

**CITY OF LACEY & LACEY URBAN
GROWTH AREA
LAND USE ELEMENT
OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2016
Adopted August 11, 2016**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CITY OF LACEY & LACEY URBAN GROWTH AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2016-2035

Located at the southern tip of the Puget Sound, Lacey has grown from rural beginnings into a dynamic community with an eye towards the future. The area now known as Lacey was first settled in 1848. For many years, farming and logging activities dominated the landscape and by 1891 a horse race track, railroad line, station and hotel were constructed. Soon after, in 1903, the Lacey Post Office was established, signifying Lacey's identity.

Slow and steady growth occurred in the Lacey area during the early part of the twentieth century, based primarily on the logging and agriculture industries. The Lacey area experienced a housing boom after World War II due to the community's proximity to Fort Lewis and Olympia, the state's capital. These pressures of growth spurred the incorporation of the City of Lacey in 1966.

The 1970 population of the newly founded City of Lacey was 9,696. In the decades to follow, Lacey continued to experience steady growth and, by the 2010 Census, Lacey had 42,393 residents. Lacey's population has more than quadrupled in the 50 years since incorporation. 2015 estimates show Lacey with 46,020 people and its Urban Growth Area with another 34,210.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to present a clear vision for Lacey's future over the next twenty-year period. A vision that can be easily understood, implemented, and evaluated. The Lacey Comprehensive Plan is actually comprised of a series of documents or elements that, as a whole, provide a consistent policy direction relating to growth and development, transportation, housing, parks, open space, environmentally sensitive areas, public services and other issues. The Comprehensive Plan provides the foundation for adoption of regulations, programs and services designed to implement the plan.

LACEY'S LAND USE ELEMENT

This Land Use Element is the first major update since 2003 and the second major update to the Comprehensive Plan under the State of Washington's Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA). The Comprehensive Plan is required to be updated every eight years by the GMA. This was accomplished in 2016 and was an opportunity for the City to review the policies and land use decisions established in the 2003 plan against the growth experience of the last 25 years since adoption of GMA. The 2016 update contains the goals and policies to guide how the City will accommodate forecasted growth of the coming twenty years, while maintaining Lacey's vision.



The Lacey Planning Area, which is the area influenced by the City of Lacey & Lacey Urban Growth Area Comprehensive Plan consists of approximately 21,295 acres. This area is comprised of the City of Lacey and a portion of unincorporated Thurston County located within the Lacey Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Because the Lacey Planning Area encompasses two jurisdictions, this Land Use Element has been developed and adopted jointly with Thurston County.

One of the fundamental tenets of the GMA is that urban services will be provided by municipalities. It follows that GMA presumes that ultimately the entire growth area will be part of the City. Therefore, having consistent development standards is very important. The close partnership between the City and County in developing and implementing this plan is intended to coordinate development and to smooth the transition of services between the incorporated and unincorporated urban areas as annexation is considered. The City of Lacey's authority to implement the plan is limited to its jurisdictional boundary. Implementation of the plan in the unincorporated portions of the UGA is accomplished by Thurston County.

DEVELOPING THE 2016 LAND USE ELEMENT

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process began in 2013 through the "Envision Lacey" engagement process with an open house conducted by the Lacey Planning Commission, associated with the release of a first draft of the updated Land Use Element. The open house was an opportunity to discuss the initial elements of the update process. To follow up with the open house, outreach was conducted at several community events including Military Family Days, the Lacey Community Market, and Children's Day at Huntamer Park. The Planning Commission also conducted a second open house at Lacey Elementary in early 2014.

After conducting the open houses and community events, the Plan was re-drafted to incorporate community feedback, focus and hone concepts, including refinement of goals and policies, and inclusion of specific implementation items. The updated Plan was then rolled out through Envision Lacey at the following community events:

- HOA Academy, June 13, 2015 at Lacey Community Center
- South Sound BBQ Fest, July 11, 2015 at Huntamer Park
- Council on the Road, July 16, 2015 at Mountain View Elementary
- Cops, Cars, and Kids, August 1, 2015 at Lacey City Hall
- Children's Entertainment Series, August 4, 2015 at Huntamer Park
- Summers End Car Show, September 19, 2015 at Huntamer Park

After the summer 2015 events concluded, presentations on Envision Lacey were given to more than a dozen community organizations including: Rotaries, Lions, Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce,



Olympia Master Builders, and homeowners associations. These presentations coincided with Planning Commission “on-the-road” meetings that focused review of the Land Use Element specific to the geographic area of the City or UGA in which they were held. The first meeting was on December 1st, 2015 at Horizons Elementary. This covered the area primarily from the Woodland District south to Horizon Pointe within the city limits (Central and Horizons Planning Areas). Additional meetings followed with one specific to the Urban Growth Area east of the city limits held at Evergreen Forest Elementary on January 19th, 2016, and northeast Lacey (Hawks Prairie and Pleasant Glade Planning Areas) held at Olympic View Elementary on February 2nd, 2016.

The Lacey City Council held seven public meetings and work sessions discussing the Planning Commission recommendation prior to adopting the final draft of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update.

In addition to considering public input received, the review and development of the 2016 Land Use Element included revisiting goals and policies established in the 2003 plan, examining current land use trends, market pressures, demographic data supplied by the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), and a market analysis conducted by the City.

