

ABERDEEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Goals and Policies

DRAFT 8/16/2021

Footnote #s: Shows where we heard or confirmed the idea. Key at end.

Note about policies: Policies are included here as a holding ground and to give a sense of how the plan may be filled out. No need to review at this point unless you'd like to.

Overarching Guiding Principles

Balance multiple objectives:

1. **Unique Aberdeen identity.** Set the framework for physical and social structures to build a sense of community, identity, and mutual connection to place.^{2,6}
2. **Economic prosperity.** Build long-term strength in the local economy with a balance of different sectors offering good wages while maintaining a low cost of living.^{6,7}
3. **Human health.** Enhance the urban environment to make it easy to get exercise, see friends, and eat healthy food.^{6,7}
4. **Environmental health.** Steward and revive forest, water, and wetland systems in and around the city.^{6,7}
5. **Equity.** Support life fulfillment for all Aberdeen residents, regardless of background.^{6,7}
6. **Resilience.** Develop and maintain physical, social, and economic infrastructure that is resilient to climate change, natural disasters, and economic disturbances.^{2,6,7}

Framework Goals

1. **Unified vision.** Maintain a clear and relevant vision for the future so that Aberdeen's community is all "rowing in the same direction."^{2,6}
2. **Functionality for supporting our best lives.** Support the transportation, land use, economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure systems needed for Aberdeen residents to say, "Life is good here."^{1,2,6}
3. **People friendly.** Promote a people-friendly built environment.⁶
4. **Regional coordination.** Coordinate with and leverage the interconnected Grays Harbor region.⁶
5. **Public engagement.** Foster community ownership over Aberdeen's future through public engagement on major decisions.

Land Use Goals

1. **Design the city for people.** Encourage positive social interaction to maintain the sense of an intertwined, approachable community.¹
2. **Natural setting.** Leverage, relate to, and celebrate Aberdeen's setting within the natural environment, including its weather and nearby forests and beaches.¹

3. **Urban form concept.** Set the framework for an urban form that is resilient to hazards (e.g., flooding, sea level rise, tsunamis, earthquakes) and climate.^{2,6}
4. **Environmental health.** Avoid, minimize, and mitigate development impacts on natural systems.
5. **Focused growth.** Focus growth and investment downtown and in well-connected neighborhood centers with services and amenities to accommodate expected population and jobs.⁶
6. **Compact development.** Encourage compact development—homes, workplaces, schools, recreation, and services within close proximity—to make efficient use of Aberdeen’s traditional neighborhood centers and public investment in transit and other infrastructure.⁶
7. **Compatible employment development.** Provide opportunities for employment development that leverages Aberdeen’s natural resources and physical environment, has minimal impact on the natural environment, contributes to quality of life, and is compatible with desired development patterns.⁶
8. **Land use designations for economic prosperity.** Support a diverse economy through employment-oriented districts—where land use designations and the transportation system prioritize job retention—such as the Port’s industrial area, commercial corridors, and downtown.⁶
9. **Public and natural spaces.** Develop a connected network of public spaces, especially downtown, and draw nature into the city.⁶
10. **Certainty with adaptability.** Guide development in a manner that provides certainty about future land use and allows flexibility to adapt to future opportunities and conditions.
11. **Regional coordination.** Coordinate with Grays Harbor municipalities to accommodate expected population and job changes and complement each other’s strengths.⁶

Policies

1. Ensure zoning code allows for flexibility and supports the Comprehensive Plan goals to encourage desired development.¹
2. Focus investments where they support and catalyze the urban form concept of connected centers, corridors, and open spaces.⁶
3. Designate land uses for resiliency, adaptation to climate change, and environmental health, while maintaining economic vitality and people-oriented places.⁶
 - a. Action: Develop a Climate Action Plan for the city (or in partnership with nearby communities) that identifies strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that align with WA State’s emission reduction targets.
4. Avoid conflicts between industrial uses and residential and recreational uses through careful land use designations and appropriate separations or buffers.
5. Carefully consider appropriateness and compatibility of building types and human activity when designating land uses in flood zones.⁷
6. Allow higher intensity land uses downtown and in neighborhood centers, and ensure development code allows desired development types.⁶
7. Plan for charm downtown, including outdoor gathering and green space.⁶
8. Implement restoration and other ecosystem health plans.⁶
9. Consider toxic site cleanup needs when designating land uses.
10. Offer clear and efficient permitting processes.²

