

3.7 Relationship of the Proposal to Plans and Policies

Yelm Comprehensive Plan

The City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan, first adopted in 1995 under the authority of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), contains a series of elements consistent with GMA requirements. The Plan was reviewed and updated in 2006 to ensure that it remains consistent with GMA planning requirements.

The City of Yelm Comprehensive Plan adopts the goals of the Growth Management Act and establishes policies to: promote urban growth and attempt to reduce sprawl; encourage an efficient multimodal transportation system; provide for affordable housing and a variety of housing types and densities; promote economic development, protect property rights, efficiently process permits; maintain and enhance natural resource industries; retain open space and enhance recreational opportunities; protect the environment; encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process; ensure there are provisions for public facilities; and preserve sites of historical or archaeological significance.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide land use within the City and the City's Urban Growth Area (UGA), and to guide the adoption of development regulations and Capital Improvement Plans that implement the goals and policies identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

A guiding principle of the Plan is to create a sustainable community; i.e., a community that thoughtfully provides for the needs of its residents with efficiency and stewardship for the future, to consider how today's decisions will affect the quality of life of a sustainable community and meet the needs of current citizens without jeopardizing the quality of life or needs of future generations. The goal is to establish ways of living that can be sustained indefinitely.

The primary criteria for conceptual approval of a Master Plan Development is consistency with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The conceptual plan becomes the sub-area plan for the proposed development, and the Final Master Site Plan becomes the development regulations and Capital Facilities Plans.

The Southwest Planning Area in which the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community is located is bounded by Fort Lewis on the west, 93rd Avenue SE and SR 507 on the north, SR 510 on the east, and the City limits on the south. Most of the Southwest Planning Area is part of the Southwest Yelm Annexation Area, for which the Comprehensive Plan envisions a mix of single-family and multi-family residential uses, as well as open space, parks, school sites, and commercial spaces.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use chapter contains policies to: promote infill at urban densities; permit cost-effective phasing of urban utilities; provide policies to guide regulations to implement the Plan; and to provide a local Plan consistent with the Growth Management Act.

The Housing chapter of the Plan contains goals that: encourage a variety of housing types and densities and a range of affordable housing; encourage housing with a pedestrian orientation in order to promote a sense of community and safety; meet County-wide planning policy requirements to ensure a fair share of affordable housing; encourage housing that meets adequate safety standards, and promote energy-efficient housing to reduce the overall costs of home ownership.

The Public Facilities and Utilities chapter adopts policies to facilitate the development and maintenance of all such facilities at the appropriate levels of service to accommodate the growth that is anticipated to occur in the City of Yelm, and to facilitate the provision of public facilities and utilities and to ensure environmentally-sensitive, safe, and reliable service, that is aesthetically compatible with the surrounding land uses and results in reasonable economic costs to consumers.

The Transportation chapter of the Plan establishes goals that promote a transportation system compatible with neighboring cities, Thurston County, Washington State, and other transportation system providers. Other goals in this chapter support: a well-maintained transportation system that provides safe and cost-effective movement of goods, services, and people; and a transportation system with minimal environmental impact and energy consumption that provides for a high quality of life to be enjoyed by the citizens. The Transportation chapter promotes the responsible funding of needed transportation system improvements with public and private sector participation.

The Parks and Recreation chapter of the Plan establishes the goal of maintaining adequate park and recreation facilities to provide a broad range of facilities that meet the needs of the Yelm community.

The Environment chapter of the Plan establishes goals to: protect the natural environment and preserve environmentally sensitive areas; promote quality building and development that is compatible with the surrounding environment; protect the quality, and manage the quantity of groundwater for all uses at present and in the future; encourage measures that improve surface water management; achieve no net loss of wetlands and increase the quality of Yelm's wetland resources through the application of best available science; protect, restore, and enhance the City's streams; and prevent the loss of life and property in frequently flooded areas.

Additional environmental goals include the designation and regulation of development on lands that have identified geologic hazards to protect the health and safety of persons and property, and to avoid other adverse impacts of erosion, landslide, and other geologic hazards; preserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat; providing fish and wildlife habitat of sufficient diversity and abundance to sustain existing indigenous wildlife populations.

Finally, Comprehensive Plan goals promote the protection of air quality and the control of noise pollution in a manner that promotes the use, value, and enjoyment of property in an urban environment.

Sustainable Development. The City has adopted principles for sustainable development within the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community (see Draft EIS Appendix A). These principles establish guidelines for incorporating sustainability as part of the proposed development, such as making it a "built-green" community, and encouraging Low Impact Development (LID) standards for stormwater management, as currently published. The principles also acknowledge that implementation measures for sustainability will change over time with the advent of new technology and changing patterns of behavior by the community. The most current implementation measures will be reviewed at the time of each application for development within the Master Planned Community.

