CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND VISION

1.1 Sequim's Comprehensive Plan

The City of Sequim's Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's diverse needs, values, and aspirations while aligning with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). Known for its small-town feel, stunning natural surroundings, and vibrant downtown, Sequim has thrived from thoughtful planning and community involvement. As the city continues to grow, it embraces change while preserving its unique character, enhancing quality of life, and fostering a sustainable future. This plan provides a roadmap with clear goals, policies, and strategies to guide responsible development, support a strong local economy, and ensure Sequim remains a welcoming and connected community for all residents who call Sequim home.

1.2 Vision Statement

Sequim is the vibrant heart of the Sequim-Dungeness Valley, preserving its small-town charm while embracing sustainable growth. By directing development into well-planned, mixed-use hubs along Washington Avenue, the city fosters a walkable, connected, and diverse community that supports all ages and lifestyles. Sequim values its surrounding rural lands, prioritizing environmental stewardship, resource efficiency, and the protection of natural beauty. The City's commitment to smart growth, a robust transportation network, and a thriving local economy enhances its role as a place for culture, recreation, and essential services. A spirit of volunteerism and civic engagement strengthens Sequim's identity, ensuring a welcoming, safe, and resilient community.

This Vision Statement has guided the drafting of this Comprehensive Plan and expresses residents' wishes for the future in a general sense. It is the basis for all that follows in the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 Guiding Community Principles

Sequim's community principles are integral to supporting Sequim's vision statement. These guiding principles are the foundation for the other goals and policies enumerated throughout the plan.

- **Preserve Sequim's Community Character** – Balance growth with Sequim's small-town character, supporting its sense of place, natural beauty, and economic vitality.
- **Diverse Housing and Community** – Support a variety of housing options and lifestyles to accommodate all ages, incomes, and household types.
- **Ensure Focused Growth** – Concentrate growth in key areas like downtown and Washington Avenue nodes, ensure walkability, mixed-use spaces, and access to essential services.
- **Connected and Accessible** – Expand transportation choices with safe, efficient streets, bike paths, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

- **Enrich Community Life** – Provide diverse recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities that evolve with the city's changing demographics.
- **Protect the Environment** – Sustain the natural beauty of Sequim while adapting to climate change impacts.
- **Support Businesses** – Foster a thriving business environment that retains small businesses, attracts larger employers, and encourages innovation.
- **Strengthen Education** – Promote inclusive, high-quality education to empower residents and support community growth.
- **Engage the Community** – Establish transparent processes that involve residents and reflect community priorities in decision-making.

1.4 Planning Context

Sequim's Comprehensive Plan ("The Plan") is a legal and policy document that serves as the vehicle to achieve the City's vision of the future. In short, it's a blueprint for building upon the existing character, physical development, and infrastructure provision of the city. The plan takes a long-range perspective on topics that address the physical, social, and economic health of the city. Plan guidance is intentionally general, providing broad policy direction that will be translated into action through specific implementation programs or regulatory actions developed by the City. The Plan is a living document, adaptable to evolving conditions, and offering a framework for the consideration of policy changes. The Plan has these characteristics:

- Long Range – Based on a 20-year vision of the city;
- Predictable – Site specific and clearly states how properties will be zoned and used in the future;
- Consistent – Internally consistent and is consistent with regional and subarea plans;
- Flexible - Will continue to evolve through its annual amendments and updates and the required 10-year review and five-year check-in, the plan will be adjusted to changing needs, unforeseen circumstances and new local or regional trends;
- and as the name implies, Comprehensive – Organizes and coordinates the complex interrelationships among people, land, resources, natural environmental systems, and public facilities in such a way as to protect the future health, safety, and welfare of the residents.

The Growth Management Act

The passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 fundamentally changed the way comprehensive planning is carried out in Washington State. The central premise of the GMA is that spontaneous and unstructured growth and development is wasteful of our natural resource base and costly to the provision of public services and facilities. By managing growth and development, the negative effects can be minimized, and the benefits can be maximized.

The GMA requires state and local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans, and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations. This approach to growth management is unique among states.

Rather than centralize planning and decision-making at the state level, the GMA built on Washington's strong traditions of local government control and regional diversity. The GMA established state goals, set deadlines, offered direction on how to prepare local comprehensive plans and regulations, and set forth requirements for early and continuous public participation. Within the framework provided by the mandates of the Act, local governments have many choices regarding the specific content of comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations.

