendment being proposed at this time, though; and no zoning update being done in conjunction with the comp plan update. Mr. Langdon explained that someone could apply to amend the code rather than waiting for the City to undertake an update.

Discussion lagged, and Bill Fashing asked what people want to see in the area. Responses included:

- Commercial developers stated that the Regional Commercial zone doesn't make sense. They have zealously tried to market the properties, but there has been no development interest in such a large (80,000 sf+) building. They do see interest from locally owned national franchises of smaller-size businesses; however, they are not allowed there. One "national retailer" wanted to locate in the vicinity of 30th/32nd but couldn't. Triangle Shopping Center is the most successful development in the area. The Longview market is not conducive to more big box without 30-40,000 more people. Costco won't come here and is currently expanding in foreign markets. The status of Three Rivers Mall plays a role. "I could zone it for unicorns, but the unicorn's not going to show up."
- It is likely the Ocean Beach Highway frontage would develop first, but "the rest will fill in." They are not interested in seeing the rear zoning line (adjacent to Olive) moved closer to Ocean Beach Highway. At the same time, the cost of improving Olive Way was seen as a deterrent to development of the rear portion.

- An alternate view was that only the first 100 feet along Ocean Beach Highway would develop. With two driveways apiece, this would create multiple and conflicting turning movements. Left turns should be restricted onto and off of Ocean Beach Highway.
- Opinions diversified. One comment was “It’s been this way for ten years and nothing’s happened. Let’s not have it be another ten years.” Another opinion was that, while ten years might be a long time for a developer, it’s a short time for a city to evolve. There isn’t another place for it if big box demand does emerge.
- Discussion turned to the relationship between residential growth and commercial demand. Growth to the south is already here. With residential growth comes commercial growth, whether or not it’s close to I-5. Mr. Langdon was questioned about pending multifamily permits; he stated there are several prospective West Longview developments at preapp stage.
- “Why can’t it be zoned both ways and whoever comes first ‘builds the castle’?” Is there a way to design zoning to encompass both levels of use?

In addition, two written comments were received either at the meeting or via letter, both from people who attended. Some of the written comments received overlapped discussion during the meeting.

- Commentator wants the land to remain commercial zoning that would promote use of the whole block, but beyond that is not clear on what the best zoning designation should be.
- This was the only area where a large shopping center could be placed in West Longview when the area’s designation was changed ten years ago, and that has not changed now. Eliminating the designation would virtually guarantee the area would never have a major shopping area, which would be of value to people from miles around.
- There is a need to change the designation to allow for smaller commercial on the south side of Ocean Beach Highway. At the same time, this would cause traffic congestion and left turn issues. By contrast a larger shopping area would have limited access and would not pose the same issues.
- The current comp plan “holds” the area for specific uses, and ten years is a relatively short time to realize the intended level of development. It would be short-sighted to change the designation. The current Regional Commercial designation is the correct designation and ultimately the correct use for the area. Commentator opposed any changes at this time.

AREA

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

About Longview's Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are intended to translate community values and goals into a framework for government decisions about how a city grows, how land is used, and all the other things typically found in a community such as housing, streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities, and public services – as well as how public dollars are spent. Plans look out ahead to how today's Longview residents want the city to look and function over the next 20 years. In concert with Longview's strategic plan, the comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap for achieving that vision.

Only a small part of Washington's growth management law applies to Longview and other cities within Cowlitz County, giving us more flexibility to respond to local priorities. The City's plan was last updated ten years ago, in 2006. At midway through the life of the plan, it's time to assess what's going well, and what we should change.

These conversations will help shape a plan that will best direct Longview's public policies, regulations, and public investments. Public hearings will follow once the new plan is drafted. Thank you for taking part!

About the Highlands Area

The Highlands neighborhood contains close to 1,800 housing units, about 1,000 of which are rentals. The area has a mixture of single-family homes (77 percent), with small-scale multifamily (duplex/triplex/ small apartments) and larger multifamily (Alder Terrace) making up the remainder. Some homes are better maintained than others. Census data estimates that of over 4,800 people living in the area, close to 16 percent are unemployed and over 40 percent live in poverty.

Income

\$11,399

Per capita income

about half the amount in Longview: \$22,223

about half the amount in Cowlitz County: \$24,260

\$22,092

Median household income

about three-fifths of the amount in Longview: \$36,498

about half the amount in Cowlitz County: \$47,452

Household income



Poverty

41.5%

Persons below poverty line

nearly double the rate in Longview: 22.7%
more than double the rate in Cowlitz County: 17.5%

Children (Under 18)



Seniors (65 and over)



For discussion purposes, the Highlands emphasis area includes a narrow commercial strip along Oregon Way between Beech and the 15th/Oregon Way intersection. In addition, there are a couple of neighborhood commercial nodes across Beech just outside the area, including a Longview Police satellite office; and a handful of home-based businesses within the neighborhood. The nearest large grocery stores, Safeway and Fred Meyer, are not within easy walking distance of the neighborhood, although it's possible to reach them via one of the two transit routes serving the area. The neighborhood's most significant assets are the 6+-acre Archie Anderson Park and the neighborhood-owned and -operated community center and garden.

