



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 13, 2024
To: Heidi Gudde, Planning Director; Dave Timmer, Planner
From: Katie Cote, Planning Manager; Rachel Chen, Planner
Subject: Legislative Changes for the 2025 Lynden Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update

1. Background

The City of Lynden must update their Comprehensive Plan for the 2025 Periodic Update Cycle, as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). BHC has conducted a policy analysis to identify gaps in Lynden's current Comprehensive Plan with regard to legislative updates since 2015, and staff comments on the existing plan. This memo provides an overview of the changes and updates needed for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

Most changes include general updates to land use and housing inventories and analysis or policy updates based on recent Washington State legislation, including HB 1220 (2021), HB 1337 (2023), and HB 1181 (2023), which include requirements for allocating affordable housing by zone, allowing two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on residential lots, and developing a new climate element as part of this update, respectively. The climate element, which will be called the Community Resilience Element, is being developed separate from the larger Comprehensive Plan update. Necessary updates for the climate element and to bring other elements of the comprehensive plan into compliance with HB 1181 will be discussed in a separate memo.

Policy gaps associated with the Transportation Element or Park and Trails Master Plan are not included in this analysis and will be prepared by others.

2. Comprehensive Plan Updates

The following items, organized by comprehensive plan element, were identified as necessary updates based on a policy gaps analysis and staff direction:

1. DOCUMENT-WIDE UPDATES

- a. Update and reformat tables and figures to be more reader-friendly and engaging.
- b. Remove redundant information and simplify the text throughout the plan to be approachable to all readers.
- c. Include opportunities for coordination with Tribal governments throughout the plan.
- d. Consolidate sections on GMA background information in the individual elements of the plan into the Introduction or an appendix item to simplify the elements and provide a comprehensive overview of the GMA in one section of the plan.
- e. Move and update background information in each element including land use and housing inventories and other data analysis to an appendix.
- f. Update maps throughout the plan.

2. INTRODUCTION

- a. Update the Vision Statement to be a forward-looking vision that reflects Lynden's current community values and any changes since the last plan.
- b. Incorporate policies that are specific and relevant to Lynden from the "Vision Goals and Policies" and the "13 Growth Management Goals and Policies" sections into the goals and policies of related elements.
- c. Incorporate relevant GMA-background policies from other elements into the introduction.

3. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- a. Draft new goals and policies to implement the City's vision for this element.
- b. Develop this element to incorporate parks and recreation planning efforts and other facility planning and programming goals with climate resilience goals.
- c. Include new content that connects the City's vision to community health, wellness, safety, aesthetics, resilience, and access to healthcare and green spaces.
- d. Move any relevant policies from the Introduction of the current plan to the new Health and Wellness Element.

4. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- a. Include new goals and policies drafted to address vulnerabilities in the city and bolster existing efforts in the City. A more in-depth discussion of the required components and changes will be outlined in a separate memo.

5. LAND USE ELEMENT

- a. Update the land capacity and land use inventory, which will be incorporated into the plan as appendix items.
- b. Include a summary of local land use issues to provide an overview of the goals and policies that were developed or updated as part of this comp plan update.
- c. Update the critical areas discussion to provide a holistic discussion of critical areas that incorporates climate impacts.
- d. Update goals and policies to ensure the requirements of the Commerce checklist and Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policies are met by the Comprehensive Plan update.
- e. Draft new policies to comply with HB 1181 and complement the goals and policies developed in the climate element.
- f. Develop goals and policies for a new Gateway Subarea
- g. Identify any necessary map amendments following the results of the land capacity analysis
- h. Move relevant policies from the Introduction of the current plan to the Land Use Element.

6. HOUSING ELEMENT

- a. Shorten the introduction section and update any information that has changed since the last comp plan update. The introduction will focus on a summary of local housing issues.
- b. Draft new goals and policies to comply with HB 1220 related to housing affordability and HB 1337 related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- c. Include images and examples of local housing types, development projects, and update existing tables and figures with current data.
- d. Update the housing inventory and needs analysis with current information and move it to an appendix item.
- e. Move relevant policies from the Introduction of the current plan to the Housing Element.

7. UTILITIES ELEMENT

- a. Update background information and move it to an appendix item. Focus the introduction of the element on how the goals and policies in the element will help Lynden achieve its vision.
- b. Draft new goals and policies to address policy gaps, as described in the Lynden Policy Gaps Analysis memo.
- c. Move relevant policies from the Introduction of the current plan to the Utilities Element.

8. CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT

- a. Update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to reflect current conditions. Most of the analysis and background information of this element will be moved to an appendix.
- b. Update or draft new goals and policies to address policy gaps, as described in the Lynden Policy Gaps Analysis memo.
- c. Move relevant policies from the Introduction of the current plan to the Capital Facilities Element.

The above items provide a general scope of updates and proposed changes as part of this 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. A more detailed outline of the required and recommended changes and policy updates, including some initial proposed redlines and staff comments on the existing plan, can be found in the attached Appendix A – Lynden Comprehensive Plan Policy Gaps Analysis.