

CITY OF LYNDEN



Comprehensive Plan - 2025 Update

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a community's land-use planning document that takes stock of the present conditions and looks to the future. It includes a broad vision statement and a policy roadmap to help live up to that vision. It is meant to be used by city leaders, business owners, developers, and citizens to guide decisions about a city's growth and development.

Lynden's Comprehensive Plan looks 20 years into the future to guide decision making on population growth, transportation needs, capital projects, housing options and design, economic development, climate resilience, and cultural and environmental enhancement. It is intended to help maintain the city's unique assets as it anticipates the next 20 years of growth, while remaining a working document that is adaptative to changing economic and social conditions.

Why Plan?



Cities make plans to manage growth, promote economic development, and protect their wealth of natural resources. A city must consider the "big picture" issues. Imagine the thousands of individual decisions that developers, businesses, and individuals make that impact their own small corner of the city. It is up to the city to make sure that those decisions fit into the broader vision and context of the city as a whole.

A comprehensive plan articulates a vision for what the city can become. It includes residents in forming that vision and helps them realize that the vision is attainable. Good planning is inclusive of the city as a whole and how it is situated in a larger geographical context, while accounting for regulatory, legal, and financial considerations as well.

Financing

The way that cities grow and develop has major implications on the cost of providing and maintaining the public services that go along with that development. Inefficient development results in higher infrastructure, utility, and safety service costs. By planning for compact development, a variety of land use options, and by fully using and maintaining existing facilities and infrastructure, Lynden can better manage the cost of providing and maintaining public services for its residents.

Planning Context

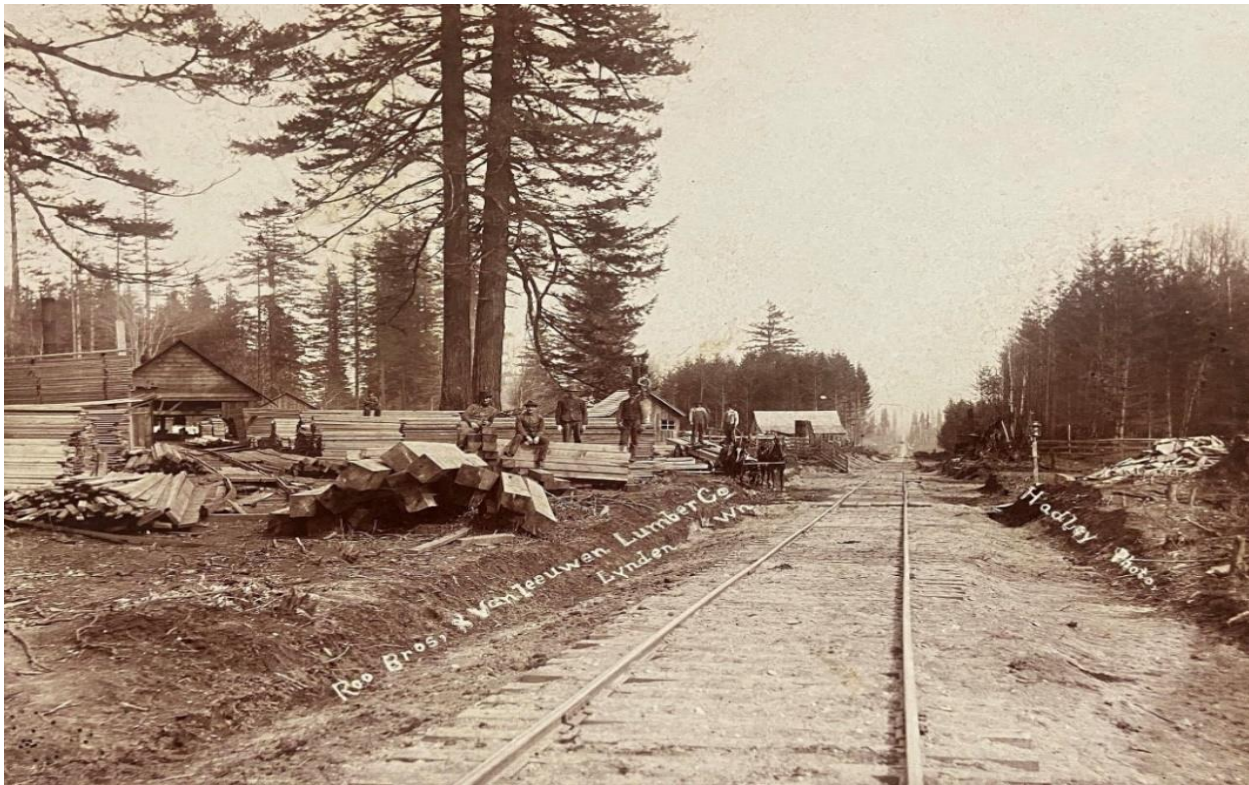
The GMA requires cities to plan aligned with the following state goals:

- **Urban growth.** Focus urban growth in urban areas where adequate services exist or can be provided.
- **Reduce sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- **Transportation.** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- **Housing.** Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- **Economic development.** Promote economic opportunity for all residents, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons.
- **Property rights.** Private property rights shall be protected and private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation.
- **Permits.** Permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner.
- **Natural resources industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries.
- **Open space and recreation.** Retain open space and green space, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- **Environment.** Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality and availability.
- **Citizen participation and coordination.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- **Public facilities and services.** Ensure the public facilities and services necessary for development are provided concurrent with development without decreasing levels of service.
- **Historic preservation.** Identify and preserve lands, sites, and structures with historical or archaeological significance.
- **Climate change and resiliency.** Adapt to and mitigate climate impacts and natural hazards and support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- **Shorelines.** Manage shorelines of the state.

In 1990 the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act, or GMA

(Chapter 36.70A RCW), requiring municipalities to work to manage growth in a coordinated fashion. It was designed to reduce urban sprawl, protect natural resources, and enhance resident's quality of life. It intends to focus urban growth in those areas already characterized by urban levels of service and density. The authority to designate urban growth areas - places that should accommodate the projected growth of the state - was granted to the county, working in cooperation with the cities within its boundaries. The GMA also mandates that local governments complete a Comprehensive Plan and update it periodically. Lynden adopted its original Comprehensive Plan in 1995 and updated it in 2004 and 2017. Specific requirements of the GMA are outlined, as follows.

History of Lynden



Lynden began as a logging town.

The area now known as Lynden was long inhabited by residents of the Nooksack Tribe prior to European settlers arriving in 1860.¹ Phoebe and Holden Judson settled Lynden as their "ideal home" in 1871. Settlers were attracted to the area based on their efforts to establish Lynden as a trade and educational center. Lynden's first plat was established in 1884. By the time Washington had achieved statehood in 1889, Lynden had a population of more than 500 people. The city was officially incorporated in 1891. While the city began as a logging town, by the turn of the century the dominant industry was agriculture, specifically dairy and berry farms, though vegetables, hops, and grains were also popular crops among Lynden farmers.

¹ [Lynden - Thumbnail History](#). History Link (January 20, 2008).

A sizeable population of Dutch residents began moving to Lynden throughout the late 1800s to early 1900s. Many became farmers and began to establish numerous churches in Lynden. Another wave of Dutch migration came throughout the late 1940s-1950s, as many European Dutch were displaced as part of World War II, and Midwestern Dutch populations moved further west.

Population growth from 1910 illustrates a slow but steady population increase through most of the 20th century which ended with a boom in the 1990s and continued into the 2000s. Lynden's population continues to increase as it remains a desirable place to live and to raise a family. Of course, Lynden's growth in land area has steadily increased as well. While acreage information for the early decades of the city is unreliable, in 1945 the city contained 501 acres. That has steadily increased to the current size of 3,862 acres.

Lynden is currently known for its charming downtown - its shops, the incredible flower baskets, and the appealing architecture. Visitors notice the city's cleanliness, manicured lawns, tree lined streets, and friendly people. Others remember the churches "on every corner" or the striking windmills that welcome visitors to the town. Every August, thousands of people make memories at the Northwest Washington Fair. To the over sixteen thousand people that live in Lynden, this is the place they call their "ideal home."

Recent Development

The City's Urban Growth Area (UGA) was established with its original Comprehensive Plan in 1995 following the state's adoption of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. The GMA requires fully-planning jurisdictions to accommodate projected population and employment growth within designated UGAs. In coordination with Whatcom County, the city expanded its UGA as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update process to accommodate projected residential growth. Because of that 2016 expansion, the current UGA can accommodate the City's projected 20-year population growth. Therefore, no changes to the City's UGA boundaries are being proposed as part of this 2025 Comprehensive Plan update.



Since 2016, 406 acres of Lynden's designated UGA were annexed to the city limits. Of these 406 acres, 178 acres are for industrial use, 159 acres are for residential use, and 69 acres are for public use purposes. These annexations leave just under 300 acres of unincorporated land in Lynden's UGA - most of that slated for residential growth in the Pepin Creek Subarea.

Residential Development



Between 2016 when the Comprehensive Plan was last updated and 2023, when data for the 2025 update was analyzed, there were periods when all housing types were in high demand. During this time more than 1,000 residential units were built - approximately 50% single family and 50% multifamily units. Most of this residential growth took place in the East Lynden Subarea with new single-family developments such as the final phases of the North Prairie development, Berryman Estates, and Kode Kamp Vista. Significant

multifamily developments along Badger Road with other large multifamily developments constructed in the North Lynden Subarea near the Depot Road and Badger Road intersection. The West Lynden Gateway Subarea saw residential development at the corner of Front and 19th Streets as part of a multiuse project in the Lynden Market Square development. As the availability of vacant lots and new development lots has decreased, the pressure for creative infill projects across the city has increased. Some of the highlights of these infill projects include adding residential units in the Historic Business District, and South HBD, as well as short plats on older large residential lots across the city.

Public Infrastructure Development

Since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update, the city has continued to finance upgrades to its portfolio of public infrastructure, investing more than \$45 million in several projects that will directly impact the city's ability to provide services as growth continues. These projects range from:

- **Utility Upgrades:** \$7.7 million
 - Bender watermain, South Park watermain, Sewer Pump Station #17, Guide sewer extension, 6th St sewer upgrade, Fairgrounds stormwater system improvements, LED streetlight conversions
- **Street Improvements and Maintenance:** \$12.3 million
 - 17th St, Line Road, 7th St, East Grover St, Benson Road, W Front St, Main and 3rd Intersection, Cedar Drive, Judson St, N 8th St culvert
- **Street extensions - Gap Elimination:** \$5 million
 - 17th St, Riverview Road, Foxtail St
- **Wastewater/Water Treatment Plant Projects and Upgrades:** \$8.2 million
 - UV treatment system, New plant outfall, Old water plant demolition, Industrial condensate pipeline, New maintenance building
- **Park Improvements and Trail Connections:** \$4.5 million

- Bender Fields parking lot, Jim Kaemingk trail extensions, East Lynden trail
- **Pepin Creek Subarea Infrastructure:** \$4 million
 - Main St Bridge, Intercept ditch
- **Public Building Construction and Improvements:** \$4 million
 - Public Works shop, Decant facility, Fire Station addition, Community Center renovation



Commercial and Industrial Development

More than 1,000,000 square feet of commercial and industrial development were completed in Lynden between 2016 and 2023. The majority of this was related to Lynden Door expansion projects, an industrial freezer addition, and large-scale storage projects for contractor space. Commercial development included new retail space along the Guide Meridian corridor, mini-storage projects in north Lynden, and office space downtown. Commercial development totals include two new schools that were built in the city during this time.

Reflecting shifting patterns in commercial landscape and the way that Americans now buy general commercial goods, the overall demand for new retail buildings seems to have decreased. In 2017, prompted by several commercial property owners in East Lynden, City Council approved a rezone request of 12 parcels (27 acres) from commercial to residential land uses. Since that rezone occurred, several of these parcels have been developed with multi-family projects resulting in more than 100 new housing units on these parcels.

Looking ahead, Lynden has an abundance of Industrial land available for development in West Lynden. In 2024, the West Lynden Annexation was completed, as proposed by several landowners. This annexation brought in 280 acres (170 acres of which is vacant industrial land) from Lynden's remaining unincorporated Urban Growth Area west of the Guide Meridian into the city limits.



Planning and Legislative Activity

Lynden has written new chapters of development code and updated several others since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. These regulatory code updates come as the city keeps pace with ever changing community desires and state legislative mandates. Since 2016, the city has updated its Critical Areas Ordinance, Shoreline Management Program, Park and Trail Master Plan, Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations, off-street parking code, commercial use regulations, residential and commercial design standards, civil penalties codes, and low impact development provisions. Furthermore, it has adopted a new West Lynden Gateway Subarea, the Pepin Creek Subarea Plan, introduced a new Mixed-Use Center Overlay, and established the role of a hearing examiner.

Community Engagement

As part of this Comprehensive Plan effort, the city initiated several engagement efforts to gather feedback from specific groups in the Lynden community to inform the City's Comprehensive Plan and Climate Resiliency Element. During the summer and fall of 2024, engagement efforts included a penny poll at the City of Lynden's Raspberry Festival, an online and printed community survey, as well as focus groups and listening sessions with commercial interests, the Community Center, and agricultural interest groups. A full report of the engagement efforts conducted as part of this Comprehensive Plan update can be found in Appendix C.



From the engagement efforts, several priorities involved as identified by Lynden residents. Broadly speaking, and in no particular order, residents were primarily concerned about:

- accommodating future growth and how it would impact the communal feel of neighborhoods and the quality of life that Lynden provides;
- balancing economic growth with housing affordability, so those who work in Lynden can also afford to live there;
- maintaining the small-town feel of Lynden, which include efforts to support local events and traditions, maintain a recognizable downtown, ensure proximity to green spaces, and maintain a communal and slower pace of life;
- providing housing that is affordable for all walks of life, such as families looking for their first homes, households looking to downsize, individuals living alone, those with unique housing needs, and households of all income levels;
- preserving land for agricultural use by increasing density within the UGA;
- maintaining infrastructure to be resilient in the face of natural disasters and extreme weather events;
- preparing for flooding and water shortages, as precipitation patterns are changing and will continue to change;
- improving tree canopy coverage without impacting the potential for infill development;
- enhancing recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Together, these issues informed the development of the vision statement, the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan, and the new Climate Resiliency Element.

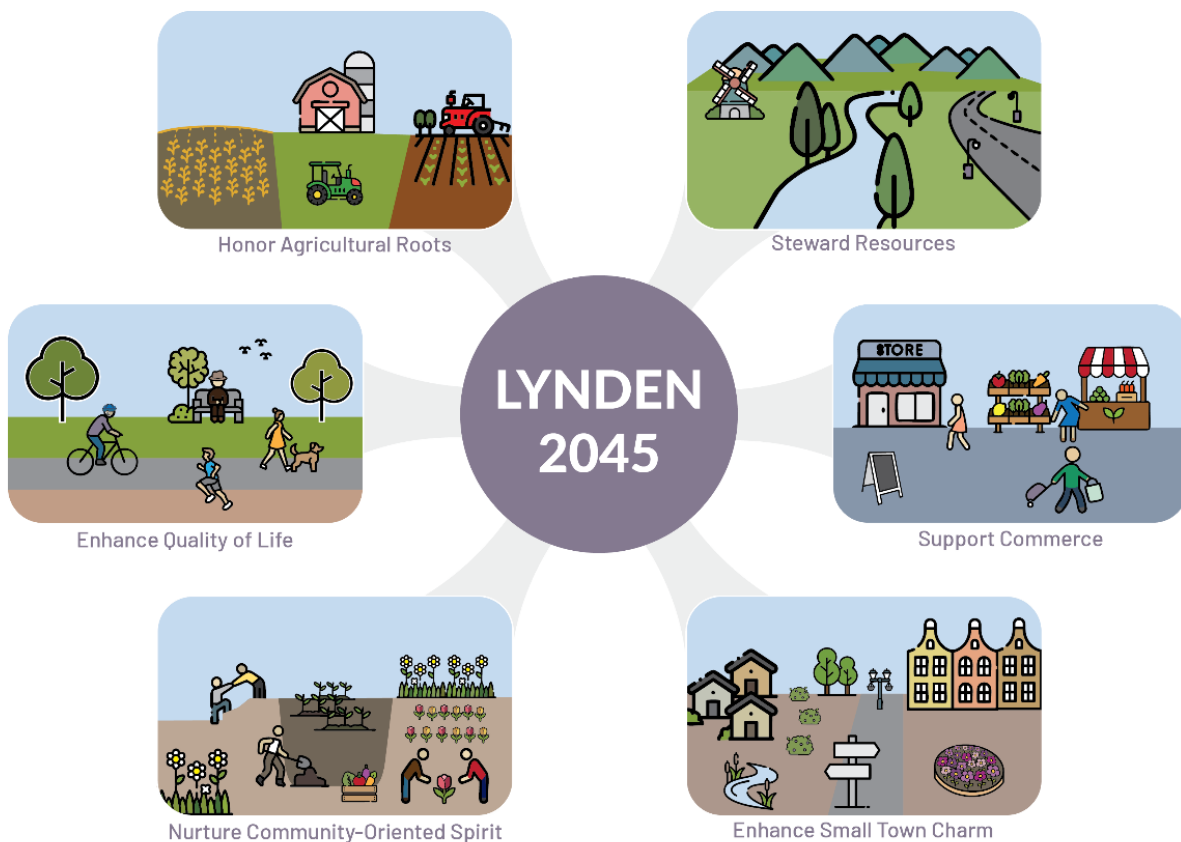
Lynden 2045: A Vision for the Community

The major themes identified from community engagement efforts for this periodic update have informed the development of the City's vision statement, as follows, which is intended to guide the City's growth over the 20-year planning period.

Cultivating a community where families can thrive.

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.

Lynden's vision statement stems from a few key "vision principles", as illustrated below, which are reflected in the goals and policies throughout this Comprehensive Plan.



Vision Principle 1: Honor the city's industrious agricultural roots



Lynden's history is full of hardworking and innovative people which have led some of its small-town businesses to grow to national and international success stories. Although Lynden is well represented in the building and freight industries it is probably most closely identified with the business of farming.

It is clear that agriculture has been and remains a large part of the city's economy and identity. Locally this is celebrated through events like the Farmer's Day Parade, the Raspberry Festival, and the Northwest Washington Fair. The city's connection to its agricultural roots has, for generations, influenced the culture of the community, its work ethic, and its small-town charm. Now, as Lynden grows from a small town to a city, this ag connection influences priorities for growth and development.

