

Chapter One

Introduction

Pullman's comprehensive plan is this community's guide to future growth and development. The interests of community members are expressed in the plan through a set of goals and policies outlining a preferred future development process and vision. The plan expresses the principles that the citizens want to guide growth and development. Reference should be made to these principles when public commitments are to be made that will affect Pullman's physical, social, and/or economic environment. Private decisions that fall within the purview of city policies should also follow these principles. When the city ensures that public and private decisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the vision of community members as expressed in the plan is implemented in ways that enable residents to continue to enjoy their community, their homes, and their property.

Typically, comprehensive plans have at least a 20-year horizon to provide ample time for a community to realize the vision described in the plan. Although the legislative body of a jurisdiction (in this case, the Pullman City Council) officially adopts the plan, the document is designed to reflect the interests of all city residents through public participation activities that start early in the process and continue until plan adoption.

The authority to create a comprehensive plan is set forth in Washington state law. An urban area classified as a "code city," such as Pullman, can choose to form a planning commission. If the city decides to create a planning commission, then state law requires that jurisdiction to adopt a comprehensive plan for "anticipating and influencing the orderly and coordinated development of land and building uses of the code city and its environs."

Pullman, located in Whitman County (see Figure 1-1), is not mandated to implement all the requirements of the Washington Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA). Within a non-GMA jurisdiction such as Pullman, the mandatory features of a comprehensive plan are as follows:

- a Land Use Element which includes a map showing the appropriate location for different land uses (such as residential, commercial, and industrial) and recommended standards for population density and building intensity
- a Transportation Element designating a system of roads, trails, and transportation facilities to safely and efficiently move goods and people throughout the community; this element should be compatible and integrated with the land use plan for the city
- identification of Critical Resource Areas (such as wetlands and wildlife habitat areas), and goals and policies for their protection

In addition, this city has determined that its Comprehensive Plan should also include the following elements:

- a Capital Facilities and Utilities Element, setting policies for extending city services (water, sewer, police, emergency services, etc.) and for the use of public right-of-way by private utilities; this would include policies addressing provision of telecommunications services to all parts of the city
- a Housing Element addressing the need to provide sufficient land to accommodate housing for expected growth, encourage rehabilitation and upkeep of existing housing, prevent discrimination, and provide assistance to households with special needs (for example, the disabled, elderly, and single parents of minor children)
- a Parks and Open Space Element setting standards for provision of parks and recreation facilities and containing a plan to ensure that adequate recreation opportunities are available to all residents

This Comprehensive Plan has a vision statement for the community, along with goals and policies to guide development over the next twenty years. The goals and policies address issues identified by residents, city officials, and staff at a series of meetings held during the past few years. They reflect input on the future land use pattern and supporting infrastructure preferred by residents.

Once adopted, the comprehensive plan serves as a basic source of reference for future legislative and administrative action. It is not to be construed as a direct restriction of property rights or land uses. The vision embodied in a comprehensive plan must be implemented through regulations, programs and budgetary actions approved by the City Council. The most common way to implement a comprehensive plan is through adopting a zoning code, which sets forth standards regarding where and how development can occur in a locality. Other types of laws typically used to enforce the concepts of a comprehensive plan are subdivision ordinances, environmental regulations, and engineering design standards. Programs initiated to implement a comprehensive plan could include such undertakings as a sidewalk repair operation, housing maintenance campaign, city beautification program, or water quality protection effort. Oftentimes, the comprehensive plan will call for the construction or maintenance of major facilities that are funded through the city's Capital Improvement Program or Transportation Improvement Program. Both programs outline city expenditures for public facilities over a six-year future timeline that is updated annually.