The Buildable Lands Program in Thurston County provides information for Lacey to answer two key growth-related questions. The first is whether residential development in the urban growth area is occurring at the densities which were envisioned in local land use plans. The second is whether there is an adequate land supply in urban growth areas for anticipated growth in population and employment. The Buildable Land Reports confirmed that the amount of available residential land supply is adequate, although commercial land should be closely monitored to ensure a sufficient supply is available to serve the growing population. This is especially important because municipalities in the state of Washington rely heavily on sales tax revenue as property taxes in and of themselves do not cover the cost of primary residential services such as water, sewer, police, and fire protection. The City also completed the Lacey Community Market Study which identified economic development opportunities and leakages so that Lacey can remain competitive in business recruitment and retention. The Market Study informed the Economic Development Element which had its first update since 1994.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

After reviewing the progress of growth and development over the first twenty years since Lacey’s original GMA plan was adopted, it was found that many of the primary goals and policies are still valid. However, there are some adjustments that need to be made to ensure that the community’s vision is achieved. This Plan is organized differently than previous versions by identifying specific implementation strategies that will achieve the vision as set forth by the Plan.

URBAN GROWTH AREA

The Lacey UGA remains appropriately sized to accommodate the growing population with an adequate amount of residential-designated land to supply the next twenty years of population



growth. However, in the next twenty years, it is projected that the residential population of the Urban Growth Area will exceed that of the Lacey city limits. Given the amount of residential growth projected for the UGA, the Plan encourages a full range of residential densities, employment, commercial, recreational and civic uses within the UGA. Additionally, the Lacey UGA contains the highest percentage of septic systems of any UGA in north Thurston County. Measures have been included in the Plan to address the proliferation of septic systems and ensure eventual connection to sewer. To minimize financial impacts and complexities of annexation, the Plan identifies the needs through a strategic annexation plan to incrementally annex the unincorporated growth area in a manner that is cost effective for the City, the County, and the citizens.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

To meet the goals of the Housing Element and to provide diverse housing types for purposes of affordability and choice, the Plan encourages higher density development, especially in priority areas around corridors and established nodes. Among the priority actions in the Plan is to raise minimum density requirements for Moderate and High Density Residential zoning districts to prevent the over proliferation of single-family residential lots within these zones. At the current rate of construction, all of the single-family residential lots within Lacey will be developed within the next planning horizon. This means that within the city limits, the focus will be on redevelopment and infill. In the unincorporated UGA, where most vacant land resources are available, green field development will continue as large and previously-entitled projects are constructed.

TRANSPORTATION

Lacey's status primarily as a residential community means that a well-connected pedestrian and bicycle network, combined with a convenient high frequency transit service, is vital to connect residents with jobs, shopping, schools and other day-to-day activities. For this reason, the Plan strives to employ land use policies that support higher density residential areas located close to employment, shopping, and entertainment opportunities providing Lacey residents with more opportunities to walk, bicycle, or ride public transit. Lacey's aim is to not eliminate private automobiles, but to encourage the use of other transportation modes wherever and whenever possible, and ensure that land use policies support this.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Element has been updated for the first time since 1994. The Element sets forth goals and policies to build on the community's strengths and opportunities, while mitigating its weaknesses and potential threats. The goals focus on business retention and expansion: encouraging entrepreneurs to start businesses in Lacey, ensuring existing businesses stay and grow, and attracting targeted new businesses. The Element's policies, as well as the implementation strategies in the Economic Development Strategy, lay out plans to ensure that Lacey continues to foster an environment where businesses can thrive; where services are ready when needed; and where processes are clear, predictable, fast, and efficient.



SUBAREAS

The Comprehensive Plan establishes general patterns for future land use, transportation and other infrastructure needs. For more detailed planning on a geographic basis, subarea plans are used as plans for neighborhoods, corridors, special districts and joint planning areas. The adoption and incorporation of subarea plans into the Comprehensive Plan adds greater detail, guidance and predictability to future development. These subarea plans help guide the City's transition to ensure that high quality urban development is achieved. Existing sub-area plans are assisting Lacey's current transition in the Woodland District and Northeast Lacey. Future subarea plans are identified for several areas that could benefit from sub-area planning, including the Depot District, Martin Way Corridor, and the Golf Club Road neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENT

The city of Lacey has been a leader in supporting efforts to protect and improve the environment while balancing the numerous goals and policies adopted by the City to help achieve its vision for the future. This plan continues that vision through an update to the Environmental Element. Priority implementation items in the Environmental Element include enhanced protection of Woodland Creek and the adoption of the City of Lacey's Carbon Reduction and Resiliency Plan (CR₂ Plan) which identifies ways that the City (as an organization and the greater community) can take action to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 15% below 2005 levels by the year 2020.

CONCLUSION

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan builds on past planning efforts over the last twenty years of implementation of the Growth Management Act and charts a course for the next twenty years. Through the efforts of the citizens of Lacey and the Lacey Urban Growth Area, implementing this Plan will enrich the quality of life by building an inviting and secure community, encouraging a vibrant and diversified economy, and preserving the natural beauty of our environment. Envision Lacey!

A special thank you is extended to the citizens of Lacey for participating and providing comments in the Envision Lacey planning process, and the Lacey Planning Commission for the countless hours of discussion and consideration of comment, data, and information presented to them as they worked through the many issues involved in this planning effort.



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