Vision Principle 2: Steward environmental and economic resources



The city has a role as a caretaker of the environment to ensure that its natural resources, including land, water, and habitat, are wisely managed for today's residents and generations to come. This vision principle also refers to financial stewardship. If done well this caretaking builds a resilient community. This sort of resiliency means that the city is prepared to endure and respond to sudden changes or emergencies and can mobilize to assist the most vulnerable in our community. City leaders strive to ensure that the infrastructure of the city can serve residents reliably in order to maintain the community's sense of security and independence and our natural areas thrive. This aspect of the vision statement reflects the concerns of residents in Lynden regarding sustainable stormwater management, flood prevention, water supply and quality, energy capacity, and the longevity of agriculture and ag-related industries.

Vision Principle 3: Support industry, innovation, and the local agricultural economy



While Lynden values its history and traditions this has not stymied business growth and innovation. Industry innovators including Lynden Door, Lynden Transport, and Pure Potato hail from Lynden. Agriculture plays a heavy role in the Lynden economy as evidenced by its implement dealers, irrigation suppliers, cold storage, and dairy and berry processing. This aspect of the vision statement intends to help Lynden remain a place for new businesses to develop while supporting and maintaining existing industry and honoring their role in the city. The city's infrastructure, transportation, quality of life, and climate resilience planning all play a key role in the future economic development of Lynden.

Vision Principle 4: Embrace the city's small-town charm



A 2024 community survey asked residents to identify what contributed to Lynden's small-town charm. The three most common answers pointed to local events and traditions, a historic and recognizable downtown, and the layout of the city's neighborhoods which include wide streets and single-family homes. Others responded that the charm stems from less tangible aspects including a slower pace of life or the feeling of a close-knit community. These answers provide insight into the values held by Lynden residents and can guide policies and priorities as the city grows. Efforts to facilitate community traditions and maintain design standards are just a couple of ways the city can respond.

Vision Principle 5: Nurture the city's community-oriented spirit



Lynden prides itself in its community collaboration and self-reliance. Lynden's sense of community spirit has been enhanced and encouraged through acts of caring and kindness, a sense of community trust and understanding, and a strong attitude of volunteerism and citizenship. This is evidenced by a significant network of recreational and social services available to a broad demographic of people including youth and seniors. Organizations such as Project Hope and Lynden churches play an active role in providing emergency and transitional housing. The senior center and Forge Fitness provide discounted resources and beneficial connections for seniors. Mentoring and childcare programs such as Be the One and the Boys and Girls Club walk alongside the city's youth while Lynden Youth Sports and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) create valuable social and educational resources. As the city continues to grow it will benefit from facilitating and encouraging this variety of programs, housing options, services, and business support to meet the diverse needs of its residents and help ensure the city remains a supportive and strong community.

Vision Principle 6: Building a place where families can thrive.



Families of all shapes and sizes thrive in a safe and supportive environment. To ensure Lynden residents can thrive, it is important to facilitate the provision of sufficient housing affordable to all ages and incomes and address the increasingly diverse needs of the population, and to provide visible and reliable public safety resources. It is also increasingly clear that the development of cities, including how residents of all ages are able to move around the city, impacts the health of residents. A healthier population tends to be happier, more productive, and reduces the cost of public and safety services. As it grows, Lynden will strive to implement development patterns and multi-modal transportation networks as well as green spaces and recreational opportunities that foster good health and enhance residents' quality of life.

Looking Forward

Together, these interconnected, overarching principles will guide the city as the Comprehensive Plan is completed, implemented, and revised. The vision, which is adopted as a foundation of this Comprehensive Plan, will remain as a focal point in the plan throughout any and all revisions, and will provide a strong basis for city-wide decisions over the 20-year planning period.

City leadership and the residents of Lynden take ownership of this Comprehensive Plan and are dedicated to this vision. Policies will be implemented to ensure that these principles are attained and that Lynden's quality of life is enhanced in future years. As part of this, Lynden is committed to continuing a positive working relationship with Whatcom County to ensure and enable the implementation of those goals and policies that may reach outside the borders of the City limits.



2. LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element takes stock of how land is currently being used in Lynden and determines how the land will be used in the future as the City plans for its predicted growth. It recognizes that land is a finite resource and the manner in which it is developed and used impacts every aspect of the city: economic, public health and safety, roads and utilities, and quality of life.

The continued growth within Lynden will impact the look and feel of the city but can also provide great opportunities for the community. Growth projections indicate that more than 6,600 people are expected to find their new homes in Lynden over the next 20 years, and nearly 1,800 jobs will be created over that same time period. Open fields within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) will be filled with houses, apartment buildings, and commercial space. Creative residents will figure out ways to fill in vacant lots in already developed neighborhoods. Downtown and commercial areas on the edge of town will continue to evolve and change based on community needs.

The background information used to develop the goals and policies of this element can be found in the Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) in Appendix D, and the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) in Appendix E). The Housing Needs Assessment identifies that Lynden will need to plan for an additional 3,535 new housing units over the 20-year planning period. The Land Use Element provides a plan for how Lynden will accommodate its projected growth. It gives the city, its government officials, its developers, builders, and all of its residents a guide for

GMA Requirements

Land Use Elements are required to:

- Designate the proposed general distribution, location and extent of land uses, including lands useful for public purposes.
- Ensure sufficient capacity and space for future population and employment, by including analysis of population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.
- Provide for protection of critical areas and the quality and quantity of ground water used for public water supplies.
- Utilize urban planning approaches that promote physical activity.
- Review drainage, flooding, and storm water run-off in the area and provide guidance for preventing degradation of waters of the state.

State legislation, including HB 1181 (2023), also require the land use element to:

- Consider environmental justice in its policies, including efforts to avoid creating or worsening environmental health disparities.
- Identify open space corridors and green spaces within and between UGAs, including lands useful for wildlife habitat, recreation, urban and community forests, and connection of critical areas.
- Reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires.
- Reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled.

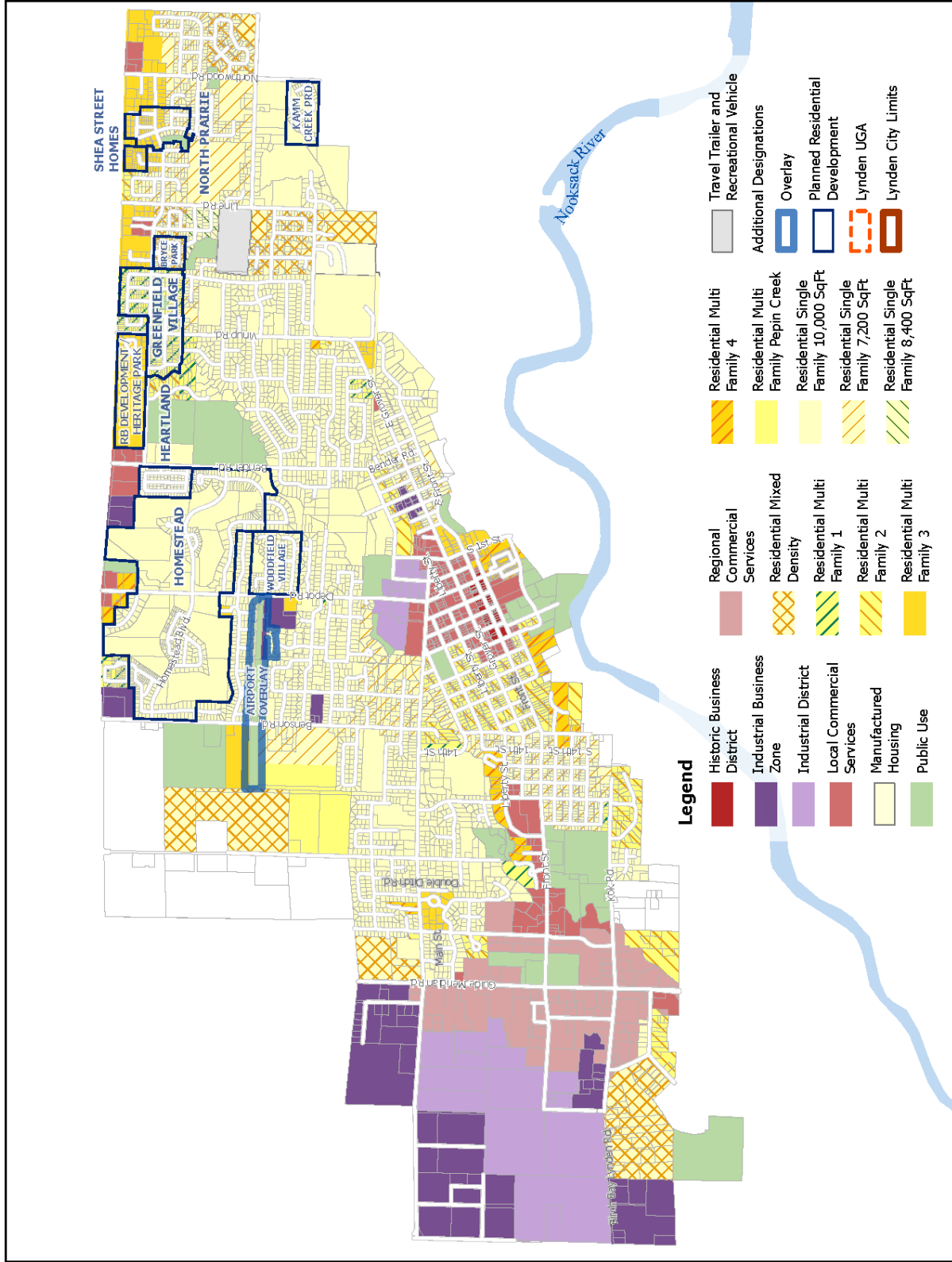
growth. It acknowledges that change will occur and attempts to minimize conflicting land uses so that the City's vision can still be met.

In order to enhance Lynden's charm and residents' quality of life and meet the goals outlined in the Growth Management Act and the Whatcom County Countywide Planning Policies, the following goals and policies have been developed related to the purpose and pattern of growth in the Urban Growth Area, the annexation of those areas to the City of Lynden, and the future land use within the City. This element also incorporates goals and policies for the West Lynden Gateway Subarea to plan for the further development of this area while balancing protection of the subarea's species-rich critical areas.

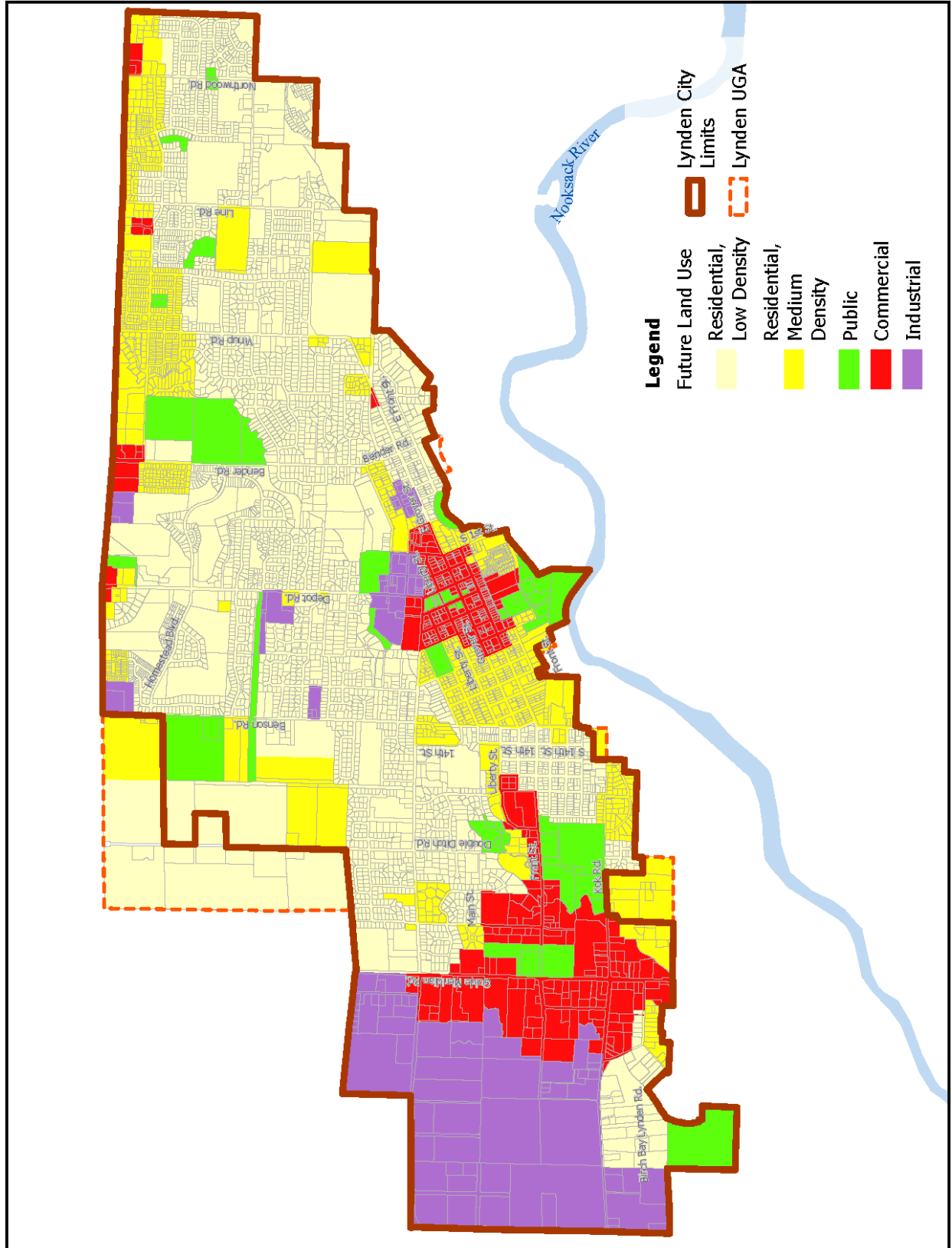
Although the City of Lynden does not have approval authority over development applications in unincorporated UGA areas, Lynden will encourage Whatcom County to plan jointly for the area through the adoption of inter-local agreements as required by the County Wide Planning Policies.

The Land Use Element, like all the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, is not static. It will require periodic refinement and adaptation to address both opportunities and obstacles throughout the planning period. The City's Zoning Map can be found on page 24, and the Future Land Use Map can be found on page 25 below.





Zoning
 City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | March 2025
 Source: City of Lynden, Whatcom County.



Future Land Use
 City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | February 2025

Source: City of Lynden, Whatcom County.

Land Use Goals and Policies

URBAN GROWTH AREA (UGA)

Goal LU-1: Maintain an Urban Growth Area (UGA) that adequately accommodates projected population and employment growth over the 20-year planning period.

- Policy LU-1.1 LAND SUPPLY. Maintain an UGA that supplies a land supply adequate for Lynden’s future growth, is consistent with the County Wide Planning Policies, and considers which lands are better suited for agriculture vs. urban development.
- Policy LU-1.2 JOBS. Preserve sufficient commercial land to accommodate the 20-year employment growth projections, while preventing commercial and industrial developments from encroaching beyond designated UGAs.
- Policy LU-1.3 PUBLIC FACILITIES. Preserve or acquire public land, if necessary, to provide public facilities, services, and public open spaces necessary to serve projected growth and maintain a high quality of life.
- Policy LU-1.4 SERVICES. Changes to land uses throughout the City should carefully consider the proximity to urban services necessary to serve the new land use. This may include public transit, shopping and personal services, and adequate public utilities.
- Policy LU-1.5 IMPACTS. Review the potential impacts on established neighborhoods when considering zoning changes, whether they are implemented through the comprehensive planning process or through a site-specific rezone.
- Policy LU-1.6 ANALYZE. The development potential of any individual property under the land use designations of this Comprehensive Plan shall be based on the net buildable area of that property, and shall be further subject to clustering, planned unit development and low impact development provisions, availability of necessary utilities, critical area regulations, and other applicable development policies, regulations, and standards.
- Policy LU-1.7 COORDINATE. Plan cooperatively with Whatcom County for areas within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area, including the use of inter-local agreements that reflect community input and provide guidelines on the size and timing of annexation.
- Policy LU-1.8 PUBLIC FACILITIES. Ensure that adequate public facilities are available to serve new growth and development, by considering funding mechanisms including impact fees for Transportation, Park, and Fire,

Local Improvement Districts (LIDs), connection fees, or other mitigation or system fees allowed by state law.

Goal LU-2: Anticipate annexations and development within the Urban Growth Area to ensure consistency with the Vision, Goals, and Policies of this Comprehensive Plan, and prioritize infill development over expansion into agricultural and rural lands.

- Policy LU-2.1 The City of Lynden will anticipate annexation of land by developing and updating subarea plans and capital facility plans which consider Urban Growth Area (UGA) properties. The City of Lynden will review Whatcom County development applications in the UGA to encourage development patterns consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable subarea plans.
- Policy LU-2.3 Coordinate with Whatcom County to limit urban development outside of the designated UGA in order to conserve rural and agricultural lands.
- Policy LU-2.4 Encourage infill development and creative use of under-utilized properties within the city.

LAND USE TYPES

Goal LU-3. Encourage infill development and higher-intensity land uses in the existing Mixed-use Center Overlay near transit corridors and commercial centers.

- Policy LU-3.1 Increase or remove density limits within the mixed-use overlay zones, along transportation corridors, and in the city's core.
- Policy LU-3.2 Require pedestrian infrastructure such as trails, sidewalks, and protected roadway shoulders in association with development with the goal of creating a network of safe bike and pedestrian routes.
- Policy LU-3.3 Encourage efficient design by adjusting impact fees and system development charges so the homes with larger impacts on utilities pay more.
- Policy LU-3.4 Balance tree canopy coverage with infill development to allow for more efficient use of land that provides adequate trees for shading, maintaining the small-town feel of the city, and public health benefits.

Goal LU-4: Allow residential uses that reflect Lynden's small-town charm and architectural styles, while safeguarding property owners' rights to build a variety of housing types that meet the needs of all community members.

Policy LU-4.1 Provide adequate residential land and densities to accommodate allocated housing targets for households from all income levels and backgrounds.

Policy LU-4.2 Allow two ADUs on qualifying residential parcels in the city, consistent with state law ([RCW 36.70A.680,36.70A.681](#)) and the Lynden Municipal Code (LMC 19.20).

Goal LU-5: Identify and preserve land for public recreation and community facilities, ensuring these spaces are accessible, well-maintained, and meet the needs of current and future residents.

Policy LU-5.1 Prioritize the identification and conservation of natural landscapes or wildlife habitat areas and land suitable for public amenities and facilities.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Goal LU-6: Maintain agricultural land outside of the unincorporated UGA for long-term agricultural use by encouraging smart growth techniques such as infill development.

