

QUALITY OF LIFE ELEMENT

With proposed changes



Introduction

In one sense, this entire comprehensive plan and the Growth Management Act requirements associated with it addresses numerous interconnected quality of life issues. Although a formal quality of life element is not included in this plan, the community's desire to articulate the following priorities was clearly evident during the development of this plan. The quality of life goals and policies are presented separately as an expression of their importance and because they did not fit easily into other elements of the plan.

Many subjects could potentially fall into the area of "quality of life". These goals and policies emphasize those aspects of life that bring and keep us together as a community -- Town-wide celebrations, historic preservation, environmental quality, a concern for the safety and security of our neighbors, and the education of our residents, to name just a few.

The Environment

The Town's quality of life is directly affected by the physical environment. To protect the environment, the Town has enacted critical area regulations in line with state policy. Critical areas include wetlands, landslide hazard areas, fish and wildlife habitat areas, frequently flooded areas and critical aquifer recharge areas. The Town has wetland areas scattered throughout the Town, the largest one in Farrell's Marsh Park. Landslide hazard areas occur in areas with steep slopes, especially along the shoreline areas. Fish and wildlife areas also exist primarily along the shoreline, Chambers Bay and some of the drainage waterways. The area surrounding Chambers Bay comprises most of the Town's frequently flooded areas. The entire Town is a critical aquifer recharge area for the Chambers-Clover Creek watershed.

Natural systems, such as streams, wetlands, aquifers, and wildlife corridors cross political boundaries. The Town participates in regional discussions concerning the preservation of open space, critical areas, endangered species through the Pierce County Regional Council and the Puget Sound Regional Council.

Climate change is an emerging threat to the Town's quality of life. As state and federal efforts begin to tackle this issue, the Town is committed to doing what it can to reduce greenhouse gases and conserve water and energy resources.

The University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group and the Department of Ecology coauthored a report entitled *Sea Level Rise in the Coastal Waters of Washington State* in 2008. That report provides high, medium, and low sea level change projection scenarios. For Puget Sound, the report projects sea level rise from a low of 3 inches to a high of 22 inches by the year 2050, and a low of 6 inches to a high of 50 inches by the year 2100.

The areas most vulnerable to rising sea and higher floods are along the shoreline, including the mouth of Chambers Bay, Sunnyside Beach, Saltar's Point and the outlet for the Fifth Street Waterway. The Town's critical areas ordinance and Shoreline Master Program provide regulations on building within flood zones.

More study is needed to determine the threat to Steilacoom posed by sea level rise. According to the Georgetown Climate Center's *Adaptation Tool Kit: Sea level Rise and Coastal Land Use* (2011), the Town should identify potential sea level rise impacts, assess vulnerabilities, designate areas requiring special protection, and identify the land use tools to respond to the identified issues.

Health

The Town has long encouraged physical activity by its residents through the construction of bicycle and walking paths, sidewalks, requirements for new subdivisions to provide pedestrian access, as well as parks and open spaces with both passive and active recreational opportunities.

Healthy living includes access to locally produced food. Steilacoom's Farmer's Market opened in 2007 and has been bringing together local vendors and Town residents each summer since. The Market operates at the Lafayette Street multi-purpose courts on Wednesdays, tying into the Wednesday evening music in nearby Pioneer Park. A part-time Town staff Market Coordinator organizes the Market.

Healthy construction methods, use of water and energy saving appliances, and low impact development methods all contribute to the health of the Town's inhabitants.

Quality of Life Goals and Policies

The Goals and Policies in this Plan are intended to affect the functioning of the Town. Measuring their impact is vital to determining whether the Plan is working. However, not all goals and policies can be measured. As a part of its review of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will work toward implementing a system of assessments for each measurable Goal and Policy in the Comprehensive Plan.

Quality of Life Goal 1: Common Unity

The Town should encourage those activities which foster a sense of community.

Policy QL 1.1 The Town should continue to promote a wide diversity of community activities, educational opportunities, and cultural events suitable for all age levels. Examples include the Fourth of July celebration, concert in the park series, Town Clean Up, and various holiday activities.

Policy QL 1.2 The Town should continue to promote volunteerism, and involvement of community organizations in providing services to the community, schools and children.

Policy QL 1.3 The Town shall continue to work with the Steilacoom Historical School District and other community-based groups and agencies, such as the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association, the library, and the Steilacoom Tribe, to achieve excellence in education and provide diverse educational opportunities for all Steilacoom residents.

Policy QL 1.4 The Town should encourage and supervise efforts that allow residents to take a more active role in the maintenance and enhancement of all Town-owned properties and facilities located in residential neighborhoods.