GMA identifies fifteen planning goals that are intended to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and the development regulations that support the plans. Local plans must implement these goals in a balanced manner:

- **Urban Growth**: Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- **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 and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city Comprehensive Plans.
- **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 and using stock.
- **Economic Development:** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans. Promote economic development opportunities for all residents of the state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- **Property Rights:** Private property rights must not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners must be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- **Permits:** Applications for both state and local governmental permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- **Natural Resource Industries:** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
- **Open Space and Recreation**: Retain recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, 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 the availability of water.
- **Participation and Coordination**: Encourage the involvement of residents in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, to ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

- **Public Facilities and Services:** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development must be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
- **Historic Preservation**: Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.
- **Climate Change and Resiliency**: Ensure that comprehensive plans, development regulations, and regional policies, plans, and strategies under RCW 36.70A.210 and chapter 47.80 RCW adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.
- **Shorelines of the State**: The goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020.

Since its passage, the GMA has responded to ambiguities through Growth Management Hearings Board interpretations resulting from resident or governmental petition. Also, as Washington's population increases and funding priorities change, the GMA responds through new legislative mandates and amendments.

The Countywide Planning Policies
To achieve coordinated regional planning efforts, the GMA requires that counties and the cities therein develop policy framework to guide development of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. Each local comprehensive plan must demonstrate that such policies have been followed in its development.

The Clallam Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) address issues that transcend city boundaries, such as setting Urban Growth Areas, accommodating housing and job demand, natural systems protection, siting of essential public facilities, accommodating affordable housing, promotion of contiguous and orderly development, and addressing transportation and capital facilities. The CWPPs provide a framework to promote consistency among comprehensive plans within Clallam County.

1.5 Public Engagement and Involvement

The GMA places a high degree of importance on participation and establishes early and continual participation as the basis for the community's comprehensive planning process. The importance of participation is reflected in Statewide Planning Goal 11 which states, "(11) Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts."

Community involvement has been, and will continue to be, an important component of comprehensive planning. Without the community's participation any plan developed regardless of its technical caliber or literary quality will prove meaningless and ineffectual. Many of the proposed Plan updates were identified from the feedback received through community engagement as well as policy direction from the City Council and Planning

Commission. The public engagement and involvement program provided opportunities to ensure that every interested person who wishes to express an opinion had the ability to do so.

The Public Participation Plan specified how the city will engage and inform the community during efforts to update the Plan and included the following goals:

- To provide the public with timely information, an understanding of the process, and opportunities to review and comment, and to have those comments forwarded to the City's decision makers.
- Ensure that information about the process is provided to the public early in the process and at regular intervals thereafter, to maximize public awareness and participation in the process.
- Actively solicit information from residents, property owners, and stakeholders about their concerns, questions, and priorities for the future of Sequim land uses and the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Encourage the public to informally review and comment on the update throughout the process.
- Incorporate public comment into the review process prior to significant milestones or decision-making.
- Provide forums for formal public input at milestones prior to decision-making by local officials.
- Consult and consider recommendations from neighboring jurisdictions, federal and state agencies, and Native American tribes.
- Engage populations that are traditionally under-represented in planning processes (e.g., people of color, lower-income residents, working adults, youth, older adults, and non-English speaking residents).

Public participation is an integral part of the planning process. Early and continuous public participation brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process and enables the city to make more informed decisions. These collaborative efforts build mutual understanding and trust between the city and the public they serve. The goal of the Public Participation Plan was to provide all residents, property owners, business owners, and other stakeholders, an opportunity to understand and participate in the Comprehensive Plan update process. A summary of public participation for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update is provided in Appendix C of the comprehensive plan.