Policy LU-6.1 Continue to support agriculture and the right to farm in areas surrounding the city. Require a covenant on all development adjacent to agricultural lands that acknowledges the potential impacts of farming practices on urban uses and recognizes the farmers' rights to utilize those practices that are necessary to agricultural use.

Policy LU-6.2 Consider the needs of the local agricultural industry when updating the City's Transportation Element and Capital Facilities Plan. Specifically, consider expanding truck routes to seasonally accommodate farm equipment, coordinate with local Water Improvement Districts to develop stormwater and flood solutions, and participate in water conservation efforts.

Policy LU-6.3 Prioritize infill development in the UGA to reduce development pressures on prime agricultural land outside of the city.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Goal LU-7: Ensure that new development maintains the small-town charm and community spirit that define Lynden, while providing a welcoming environment for new residents.

Goal LU-7 and its corresponding policies strongly relate to those found in the **Health and Wellness Element**.

- Policy LU-7.1 Consider the historical mixture of land uses and design elements in developing and implementing regulations that increase the vitality and walkability of Lynden.
- Policy LU-7.2 Encourage neighborhood designs that promote social interaction through features such as front porches, community parks, pedestrian walkways, and public gathering spaces.
- Policy LU-7.3 Avoid land use actions that create or worsen environmental health disparities and disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations within the city.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal LU-8: Ensure the City's development regulations, processes, and procedures protect and preserve natural resources and environmentally critical areas, for both the benefit of the environment and public health and wellbeing.

- Policy LU-8.1 Encourage the preservation and protection of critical areas within the Urban Growth Area.
- Policy LU-8.2 Enforce existing land use regulations that protect the natural resources within the city and the surrounding area, including the quality and quantity of water resources, and implement the goals of the Growth Management Act and stormwater control regulations.
- Policy LU-8.3 Explore ways, such as land use planning tools, elevation requirements (freeboard), setbacks, buffers, and wildfire adaptation measures, to reduce the risk to lives and property posed by natural disasters such as flooding, landslides, and wildfires.
- Policy LU-8.4 Utilize Best Available Science (BAS) when updating development regulations for critical areas.
- Policy LU-8.5 Ensure fishery resources and their extended habitat areas, including tributaries and wetlands, are protected from activities that threaten their health, including coordination with Whatcom County efforts where applicable.
- Policy LU-8.6 Encourage Best Management Practices to reduce or eliminate impacts on natural resources and the environment.

Critical areas include wetlands, frequently flooded areas, critical aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and geologically hazardous areas. Lynden's **Critical Area Ordinance** outlines regulations to protect critical areas.

- Policy LU-8.7 Consider opportunities for private property owners to preserve open space as a visual amenity through techniques such as conservation easements, clustering, transfer or purchase of development rights, and density bonuses.
- Policy LU-8.8 Coordinate with Whatcom County and tribal governments to protect water resources, restore stream corridors where feasible, and reduce stormwater runoff and flooding.

Goal LU-9: Identify and encourage the protection and preservation of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources in the City.

- Policy LU-9.1 Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic properties, so they continue to provide useful benefits beyond their initial, intended use.
- Policy LU-9.2 Collaborate proactively with tribal governments and local and regional historic preservation organizations, including the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), to implement strategies that support historic preservation and the preservation of cultural and archaeological resources.
- Policy LU-9.3 Encourage the process of further identifying and designation of historic places (districts, buildings, landmarks) within the city.
- Policy LU-9.4 Continue to assist the Lynden Historic Preservation Commission with administering the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- Policy LU-9.5 Work with property owners to list appropriate properties onto the Lynden Register of Historic Places and designate eligible properties for Special Valuation for rehabilitation projects.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal LU-10: Encourage the diverse development of commercial and industrial lands to foster economic growth and development, support a stable and diverse economy, and provide job opportunities for all residents.

- Policy LU-10.1 Promote economic development by zoning land suitable for commercial and industrial development west of the Guide Meridian.

Appendix B includes Lynden's Land Capacity Analysis, which explains how Lynden could accommodate 1,799 new jobs by 2045. Overall, and particularly as a result of the large amount of industrial employment capacity, **Lynden has more than enough capacity to meet its job targets for this comprehensive planning period.**

- Policy LU-10.2 Encourage new and a diverse range of employment opportunities that can help retain younger residents and replace jobs lost due to the changing needs of the agricultural industry.
- Policy LU-10.3 Ensure that the city's land uses optimize the potential for economic benefit, while protecting the City's open space and natural resources.
- Policy LU-10.4 Maintain a positive business climate that is consistent, responsive to the needs of the business community, and affordable to business owners.
- Policy LU-10.5 Work with business owners and citizens to enhance commercial centers across the city, by supporting Mixed Use Development on qualifying parcels, continual support of the downtown Historic Business District, the 4th St civic corridor, and other commercial centers (Fairway, Lynden Market Square, Guide Meridian corridor, etc.)
- Policy LU-10.6 Continue to support and encourage agriculture-related businesses and industry in the city. Identify code and regulatory barriers for ag-related businesses and appropriately seek to remove those barriers.
- Policy LU-10.7 Coordinate with landowners, developers, and the Airport Board to reduce potential conflicts between the airport and nearby uses. Reduce the regional use of Benson Road by providing alternative routes and facilitate the protection of the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ).



The runway of the Lynden Municipal Airport comes up to the edge of Benson Road, an arterial corridor in the city, and is in close proximity to many homes.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Goal LU-11: Ensure orderly growth that respects the City's scale and prevents sprawl while also accommodating allocated population, housing, and employment growth targets and the requirements of the GMA.

- Policy LU-11.1 Encourage development in areas where adequate public facilities and services are available or convenient to promote a logical and efficient extension of the City's transportation and utility networks.
- Policy LU-11.2 Support land use patterns that reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- Policy LU-11.3 Provide landscaping and buffering standards to mitigate impacts from high-intensity uses, such as commercial and industrial development, on critical areas and residential development.
- Policy LU-11.4 Facilitate zoning regulations and land use designation which can provide sufficient capacity for housing units serving lower-income households (those earning 80 percent AMI or less), such as by adjusting the maximum allowed density in the Mixed-Use Centers Overlay to 40 units per acre.
- Policy LU-11.5 Continue the development of subarea plans for each of the City's subareas to highlight and acknowledge the unique character of each one and identify growth opportunities appropriate for each subarea's characteristics. Consider supporting the development and administration of neighborhood groups and associations.

Goal LU-12: Ensure streamlined and predictable permit review processes.

- Policy LU-12.1 Coordinate efficiently and consistently across departments and agencies (if applicable) in permit review processes.
- Policy LU-12.2 Promote efficiency and predictability when updating regulations for permit review.
- Policy LU-12.3 Protect property rights from discriminatory action to allow property owners reasonable use of their private property and avoid unconstitutional taking of private property for public use without just compensation.
- Policy LU-12.4 Continue to process permits in a timely and fair manner, ensuring adequate staffing to provide a reasonable review period for permit applications. Develop tracking reports as a metric for review times.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Goal LU-13: Engage and collaborate with local and regional stakeholders to improve the livability of the city and reduce conflicts.

- Policy LU-13.1 Provide meaningful opportunities for collaboration with interested Tribal governments on land use planning.
- Policy LU-13.2 Provide opportunities for meaningful, inclusive engagement with residents and community groups, making a concerted effort to reach vulnerable populations, overburdened communities, and populations that have historically been excluded or unable to participate in engagement opportunities.
- Policy LU-13.3 Utilize a variety of methods of communication, such as the addition of a community newsletter or a page in the local newspaper in addition to the use of the City's web page and social media networks in order to engage all members of the Lynden community.
- Policy LU-13.4 Facilitate and work with community groups to sponsor Town Hall meetings where residents and civic leaders have the opportunity to discuss issues regarding the growth, development, and livability of the City.
- Policy LU-13.5 Actively promote interagency cooperation through continued involvement in intergovernmental committees and cooperatives such as the Small Cities' Caucus, Growth Management Oversight Committee, Watershed Inventory Resource Area Planning Group, NPDES Phase II Stormwater Partnerships, and Whatcom County Conservation and Watershed Improvement Districts.
- Policy LU-13.6 Recognize the need and invaluable contributions of volunteers and community groups across the city.
- Policy LU-13.7 Continue to sponsor community task forces to navigate complex issues and planning topics.
- Policy LU-13.8 Continue to notify the public about dates for public hearings, by ordinance, in local papers, and through other public means of communication.
- Policy LU-13.9 Increase communication regarding budgeting, public projects, and other city-wide decision-making processes.

Lynden Subareas

Subarea Plan Concepts: As a land use planning tool, the City of Lynden is divided into nine subareas. Division in this way recognizes that different sections of the city possess unique characteristics, opportunities, and challenges. As such, each subarea benefits from a clear articulation of how the City's vision applies to these areas as well as specific goals and requirements associated with growth and development.

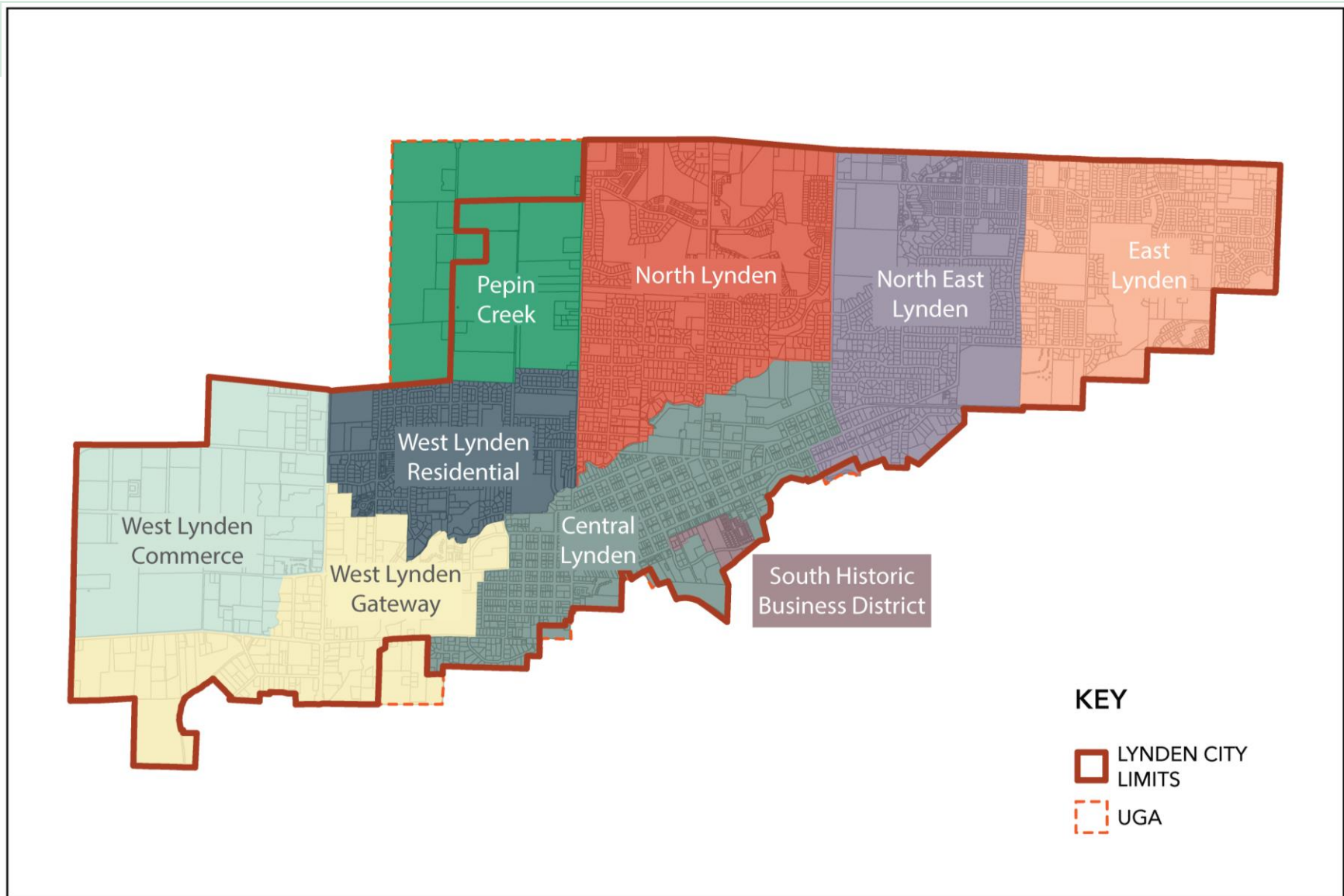
Since the early 1990s the city has adopted subarea plans in a wide range of formats. Some plans are primarily concepts while others are more detailed. All land use development is required to show compliance with Council-adopted subarea plans. Because of this, consistency between the overall Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Element, individual subarea plans, and development regulations is critical to successful implementation of each subarea's vision.



Recent changes to the city's subarea boundaries included a revision to the West Lynden Commerce Subarea and the addition of the West Lynden Gateway Subarea. This subarea was created at the end of 2022 with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment when the City simultaneously adopted modifications to the regulations for mixed-use development near qualifying commercial centers. The change warranted a shift in subarea boundaries that created the West Lynden Gateway Subarea which is likely to see significant growth with the city's mixed-use provisions. 2022 revisions also redefined the perimeter of West Lynden

Commerce Subarea, a subarea which specifically excludes mixed-use developments to protect land for industrial and commercial opportunities. The 2025 periodic update includes goals and policies specifically for the West Lynden Gateway Subarea because growth and development in this area seems imminent. Policies here focus on accommodating growth and contributions to the city economy while mitigating potential conflicting uses and negative traffic impacts.

DRAFT



LYNDEN SUBAREAS MAP

City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | March 2025



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East Lynden Subarea

Characterization: The adopted subarea plan for the East Lynden Subarea was last amended in 2004. Since that time a significant amount of residential growth and development have occurred. Development has largely followed the subarea plan except that most commercially zoned properties in this area were converted to residential use in 2017 due to lack of commercial viability.

The East Lynden Subarea encompasses the City's most eastern region. It is bounded north by East Badger Road and extends from a line a quarter mile east of Vinup Road to a quarter mile east of Northwood Road. The southern boundary follows a combination of property lines, section lines and the floodplain to include the most developable land within the area.

Since annexation in 2001 the East Lynden Subarea has seen significant construction of single-family and multi-family housing developments. This subarea is not expected to expand within the next planning period as there is no Urban Growth Area located on the eastern edge of the city.

Although approximately 48 acres of the East Lynden Subarea initially held a commercial land use designation, the rural demographics surrounding this section of the city do not support isolated commercial development. Commercial entities are currently limited to the Northwood Market, the Thirsty Badger, and Badger Storage (east of Northwood Rd). Mixed use development was constructed along Mercedes Drive using early versions of the City's mixed-use code. This development generally utilizes self-storage as the commercial entity on the first floor with residential use dominating the remainder of the building. A similar storage use also occupies the 1.5 acres west of Mercedes Drive.



Given the challenging commercial market in this area, the City Council approved a land use map amendment in December 2017. This change resulted in a shift of 12 commercial properties (26.87 acres) to residential land use with corresponding zoning designations ranging from RM-3 to RS-72. The remaining commercial property is centered on the intersection of Badger Road and Northwood Road. This area, combined with the Fire District's nearby property and the

adjacent location of American Reformed Church and Cornerstone School is intended to serve as a neighborhood node / entry point.

Visitors to Lynden are drawn into the East Lynden Subarea by the popular Lynden KOA Journey Campground which is located on a scenic 25 acres at the western edge of this subarea. This

section of the city is also home to the Lynden School District's Middle School and the private K-12 school, Cornerstone Christian.

Opportunities: It is essential that the sub-area, in serving a growing residential base, include a significant effort to make trail connections especially connections to schools, parks, the KOA, and neighborhood commercial destinations. Pursuant to Policy 1B of Goal LU-5 of Chapter 2 The Land Use Element, and as a condition of CPA #17-01 which changed land use designations on 12 commercial zoned properties in the East Lynden Subarea to residential zones, the City will require future development in East Lynden to facilitate better pedestrian movement. This requirement obligates residential developers throughout the subarea to provide trail connections and sidewalks. Specifically, a multimodal trail will be required along Badger Road (WA-546) in the East Lynden Subarea and the East Lynden Loop Trail. These requirements are also documented in the 2020 update to the City's Park and Trail Master Plan which outlines specific trail and multimodal routes that make build on the City's trail network across the city.

Opportunities for connections to the regional trail system exist within this subarea as Northwood Road connects with Hampton Road - a well-known County bike route. Additionally, long range plans also include the potential of converting the nearby unused BNSF railroad corridor to a regional trail connecting Lynden to the small cities of Sumas and Everson.

Additional residential growth can be anticipated here south of Bradley and Kamm Roads and at the intersection of Kamm and Northwood Roads which are slated primarily for single-family housing types. These parcels are owned by a relatively few owners who have decided, at this point, to maintain their properties as undeveloped.

Neighborhood commercial opportunities exist in the small commercial node at Badger Road and Northwood Road has the capacity to grow to include additional services. Trail and sidewalk connections to this node will make it a more desirable destination.

Challenges: Badger Road, at the north perimeter of the subarea is a State Highway that accommodates a significant amount of traffic including heavy truck traffic. Connections to this road are limited and existing street networks south of the Badger have, at times, failed to connect to properties along the Badger Road leaving them to front a busy highway with no multi-modal accommodations and access points on the highway.

Infrastructure challenges exist in that some primary corridors within the East Lynden Subarea remain in substandard condition. Line Road, Kamm Road, and Northwood Road are all critical arterials with very few areas that have been improved to City standard. A significant cost and effort will be needed to update these roadways especially as development on and near these arterials is already existing.

The southern edge of the Subarea is impacted by the Kamm Creek and Nooksack River flood plain along with associated wetlands. These areas, when combined with peat soils make some areas south of Kamm Road challenging to develop.

Northeast Lynden Subarea

Characterization: The City of Lynden does not have an adopted subarea plan for North East Lynden. This subarea is characterized by residential subdivisions with generous lot sizes and homes constructed primarily in the 1970's through the early 2000's.. At the northern end of the subarea there are several housing developments focused on Seniors. The Planned Residential Development



Heritage Park houses the Christian Health Care Center and the Lynden Manor, which are both significant assisted living facilities that provide housing and health care for Lynden's senior residents. Supporting that, the nearby Bryce Park retirement community and the Parkview Apartments are both age-restricted to residents who are 55+.