Quality of Life Goal 2: Access to Information and Public Officials

The Town should seek ways to make government more responsive to its citizens.

Policy QL 2.1 The Town shall continue to promote citizen access to public officials through Town-sponsored residential advisory groups and other boards and commissions, and by conducting public forums to exchange ideas and views between citizens and public officials.

Policy QL 2.2 The Town shall continue to increase efforts to encourage the participation of individuals and groups that have been previously underrepresented in the public decision-making process.

Policy QL 2.3 Land use proposals and all related permits shall be processed in a timely, fair, predictable, efficient, and effective manner.

Policy QL 2.4 The Town should consider the impact of land use ordinances and policies on the rights of private property owners. The Town will take steps to ensure the rights of private property owners are protected and provide a cost effective and timely appeal process.

Policy QL 2.5 The Town shall encourage citizen participation in government at all levels.

Quality of Life Goal 3: Historic Preservation

The Town should seek ways to preserve and maintain its historic resources.

Policy QL 3.1 Continue a Preservation and Review Board as the monitoring agent for compatible architecture in the historic district.

Policy QL 3.2 The Town's preservation programs and policies should be reviewed and enhanced where necessary. Of particular interest is the development of an active preservation program which emphasizes community outreach and involvement.

Policy QL 3.3 Efforts to publicize new development proposals within the historic district shall continue to promote community awareness and participation.

Policy QL 3.4 The Town's preservation program shall honor and reflect the Town's historic character and encourage more community education relating to historic preservation.

Policy QL 3.5 The Town shall support programs to protect its historic resources. Examples include protection against "demolition by neglect", education and referral, a special valuation (tax deferral) program, and voluntary designation of homes outside the district.

Policy QL 3.6 The Town shall consider the impacts of new development and redevelopment on historic and archaeological resources and sites as part of the Town's State Environmental Policy Act review process and require appropriate mitigating measures.

Policy QL 3.7 The Town should encourage coordinated efforts between the Pierce County Landmark Commission, area colleges, Indian tribes, state agencies, and non-profit organizations, such as the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association and the Steilacoom Tribal Museum, to protect historic and archaeological resources.

Policy QL 3.8 The Town will seek to protect the central historic district by maximizing use of the former industrial site (*Master Planned Development site*) to achieve growth targets.

Quality of Life Goal 4: Public Safety Education

The Town shall protect the safety of the community and endeavor to support public safety education to all segments of the community.

Policy QL 4.1 The Town shall support public safety education for all its citizens. The Town shall cooperate with other agencies and organizations, including the Steilacoom Historical School District, to provide public safety education on a broad variety of topics including: CPR, first aid, bicycle safety training, emergency preparedness, fire prevention programs, home crime prevention, block watch programs, "Safe Place" and similar programs.

Policy QL 4.2 Enact and enforce Town codes and regulations regarding public safety to ensure a safe environment.

Policy QL 4.3 The Town will continue to develop and update its Emergency Preparedness Program.

Policy QL 4.4 Programs that increase contact between Public Safety Officers and individual neighborhoods and that proactively foster a safer community, such as a community-based policing program, should be implemented when financially feasible.

Policy QL 4.5 The Town shall continue its recruitment and training program of public safety reserves to maintain the level of service standard determined by the Town Council.

Quality of Life Goal 5: Environmental Quality

The Town should maintain and promote a healthy environment and minimize the risk to residents from environmental and man-made hazards.

Policy QL 5.1 The Town shall seek to minimize the exposure of residents to the harmful effects of excess noise, light and glare, and water and air pollution.

Policy QL 5.2 The Town shall seek to protect fish and wildlife resources by preventing the indiscriminate and unnecessary removal of native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers; by promoting the protection and development of areas which provide food, cover, resting, and nesting areas for wildlife; and by protecting and enhancing the quality of aquatic resources.

Policy QL 5.3 The Town shall seek to ensure that development is properly located and constructed with respect to the limitations of the underlying soils, geological hazards, and areas subject to flooding.

Policy QL 5.4 Town facilities, services, programs, and procedures shall be designed and managed to conserve resources and reduce demand for facilities with

significant adverse environmental impacts. Similarly, procedures, programs, and rate structures shall encourage citizens to conserve resources and to minimize the negative environmental impacts of their use of facilities and services.

Policy QL 5.5 The Town shall enact and enforce critical areas regulations for wetlands, flood hazard areas, geologically hazardous areas, fish and wildlife habitat areas, and critical ground water recharge areas.

Policy QL 5.6 The Town shall act in a coordinated manner with other jurisdictions to identify, designate, and conserve resources, and to protect open space and environmentally sensitive lands.