Part of the Highlands neighborhood is zoned R-1, allowing fairly low density, but much of it is zoned R-4, one of the highest-density residential zones in the city. The R-4 zone allows for up to 25 dwelling units per acre, or 35 for congregate care and other such facilities. Very little new development or redevelopment has happened in recent years, though; more than three quarters of the housing was built before 1970. Other parts of the city saw an upswing in new homes built during the 1970s. New development potential would involve buying out and tearing down small, older homes and replacing them with more dense development.



What are we looking at?

Following on the Highlands Revitalization Plan, the work of the Highlands Neighborhood Association, and collaboration with Longview Police Department, residents have made strides in improving neighborhood conditions. As might be expected, crime focuses on the overwhelmingly residential character – home burglaries, thefts, car prowls, stolen cars, etc. While the area has shown a high crime rate in the past, the type and amount of crime in the past year has been close to or below average compared to nearby Longview neighborhoods. Assaults (including domestic violence) show a bit higher rate. The notable difference is in the amount of vandalism, which is higher in the area, but this could also be influenced by an active neighborhood group that encourages reporting.

One of the City Council's priorities has been to promote the development of townhouses and attached housing in the area, which will increase the housing density. Meanwhile, the Police Department is concerned that introducing more people will worsen the crime outlook.

Value

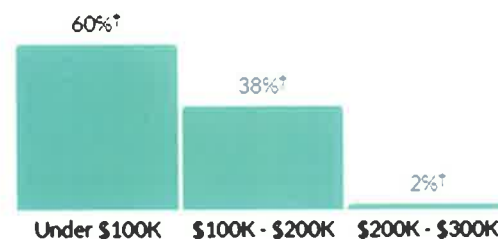
\$82,500

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about half the amount in Longview: \$162,400

about half the amount in Cowlitz County:
\$175,300

Value of owner-occupied housing units



Sometimes there's the concern that redeveloping housing in an older, poorer neighborhood will displace people by raising property values and rents. One part of the current comprehensive plan update is evaluating the optimal density and housing mix for the Highlands area.

In terms of the commercial area, the existing commercial uses along Oregon Way don't particularly serve the neighborhood versus pass-by traffic. North of Baltimore, the commercial zone contains older homes. The volume of traffic on Oregon Way doesn't contribute to a positive living environment, so commercial uses seem most practical in this area. However, the lots are only about 120 feet deep, which limits what could be built there. At the same time, extending the zoning further out from Oregon Way would encroach on the residential area that's behind it. Realistically, it would be tough to fit new development on these lots and still meet other requirements like parking, landscaping, etc.

What do you think?

- Should housing density stay the same, be increased, or be rolled back for the Highlands area?
- If new housing is built within the area, how can it remain affordable to those living currently there?
- How can the neighborhood build on the momentum it has gained?
- What should happen with the commercial zone running northward from the neighborhood?

Later thoughts? E-mail steve.langdon@ci.longview.wa.us



HIGHLANDS NEIGHBORHOOD

2016-17 LONGVIEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

March 29, 2017

Public Workshop Synopsis

Approximately 30 members of the public attended. Following a staff presentation, they were invited to review displays, enjoy refreshments, and talk with staff.

Steve Langdon presented a slideshow reviewing issues that will have some bearing on the area's comprehensive plan designation and will ultimately drive its zoning. There will be an additional, citywide neighborhood workshop, probably at the end of April. He anticipates having hearings in June.

Questions and comments made during the presentation as well as afterward focused on:

- When were the current densities and zoning applied to the area? Apartments and duplexes that have been built in the area "look like cr-p." But, apartments are not always a bad plan. Alternate opinions: Lowering the allowed density will reduce property values in the area, vs. the area should be zoned for single-family only.
- Complaint regarding drinking water quality.
- There aren't street lights. The darkness of the neighborhood invites crime. Other safety concerns focused on trash and vehicles being abandoned along Oregon Way. Illegal dumping is a problem on private property and in alleys. Baltimore Street is a bad part of the neighborhood.
- Redevelopment options at different densities within the area. How to address redevelopment constraints given the small lots in the area. How to encourage redevelopment such as allowing smaller multifamily structures, relaxing parking requirements, reducing setback requirements, etc.
- What should happen along Oregon Way? Due to the medians, left-turn movements are limited. Will Oregon Way stay two lanes each way? Yes, there are no plans to change this.
- Is there a grant or funding for the neighborhood that goes along with this? Not per se, but Steve explained that the comprehensive plan will help to direct future public investments. There's already a plan, but no funding, for Archie Anderson Park. There's been a lot of funding spent on downtown, why not move on to investing in the neighborhoods? There were additional questions about the plan for Archie Anderson Park. They call for baseball field removal. Parks & Recreation wants to update the master plan.
- There are group homes in the area. The relationship between the planning process and the shelters issue was questioned, and it was clarified that this is not about shelter siting.