The southern end of the subarea includes the spacious homes associated with East Front Street and Terrace Drive which are somewhat disconnected from the remainder of the subarea by the Grover Street corridor.

Commercial services here are located within Bender Plaza on the corner of Badger and Bender Roads. Bender Plaza is an active space that contains a gas station, restaurants, and professional offices.

Finally, this subarea contains the Lynden High School campus and Bernice Vossbeck Elementary school, Bender Fields Park and portions of the Jim Kaemingk Trail run through this subarea.

Opportunities: Recreationally and economically, Bender Fields Park is a significant regional draw as thousands of athletes visit to play soccer, baseball, softball and even cricket tournaments each year. Additional amenities of Bender Fields such as walking paths, bocci ball, pickleball courts and play structures make the location a draw for a wide demographic.

Although the subarea appears primarily residential in nature there are some significant employment generators here with services at Bender Plaza, as well as employment associated with the assisted living and care facilities, the elementary and high schools.

The Fishtrap Creek corridor enters Lynden at the northern edge of this subarea and flows southwest along the southern perimeter of Bender Fields. This creek corridor has historically been impacted by adjacent residential development as structures and lawns reduced riparian areas to bare minimums. Efforts to improve the habitat in the creek channel and provide public

education about the benefits of creek riparian areas began in the early 1990's to improve the health of the creek. The corridor provides a significant ecological and open space asset for the Northeast Lynden Subarea and the City as a whole.

Challenges: Roadway infrastructure within the Northeast Subarea is generally more complete than the neighboring East Lynden Subarea. However, providing pedestrian accommodations on Bradley Road near the high school has continually been raised as a top priority. Improvements here are slated to begin in the summer of 2025 with a longer-term goal of addressing the intersection of Bradley and Vinup Roads with a roundabout to improve traffic flow during peak hours.

At Bender Fields Park, high demand during spring and summer seasons challenges the City with ongoing field maintenance and visitor management. Managing Park budgets is challenging as maintenance and upgrade costs always outpace the fees collected for field usage.

High water flows in the Fishtrap Creek channel have, in some places, resulted in significant erosion and property damage.

North Lynden Subarea

Characterization: The City of Lynden adopted a North Lynden subarea plan in 2012. This plan has not been updated since that time. The southern portion of this subarea was incorporated into the City by the close of the 1960s. Annexations in 1991 brought the lands north of Sunrise Drive into the City limits and development of the Homestead Northwest golf community began shortly afterward. The northern boundary of the North Lynden Subarea is the heavily traveled State Route 546 (East Badger Road). The western boundary for the North Lynden Subarea is Benson Road. Fishtrap Creek and Main Street are the southern boundaries. The Subarea relative to the rest of Lynden is located north of downtown.

Land use in the North Lynden Subarea is characterized by established residential developments such as the Homestead golf community, the Woodfield Neighborhood and South Park Street but also the Lynden Municipal Airport and some long standing commercial and industrial users. Flora, Inc., VanderPol Building Components, Inc., Martin's Feed, Inc., Kulshan Veterinary Services and



Development of the Homestead Golf Community began in the early 1990's

Daritech, Inc. are all relatively intense manufacturing or service-oriented business all located within this Subarea.

The City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment made changes to the City's subarea boundaries particularly in west Lynden. The changes included the creation of a new subarea, the West Lynden Gateway Subarea. The corresponding new subarea boundaries resulted in shifting approximately 90 acres of the North Lynden Subarea, the portion west of Benson Road, into the West Lynden Residential Subarea.

Opportunities: The commercial center of Bender Plaza, located immediately north of Bender Fields, is a neighborhood hub which stands to benefit economically from adjacent neighborhood and visitors to the nearby Bender Fields Park. Property immediately west of Bender Plaza, currently occupied by Martin's Feed, has the potential to redevelop into a significant commercial or mixed-use project as it currently operates as a legal nonconforming use.

Challenges: The Homestead golf community, now more than 30 years old, is needing infrastructure upkeep, a challenge that is testing the durability of the private association intended to care for these needs. In 2024 the golf course closed for business as legal disputes between homeowners and the association's declarant, and golf course owner, languish in court.

Historical uses like the municipal airport and agricultural manufacturing and trucking have been impacted by the city's residential growth and vice versa. Ongoing management is needed as these uses can be incompatible with each other. Residential tree height has conflicted with the airport approach. Neighborhood residents occasionally complain about the noise and odors from manufacturing and trucking industries. It is important to note that industrial users continue to contribute to the city's economy and also represent future development opportunities.

Pepin Creek Subarea

Characterization: A detailed Pepin Creek Subarea plan was adopted in 2020 and amended in August of 2021. This subarea is approximately 460 acres including the northwestern Lynden city limits and urban growth area (UGA). Approximately 180 acres is within city limits and the remaining 280 acres are in the UGA. This subarea has traditionally been used for agricultural and currently has little to no urban infrastructure. Primary roadways here are Double Ditch Road and Benson Road both of which are flanked by fish-bearing waterways on one or both sides of the roadway. The adopted subarea plan calls for the rerouting of a portion of Pepin Creek from the ditches alongside Double Ditch Road into a new man-made creek channel. Shifting the path of the creek will allow for roadway improvements and a more effective roadway network, the mitigation of overland floodwater to improve the resilience of existing and future residential neighborhoods, and improved fish habitat.

About 155 acres of what is now the Pepin Creek Subarea was added to Lynden's UGA as part of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update and the City's Comprehensive Plan Update adopted in 2016. Annexations in 2023 and 2024 brought in approximately 68 acres to

the city. Although there is capacity for growth in other parts of the city, the Pepin Creek Subarea has been identified as a primary area for future residential development over the next 20 years.

The City of Lynden owns more than 40 acres of property within this subarea which are slated for the development of Benson Park and connecting recreational trails.

Opportunities: The expectation that this area will receive a majority of the City's population growth prompted the city to develop the Pepin Creek Subarea Plan. This plan lays out future land use and zoning, traffic circulation patterns, as well as design standards for neighborhood development while considering the need for flood mitigation and the potential re-channelization of Pepin Creek. Please refer to the [Pepin Creek Subarea Plan \(2021\)](#) for more detailed information.

This subarea a relatively 'blank slate' regarding infrastructure and, despite its challenges, has been planned more proactively than any other area of the city. This allows for requirements to be set in place early so as to facilitate a thoughtfully connected subarea with Pepin Parkway acting as the spine of the roadway and pedestrian networks.

Challenges: The Pepin Creek Subarea is challenged by the need for extensive infrastructure improvements as the area is served only by Double Ditch and Benson Roads which are, for the most part, unimproved from the County standard with deep ditches on one or both sides. Additionally, the area is challenged with high ground water and the need for extensive sewer network expansion.

Central Lynden

Characterization: The Central Lynden Subarea is characterized by downtown Lynden, the Historic Business District, and the City's oldest residential construction that radiates from downtown. This subarea, in many ways, gives Lynden its unique charm and identity. Front Street, with its the remarkable tree lined right-of-way leads into the downtown commercial core which has a diversity of retail and professional offices, dining establishments, a hotel, the Pioneer Museum, and the Jansen Art Center. The residential neighborhoods to the west, northwest and east of downtown are characterized by the traditional street grid with varying lot sizes and a diversity of architecture. The commercial/residential area to the north of downtown has a mix of single family and multifamily structures throughout with small scale commercial buildings that generally house professional offices and small non-retail businesses.



City Hall and the Library (beyond) are located in the Central Lynden subarea.

This subarea also contains the historic industrial area which was located here because of Lynden's once heavily trafficked rail spur that shipped lumber and agricultural products out of Lynden. The 100+ year old Darigold plant is located here, as well as the Versacold facility, a lumberyard and agricultural warehouses. The Lynden Christian

Schools campus (including an elementary, middle and high school) is found in this subarea, as is the former Lynden Middle School property. The Central Lynden subarea also contains much of the City's public facilities. City Hall, City Hall Annex building, the Lynden Public Library, the Fire Station, the Community Center, the Lynden Water Plant and the Wastewater Treatment Plant are located here. Furthermore, the City Park, Centennial Park, Schoolyard Park, Patterson Park, and portions of the Jim Kaemingk trail are found in this subarea.

Opportunities: The Central Lynden Subarea is rich with opportunity. Bolstered by its history and charm, and benefitting from dedicated local business owners, downtown and central Lynden have remained economically viable even while the downtown areas of other small cities have struggled. Community events focused within the Central Lynden Subarea such as the Farmers Day Parade and Razz Fest draw regional visitors while property owners in the area are actively seeking to create additional living units within this section of town through infill and conversions.

The Fishtrap Creek corridor is an asset to this subarea as it runs along its northern edge with public access to the water at the City Park and Jim Kaemingk Trail.

Several studies have been done which provide a guide for development here. This includes the concept of a civic corridor along 4th Street (highlighted in the plan for the neighboring South Historic Business District) and conceptual plans for expanding Centennial Park and utilizing 4th Street for community events such as the Lynden Farmers Market.

Challenges: As popularity of the Central Lynden Subarea continues the City has been weighing policy regarding parking with the goal of continuing to provide easy parking access to visitors and shoppers within the downtown area.

The neighboring South Historic Business District has seen an increase in residential development which may continue in the near future. Residential density in this area stands to benefit the businesses within the Central Lynden subarea but residential, service, and visitor traffic circulation is somewhat challenging due to misaligned streets and the narrowness of Judson Alley.

South Historic Business District

Characterization: The South Historic Business District (HBD) is a distinct subarea located south of the downtown commercial core. In 2007 the city adopted the South HBD subarea plan that specifically focused on planning the future of this subarea. The award-winning document lays out plans for transportation, public use and private land use, as well as concepts for pedestrian focused building layout and design. This area has significant development potential as it will be an extension of Lynden's commercial downtown with mixed residential space. Development here will likely be stimulated by the 2019 completion of Riverview Road, which will provide easy access to this area from Front Street as well as Hannegan Road. Future updates to this subarea plan are needed.

Opportunities: Properties within the small subarea of the South Historic Business District are within walking distance to downtown Lynden and several of the city's parks. Commercially zoned properties here are eligible to utilize the city's Mixed-Use Centers overlay which opens the door to high density housing but maintains opportunities for the establishment of new commercial entities.

Challenges: Vehicular connections to the South HBD are somewhat limited. Primary access along the southern edge of the subarea is provided through the recently constructed Riverview Road. This provides access to Hannegan Road at the eastern edge and 7th Street at the western edge. Northerly access points to the subarea would connect to Judson Alley which serves as a narrow service corridor for Front Street businesses. Connections to Front Street via the 3rd - 6th Streets are often misaligned at their Front Street intersections. Future traffic flow management here should be mindful of the potential residential density and be tied to street and alley improvements.

West Lynden Residential Subarea

Characterization: The West Lynden Residential Subarea does not have a specific Council-approved subarea plan. It directly borders the West Lynden Commerce Subarea. Its character is dominated by residential subdivisions that were generally built in the late 20th century. These subdivisions contain some of the notable multifamily developments such as Oakwood, Woodcreek, Forest Circle that were built out in the 1980s and 90s.

This subarea is notably family oriented as it also contains the Ridnour Athletic Complex (RAC), two elementary schools (Isom and Fisher), and Dickinson Park. The City expects to continue extension of the Jim Kaemingk Jr trail into this subarea as it makes its way westward along the Fishtrap Creek corridor.

Opportunities: Additional residential development is expected to occur on the property surrounding the RAC with the build-out of 'Lions Gate' a Planned Residential Development (PRD) that features a variety of housing types. Additionally, more single-family homes are expected when the Bogaard Hay Company eventually subdivides and converts the remainder of its historic location to a conforming land use.

Challenges: Challenges associated with this subarea include a high-water table which is compounded by the threat of flooding from overland flows traveling south through the Pepin Creek watershed. Additionally, although characterized by residential uses and elementary schools, this subarea is bisected by Main Street which serves as a significant corridor for the trucking and agricultural industries.

West Lynden Commerce Subarea

Characterization: The West Lynden Commerce Subarea, approximately 560 acres in size, includes commercially and industrially zoned land within the city west of the Guide Meridian and north of Birch Bay Lynden Road. The significant transportation corridors in this subarea, the Guide Meridian (SR539) and Birch Bay Lynden Road, accommodate shipping traffic and provide economic opportunity for both commercial and industrial land uses. Some uses here are key to the surrounding ag industry including Scholten's Equipment and Pape Machinery Agriculture & Turf, Oxbo International Corporation, and Lineage Public cold storage. Others, key to the construction industry include Lynden Door, Inc, Westside Lumber, and K & S Woodworks.

Recent commercial additions to this subarea include the development of Lynden Commons on a property which historically hosted RV and tire sales. Now the property features Cobblestone Hotel and complimentary retail uses.



Industry and cold storage in the West Commerce Subarea support the surrounding agricultural industry.

Opportunities: The Guide Meridian (State Hwy 539), the eastern boundary to this subarea is the City's most heavily trafficked transportation corridor. This presents a commercial

opportunity as properties here are accessible and visible. A 2024 annexation added approximately 130 industrial acres to this subarea. Historically used for agricultural these 130 acres are divided into only 4 parcels which sets the stage for large scale industrial users in the future. Properties in this subarea are not eligible for the Mixed-Use Overlay.

Challenges: Challenges associated with this subarea include a high-water table which complicates stormwater management. Additionally, costly improvements to create truck-friendly corridors along Birch-Bay Lynden Road, Berthusen Road, the Guide Meridian, and portions of Main Street are needed. Roundabout projects at the intersection of Main and Berthusen and Birch-Bay Lynden Road and Berthusen Road are at various stages of planning or design. See the Transportation Element for more information on these projects.

West Lynden Gateway Subarea

Characterization:

The West Lynden Gateway Subarea is primarily characterized by the main entrances to the city from the west, on Birch Bay Lynden Road, and from the south, on the Guide Meridian (SR 539). Residents and travelers entering Lynden from these locations, leaving the distinct agricultural landscapes, namely the vast berry fields west of town and pasture and field crops in the Nooksack River floodplain to the south, and enter the City along these busy commercial corridors.

The primary land use in this subarea is commercial, with a mix of large-scale farm implement dealers, grocery stores, chain restaurants, and general retail. The subarea contains four (Marketplace at Lynden, Lynden Towne Plaza, Lynden Market Square, and Fairway Center) of the six established "Commercial Centers" on which the Mixed-Use Overlay is centered. These Commercial Centers house Lynden's primary grocery stores (Safeway, Food Pavilion), as well as several dining, retail, and other commercial establishments. Fairway Center also contains a large church campus (North County Christ the King).

The recently completed (2024) Lynden Commons development along the Guide Meridian contains new restaurants, retail businesses, and Lynden's largest hotel - Cobblestone Hotel, with 68 rooms. Front Street directly east of the Guide Meridian splits Lynden's two largest cemeteries (Monumenta and Lynden Historic Cemetery) providing a unique respite from this busy commercial area.

Further east along Front Street is the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds, which has hosted the Northwest Washington Fair each summer since 1909, except for four years during WWII and in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fair brings thousands of visitors to Lynden every year - most of which spend the majority of their time in this subarea. When not hosting the Fair, the Fairgrounds also host a variety of entertainment events (horse shows, garden shows, rodeos, concerts).

In 2024, the SW Lynden Annexation brought 280 acres into the city limits, including ~150 acres that are in the Gateway Subarea south of Birch Bay Lynden Road. This newly annexed area contains agricultural uses (pasture and berries), the City's West Lynden Regional Storm Pond, multiple large parcel single



family lots, and 2 industrial businesses (Whatcom Manufacturing and the Skagit Farmers Supply store).

The subarea's various commercial and industrial uses are contrasted by some of the City's richest critical areas, including salmon habitat in Fishtrap Creek and Duffner Creek, which flow through the subarea and provide varying quality habitat for salmon and other wildlife. Both of these streams provide potential habitat restoration and recreational opportunities (trails) across this subarea. Additionally, the Nooksack River floodplain reaches the southern portion of several parcels in the subarea, though very little development has historically occurred in the floodplain. South of the city limits, it is not uncommon during the winter months to see the vast floodplain full of flood waters. This area is also prime overwintering waterfowl habitat for ducks, trumpeter swans, and flocks of snow geese.

Opportunities: The West Lynden Gateway includes significant opportunities as it hosts the largest concentration of commercial centers along the busiest transportation corridors in the city - the Guide Meridian, the Birch-Bay Lynden Road, and Front Street. Each of these corridors present the opportunity for visual gateway landmarks.