Policy QL 5.7 The Town shall seek to maintain or improve natural hydrological processes through its land use regulations. Town regulations shall seek to improve water quality through such measures as implementation of low impact development techniques to reduce groundwater pollution.

Policy QL 5.8 The Town shall continue to promote the conservation of water resources through its land use regulations and management of the water utility

Policy QL 5.9 The Town shall work to improve the countywide overall air quality for particulates, ozone, and toxics through measures such as implementing Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations.

Policy QL 5.10 The Town shall continue to promote less polluting and energy efficient transportation systems, such as bicycles and buses, in its land use regulations

Policy QL 5.11 The Town shall strive to meet State mandates on climate change, the reduction of greenhouse gases, and support for alternative energy sources.

Policy QL 5.12 The Town shall encourage countywide carbon sequestration through increasing the amount of vegetation and canopy cover in urban areas by coordinating the preservation and growth of open spaces and the use of street trees

Policy QL 5.13 The Town shall work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing conservation of fuels and/or the use of alternative fuels In Town owned vehicles.

Policy QL 5.14 The Town shall address sea level rise by identifying potential impacts to the Town, assessing vulnerabilities, designating areas requiring special protection, and identifying necessary actions.

Quality of Life Goal 6: Health and Wellbeing of Town Residents

The Town will design to promote physical, social, and mental well-being so that all people can live healthier and more active lives.

Policy QL 6.1 The Town shall continue its efforts to provide an improved environment for walking, bicycling and other physical activity throughout Town.

Policy QL 6.2 The Town shall create design guidelines to encourage construction of healthy buildings

Policy QL 6.3 The Town shall continue its support for the Steilacoom Farmer's Market, and encourage community access to agricultural, farmland, and aquatic uses that facilitate the production of fresh and minimally processed healthy foods

Quality of Life Goal 7: Coordination and Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions and Agencies

The Town recognizes that the quality of life of Town residents is strongly affected by the decisions made by other governmental and advisory agencies. The Town's goal is that Steilacoom concerns are reflected and addressed by other agencies whose decisions and activities affect the quality of life of Town residents.

Policy QL 7.1 The Town shall continue its participation in various county and regional organizations concerned with the implementation of the Growth Management Act and the planning and funding of transportation projects.

Policy QL 7.2 The Town supports the development of interjurisdictional programs which address regional problems and issues that affect the Town and the larger Puget Sound region. Examples of regional issues include affordable housing, health care, and economic growth.

Policy QL 7.3 The Town supports the development and adoption of interlocal planning agreements with Pierce County, the Cities of DuPont, Lakewood and University Place, Joint Base Lewis-McChord and other governments to address concerns relating to land use and development. Of particular concern to the Town are issues relating to mitigation of impacts associated with development outside of the Town boundaries and the provision of adequate public services.

Policy QL 7.4 The Town supports improving and expanding coordination and cooperation with the Steilacoom tribal organization and members.

Policy QL 7.5 The Town supports improving and expanding coordination and cooperation with the Nisqually, Puyallup and Squaxin tribal organizations and members.

Policy QL 7.6. The Town supports keeping its land uses compatible with the adjoining military areas, Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Camp Murray. The Town will

review recommendations from the JBLM Joint Land Use Study to ensure compatibility.

Policy QL 7.7. The Town shall notify the commander of Joint Base Lewis-McChord of any comprehensive plan or development regulation change that could affect the mission of the base. Notice shall be in the manner required by RCW 36.70A.530.

Policy QL 7.8. The Town shall consider entering into joint service agreements with Joint Base Lewis-McChord on a variety of topics, including but not limited to, public safety and emergency response, environmental conservation and participation in the JBLM Community Connectors Program.

Quality of Life Goal 8: Assessment of Comprehensive Plan

The Town shall work toward a system of assessments for each measurable Goal and Policy in the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy QL 8.1. During each review of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town shall strive to design a performance-based system for evaluating the Goals and Policies under review.

Quality of Life Goal 9 Education

The Town recognizes the importance of education in maintaining the quality of life in Steilacoom. The Town shall support educational opportunities for its citizens.

Policy QL 9.1 The Town shall cooperate with the Steilacoom Historical School District on matters of mutual interest, including joint use of facilities and the sharing of information.

Policy QL 9.2 The Town shall involve the Steilacoom Historical School District in land use regulation decisions through notification of applications for subdivisions and changes to regulations.

Policy QL 9.3 The Town shall cooperate with the Steilacoom Historical School District in the siting of new schools and school facilities in accordance with Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction design regulations.