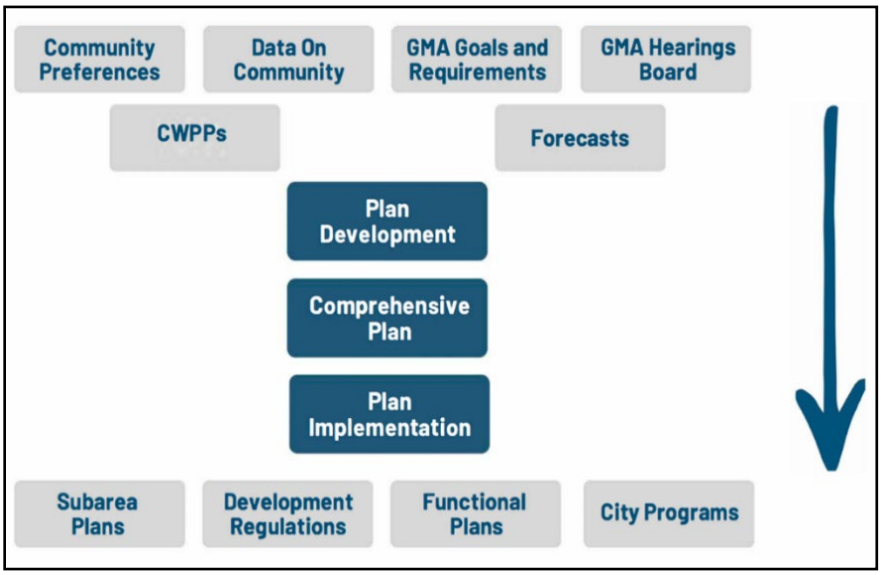
1.6 How the Comprehensive Plan is Implemented

There are several tools used to implement The Plan. The main methods are through development regulations, such as zoning and critical area ordinances, and second, through capital improvement plans, such as sewer, water, parks, and traffic. These two tools constantly weigh the City's financial ability to support development against its minimum population obligations and environmental protection. It is the Plan goals and policies that the development regulations and capital improvement plans are based upon.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Amendments to The Plan are necessary from time to time to respond to changing conditions and needs. The GMA requires that amendments to a comprehensive plan be considered no

more frequently than once per year (except for years where comprehensive plans are updated).



Proposed amendments to the Plan must be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of various proposals can be ascertained. In considering proposed amendments to The Plan, proposals will be evaluated for intent and consistency with The Plan, and whether a change in conditions or circumstances from the initial adoption, or new information is present which was not available at the time of the initial adoption of the Plan. The Planning Commission reviews proposed amendments to the plan and forwards recommendations to the City Council.

Updates to the Comprehensive Plan

The GMA requires that comprehensive plans be reviewed and updated as necessary, at least every 10 years, outside of the optional annual review process, with a 5-year check-in. Further, Clallam County must review, at least every 10- years, its designated urban growth areas. Clallam County reviews the densities permitted within both the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County for the Buildable Lands Report the year prior to the 10-year periodic update cycle. In conjunction with this review by the county, each city located within an urban growth area must review the densities permitted within its boundaries, and the extent to which the growth occurring has located within a city or within the unincorporated portions of urban growth areas.

1.7 Organization of the Plan

Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a legal document consisting of text, goals and policies that are adopted by the City Council to guide public and private land use decisions, and a series of maps.

- Section 1 is the plan's policy document, which contains all goals and policies.
- Section 2 is the Comprehensive Plan's appendices, which include technical data, housing needs assessment, land capacity analysis, capital facilities plan, transportation plan and public participation plan.

The Plan consists of eight chapters. The GMA prescribes seven specific chapters that must be contained in a comprehensive plan. The City has added one optional element:

Required:
Land Use
Housing

Optional:
Community Character

Transportation
Capital Facilities and Utilities
Parks, Recreation and Open Space
Economic Development
Climate and Resiliency/Environment

The goals and policies contained within each of the chapters of Section 1 are the heart of the plan, and present direction for guiding Sequim's growth.

A *goal* is a direction-setter. It is an ideal future end, condition or statement related to the public health, safety, or general welfare towards which planning, and implementation measures are directed. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, is abstract in nature.

A *policy* is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a clear commitment of the local legislative body. A policy is based upon a comprehensive plan's goals and the analysis of the data. A policy is put into effect through implementation measures such as zoning, land division, and environmental ordinances.

Plan Interpretation
This Plan provides a guide and framework for regulatory and non-regulatory actions for growth that expresses the vision of Sequim residents. In order to maintain internal consistency between the general Plan policies, the following general rules of construction are intended to be used for interpreting the Plan:

- Policies are intended to be mutually supportive and are to be read collectively, not individually.
- More specific policies must control more general policies.
- Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map re-designation proposals should reflect and be based on the policies of the Plan. Any amendment of the Comprehensive Plan Land Use map is subject to the annual Plan amendment process, the subarea plan amendment process, or the 10-year Comprehensive Plan review, as applicable.