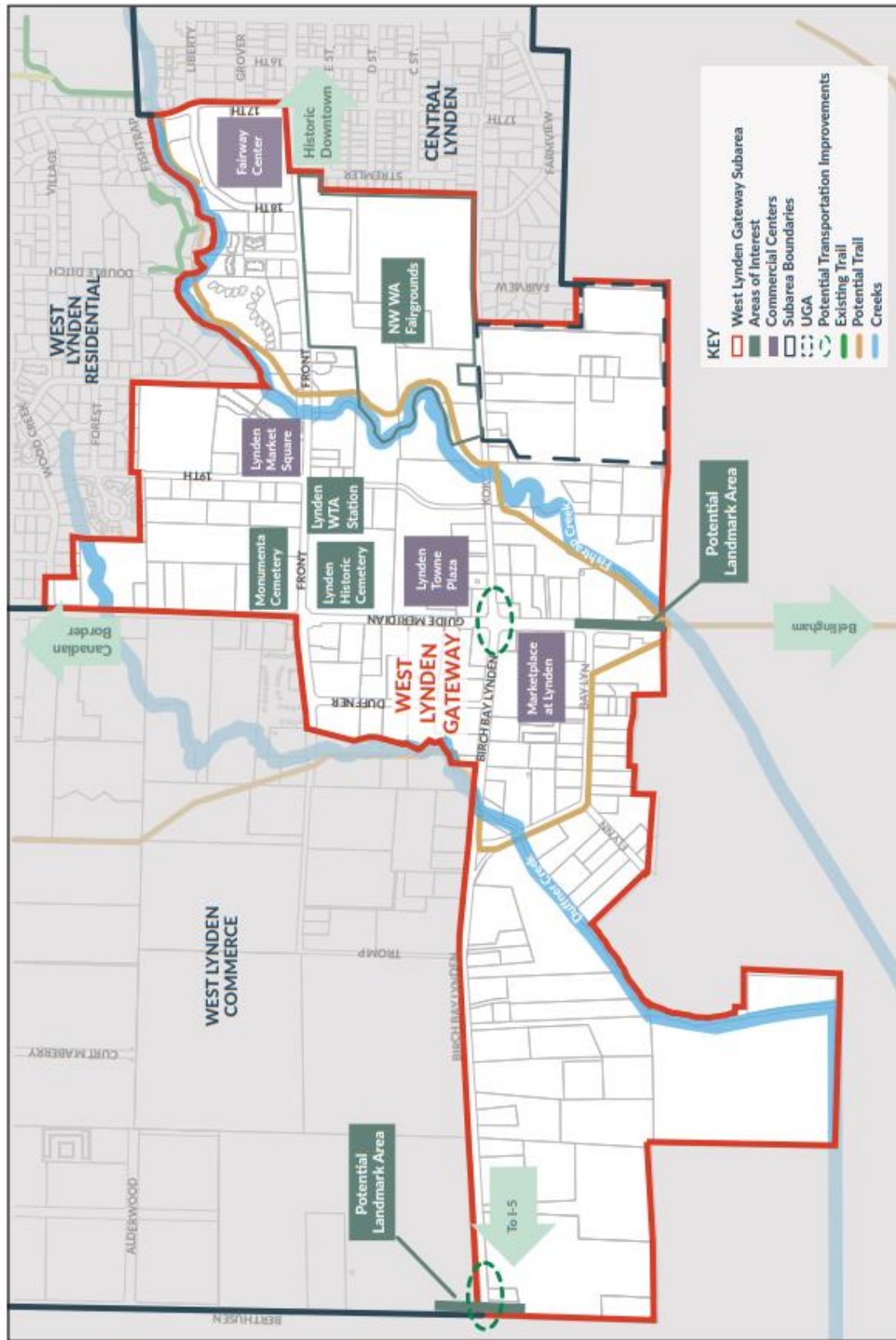
Another significant corridor, the Fishtrap Creek corridor, should not be overlooked as the character of the West Lynden Gateway is shaped. The creek and its associated critical areas present an opportunity for residents and visitors to the subarea to enjoy open space and a rich riparian habitat despite the intensity of surrounding development. Connection to these open spaces in relation to the NW Washington Fairgrounds and future residential development should be thoroughly explored.

Challenges: This subarea is likely to see a significant increase in high-density housing over the next 10-20 years as property owners utilize mixed-use provisions with the city's land use code. This residential density, while a boon to local businesses, could increase traffic congestion along the subarea's busy corridors. It will be critical to identify the needed roadway improvements, restrictions to turning movements, and intersection upgrades in order to accommodate growth, maintain a safe environment, and accommodate pedestrian movement. Identifying needed improvement projects early will also assist the City in collecting developer contributions.



The critical areas within the West Lynden Gateway will, no doubt, face development pressure. It will be important that the vision and goals for the subarea clearly define expectations for these areas. While pedestrian access to these spaces would clearly be an asset to those who live there, visitors, and the community, managing trail / access impacts and the cost of improvements will require significant resources. Efforts should continue to implement trail connections within this area.

Goals and Policies: To increase the economic development potential of the subarea and protect the critical areas present, the following goals and policies were drafted to help balance these priorities for future development in the subarea.



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WEST LYNDEN GATEWAY SUBAREA
City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | February 2025

West Lynden Gateway Subarea Goals and Policies

GATEWAY ENTRANCE

Goal 1. Establish a gateway or landmark areas in the vicinity of the intersection of Bay Lyn Drive and the Guide Meridian to welcome visitors and residents to the city, develop gateway design standards.

- Policy 1.1 Work with local artists and business owners surrounding the landmark area to create a welcoming landmark or gateway area representative of Lynden.
- Policy 1.2 Explore zoning requirements and incentives for new development to include gateway design features and /or a landmark feature or notable art installation.
- Policy 1.3 Engage businesses owners and community members in identifying a unique theme or story to tell through public art or landmarks.

WALKABILITY

Goal 2. Improve non-motorized connections to ensure pedestrians and bicyclists can safely and efficiently navigate through this subarea.

- Policy 2.1 Improve the walkability of the intersections along the Guide Meridian by continuing to coordinate with WSDOT on potential sidewalk improvements.
- Policy 2.2 Develop a more extensive sidewalk network with pedestrian amenities to increase pedestrian safety by requiring new development to install sidewalks and street trees.
- Policy 2.3 Advance the on-going development of multi-modal trails (Jim Kaemingk Jr., Duffner, and the River Trails) that are conceptually included in the City's Park and Trails Master Plan.



The Northwest Washington Fairgrounds draw thousands of visitors to Lynden every year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 3. Explore ways to maximize commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations within the subarea.

- Policy 3.1 Capitalize on the regional draw and economic development potential of the NW Washington Fairgrounds to promote tourism opportunities and services that support the needs of those events.
- Policy 3.2 Support large-scale commercial and industrial development in the subarea on vacant properties or through redevelopment of existing commercial sites (e.g., Pioneer Ford).

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Goal 4. Coordinate with private property owners to establish trail connections along Fishtrap and Duffner Creeks to increase recreational opportunities and pedestrian connections in the subarea.

- Policy 4.1 Work with private property owners to establish trailheads that include a small parking area, bike parking, trash receptacles, lighting, and signage.

- Policy 4.2 Assist private property owners with efforts to develop trail connections.
- Policy 4.3 Maintain and improve trails to increase pedestrian connectivity and access to Fishtrap Creek, Duffner Creek, and the Nooksack River.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Goal 5. Ensure that existing and new development activity prioritizes environmental stewardship and avoids impacts to critical areas.

- Policy 5.1 Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat within the West Lynden Gateway subarea.
- Policy 5.2 Avoid new development in frequently flooded areas.

MIXED-USE CENTER DEVELOPMENT

Goal 6. Promote the use of the City's Mixed Use Center Overlay that thoughtfully provides a compatible mix of multifamily housing, neighborhood commercial, and semi-public open space on eligible parcels in this subarea.

- Policy 6.1 Support the Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) in exploring higher density transit-oriented residential development on their existing Park and Ride site.
- Policy 6.2 Encourage recreational development within this subarea that can support a growing residential population.

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3. HOUSING ELEMENT

Access to appropriate and affordable housing is a fundamental human need but also a foundational component to a strong and stable community. A city's residents need a variety of housing options at a variety of price points in order to meet the diversity of housing needs in the community.

This element was developed to address the Lynden-specific housing issues identified in the Lynden Housing Needs Assessment (April 2025), , community concerns as outlined in the Introduction, and to meet the GMA requirements as described below.

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1220 (HB 1220) as an amendment to the state Growth Management Act (GMA). HB 1220 requires that local governments plan for housing at all income levels and assess the racially disparate impacts (RDI) of existing housing policies. Conditions that indicate a policy which may have racially disparate impacts include segregation, cost burden, displacement, educational opportunities, and health disparities.

The background information used to develop the housing goals and policies, as well as the required Lynden Housing Needs Assessment can be found in the Appendix E). Key findings from the Housing Appendices are outlined below:

- According to current research by Washington State University, Lynden does not have a history of racially restrictive covenants.
- Between 2017 and 2021 the share of non-white residents increased in both Lynden and Whatcom County.
- Between 2017 and 2021, Lynden added a significant number of multiracial, Hispanic/Latino residents, and other race residents but lost Asian residents.
- **White households in Lynden are significantly less likely to be cost burdened** than Asian and Hispanic/Latino households. There are no cost-burdened Black/African American households in Lynden.
- Lynden has a **significant rental housing shortage at the high and low end of the market**. The city needs 100 rental units for households making less than 30 percent AMI and 410 rental units for those making more than 80 percent AMI to meet current demand.
- **Displacement risk is generally low** in Lynden.
- While white households are the most likely of any racial group to make less than 30 percent of AMI, Asian and Hispanic/Latino households have the highest share of households making less than the median income.

GMA Requirements

The Housing Element is intended to ensure the vitality of established residential neighborhoods while meeting the city's housing targets. The Housing Element is required to:

- Include an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs that identifies the number and type of housing units necessary to provide for projected growth over the planning period, including units for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households, and emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing.
- Outline goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, including single family residence and moderate density housing options including duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes.
- Identify sufficient land for housing, including, but not limited to, government-assisted housing, housing for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, foster care facilities, emergency housing, emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, and consideration of moderate density housing.
- Include adequate provisions for existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community, including documenting barriers and actions needed to achieve housing availability, the consideration of housing locations in relationship to employment location, and consideration of the role of accessory dwelling units in meeting housing needs.
- Identify local policies and regulations that result in racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion in housing, and establish new policies to address and begin to undo these racially disparate impacts.
- Identify areas that may be at higher risk of displacement from market forces that occur with changes to zoning development regulations and capital investments and establish equitable anti-displacement policies.



Housing Goals and Policies

AFFORDABILITY AND DISPLACEMENT

Goal H-1: Create and preserve existing housing opportunities, aiming to meet the City’s housing targets for households from all economic backgrounds, while mitigating housing displacement pressures.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Policy H-1.1 | Solicit neighborhood and community comment on proposed plans in residential neighborhoods, making a conscious effort to include input from historically underrepresented communities. |
| Policy H-1.2 | Identify, prevent, and provide mitigation measures for areas at risk of displacement due to market forces, regulatory changes, or infrastructure investments. |
| Policy H-1.3 | Prioritize the development of anti-displacement programs and the preservation of existing affordable housing in overburdened communities. |
| Policy H-1.4 | Encourage opportunities for preserving and rehabilitating existing affordable housing stock. |
| Policy H-1.5 | Explore opportunities and collaboration with other jurisdictions to increase tenant protections. |

HOUSING CAPACITY AND TARGETS

Goal H-2: Ensure zoning contains sufficient residential land to accommodate a range of housing types meeting all income levels, including those earning 0 to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), and update development regulations to allow these housing types.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Policy H-2.1 | Balance the preservation of single-family housing with the need to provide diverse housing options and pathways for homeownership. |
| Policy H-2.2 | Encourage cluster housing, cottage housing, townhouse developments, and a diversity of housing types to accommodate growth and promote the opportunity for home ownership. |
| Policy H-2.3 | Continue to allow Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) construction in all single-family residential neighborhoods in the City. |
| Policy H-2.4 | Continue to allow manufactured housing that meets the city’s design standards as an affordable housing opportunity. |

- Policy H-2.5 Provide zoning that allows for a range of densities across all neighborhoods, such as rezoning to allow smaller lots for diverse housing needs.
- Policy H-2.6 Allow alternative residential housing units such as group and cooperative housing, transitional housing, assisted living facilities, mobile, and modular homes, in areas with access to adequate transportation and services, including health care, education, and fresh food in order to provide for a wide choice of housing types and costs.
- Policy H-2.7 Allow multi-family housing to be dispersed throughout the City, , while continuing to maintain the health, safety, and vibrancy of existing neighborhoods.



Goal H-3: Support developers seeking to create housing that is clean, safe, affordable for all income levels, and meets a diverse range of housing needs.

- Policy H-3.1 Encourage use of the Planned Residential Development ordinance, which allows for diversification of housing types and the preservation of open space.
- Policy H-3.2 Encourage creative opportunities and develop incentives to provide affordable housing for all income levels, prioritizing households earning less than 80% of AMI (low, very low, extremely low, and moderate-income households) and cost-burdened households (those spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs).
- Policy H-3.3 Encourage the inclusion of affordable housing units or lots in developments by considering incentives such as smaller lots, density bonuses, reduced impact fees, or other incentives as deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Policy H-3.4 Encourage public-private partnerships and the use of regional and national tax incentives (such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program) to finance and develop affordable and/or supportive housing.

Policy H-3.5 Encourage affordable housing near major employment centers and public services to achieve a balance of housing and economic growth and ensure those who work in Lynden can afford to live in the city.

Goal H-4: Promote opportunities and strategies for community members to age in place.

Policy H-4.1 Continue to encourage and explore ways to incentivize the construction of new senior housing.

Policy H-4.2 Identify areas of the City best suited for aging in place due to access to services, transportation, and medical facilities.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

Goal H-5: Establish and enforce standards for multifamily housing that could be constructed in the city's mixed-use overlay or when existing commercial structures are converted to residential use.

Policy H-5.1 Provide site standards and review of new multifamily development or conversions which ensure sidewalk connections, open spaces, pedestrian lighting, and pedestrian-scaled spaces are integrated into the design.

Goal H-6: Maintain and enhance the quality of existing neighborhoods.

Policy H-6.1 Establish objective design standards for infill development that incentivizes infill while ensuring compatibility with the walkability and vibrancy of existing neighborhoods.

Policy H-6.2 Provide buffers, including landscaping, between commercial, industrial, and residential land uses.



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4. UTILITIES ELEMENT

Utility providers are typically responsible for planning for the future demands on the services they provide, however, the Utilities Element gives the City the opportunity to work with utility providers to ensure sufficient and efficient services are provided equitably among residents. This element is intended to support and increase collaboration with utility providers to provide sufficient utility services to existing and future customers. By planning with these providers, the city hopes to minimize any negative effects that might result from future demands on utilities.

Public utilities (water, sewer, stormwater) are covered in the Capital Facilities Element. The background information used to develop the utilities goals and policies and an inventory of the city's utility infrastructure can be found in the Appendix F.

GMA Requirements

The Utilities element relates to all services provided, planned, paid, and delivered by providers other than the jurisdiction. It is required to:

- Show the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas systems.
- Identify all public entities that own utility systems.

Utility Goals and Policies

ADEQUATE PROVISION OF SERVICES

Goal U-1: Coordinate with private utility providers to ensure high-quality service for customers within the Lynden UGA, meet the demands of projected population growth, and increase the resilience of utilities to extreme weather events and natural hazards.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Policy U-1.1 | Cooperate and maintain open communications and data sharing with private utility companies who provide utility service within the Lynden UGA. |
| Policy U-1.2 | Encourage residents to appropriately locate underground utilities prior to construction projects occurring. |
| Policy U-1.3 | Prevent the extension of urban services, including water and sewer, outside the UGA unless such extension is necessary to protect the |

- health of nearby residents, and require annexation as a condition of utility extensions within the unincorporated UGA.
- Policy U-1.4 Prevent the provision of water or sewer services to urban uses outside the urban growth area, except when providing water to surrounding rural water associations according to approved contracts or to extend services at a rural level of service for health reasons.
- Policy U-1.5 Partner with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to promote financial assistance and discounted billing programs for income qualified residents in order to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disproportionately impacted by the State's clean energy transition.
- Policy U-1.6 Evaluate potential disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities when making decisions regarding infrastructure investment or improvements.
- Policy U-1.7 Actively seek community input on public facility and service proposals, ensuring representation from historically marginalized or underserved communities.
- Policy U-1.8 Coordinate with PSE to increase the electrical capacity in the west side of the city and seek grant funding to support these upgrades.

INTERNET SERVICE

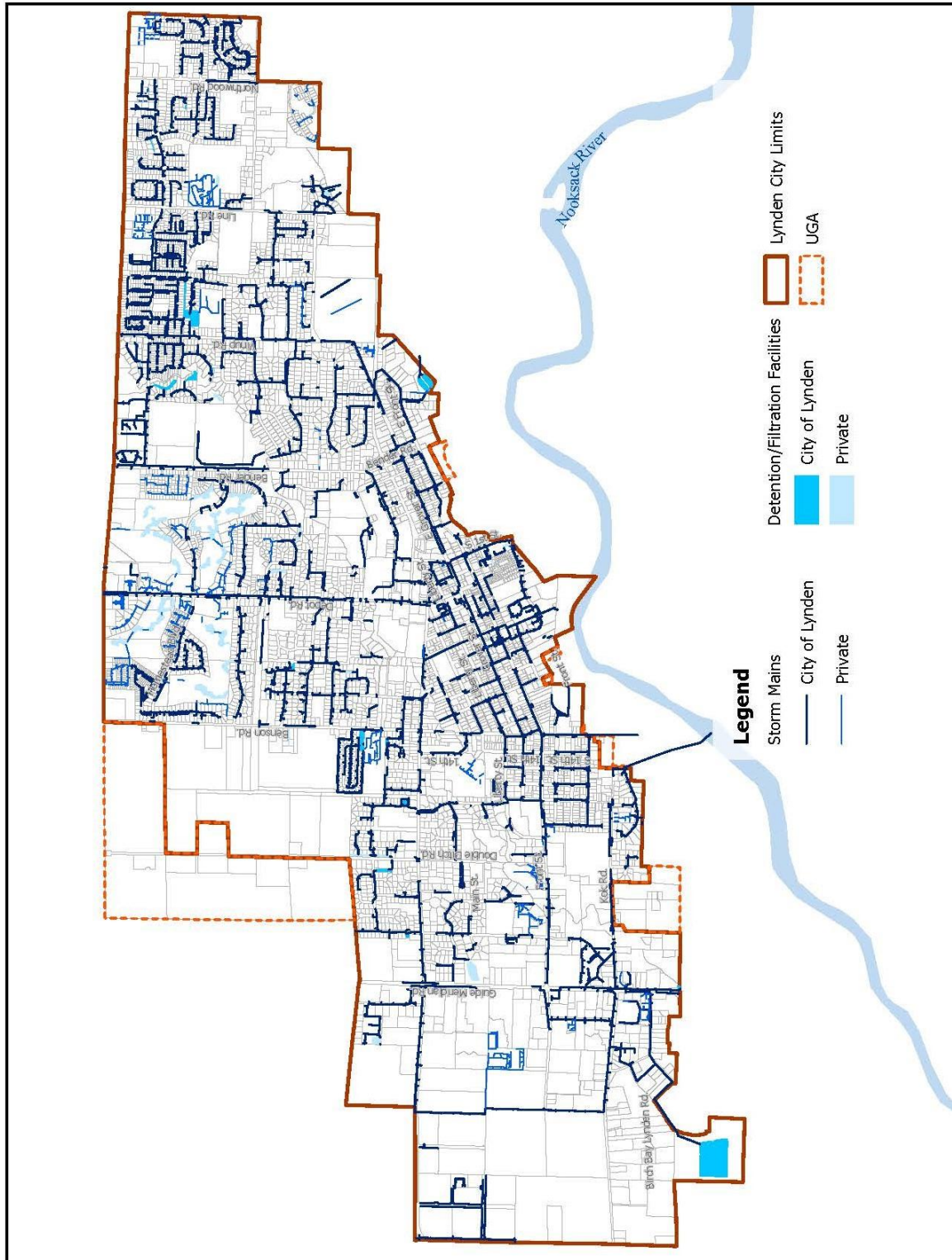
Goal U-2: Provide opportunity for increasing and improving access to high-speed internet service.