11. Seek opportunities to acquire environmentally sensitive sites to maintain natural stormwater and ecosystem functions.⁶
 - a. (Action: acquire properties platted over designated wetlands in South Aberdeen)
 - b. (Action: acquire sites with steep topography in __)
12. Preserve and enhance a network of urban habitat corridors and open spaces.
13. Retain prime industrial land and encourage the capacity, affordability and viability of industrial uses.

Economic Development

Goals

1. **Healthy economy.** Foster a healthy, diverse, sustainable economy that supports prosperity and equitable employment opportunities in harmony with natural resources.⁶
2. **Attract talent.** Invest in quality and unique sense of place and affordable and diverse housing types to attract and keep talent.⁶
3. **Downtown.** Focus efforts and investments downtown.^{1,2}
4. **Healthy businesses.** Encourage business incubation, entrepreneurship, and retention.
5. **Transportation.** Serve employment districts with a transportation system that meets industrial, commercial, tourism, and other employment sector needs.
6. **Waterfront.** Support a multifunctional waterfront, including employment, recreational, natural systems, housing options, and water transportation uses.¹
7. **Unique Aberdeen identity.** Use arts and culture to reinforce Aberdeen’s unique sense of place.
8. **Employment districts.** Maintain and/or establish employment districts that prioritize or expand lands for commercial and industrial uses.
9. **Regional coordination.** Coordinate with Grays Harbor municipalities to efficiently run government, address common challenges, and save costs.⁶

Policies

1. Promote downtown redevelopment and/or rehabilitation, especially with mixed use and affordable housing.^{4,1}
2. Balance historical preservation goals with building re-use feasibility.
3. Offer ample cultural and recreational opportunities for residents and tourists.⁴
4. Support heritage tourism.⁴
5. Promote local ownership of properties and homes.¹
6. Be patient, incremental, proactive, and adaptable.
7. Identify and implement public realm improvements that build on Aberdeen’s assets, offer unique experiences, and improve quality of life.²
8. Serve Aberdeen’s employment centers with appropriate freight routes and multimodal transportation system to keep freight moving.⁶
9. Maintain and augment strong connections to the waterfront to enhance Aberdeen’s sense of place.^{1,2}
10. Prioritize amenities, services, connection to downtown, the arts, and open space.²
11. Maintain flexible land use, zoning, tools, and approaches to adapt to market changes.²

12. Ensure that zoning is simple and not a barrier to residential and economic development.²
 - a. (Actions: Revisit zoning code and simplify where possible. Focus ground floor commercial requirement only where essential to prioritize residential development.)
13. Compile a toolkit of incentives and tools to increase feasibility of desired development.^{1,2}
14. Seek, offer, and/or connect developers to grant funding for building rehabilitation.^{1,2}
15. In the near term, focus on attracting information technology workers and others who can work from home.²
16. Maintain relationships with major employers, developers, brokers, economic development professionals in government, neighborhood and nonprofits, and others in the employment and development communities to foster a balanced understanding of community needs.
17. Consider land acquisitions, especially on the waterfront and other potentially challenging sites, when the benefit of recruiting developers outweighs the risks and costs.²
 - a. (Action: Work with a broker who has experience executing deals resulting in new development in the region to clearly understand costs and benefits.)
 - b. (Action: Create additional parking downtown for short- and long-term use or create incentives for private parking that is available for public use.)
18. Focus on downtown and the City's regional gateway location to grow tourism.²
19. Support and leverage transit with appropriate land uses.
20. Consider consolidating downtown surface parking lots into public structured parking to increase mixed-use development feasibility, make visiting downtown by car convenient, and free up property for parks and infill development.⁶
21. Leverage public investment in restoration projects, such as Fry Creek, to incentivize desired development and enhance Aberdeen's unique identity.⁶
22. Maintain and increase opportunities to access the water. Require public water access with any redevelopment.⁶
23. Plan for sea level rise, tsunamis, and climate change.^{2,6}

