

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW GUIDE

Plan Update Overview

This review guide outlines changes that have been made to the Lynden Comprehensive Plan since the last periodic update in 2017. 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). This new legislation includes requirements to distribute affordable housing across zones, allow two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on residential lots, and develop a new climate element as part of this update, respectively. This update prioritizes edits to plan text to use plain language, simplify descriptions, and remove redundant policies or narratives, in favor of more photos and graphics throughout. In order to keep the plan accessible and easy to read, background information and technical analysis used to develop each of the elements is moved to the Appendices.

A significant part of the Comprehensive Plan is the Vision Statement, which is intended to guide the development of the goals and policies found in the plan as well as the city's decision-making processes over the planning period. Given community outreach efforts conducted as part of this update process, the following Vision Statement was created.

Lynden strives to cultivate a vibrant future by honoring its industrious agricultural roots, stewarding its resources, supporting commerce, innovation, and the local agricultural economy, embracing its small-town charm, and committing to nurture its community spirit so as to create a place where families can thrive.

The Vision Statement can be further explained by the following principles:

1. Honor the City's industrious agricultural roots
2. Steward environmental, economic, and social resources
3. Support industry, innovation, and the local agricultural economy
4. Embrace the City's small-town charm
5. Nurture the City's community-oriented spirit
6. Enhance quality of life for all residents

Comprehensive Plan Elements

This part of the review guide explains the key changes that have been made to each element and provides a broad overview of the goals for each element.

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction describes Lynden’s history and recent development patterns, why planning is important in Lynden, and outlines Lynden’s vision statement which guides the rest of the plan. The Introduction was shortened by moving relevant policy language from the “Community Value Statement” to other elements, updating and consolidating the “Planning Context” section to focus on GMA requirements and major legislative changes since the last update, and removing the “Demographic Profile” section, as information in this section has been updated and included in the Land Capacity Analysis and Housing Needs Assessment, which will be included as appendix items to the Comprehensive Plan. The history section was updated to include more photos and highlight more of Lynden’s history, and the Vision Statement was updated to reflect a forward-looking vision for the city and incorporate vision principles to explain the vision statement and the major themes of the plan.

LAND USE

The Land Use Element sets the path for how land is allocated and used, identifies where growth is appropriate, and describes desired changes over the coming 20 years. The goals and policies included in this element address how Lynden will accommodate its projected population growth while maintaining a high quality of life for residents. Overall, the Land Use Element was shortened to focus on the goals and policies of the element; background information and an updated land capacity analysis can be found in the appendix. Some goals and policies of the plan were moved to the new Health and Wellness Element and the new Climate Element and were strengthened to address changing city priorities. Some of the “Community Value Statements” from the last plan were incorporated into policy language, namely those that relate to Economic Development, which are included as a new sub-topic in the Land Use Element Goals and Policies. New policies were also drafted to address recent legislative changes to GMA requirements, the WA Department of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Checklist, Whatcom County Countywide planning policies, and to incorporate community priorities and policy recommendations from the Land Capacity Analysis and Housing Needs Assessment. Finally, new land use, future land use, and subarea maps were developed.

HOUSING

The Housing Element helps Lynden identify solutions to local housing issues and further the city’s vision of maintaining its close-knit community and vitality while embracing growth. The

element outlines goals and policies to ensure adequate housing is provided for all residents, regardless of income, race, or ability. Overall, the Housing Element was shortened to focus on the goals and policies of the element; background information was updated and can be found in the appendix. Some of the “Community Value Statements” or vision policies from the last plan were incorporated into policy language. New policies were also drafted to address recent legislative changes that require cities to distribute affordable housing across zones and allow two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on residential lots, along with other updates from the WA Department of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Checklist, Whatcom County Countywide planning policies, and to incorporate community priorities and recommendations from the Housing Needs Assessment and Racial and Disparate Impacts Analysis.

UTILITIES

The Utilities Element describes the location and capacity of existing and proposed utilities to ensure reliable and adequate levels of service are met and maintained as Lynden accommodates future growth. Utilities include water and sewer, electrical, natural gas, and telecommunication systems. The goals and policies in this element were updated to address GMA requirements, the WA Department of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Checklist, Whatcom County Countywide planning policies, and city priorities. The background information and utilities inventory were moved to the appendix, along with a new map showing utility facilities.

CAPITAL FACILITIES

The Capital Facilities Element identifies funding priorities, strategies, and opportunities for capital facility improvements and needs in Lynden, in order to provide adequate public facilities for residents and future growth. It includes inventories of existing capital facilities, forecasts future needs, and proposes new facilities and improvements. Capital facilities in Lynden include parks and recreation facilities, utilities, and other public facilities. The background information and capital facilities inventory was updated and moved to the appendix, along with a new map showing the city’s capital facilities.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This is a new element included as part of this periodic update. Unlike other elements of the comp plan, this element is not required under the GMA. However, the city recognizes the importance of planning for overall community health, and this element has been included to help the city begin to actively plan for, promote, and support a health community; an effort to be expanded with public input over time. The element has been developed to complement the other elements of the comp plan, the Lynden Parks Plan (adopted in 2020), and the Whatcom County Community Health Assessment. Some policies were incorporated from the Land Use, Transportation, and Housing element, and edited to better address community health and wellness. It includes goals and policies that address the following topics related to



health and wellness: Public Safety, Social Health and Human Services, Community Design and Active Transportation, Parks and Open Space, and Recreation.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The Climate Element is a new element included in this periodic update, as required by recent amendments to the GMA with the passing of HB 1181 in 2023. It is intended to help the City of Lynden increase resilience to and address the potential impacts of extreme weather events and natural hazards, such as flooding, and reduce Lynden’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with statewide goals.

The element has been developed to complement the other elements of the comp plan, meet the requirements of HB 1181, and address community concerns surrounding climate resilience as identified through a community survey. The goals and policies are divided into the two required sub-elements, Climate Resilience, and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction, and address the following topics and community priorities: water resources, stormwater management and flooding, extreme heat, food security and local agriculture, energy efficiency, infrastructure resilience, emergency management, public health, and green spaces. To provide additional context and address how the city may implement some of the policies, sidebars with potential implementation actions have been included throughout the element.