- Policy U-2.1 Consider developing public Wi-Fi networks that residents and businesses can access.
- Policy U-2.2 Consider development regulations that require new development to provide fiber-optic infrastructure in public rights-of-way.
- Policy U-2.3 Pursue grant opportunities for investments in broadband infrastructure and improvements to internet services to support businesses and residents who work from home.

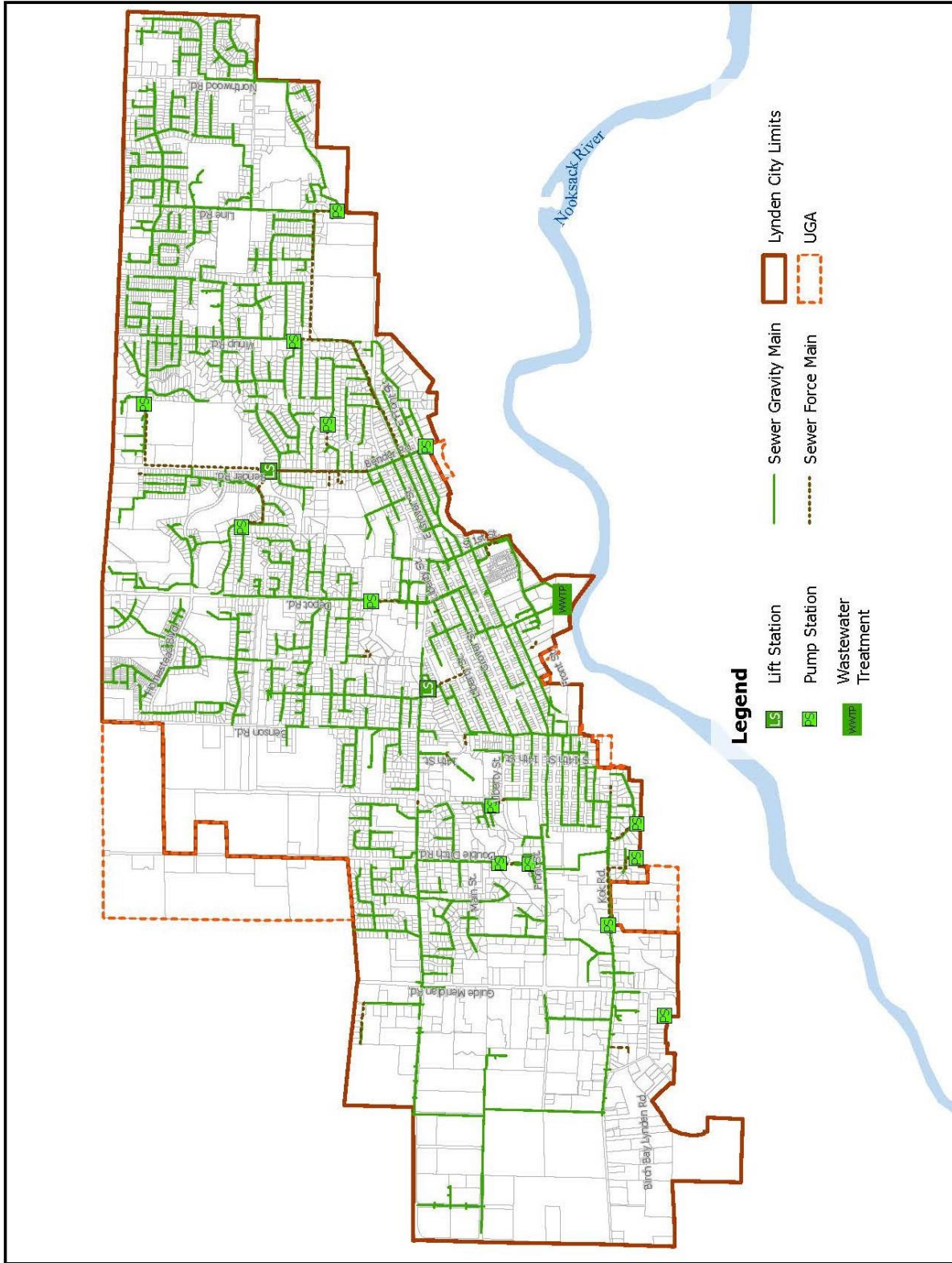
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

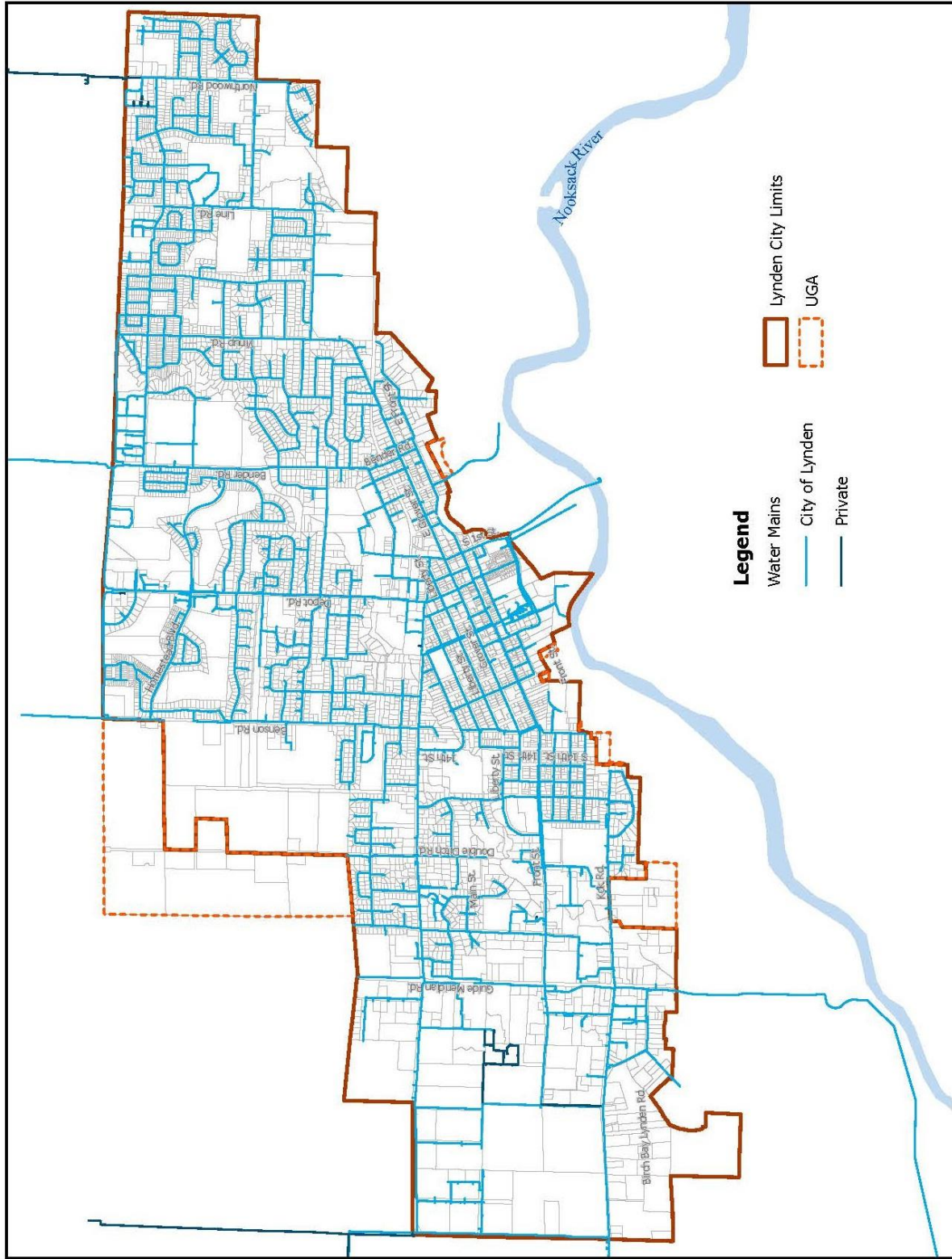
Goal U-3: Promote and expand efforts to increase energy conservation and solid waste recycling programs and reduce the amount of waste generated.

- Policy U-3.1 Prioritize the use of lower-carbon building materials and construction designs and materials that are consistent with energy efficiency standards and reduce embodied carbon.
- Policy U-3.2 Work with solid waste utility providers to ensure the community is able to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste materials sustainably and decrease the amount of waste that ends up in the landfill.



Stormwater Infrastructure
City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | March 2025
Source: City of Lynden, Whatcom County.





Water Infrastructure
City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | March 2025
Source: City of Lynden, Whatcom County.

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5. CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT

The City of Lynden is responsible for ensuring that development occurs concurrently with the public facilities needed for safety and efficiency, which include utilities and public services. The public utilities that are provided by the city include water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater. Public services that help to provide security and recreational activities include police, fire, and parks. Transportation planning is also a public service and is included in the Transportation Element.

Over the next 20 years, Lynden will continue to invest in capital improvement and maintenance projects to maintain the adequate provision of services to support a high quality of life in Lynden.

The background information used to develop the goals and policies of this element and the city's capital facility inventory and needs assessments can be found in the Appendix G.

GMA Requirements

The Capital Facilities Element identifies funding priorities and opportunities for the city. Under the GMA, it is required to include:

- An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, including green infrastructure, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities.
- A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities.
- The proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities.
- At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes.
- A requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan are coordinated and consistent.
- The identification of public facilities on which money collected through impact fees is to be spent.
- The identification of public entities that own capital facilities.
- Park and recreation facilities shall be included in the capital facilities plan element.

Capital Facilities Goals and Policies

ADEQUATE PROVISION OF SERVICES

Goal CF-1: Construct, improve, or maintain capital facilities and provide public services at levels of service that ensure a high quality of life for the projected population of the Lynden UGA throughout the 20-year planning horizon.

- Policy CF-1.1 Implement the 6-year CIPs for the public water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater systems to ensure adequate supply capacity to meet projected demand, while meeting applicable water quality standards.
- Policy CF-1.2 Secure funding sufficient to further develop parks (e.g., add new facilities or amenities) and acquire new ones, when opportunities arise.
- Policy CF-1.3 Secure funding for the Fire Department CIP in order to maintain targeted response times.
- Policy CF-1.4 Coordinate with the WCLS to ensure the Lynden Library meets demand throughout the 20-year planning period.
- Policy CF-1.5 Apply for WSDOT Aviation Division grants, as necessary to implement improvements to the Lynden Municipal Airport.
- Policy CF-1.6 Coordinate with local school districts to encourage maintenance and investment in school facilities and planning for schools that can accommodate projected growth.

Goal CF-2: Continue to require adequate levels of service (LOS) be provided at or above minimum LOS standards and concurrent with development.

- Policy CF-2.1 Require developers to provide information regarding the impact the proposed development will have on public facilities and services.
- Policy CF-2.2 Continue to require developers extend and improve all affected infrastructure concurrent with development and to meet or exceed accepted minimum levels of service standards.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

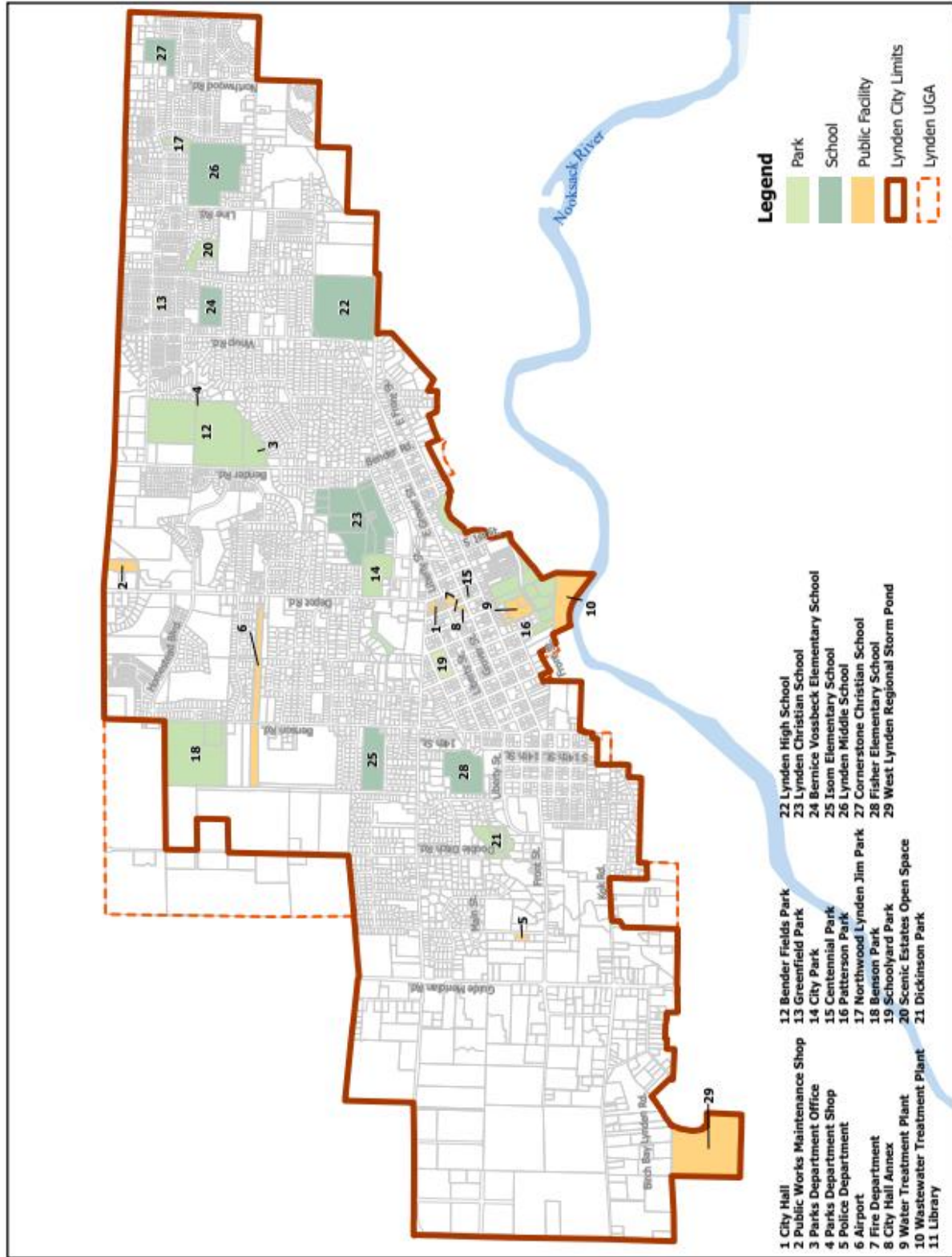
Goal CF-3: Ensure that essential public facilities are developed in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and state law.

- Policy CF-3.1 Ensure that neither the Comprehensive Plan nor development regulations preclude the siting of an essential public facility or make the siting of an essential public facility impossible or impracticable, as defined in WAC 365-196-550(3).

- Policy CF-3.2 Develop and adopt regulations that ensure that facility siting is consistent with all adopted City ordinances and meet growth targets in the adopted City Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy CF-3.3 Require public facilities that generate sufficient travel demand to be sited along or near major transportation and public transit corridors, where feasible.
- Policy CF-3.4 Ensure public facilities and services are placed and sized to meet the long-term growth outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy CF-3.5 Designate the zoning of lands intended for public uses such as parks, airports, or other facilities as "Public Use".

Goal CF-4: Ensure adequate funding is available to meet level of service standards.

- Policy CF-4.1 Make capital budget decisions consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy CF-4.2 Reassess the Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan, or re-evaluate LOS, project priorities, or sources of revenue if probable funding is insufficient to meet existing needs.
- Policy CF-4.3 Ensure that new development pays for its share of new infrastructure through fees or mitigation measures.
- Policy CF-4.4 Ensure collaboration amongst all city departments to encourage and promote citywide financial stability and economic growth.



Public Facilities
 City of Lynden 2025 Comprehensive Plan | February 2025
 Source: City of Lynden, Whatcom County.

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6. Health and Wellness Element

Introduction

Unlike other elements of the Lynden Comprehensive Plan, the Health and Wellness Element is not required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). The City, however, recognizes the importance of planning for overall community health, and adopted the Health and Wellness Element as part of the 2025 Periodic Update of the Lynden Comprehensive Plan.

How a community is planned has a direct effect on health and wellness. The goals and policies of this element are organized by topics where planning can impact long-term community health and wellness, including public safety, social health and human services, community design and active transportation, parks and open space, and recreation.

This element does not stand alone but rather unifies other elements of the Comprehensive Plan through the lens of health and wellness. For instance, the theme of multi-modal transportation is addressed by overlapping policies of the Transportation Element and the Community Design and Active Transportation section below. Relationships between elements are identified under the section headings below. Together, these goals and policies will guide City decisions that have a direct effect on community health.

GMA Requirements

The Health and Wellness Element is not required by the GMA. Under the GMA, however, cities are allowed to include additional optional elements that deal with subjects relating to the physical development in their comprehensive plan (RCW 36.70A.080).

