

Community Development Director
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 3, 2024 Meeting
TO: Tree Board, City of Lake Forest Park
FROM: Mark Hofman, AICP, Community Development Director
RE: Existing Tree Narrative, Goals, and Policies- 2015 Comprehensive Plan

The City of Lake Forest Park adopted the current version of the Comprehensive Plan on January 14, 2016, with Ordinance No. 1114. The City is required to complete a periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan by December, 2024. This update is well under way with the Planning Commission and coordination with the other boards, commissions, and committees of the city is required and essential.

In a prior meeting of the Tree Board, staff discussed the periodic update process and the ability for coordination of policies concerning trees. Staff agreed to produce a summary memo listing the tree related narrative, goals, and policies currently in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. This memo to the Tree Board includes the specific existing portions of the Plan related to trees and would facilitate a discussion as to what may require revision, or the addition of new policies.

For individual review, the current 2015 Comprehensive Plan can be found at:

<https://www.cityoflfp.gov/160/2015-Comprehensive-Plan>

2015 Comprehensive Plan, Volume I- Introduction and nine chapters, or elements.

In addition to an introduction, the Lake Forest Park 2015 Comprehensive Plan contains nine elements, with goals and policies identified for each element. Each section begins with narrative text, followed by goals and policies. The goals and policies are numbered and labeled below according to their respective elements as currently adopted.

Introduction

Portions of Narrative:

The Lake Forest Park Comprehensive Plan is specifically intended to sustain the attractive residential character and natural environment that are defining features of the city.

Defining natural features include the Lake Washington shoreline, the slopes and watercourses that drain to Lake Washington, and the city's extensive forest canopy.

The City had its beginnings as one of the first planned communities in King County and was originally platted in 1910 around natural features and existing terrain. The community was marketed as a residential retreat into nature for professionals of nearby Seattle. In 1961, the area was incorporated as the City of Lake Forest Park when residents united in response to increasing development pressure. Today, preservation of the natural surroundings continues to be an important value in Lake Forest Park.

Adopted in 2008, the Lake Forest Park Legacy 100-Year Vision seeks to preserve unique community resources and strengthen the relationship between the natural and built environments over a 100-year time frame. The Legacy Vision recognizes the City's green infrastructure as an essential element for the community's wellbeing and focuses on strengthening green infrastructure over the long-term future.

Community Forest Management Plan (2010)—The Community Forest Management Plan was adopted to help guide the City's tree regulations and is addressed in the Environmental Quality Element.

Land Use Element

Portions of Narrative:

The Element includes policies that support compatibility with natural features and environmental protection, foster a sense of community, reflect current and historic character, and keep new growth compatible with existing development.

Policy LU–2.1 Ensure that land use policies and regulations reflect the importance of the city's natural environment, tree cover, and Lake Washington shoreline in community identity.

Policy LU–2.5 Provide for a smooth transition between differing land uses through landscape buffers, site and building design measures, or other appropriate techniques.

Goal LU–3 Compatibility with Natural Environment. Promote design and development that respects and preserves the natural environment.

Policy LU–3.1 Encourage the integration of natural landscape in new development by including both natural and compatible ornamental plants, shrubs, and trees.

Policy LU–3.2 Provide design flexibility to preserve or enhance existing site features, including groves of trees, watercourses, slopes, open spaces, and similar assets.

Policy LU–3.3 Recognize and support tree preservation as an integral part of community character.

Policy LU–3.6 Promote the natural drainage and green infrastructure concepts and projects identified in the Legacy 100-Year Vision.

Environmental Quality & Shorelines Element

Portions of Narrative:

The Environmental Quality Element Goals and Policies support the City's commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural environment. The Element includes policies that provide guidance on balancing environmental protection with development potential and recognizing environmental resources as an essential living infrastructure.

Goal EQ-1 Compatible Development. Protect the natural environment through zoning and land use decisions.

Policy EQ-1.1 Protect designated sensitive areas, including ravines, steep slopes, wetlands, and other features.

Policy EQ-1.3 Preserve native and compatible vegetation whenever appropriate.

Policy EQ-1.5 Maintain and enhance the integrity of ecosystems.

Policy EQ-4.2 Promote retention of vegetation and limit land disturbance in identified steep slope and landslide hazard areas.

Policy EQ-4.3 Protect existing natural areas that provide stormwater storage during flood events.