Relationship of the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community to the Comprehensive Plan

The Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community must be consistent with policies of the Yelm Comprehensive Plan as part of the Master Planned Community approval.

Land Use: Any of the three conceptual land use alternatives for the proposed Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community would achieve urban densities of greater than four dwelling units per gross acre, and could provide for the cost-effective phasing of urban infrastructure. The method of achieving urban densities in the three development alternatives range from higher density housing units with more open space in the Urban Village alternative, to more detached single-family dwellings on urban-sized lots with a small percentage of attached housing in the Traditional Neighborhood Development alternative.

Housing: Any of the conceptual land use alternatives would provide a mix of housing types and densities and, accordingly, a range of housing prices. The Urban Village alternative would provide the most multi-family, and pedestrian-oriented housing, while the Traditional Neighborhood alternative would provide the least amount of variety in housing types and, therefore, prices.

Public Facilities and Utilities: Each of the conceptual land use alternatives identifies public service sites within the development for schools, a fire station, and a possible satellite police station. The Engineering Technical Report prepared for the proposed Master Planned Community quantifies the demand of the conceptual land use alternatives for water, sewer, electricity, and natural gas services (KPFF 2008). During the design and construction of the project, public facilities will be designed and constructed in a manner that will maintain adopted levels of service within the development as well as within the rest of the City of Yelm service area.

Transportation: The City of Yelm coordinates its transportation planning with Thurston County and the Washington State Department of Transportation through the *Regional Transportation Plan* prepared by the Thurston Regional Planning Council. The *Transportation Impact Analysis* prepared for the Thurston Highlands proposal identifies local and regional transportation system improvements that will be required to serve the project, and describes a mitigation strategy in the form of four types of developer contributions and responsibilities (TENW 2008). Any of the conceptual land use alternatives would make provisions for the use of transit, connected streets, and pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Parks and Recreation: Each of the three conceptual land use alternatives evaluated for the proposed Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community includes a mix of neighborhood, community, and regional parks in a manner that would be consistent with the adopted City of Yelm *Parks Plan*.

Environment: While each of the conceptual land use alternatives evaluated for the proposed Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community would protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas, the Urban Village Alternative would preserve the most open space and minimize disturbance of critical areas. The Traditional Neighborhood Development Alternative would provide the least amount of total open space, but would preserve critical areas and their buffers to an essentially equivalent degree compared to the other alternatives.

Capital Facilities Plans

The City of Yelm has adopted a series of Capital Facilities Plans that identify public infrastructure needs for the next 20-year planning period, and establish a list of improvements for six-year periods. These plans include the *Water System Plan*, the *Sewer System Plan*, a *Parks Plan*, and a *Transportation Plan*. These plans are constantly being updated to reflect the upcoming six-year planning period. The City is currently preparing a *Reclaimed Water Plan* for this fairly new by-product of the City's wastewater treatment process, and is scheduled to update the *Parks Plan*, *Transportation Plan*, and *Water System Plan* in 2008.

Relationship of the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community to Capital Facilities Plans

As the City's Capital Facilities Plans are updated, they will include the six-year look forward to develop a list of required improvements and mechanisms for financing the identified improvements. As construction within the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community begins to occur, and Final Master Site Plans and development applications are submitted for phased implementation of the Master Planned Community, infrastructure needs will begin to appear in the City's updated Capital Facilities Plans along with funding sources that may include impact fees and developer contributions.

Yelm Vision Plan

In the same time period during which the City of Yelm was adopting its Comprehensive Land Use Plan consistent with the Growth Management Act, the Yelm Chamber of Commerce and the local community created a *Vision Plan* designed to improve the economic vitality, convenience and appearance of the downtown commercial area by: focusing on industry, retail and commercial uses, and tourism; building community pride and involvement; enhancing the City's identity with a directed sense of character, downtown improvements, and coordinated improvement efforts; improving vehicular circulation; and promoting efficient and high-quality land use.

The *Vision Plan* is adopted by reference in the *Yelm Comprehensive Plan*, and became a guiding document in the creation of development regulations such as the Yelm Design Guidelines.

Relationship of the Thurston Highlands Master Planned Community to the Yelm Vision Plan

The *Yelm Vision Plan* will be utilized by the City during the Thurston Highlands application review process for final Master Site Plan approval, and during formulation of a Development Agreement (or similar instrument) that will establish project-specific development standards and requirements for construction within the proposed Master Planned Community.