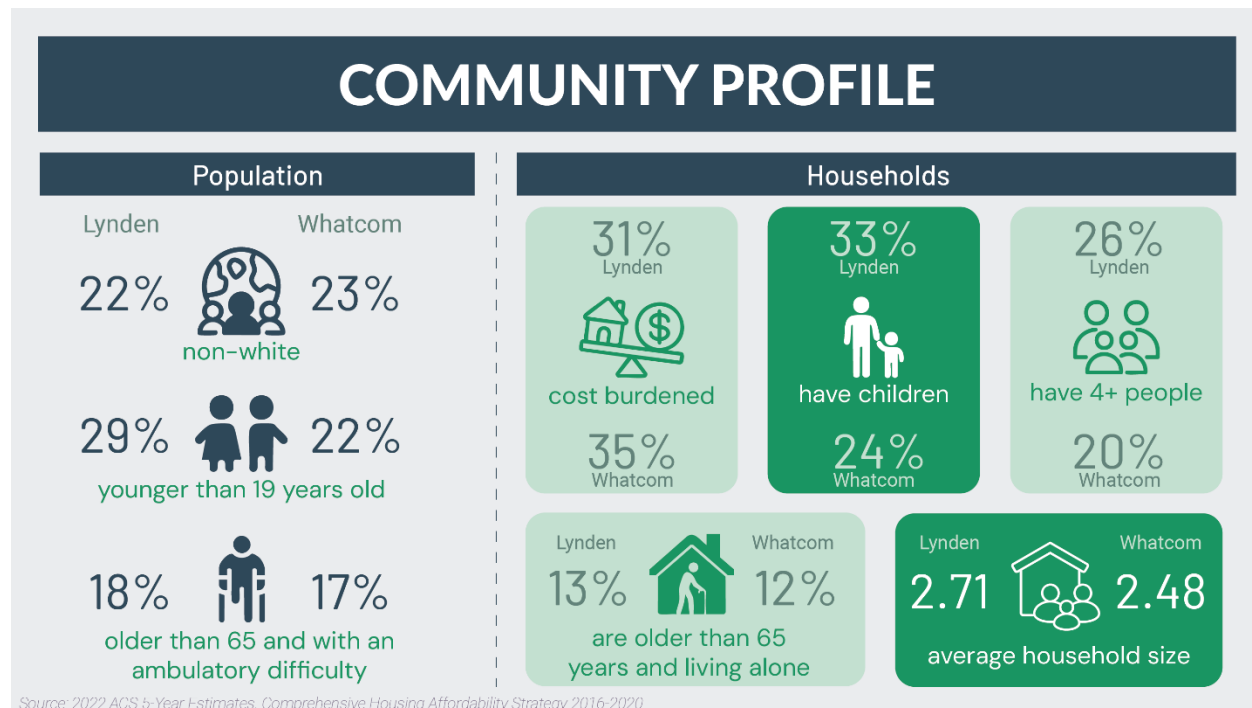
Purpose

The Health and Wellness Element was prepared as a unified planning effort to implement the community's vision as well as identify and build on the strengths of the Lynden community. The Element pulls information from a variety of sources including a County-wide community health assessment. In 2018, the Whatcom County Health Department prepared a Community Health Assessment that celebrated community health but also identified challenges. These findings illuminate the need to plan for the health and wellness of youth, families, and seniors, as well as an increasingly diverse population. Relevant findings for Whatcom County include but are not limited to those summarized in the figure below.

The Community Health Assessment found that there is a desire for creative solutions to improve coordination and access to services. Overall, the Health and Wellness Element aims to present goals and policies that bring awareness, support public safety, promote a social support system, encourage active lifestyles, and plan for the needs and interests of an increasingly diverse population, across generations.

Demographics

The Community Profile contained in the Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix E) characterizes Lynden as a growing community of young families and shifting demographics. By comparing Lynden population data to Whatcom County, the Community Health Assessment findings can be applied to help inform the City's goals and policies as it relates to Health and Wellness.



Lynden is family-centric and growing. Over the past decade, Lynden's population has grown by about 25 percent, compared to about 13 percent at the County level. The population is also skewing younger with 29 percent of the population under 19.

Similar to County levels, 16-percent of the Lynden population is older than 65 and 13-percent of households are residents older than 65 living alone. Coupled with the goals and policies of the Housing Element, the Health and Wellness Element supports aging in place by encouraging development of walkable communities and access to services, as well as a strong social support system - a "social safety net" so to speak. The Lynden population has also diversified, with 22 percent identifying as non-white in 2022, compared to 18 percent in 2012.

Community Health

In Lynden one-third of households have children and more than one-quarter have more than four residents, this signals a need for youth and family-oriented goals and policies. The Health and Wellness Element enables the City to continue to support a youth community known for athletics but also responds to the need for a broad range of services that support families, physical health, social connection, and mental well-being. At the same time, Key Findings of

the Community Health Assessment demonstrate that people from minority racial and ethnic backgrounds experience greater health disparities across all age groups. Community members report that access to healthy foods and safe places to walk, bike and recreate varies based on income and race or ethnicity.



The city's role in supporting community health is to ensure that accessibility to recreational opportunities is considered throughout the city. One example is mapping exercises which review the proximity of residential neighborhoods to recreational facilities. Street or pedestrian project which would connect previously disconnected neighborhoods should be prioritized. As new neighborhoods are developed considerations for interior open spaces should be considered. One example is that in recent years the city has created design regulations which require multi-family developments to allocate visible and accessible open spaces for residents that include amenities such as gather spaces or playground equipment.

Access to healthcare is critical. The City of Lynden has long been designated as an underserved rural community in regard to health care services. Sometimes associated with geographical isolation, this can also occur when an area simply has a shortage of personal health services. Existing in-town medical providers only had the capacity for a portion of the residents needing care and other providers in Sumas and Everson were closed which put even greater strain on Lynden services. As a result, Lynden residents have to travel farther or wait longer for medical appointments or were forced to seek care from EMS or hospital emergency rooms in Bellingham or Skagit County. City Officials and Administration spurred action from local healthcare provider, PeaceHealth. The city assisted in a property search and modified land use regulations to facilitate the construction of a new 20,000 square foot clinic which opened in April of 2024. The new PeaceHealth clinic improves access to healthcare for residents who previously had to travel to Bellingham or beyond for services.

Public Safety

Crime in Lynden is notably low, in fact the city consistently falls within the top 20 safest cities in the State. However, Lynden's ranking among Washington's Safest Cities, as ranked by SafeWise.com fell from 5th in 2018 to 19th in 2024. According to SafeWise rates of violent crime, such as assault, have remained the same, while rates of property crimes, such as package theft,

rose from a rate of 15.4 incidents per 1,000 people in 2022 to 22.6 in 2024. By comparison, the same 2024 report indicates that Washington State has the highest property crime rate in the nation with 35.6 incidents per 1,000 people while the national average rests considerably lower at 20.7. Those who are active in law enforcement note that property crimes are often crimes of opportunity. If vehicles are left unlocked or property owners don't take steps to secure valuables then they are more likely to be the victims of crime. Education as to what residents can do to protect themselves may yield high returns in preventing property crime. Additionally, if a community is actively 'looking out' for their neighbor then it becomes more difficult to anonymously commit a crime.

WASPC, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, summarized crime data for all reporting cities in the State. Statistics for Lynden in 2023 indicate that the police department (PD) handled 620 different offences and 161 total arrests. By comparison, in 2016, when the Comprehensive Plan was last updated, Lynden PD handled 327 offences and 100 arrests. (In both cases about 34-36% of offences are cleared.) While the number of total offences has increased significantly the statistics indicated that juvenile arrests were not increasing instead dropping from 20% of all arrests in 2016 to 18% of all arrests in 2023.



Image: SafeWise

Public safety is a core function of government and a high priority of the City of Lynden and its residents. The city has responded to this priority by taking steps to increase the size of the police force and by replacing fleet vehicles as they age.

Challenges to these efforts include the availability of basic law enforcement training.

The state-wide surcharge on traffic tickets, which formerly funded all basic training, was redirected by the State legislature into the general fund many year ago and has led to long delays between when officers are hired and can be properly trained.

In the State, as of 2024, the rate of police officers per 1,000 population remained very low at 1.38 which keeps Washington 51st out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for the number of officers per capita. The national average per capita is 2.31. The Lynden rate is 1.25.

Complex social and health issues that police officers face on a daily basis also strain a department's time and resources. This includes, homelessness, the impacts of drug addiction as well as serious and untreated mental and behavior health problems. All have a profound impact on the police department and justice system. Social and mental health issues are not exclusive to a few but impact families throughout the Lynden community. The Lynden police officers fill a difficult role when responding to the complex needs of families at a time of crisis.

As the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments states in a 2019 report; *"Many communities continue to face pervasive gaps in mental health service, especially crisis services, placing a heavy burden on law enforcement agencies and, in particular, officers. Without access to appropriate alternative, officers are often left with a set of poor choices; leave people in potentially harmful situations, bring them to hospital emergency departments, or arrest them."*

As the city espouses a vision of thriving families it is consistent then to bolstering support for these officers by providing them with training and access to community contacts who could assist with mental health or behavioral challenges.

Health and Wellness Goals and Policies

Public Safety

Goal HW-1: Develop and maintain safe public spaces through interdepartmental collaboration, community involvement, programming and design so that all residents and visitors feel safe in the community.

Policy HW-1.1	COORDINATION. Collaborate across City departments, including Police, Fire, Parks, and Public Works, to actively support public safety and crime prevention programs.	<p>The goals and policies of this section relate to those found in the Capital Facilities Element pertaining to the provision of services, such as police</p>
Policy HW-1.2	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. Explore ways to support public safety by involving the community in neighborhood beautification and active use of public space.	
Policy HW-1.3	DESIGN. Increase the sense of security by designing and programming public spaces and facilities to be highly visible, well-lit, and inviting, and encourage active use by a variety of users at various times of the day and throughout the year. Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the design of public spaces and facilities.	
Policy HW-1.4	PATROL. Strive to provide excellent police service and a presence in the community. Prioritize the maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian police patrols in public spaces, including parks and trails.	
Policy HW-1.5	ENFORCEMENT. Maintain a high standard of public behavior by establishing and clearly posting rules for hours of operation and safe use of public spaces and facilities. Facilitate enforcement through the funding of security cameras and lighting while providing City staff and the Police Department with tools to enforce rules. Prosecute offenders.	
Policy HW-1.6	DATA COLLECTION. Track the annual rate of crime committed in public spaces within the City in order to assess the safety of streets, parks, and trails.	



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Social Health and Human Services

Goal HW-2: Foster a connected and caring community that nurtures and supports the needs of children, families, and the elderly.

- Policy HW-2.1 EDUCATION. Support opportunities to educate the community about health and wellness.
- Policy HW-2.2 COMMUNITY IDENTITY. Promote opportunities for intergenerational activities to achieve a sense of belonging, foster connections within the community, and reduce instances of social isolation amongst older populations. Coordinate with agencies providing senior and childcare services.
- Policy HW-2.3 OUTREACH. Plan for the unique needs of children, teens, families and seniors when developing or improving public spaces, community facilities, or programs. Seek direct input from these groups on how spaces, facilities and programs can better meet their needs.
- Policy HW-2.4 COORDINATION. Increase awareness of and support access to youth programs that help children and teens gain skills and self-esteem, feel safe, and provide opportunities for community engagement, social connectedness, physical activity, and mental well-being. Coordinate with

The goals and policies in this section relate to those found in the Land Use and Climate elements of this Comprehensive Plan. The **Land Use Element** includes goals and policies pertaining to Quality of Life, which emphasize the preservation of small-town atmosphere and community spirit. Goals and policies pertaining to the health impacts associated with climate hazards are found in the **Climate Resiliency Element**.



agencies providing youth services.

Policy HW-2.5 SENIORS. Encourage consideration of issues like transportation for the elderly and the need for dependent care for families in planning for community health and human services programs.

Policy HW-2.6 FAMILIES. Respond to the County-wide childcare shortage by evaluating and eliminating barriers to the development of childcare facilities within the City, and accommodating childcare programs within public facilities.

Goal HW-3: Foster a social safety net by anticipating the needs of the community, strengthening community approaches to human services, providing police officers with training and resources, and maximizing awareness of public and community-based spaces, facilities and programs.

Policy HW-3.1 COORDINATION. Collaborate with public and community-based organizations, such as local religious organizations, Whatcom County Health Department and the Healthy Futures Group, to advocate for healthy communities and promote cooperative planning for human services throughout the region. Support coordinated efforts to plan for a new Lynden Community Center as an inclusive “third place” outside home and work with facilities and activities for all.

Policy HW-3.2 OUTREACH. Encourage existing human service organizations to evaluate needs, identify gaps, and offer services which are not currently available in the community.

Policy HW-3.3 STRATEGIZE and EDUCATE. Involve the providers of human services in the development of human service policies, funding strategies, and programs. Provide de-escalation, crisis intervention, and trauma-informed training to officers in the Lynden Police Department.

Policy HW-3.4 ACCESS AND INFORMATION. Improve access to and availability of services and programs. This may include co-locating within public and community-based facilities or participating in a clearinghouse of comprehensive information on the availability of services in the community. Make use of technology to improve access to services and information.

Community Design and Active Transportation

Goal HW-4: Implement planning and design strategies that promote active transportation and overall community health by prioritizing safe, attractive, and well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks, while fostering small town atmosphere.

Policy HW-4.1	<p>DESIGN. Require land use and development patterns that promote walkability for people of all ages and abilities. Incorporate an interconnected network of sidewalks, trails, off-street walking and bicycling paths, and on-street bicycle lanes, that support connectivity, recreation, and non-motorized travel between neighborhoods and commercial centers across the community.</p>	<p>The goals and policies in this section strongly relate to those found in the Land Use Element, Climate Element, Transportation Element (Appendix A), and Park and Trail Master Plan (Appendix B), particularly the theme of non-motorized and multimodal transportation. The map of the City's Conceptual Trail Network is contained in the Park and Trail Master Plan. This section expands and consolidates those overlapping goals and policies to focus on community design and active transportation.</p>
Policy HW-4.2	<p>MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE. Enhance and maintain public rights-of-way, parks, and open spaces by providing sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and other amenities.</p>	
Policy HW-4.3	<p>PRIORITIZE. Prioritize sidewalk improvements in areas that maximize connectivity, and safe and convenient pedestrian access to parks, community facilities and programs, and schools.</p>	
Policy HW-4.4	<p>DOCUMENT. Implement the adopted Complete Streets Ordinance in roadway design.</p>	
Policy HW-4.5	<p>AESTHETICS AND COMFORT. Work with concerned citizens to develop a plan to create aesthetically pleasing streetscapes and urban forestation. Prioritize protected paths, and off-street trails that enable pedestrians to safely and comfortably walk (one-half mile) from home and between destinations.</p>	
Policy HW-4.6	<p>SAFETY. Promote the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists by providing lighting, signage, and protection from vehicle traffic.</p>	



Parks and Open Space

Goal HW-5: Provide a variety of outdoor open spaces that allow for the active and passive enjoyment of people of all ages.

- Policy HW-5.1 DOCUMENT. Promote health and wellness through the implementation of the goals and policies of the adopted Park and Trail Master Plan.
- Policy HW-5.2 ACCESS. Ensure that all community members have equitable access to parks and open space within a half-mile walking distance. Strive to create open spaces and playgrounds that consider and accommodate children and adults with physical impairments.
- Policy HW-5.3 COORDINATION. Work with the Lynden Regional Park and Recreation District to pursue park development within the City and the surrounding district. Work with Whatcom County and surrounding communities to coordinate linked greenbelt corridors along the Nooksack River and as identified within Whatcom County's Park and Recreation Plan.
- Policy HW-5.4 PRESERVATION. Retain open space and increase access to natural areas for passive recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic value.

The goals and policies in this section strongly relate to and supplement those found in the City's adopted **Park and Trail Master Plan** (Appendix B). The **Land Use Element** also includes related policies pertaining to the preservation of public land as open space in order to maintain a high quality of life as the population grows.



Recreation

The goals and policies in this section strongly relate to and supplement those found in the City's adopted Park and Trail Master Plan (Appendix B).

Goal HW-6: Provide a diverse range of opportunities for people of all ages, interests and ability levels to participate in fitness and recreational activities.

- Policy HW-6.1 PROGRAM VARIETY. Work with community partners to support a range of recreational programs for children, including organized youth sports and alternative activities that encourage active play, fitness and well-being.
- Policy HW-6.2 ACCESS FOR SENIORS. Provide access to a variety of fitness and recreational programs for seniors with varying abilities and interests within public and community-based facilities.
- Policy HW-6.3 COORDINATION. Foster working relationships with other agencies, jurisdictions, citizen groups and volunteers to assist in the planning and implementation of recreational programs, and expand opportunities for City residents inside and outside of City limits.



Cover Page Placeholder for Climate Element

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7. CLIMATE RESILIENCY ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

WHY IS THE CLIMATE RESILIENCY ELEMENT INCLUDED?

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1181, which amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) to require cities and counties to incorporate climate planning into their comprehensive plans. HB 1181 added a new climate change and resiliency element to the mandatory elements of the comprehensive plan found in RCW 36.70A.070. The GMA now requires cities to use their comprehensive plan to build citywide resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events that are exacerbated by climate change and reduce their contributions to greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Under the GMA, climate elements are required, at a minimum, to include goals and policies to help cities reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance community resilience to climate change, and mitigate extreme weather events and natural hazards that may be exacerbated by climate change. Due to Lynden's size and location within Whatcom County, one of the largest and fastest growing counties in Washington State, the city is required to include both the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Sub-Element and the Climate Resilience Sub-Element.

The **GHG emissions reduction sub-element** must, at minimum, result in overall GHG emissions reductions generated by transportation and land use in the city and reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) without increasing GHG emissions or VMT elsewhere in the state, and prioritize GHG emissions reductions that benefit overburdened and vulnerable communities in the city ([RCW 36.70A.070\(9\)\(d\)](#)).

The **climate resilience sub-element** must, at minimum, address each relevant climate hazard a city may experience over the planning period, such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding; identify, protect, and enhance natural areas and habitat vital for species migration; and strengthen community resilience with a focus on prioritizing vulnerable communities and climate justice ([RCW 36.70A.070\(9\)\(e\)](#)).

Vulnerable populations are groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to adverse economic factors such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms, and sensitivity factors such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

Overburdened communities are geographic areas where vulnerable populations face multiple, combined environmental harms and health impacts. In general, these groups are more likely to be exposed to climate risks and hazards or suffer from poor health without the means or security to recover and rebuild.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

WHY IS CLIMATE RESILIENCE IMPORTANT FOR LYNDEN?

The strategies in this element help the City of Lynden be better suited to face natural hazard risks over the next 20 years. Community input from focus groups and a survey were used to develop goals and strategies that address existing issues of interest identified by the community such as preparing for flooding, stormwater management, the sustainability and longevity of agriculture and ag-related industries, water supply, and energy capacity.



The Nooksack River experienced extensive flooding in November 2021.

Given the state requirements and Lynden-specific issues described above, the goals and policies in this Climate Resiliency Element are intended to help the City of Lynden address:

- Efforts to increase energy efficiency and capacity throughout the city to support future growth, energy security, cost savings, and economic development.
- Strategies to support Lynden's agricultural industry and infrastructure.
 - Support for and coordination with local nonprofits and organizations that help provide crucial resources and services for vulnerable communities in the city.
 - Emergency management protocols and coordination with local organizations and churches to help bolster existing community support during natural disasters or extreme weather events.
 - Flooding events, such as the 2021 flood that impacted Lynden residents and infrastructure, have the potential to become more frequent and intense with changing climate conditions.
 - Natural hazards and extreme weather events, focusing on those that have already begun to affect the city; namely, flooding, heat waves, and wildfire smoke.
 - Efforts to increase and improve the tree canopy equitably throughout the city.