Policy EQ-8.1 Encourage the maintenance of native plantings in sensitive area buffers for wildlife when development occurs.

Policy EQ-8.2 Encourage improvement to contiguous natural wildlife corridors whenever possible.

Goal EQ-9 Forest Canopy. Preserve, restore, and enhance a healthy and diverse community forest, consisting of both native and compatible non-native species.

Policy EQ-9.1 Maintain or exceed the minimum citywide canopy cover established by the Municipal Code through regular evaluation and refinement of the City's land use and environmental regulations and policies.

Policy EQ-9.2 Develop a tree planting, inventory, and maintenance program for public-owned property that takes into consideration the species of trees that will be most successful in environments such as public rights-of-way.

Policy EQ-9.3 Ensure zoning and subdivision regulations are consistent with the Community Forest Management Plan.

Policy EQ-9.4 Maintenance of Tree Board to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Forest Management Plan.

Policy EQ-9.5 Encourage the study of the potential effects of climate change to native trees and develop strategies to adapt to and/or mitigate the likely effects of climate change to the community forest.

Policy EQ-9.6 Ensure that all new site development includes an approved tree-replacement plan that achieves canopy coverage goals.

Policy EQ-9.7 Develop a vigorous program to control invasive plant species such as English ivy, laurel, and holly on public property and encourage their control on private properties.

Policy EQ-9.8 Continue to balance tree preservation efforts with recognition of private property rights.

Housing Element

Policy H–1.5 Promote residential clustering as a means to protect environmentally sensitive areas and encouraging infill development.

Goal H–2 Neighborhood Character. Preserve and enhance the unique character of the City’s residential neighborhoods.

Policy H–2.1 Continue to incorporate site standards, landscaping, and building design guidelines into land use regulations to ensure that infill development complements surrounding uses and the character of Lake Forest Park.

Policy H–2.2 Promote site planning techniques that create quality outdoor spaces and are in harmony with neighboring properties.

Policy H–2.3 Provide guidelines for transitions and buffers around different types of uses, in order to mitigate any negative impacts associated with higher intensity uses.

Economic Development Element

Portions of Narrative:

Lake Forest Park’s many amenities, including open space, high quality urban design, green character, and Lake Washington access, are an important economic development asset and the element provides guidance for preservation and enhancement of these amenities.

Goal ED–5 Recognize and promote Lake Forest Park’s character and amenities as an economic development asset.

Policy ED–5.2 Recognize and emphasize the urban amenities in Lake Forest Park, including open space and recreational facilities, high quality urban design, green character, and community events, as important elements in the city’s economic development strategy.

- Connect recreational and open space areas to commercial centers.*
- Improve visibility and access to Lake Washington.*
- Expand pedestrian and bicycle routes to commercial centers and nodes.*
- Preserve the city’s tree canopy and green character.*
- Encourage high quality design.*

Policy ED–6.3 Ensure that regulations support economic growth while continuing to preserve the environment, community aesthetics, and residential quality of life.

Community Services & Public Safety Element

Fire Prevention

Capital Facilities Element

N/A

Parks, Trails, & Open Space Element

Portions of Narrative:

The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Element Goals and Policies support the City's commitment to developing and maintaining an exceptional park and trail system that provides diverse recreational opportunities in addition to preserving environmentally sensitive areas and forested and habitat areas. The Element includes policies that provide guidance on park maintenance, funding strategies, and tie-ins to the Legacy 100-Year Vision.

Policy PT-1.4 Implement and monitor the necessary restoration and preservation plans for riparian and sensitive area open spaces in the City's parks.

Goal PT-4 Environmental Protection. Protect environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitats, and wooded areas to provide relief from urban development.

Policy PT-4.1 In situations where regulatory measures are not effective, seek funding for open space acquisition which preserves the city's watersheds, environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife corridors, fish and amphibian habitat, and wooded areas.

Policy PT-4.3 Use the city's parks, trails, and open spaces to provide information and education about natural systems.

Policy PT-4.5 Remove invasive species in parks, trails, and open spaces.

Utilities Element

Policy U-4.6 Work with electric utilities to encourage tree removal when topping is otherwise required for maintaining power lines, and ensure that trees are replaced with location-appropriate species.