- Traffic coming off Industrial Way onto Douglas is a problem. Access is limited (one way in/out) and is not hospitable to apartments. The roundabout has an impact by forcing traffic down 32nd/33rd. This is a neighborhood safety issue. This is a walk-only school district with no school buses, so children are forced to walk.
- Will properties be condemned to make people sell for redevelopment? What about that “guy in the middle” who refuses to sell for redevelopment? No, this is not about condemnation, and that process could not be used to spur private redevelopment.
- What does the City see for houses that are deteriorating? In order to redevelop existing single-family properties, a developer would need to buy up 36 lots to produce 100 multifamily units. There have been a number of new single-family homes built in the area; for example, Habitat for Humanity has replaced homes that have burned down.

In addition, a number of written comments were received either at the meeting or via email, as well as a couple of voice mails. Some of the written comments received overlapped discussion during the meeting.

- Would it be possible for the City and/or County to purchase this area and convert it to a greenbelt with bike/pedestrian path with trees, benches, and mini-parks (i.e., playground equipment) spread along the length? Hopefully, this could tie into the lake area.
- We **OPPOSE** the rezoning of the West side of Oregon way that is currently zoned commercial. **Changing our zoning would not only devalue our real estate but would impede our future development plans.** We currently own three commercial buildings in this area that front Oregon Way/SR 432. We are strongly opposed to zoning this into an R-4 density category. Since zoning changes take so much time and energy, wouldn't the City want to expand growth along State Route 30? This would allow for better land use, future tax revenue, and creation of new jobs. We have plans to develop this property for additional commercial use because of the state highway proximity and the future port expansion. Please put it on record that we are **FIRMLY OPPOSED** to the rezoning of our land. (Specific properties and ownership information was included.)
- I purchased eight homes in the Highlands 10-12 years ago and am selling them due to the lack of police support. For example, on March 18 my tenants (husband, wife, 2-1/2-year-old daughter) in the 300 block of 25th Ave. called the police at about 8:00 pm regarding a drunk woman in her pajamas attempting to force her way into their home. The police came made the woman empty her beer after she attempted to flee. The police officer then told my tenants this is a victimless crime and “What do you expect, you live in the Highlands and this is Saturday night.” They could not sleep all night worrying about the possibility of her return. In any other city this would not happen. I have fixed up my homes and when I call the police they do little to nothing. They have failed the people living in the Highlands who are for the most part law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. I pay my taxes, fix the properties, and get the same cr-ppy attitude when complaining about the few drug/problem people bothering my properties. I have given up on Longview and want no part of the apathy and lack of desire to make this a beautiful bedroom community for Vancouver and Portland. I need to move onto a more proactive community. Best of luck, Longview.

- Property owner who lives in Vancouver area called to say he owns a small rental home on 16th. He understood “that half block is going to go light commercial” or that it has already been changed. He relayed an example from the Vancouver area, near Peace Health in Mill Plain, where some of the existing single-family homes have been transitioned into light commercial uses focused on professional offices, many medical related. Since this neighborhood isn’t as close to St. John’s maybe that wouldn’t work but it could be converted to other light commercial (one example: florist).
- A property owner who owns three single-family homes that front onto Oregon Way called to say he wants the City to keep the General Commercial zoning district in that area.
- With limited street parking, having single family homes would be better for the neighborhood.
- Absolutely against the apartments on Douglas St. We have one building apartment with two dwellings now and have garbage and junk cars. We clean up garbage every week due to the slobs. The owners of rental houses don’t take care of them, and there is a problem with garbage. Junk cars and trucks make it hard for us to park. There are also a lot of children in area. It’s too highly traveled for cars to be parked on both sides. There are a lot of hit and runs on our street.
- We have a lot of walking traffic that goes back and forth to the store. They leave papers and garbage in my yard. Cars sideswipe mirrors off cars parked on the street. Neighbor had dogs and cats poop in front yard. Renters don’t keep up their place nor do owners. Renters don’t seem to care, they just move on. We have a lot of drug people on Douglas Street; a lot steal from owners and snoop. What will it be like if we have a lot more people coming and going?
- Connectivity – continuance of bike paths & alternate transportation routes are needed. High density will offset parking for alternate routing or “flyways.” Always consider air space above roadways for future commercial emergency services such as “drone” traffic.
- No on R-4 zone. Allow for new single-family homes with fewer regulations.
- Decrease parking requirements, four-plexes or smaller. Tax breaks for investors revitalizing neighborhoods.
- As a property owner in that area I would like to see it all changed to low density residential except the first half block on the west side of Oregon way staying as community commercial. Individual ownership of homes vs apartments can translate to owner pride and more control of their neighborhood.