Addressing key issues facing Lynden residents such as these will not only help the city be able to avoid or withstand potentially devastating impacts of natural hazards and extreme weather events, but can also help the city improve air quality, increase tree cover and greenery, reduce traffic congestion, improve the physical and mental health of residents, prevent crop losses and improve food security, reduce the amount of money spent on disaster recovery, and overall,

maintain Lynden as a safe place for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. These co-benefits, among many others, are shown in the graphic below.

POTENTIAL CO-BENEFITS OF PLANNING FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCY



HOW WAS THIS ELEMENT DEVELOPED?

The Climate Resiliency Element was developed utilizing state guidance, community priorities gathered from surveys and focus group discussions with residents, and feedback from city staff. The Washington State Department of Commerce has developed intermediate guidance to help cities create climate elements that are compliant with HB 1181 and tailored to their communities. This guidance was used throughout the development of this element to ensure compliance with GMA requirements.

To further enrich the contents of this element and tailor the goals and policies to meet the concerns and priorities of residents, consultants and city staff engaged with multiple stakeholder groups and communities in Lynden throughout the update process. As described in the Introduction, a city-wide survey was conducted throughout the summer of 2024.

Through the survey, several priorities for the climate element emerged, including flood management, wildfire smoke preparedness, preservation of open space and trees, energy infrastructure improvements, and emergency management and preparedness efforts that highlight and reinforce existing community networks and support systems.

Multiple stakeholder groups were also engaged through an Advisory Group and sector-specific focus group discussions that were held in the fall of 2024. A summary of the results of these focus group discussions, which included discussions with local business owners, farmers, and seniors, can be found in Appendix C. Overall, discussions with the Advisory Group and the sector-specific focus groups identified the following priorities (in no particular order): electric grid resilience, local economic stability, support for agricultural industry, protection of vulnerable populations, flooding management, sustainable water supply, infrastructure and utility improvements, community collaboration and self-reliance, and maintaining a sense of community as the city grows. Feedback from these discussions with diverse communities in Lynden informed the priorities of the Climate Resiliency Element.

To identify the goals and policies that were included in this element, the consultant team performed a policy audit of the city's existing comprehensive plan (2017), the Lynden-specific portion of the Whatcom Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021), and the Shoreline Management Plan



A smoke-filled day in Lynden in 2020.

(2019). Existing policies that could help the city improve its resilience to intensifying hazards were identified to help determine any policy gaps for addressing climate resilience and the requirements of HB 1181. The results of this policy gaps analysis can be found in Appendix H. Broadly speaking, policy gaps were primarily identified in the following areas: agriculture and food systems, zoning and development, buildings and energy, water resources and flooding and emergency response and community networks, among others. Policies were also drafted to complement the strategies in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, such as those related to infrastructure improvements; buildings and energy; water resources; stormwater management and flooding; emergency management; and health and climate hazards, among others.

The findings from the following reports have informed the development of the goals and policies of this element:

- Lynden Outreach Summary (Appendix C)
- Environmental Justice Report (Appendix I)
- Climate Policy Gaps Analysis (Appendix H)
- Climate Impacts Memo (Appendix J)

Following the policy gaps analysis, an Environmental Justice Report (Appendix I) and Climate Impacts Memo (Appendix J) were developed to identify vulnerable and overburdened communities and relevant climate impacts for the city, respectively. The Environmental Justice (EJ) Report highlights vulnerable populations the city should prioritize in its climate resilience planning and consider in planning efforts to ensure they are not disproportionately impacted. The EJ Report identifies the following vulnerable populations in Lynden:

- **Older populations**, who are particularly vulnerable to flooding.
- **Low-income earners, people of color, and those without a high school diploma**, who are concentrated in areas with lower life expectancy.
- **Those with language barriers**, which comprise a significant portion of the population and may prevent access to information and services.
- **Individuals with heart disease, cancer**; Lynden has a higher rate of these individuals compared to statewide averages, and **individuals with asthma**.
- **Outdoor workers**, primarily agricultural workers.
-

The goals and policies of this Climate Resiliency Element highlight some initial opportunities the city has to mitigate impacts on these communities.

Given the policy audit, feedback from residents and focus groups, and climate impact and environmental justice memos, goals and policies were drafted to address each relevant extreme weather event or natural hazard, residents' concerns, vulnerable populations, and city priorities to bolster Lynden's resilience and build upon the city's existing planning efforts to increase resilience.

Climate Resilience Goals and Policies

ECOSYSTEMS AND WATER RESOURCES

Goal CR-1. Ensure the protection and restoration of Lynden’s freshwater streams (Nooksack River, Fishtrap Creek, Duffner Creek, and Pepin Creek) and their associated riparian habitat, wetlands, and floodplains to improve water quality and reduce and mitigate impacts from flooding and erosion.

Policy CR-1.1 **STREAM PROTECTION.** Protect and restore riparian vegetation along Lynden’s freshwater streams to reduce erosion, provide shade, and support other ecological functions that improve water quality, enhance aquatic habitat, and reduce flooding.

Policy CR-1.2 **ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION.** Ensure no net loss of ecosystem function in critical areas and strive for net ecological gain to enhance habitat and maximize the climate resilience benefits they provide.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

POLICY CR-1.1

- Public property - The City will identify degraded riparian areas on public property, develop restoration plans for those areas, and seek funding or non-profit partnerships to complete the restoration of these lands.
- Private property - The City will work with private property owners to provide habitat restoration and streambank stabilization resources and seek out broad funding opportunities to assist property owners with these projects.

POLICY CR-1.2

- Public property - The City will identify key habitat refuge areas currently on public properties and develop stewardship plans for those areas that prioritizes ecological protection and restoration of those areas.

Policy CR-1.3 **AQUATIC HABITAT.** Increase aquatic habitat resilience to low summer flows by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, keeping waters cool, and protecting water quality.

Policy CR-1.4 **WATER QUALITY.** Protect and preserve water quality from drought, extreme heat, and other natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

POLICY CR-1.3

- Prioritize the expansion and enhancement of the hydrology, water storage, habitat value, and public access of the Nooksack River floodplain wetland areas that surround the wastewater treatment plant.
- Create stewardship plans for public parks or increase riparian planting on city properties.

Goal CR-2. Increase water conservation and education efforts in the city.

Policy CR-2.1 **WATER CONSERVATION.** Explore options for expanding Lynden's water conservation program, which encourages residents to irrigate their landscaping more sustainably during the summer months.

Policy CR-2.2 **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.** Manage water resources sustainably in the face of regional shifts in precipitation and extreme weather events through smart irrigation, stormwater management, preventative maintenance, water conservation and wastewater reuse, plant selection, and landscape management.

Stormwater Management and Flooding

Goal CR-3. Increase the city's stormwater management potential to reduce flooding downstream of the city and in areas where surface water flooding occurs.

- Policy CR-3.1 **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.** Encourage the development of green infrastructure to increase stormwater management capacity and reduce flooding. Comply with Department of Ecology green infrastructure requirements.
- Policy CR-3.2 **REGIONAL SOLUTIONS.** Explore the potential construction of a large stormwater facility or stormwater park that can also provide opportunities for recreation or habitat.
- Policy CR-3.3 **INNOVATE.** Encourage the use of innovative stormwater management techniques that protect ground and surface water from contamination and pollution, help reduce flooding impacts and increase and stabilize Lynden's water supply during drier summer months.
- Policy CR-3.4 **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE.** Facilitate improvements to stormwater management facilities and overall capacity in the city.
- Policy CR-3.5 **ENFORCE.** Ensure development complies with stormwater regulations such as those implemented to meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit requirements.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

GOAL CR-3:

- Develop a program to connect residents to local organizations or other resources to help mitigate flooding on residential properties.



Pepin Creek flowing directly adjacent to Double Ditch Road in Lynden.

EXTREME HEAT

Goal CR-4. Mitigate the impacts of extreme heat and heat waves on human health and city infrastructure.

Policy CR-4.1 **RESPOND.** Establish development regulations that incorporate best practices for reducing the effects of extreme heat, heat waves, and the urban heat island effect, prioritizing the warmest areas of the city.

The **Urban heat island effect** is where urban areas experience higher temperatures than their rural counterparts due to increased amount of asphalt, cement, and other surfaces that absorb heat more than natural landscapes like forests and water bodies.

Policy CR-4.2 **COORDINATE.** Collaborate with local organizations to provide resources or assistance to populations that are more vulnerable to extreme heat, such as agricultural and other outdoor workers, children under the age of five, adults over the age of 64, those with disabilities or pre-existing health conditions, and low-income households, who may not be able to afford air conditioning or obtain other means of relief from the heat.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

POLICY CR-4.1

- An urban tree program to enhance the city's tree canopy, provide shade, improve air quality and stormwater management.
- Develop revisions to parking lot design standards that incorporate more or landscaping areas and trees to provide shade relief to parking lots.

FOOD SECURITY AND LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Goal CR-5. Support the local agricultural economy's efforts to remain resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and other natural hazards.

Policy CR-5.1 **PROMOTE.** Provide support for events which highlight public awareness and access to the local agricultural economy including the Lynden Farmers Market, the Raspberry Festival, Farmers Day Parade, and the Northwest Washington Fair.

Policy CR-5.2 **COLLABORATE.** Support efforts of the local agricultural industry to adapt to changing climate conditions, extreme weather events, and potential natural hazards. Coordinate with local agriculture groups such as Whatcom Family Farmers and nearby Water Improvement Districts to develop solutions related to flooding, stormwater management, and downstream impacts.

Policy CR-5.3 **ACCESS.** Facilitate increased access, i.e., along Main Street, Double Ditch and Depot Roads, for local farmers through reliable transportation corridors that support the transport of farm equipment and farm products, reduce congestion, and decrease vehicle emissions.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RESILIENCE

Goal CR-6. Ensure that energy infrastructure, including generation and transmission, is able to accommodate renewable energy opportunities and to withstand and recover quickly from extreme weather events and natural hazards.

Policy CR-6.1 **INOVATE.** Explore the potential for alternative and/or renewable sources of energy generation in the city to increase energy security including the potential for generating energy from the process waste of agricultural uses to take advantage of alternative energy sources within the city, such as through digesters or other waste-to-energy systems.

Policy CR-6.2 **COLLABORATE.** Partner with PSE to effectively meet rapidly increasing electrical demand due to projected population growth and additional heating and cooling needs during extreme weather events.

Policy CR-6.3 **UPDATE.** Support PSE as the city and region work to achieve a Clean Energy Transition by considering the adoption of zoning and development codes that support the siting of alternative methods of energy generation such as solar, wind, or the use of heat pumps.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, PREPAREDNESS, AND COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Goal CR-7. Enhance emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to mitigate risks and impacts associated with extreme weather events and natural hazards.

Policy CR-7.1 **PROTECT.** Explore the establishment of a community-serving facility, sometimes referred to as a resilience hub or a heating and cooling center, that is designed to support residents, coordinate communication, and distribute resources while providing a safe place that provides relief from hazardous air quality and extreme cold and hot temperatures. Identify organizations that would partner with the city to sustain such a resource.

Policy CR-7.2 **ASSEMBLE.** Pursue the development of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to assist residents during natural hazards or extreme weather events.

Policy CR-7.3 **INFORM.** Create evacuation plans, informational brochures, or other outreach materials to help residents plan and practice actions that make evacuation quicker and safer. Ensure that information and outreach materials are available in Spanish and other Indo-European languages to reach diverse populations.

Resilience hubs are meant to be well-trusted, well-utilized community facilities that serve the needs of communities more broadly than temporary emergency shelters. They are meant to be designed and managed by the community to enhance social cohesion by providing residents a place to gather and access information and services. They may provide cool, filtered air during wildfire smoke events, or a place to warm up during extreme cold weather events. They may also provide residents a place to receive basic medical care, charge electronic devices, and access the internet. To maintain power during outages, resilience hubs could be outfitted with a solar and back-up battery storage system to serve as an island from the conventional grid and allow continuity of services.

Policy CR-7.4 **PLAN.** Map transportation or other critical infrastructure that is vulnerable to repeated floods, landslides, dangerous winter conditions, or other natural hazards, and designate alternative travel routes for critical transportation corridors when roads must be closed, such as Double Ditch Road or Hannegan Road.

Goal CR-8. Increase cooperation and partnership with other jurisdictions, nonprofits, and organizations to strengthen post-disaster recovery networks.

Policy CR-8.1 **RALLY.** Participate in the coordination between the City, business owners, local churches, and nonprofits or other organizations that support residents during disaster recovery, such as Healthy Futures, Peace Health, and local churches.

Policy CR-8.2 **COORDINATE.** Ensure that the Lynden portion of the Whatcom County Natural Hazards Management Plan responds to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural hazards exacerbated by regional changes in

climate conditions and identifies roles and responsibilities to support a sustainable economic recovery after a disaster. Support Whatcom County efforts to collect data specific to the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and integrate a risk assessment into the plan.

Policy CR-8.3

BUDGET. Factor the staffing and fiscal impacts of extreme weather events and natural hazards into the planning of operations and coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery activities among first responders and partners, including public health, law enforcement, fire, school, and emergency medical services personnel.

The goals and policies in this section strongly relate to those found in the **Health and Wellness Element** of this Comprehensive Plan. While there are many overlapping issues between health and wellbeing and climate resilience, the goals and policies addressing the city's public health response to climate-exacerbated hazards are outlined below.

Please refer to the Health and Wellness Element for additional City goals related to improving the quality of life for all residents in Lynden. These policies were also drafted to address the findings of the Environmental Justice Report (Appendix I).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal CR-9. Support the local economy in efforts to increase its resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events.

Policy CR-9.1

PROTECT. Consider the needs of local businesses when updating Hazard Mitigation Plan and related preparedness plans to minimize economic losses during natural disasters or extreme weather events. Support local businesses' efforts to bolster disaster preparedness and maintain continuity of operations. Health and Climate Hazards

Goal CR-10. Protect community health and well-being from the impacts of climate-exacerbated natural hazards and extreme weather events, prioritizing overburdened and vulnerable residents such as those with preexisting health conditions, children and the elderly, and low-income households to ensure they do not bear disproportionate health impacts.

Policy CR-10.1

ASSESS. Promote the continued municipal use of health impact assessments and other tools to address the potential impacts of health, equity, and climate change on vulnerable communities.

Policy CR-10.2

CONNECT. Ensure residents are aware of resources and programs within the city that provide support and mental health resources during and after natural disasters and extreme weather events.

- Policy CR-10.3 **ALERT.** Maintain and expand the city’s notification alert system to include updates which could reduce exposures to flooding risks, hazardous wildfire smoke and particulate matter.
- Policy CR-10.4 **COORDINATE.** Collaborate with the city’s fire department, code enforcement division, and Whatcom County Fire Districts to assess the wildfire risks in and around the city. Develop and implement a wildfire risk and wildfire smoke resilience strategy.
- Policy CR-10.5 **EDUCATE.** Work with local residents, emergency management officials, regional clean air agency officials, and other stakeholders like Peace Health and Healthy Futures to develop and seasonally distribute information and resources to residents to educate residents on how to best address risks associated with wildfire smoke, prioritizing vulnerable populations, to mitigate public health impacts from wildfire and wildfire smoke.



Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals and Policies

GREEN SPACES AND TREE COVER

Goal CR-11. Increase the quality and quantity of tree cover in the City.

- Policy CR-11.1 **GROW.** Increase tree canopy cover by enforcing street tree and parking lot landscape requirements with the goal of reducing heat islands, improving air quality, and boosting carbon sequestration while prioritizing overburdened or vulnerable communities.

Policy CR-11.2 **PLAN.** Create an Urban Forestry Plan which seeks to protect existing tree cover, strives to increase tree cover especially in the hottest parts of the city, and is written to include consideration of potential extreme weather events and natural hazards.



INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Goal CR-12. Facilitate the expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure, including the comprehensive location of charging stations.

- Policy CR-12.1 **PARTNER.** Collaborate with interested developers and business owners who may partner with the city to establish electric vehicle charging locations in public rights-of-way or public parking facilities.
- Policy CR-12.2 **IMPLEMENT.** Require the construction of electric vehicle charging locations in association with new development per building code requirements and facilitate those which could be located in public rights-of-way.
- Policy CR-12.3 **EXPAND.** Develop a strategy to build electric vehicle charging infrastructure at public facilities like City Hall, park facilities, and the Lynden Library.
- Policy CR-12.4 **ADVOCATE.** Coordinate with other jurisdictions and service providers to advocate for the improvement and maintenance of infrastructure to ensure the city's infrastructure is well-positioned to withstand potential natural disasters.

Goal CR-13. Protect the city's infrastructure from extreme weather events and natural hazards.

Policy CR-13.1 **PLAN.** Continue to identify and evaluate infrastructure and city assets that are vulnerable to extreme weather events and natural hazards to prioritize them for maintenance, upgrades, or replacement. This includes maintenance of the city's flood plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Policy CR-13.2 **COORDINATE.** Work with utility providers to improve the safety and reliability of infrastructure vulnerable to extreme weather events and natural hazards, such as power lines, to improve the reliability of utility systems during storms.

Policy CR-13.3 **REDUCE DEMAND.** Partner with PSE to promote and support programs designed to decrease load on the electric grid during times of peak use.

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

GOAL CR-14

- Encourage the use of solar and other alternative forms of energy through incentives and updated development regulations.

BUILDINGS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Goal CR-14. Prioritize energy efficiency when reviewing the continued scope of use, adaptive reuse, or demolition of public-use buildings when feasible to reduce emissions and/or resources. Ensure that new buildings are designed and built sustainably to reduce environmental impacts and increase energy efficiency where feasible.

Policy CR-14.1 **INOVATE.** Retrofit publicly owned buildings with solar panels, electric heat pumps, and energy efficient lighting and equipment, where feasible.

Policy CR-14.2 **REVIEW.** Conduct an audit of publicly owned buildings in the city to identify whether it is more efficient and seismically safe to reuse, retrofit, or replace them.

Policy CR-14.3 **COLLABORATE.** Partner with PSE and pursue grant opportunities to promote local investments and customer enrollment in clean energy projects and programs to increase energy efficiency.

APPENDIX LIST

Element Appendices:

❖ These are considered full elements of the 2025 Lynden Comprehensive Plan

APPENDIX A: TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

APPENDIX B: PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN (UPDATED 2020)

Background Appendices:

❖ These provide background information to the various Elements

APPENDIX C: OUTREACH SUMMARY

APPENDIX D: LAND CAPACITY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX E: HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX F: UTILITIES APPENDIX

APPENDIX G: CAPITAL FACILITIES APPENDIX

APPENDIX H: CLIMATE LEGISLATIVE GAPS MEMO

APPENDIX I: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REPORT

APPENDIX J: CLIMATE IMPACTS MEMO