Transportation Element

N/A

2015 Comprehensive Plan, Volume II, Background Analysis

Volume II contains background information that supports the goals and policies in Volume I. The Planning Commission reviewed this information during the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan in order to ensure that the goals and policies reflect current conditions in the community, are consistent with current state and regional policy frameworks, and are based on best available information.

Background Analysis- Introduction

N/A

Background Analysis- Land Use

N/A

Background Analysis- Environmental Quality & Shorelines

Portions of Narrative:

The natural environment of Lake Forest Park is an important part of the daily lives of its citizens. From the very beginning, our City's natural environment has been its defining characteristic. An early land prospectus for the new City of Lake Forest Park stated, "The strict fiat has gone forth that all the natural beauty must be preserved." Our city was named for its close proximity to Lake Washington, abundance of streams, ravines, and wetlands, and its robust tree canopy. The need not only to protect but also to enhance the natural environment and wildlife inhabitants of Lake Forest Park extends far beyond its aesthetic beauty, however. The ecosystem and green infrastructure that the natural environment provides create economic and health benefits for the citizens of our community.

A number of strategic and specific-issue plans have been developed to address environmental needs throughout the city, and these have contributed to the development of the Environmental Quality and Shorelines goals and policies. These plans, and their relation to this element, are described below. They include:

- *City of Lake Forest Park Legacy 100-Year Vision*
- *City of Lake Forest Park Community Forest Management Plan*
- *City of Lake Forest Park Wildlife Management Plan*
- *City of Lake Forest Park Shoreline Master Program*

Lake Forest Park Community Forest Management Plan (2010)

The Community Forest Management Plan was drafted by the Urban Forest Task Force and adopted by reference by Ordinance 1015: Tree Canopy Preservation and Enhancement. The Plan's purpose is to guide enhancement to Lake Forest Park's tree canopy by identifying tree canopy goals, asset management strategies, and policies for promoting education on forestry issues. The plan was used to inform an update of the City's tree regulations, and acts as a supporting document for all future updates to LFPMC 16.14—Tree Preservation and Enhancement.

Lake Forest Park's forest canopy is one of its defining characteristics, and is also a vital community resource. The amount of tree canopy coverage in a community is one of the most useful benchmarks of urban environmental quality. In 2009, Lake Forest Park undertook a survey of tree canopy coverage, the results of which are shown in Figure II.4.

Figure II.4 Lake Forest Park tree canopy coverage by parcel. Page 111

The Community Forest Management Plan states that the benefits of trees include:

- *Reducing surface water runoff (keeping pollution out of the rivers and ponds)*
- *Reducing soil erosion (decreasing sedimentation of water bodies and preventing landslides)*
- *Absorbing air pollutants and sequestering carbon dioxide (countering the greenhouse effect)*
- *Reducing noise pollution*
- *Cooling the city by absorbing sunlight and releasing water through evapotranspiration*
- *Creating wildlife habitat*
- *Conserving energy by providing temperature moderation*
- *Improving water quality*

Citizen Volunteers

The natural environment of Lake Forest Park benefits from the many residents who are deeply passionate about protecting and enhancing it. These volunteer commissioners, tree board members and non-profit members collaborate with the City regularly on projects and plans that embrace the city’s shoreline, streams, forests, and wildlife habitat.

The Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation, a community-run non-profit, was formed in 1998 and has worked tirelessly since that point to increase education and awareness of Lake Forest Park’s natural resources. Members of the Foundation have contributed to many community plans in the past, and have been an integral part in developing the Environmental Quality and Shorelines goals and policies.

Background Analysis- Housing

N/A

Background Analysis- Economic Development

N/A

Background Analysis- Community Services & Public Safety

N/A

Background Analysis- Capital Facilities

N/A

Background Analysis- Parks, Trails & Open Space

Portions of Narrative:

Though Lake Forest Park’s large lots and extensive tree canopy give the city a park-like quality, there are also a number of designated parks, open spaces and recreational facilities within the community. These spaces allow for both passive and active recreation. In Lake Forest Park one can go on a nature hike, visit a playground, bicycle, or simply sit and enjoy the view of majestic Mt. Rainer across Lake Washington. These parks and open spaces are an asset to the community that provides enjoyment, health benefits, and increased property values. The City intends to increase both the quality and quantity of parks and open space available to the community.

Background Analysis- Utilities

N/A

Background Analysis- Transportation

N/A

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