

# INTRODUCTION



## **INTRODUCTION**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Mountlake Terrace has a history of comprehensive planning that dates back into the 1960s, only a few years after the City's formation. After the 1990 passage of the state's Growth Management Act, Mountlake Terrace adopted a new Comprehensive Plan for the 1992-2012 period, with an update in 1996. A comprehensive review and revision took place in 2003. The revised plan complies with the Growth Management Act and various other legal requirements, while helping achieve the City's goals for a vital, thriving community.

Public involvement was encouraged in the 2002-2003 update process, for example, through public meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council, a community open house, public hearings, written comments, newsletters, and website information.

State law allows amendments to be adopted, generally once a year, and requires major updates at least every seven years.

### **Purpose and Scope of a Comprehensive Plan**

A city or county's Comprehensive Plan is a long-term plan for guiding the community's development and quality of life.

Local comprehensive plans are required by state law. Moreover, each community can reap other benefits from developing and implementing a plan. These include:

- Predictability for future development and preservation
- Vision for quality of life and economic health
- Qualification for state and federal funding
- Direction for related City actions and activities (such as regulations, capital improvements, and programs)
- Public involvement and information
- Integration of different kinds of community planning (for example, land use and transportation)
- Match of City plans and projects to actual funding capacity
- Opportunity to work on key issues with nearby communities.

A comprehensive plan provides coordinated goals, policies, maps, and strategies regarding the community's development, investment, and quality of life. It takes a broad—not necessarily detailed—perspective for a twenty-year period and incorporates future needs for population and employment growth.

In the Puget Sound region, the current twenty-year period is 1992-2012; this subsequently, will be “rolled over” to a 2005-2025 planning period. Every city and county also has certain targets for which it must plan. For example, under the last county-wide planning process, Mountlake Terrace was required to plan for a population of at least 22,100 and employment that totaled at least 4,798 jobs.

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Despite an official planning period extending only until 2012, Mountlake Terrace's 2003 comprehensive plan update was developed with a longer-term view. It is not likely to need major updates within the next several years. However, some amendments may be needed sooner to recognize the next official planning period (2005-2025) and to incorporate any new population and employment allocations adopted by Snohomish County for the year 2025.

Major topics within the City's Comprehensive Plan are arranged by chapter (or "element") and include the following:

- Community livability
- Environment
- Economic vitality
- Housing
- Land use
- Recreation, parks and open space (contained in separate document)
- Transportation
- Capital facilities
- Utilities
- Plan administration.

In addition, the City's Shoreline Master Program is incorporated as an appendix. Under state law, the Shoreline Master Program is actually an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Because changes to the Master Program must be approved by the Department of Ecology, the City did not attempt to change the existing pagination or format to fit the rest of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **How a Comprehensive Plan Gets Implemented**

Comprehensive plans are implemented in many ways. Most importantly, state and local officials are required to follow valid comprehensive plans, as adopted under state law. For example, local government budgets, capital decisions, and land use decisions must implement and be consistent with the comprehensive plan. More details about implementation are contained in the "Plan Administration Element."

In conjunction with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City will consider amendments to its development regulations.