Housing

Goals

1. **Supply.** Encourage an adequate supply and variety of homes, districts, and neighborhoods attractive to people of all ages, characteristics, and interests to meet Aberdeen’s population needs and support economic development.¹
2. **Variety and attainability.** Improve the variety, quality, availability, and attainability of housing opportunities in the city—through production and preservation/rehabilitation—for all incomes levels and to allow residents to stay in their neighborhoods as life needs change.^{1,6}
3. **Residents and visitors.** Promote a balance of rental and ownership homes, and meet needs of residents and visitors.¹
4. **Affordability focus.** Focus on affordable housing options.¹
5. **Rehabilitation/preservation.** Encourage rehabilitation and preservation of Aberdeen’s historic neighborhoods and downtown buildings.^{4,1}
6. **Historic preservation.** Understand the characteristics that make older neighborhoods people friendly and functional and determine what “historic preservation” means for Aberdeen’s neighborhoods.
7. **Sociability.** Promote housing design that encourages comfortable social interactions and trust amongst neighbors.
8. **Aging in place.** Support aging in place options (e.g., ADA accessible condominiums, ADUs).¹

Policies

Variety

1. Maintain data to understand housing supply and needs for Aberdeen’s income levels and household types.
2. Allow a wide range of home types, including duplex, triplex, townhouse, small apartment buildings, etc, to fill in Aberdeen.¹
3. Encourage production of small units—single room occupancies (SROs), ADUs, studios, and one bedrooms.¹
4. Support an adequate supply of high quality rental units.¹
5. Encourage the rental market to meet community needs, including long-term rentals.¹
6. Encourage production of ADA accessible units near resources and amenities for elders aging in place.¹
7. Coordinate with Grays Harbor College to support student housing efforts.¹

Feasibility/Supply

8. Coordinate with regional partners to increase construction trade capacity in Grays Harbor.¹
9. Seek funding or other ways to increase feasibility of desired development.¹
10. Remove code barriers to desired development.^{1,6}
 - a. (Action: reconsider the ground floor commercial and parking requirements)¹
11. Ease waterfront permitting (e.g., by doing upfront SEPA analysis through a Planned Action EIS for the waterfront).¹

12. Promote and educate about the tools available for historic building rehabilitation (e.g., Historic Renovation Tax Credits).¹
13. Incentivize desired development...¹

Affordability

14. Seek out and apply tools (e.g., Community Land Trusts) to increase and maintain affordable homes.¹
15. Require affordable units where possible.
 - a. (Action: Add density or reduce lot line setback and parking requirements in exchange for a percentage of multifamily housing to be affordable.)
16. Create flexibility in code to allow for a range of affordable housing options.^{1,6}

People-friendly Neighborhoods

17. Examine the desirable characteristics of Aberdeen’s historic neighborhoods to set design guidance for infill, redevelopment, and rehabilitation projects.
18. Implement the Aberdeen Historic Preservation Plan and/or update its recommended actions to respond to changing conditions.

Resilience

19. Locate new housing outside of flood (and tsunami?) zones where possible.
20. Consider design standards for flooding resilience.

Design

Transportation

Goals

1. **System.** Maintain and enhance a coordinated, efficient, multimodal transportation system.³
2. **Safety and human health.** Focus on safety and designing a system for people that promotes positive health outcomes through active transportation, physical activity, and convenient access to healthcare, recreation, schools, and other destinations.³
3. **Layered benefits.** Design and implement transportation systems that positively impact multiple goals—human, economic, and environmental health.^{3,6}
4. **Economic prosperity.** Support a strong and diverse economy with a transportation system designed for Aberdeen to maintain its role as a Port city and regional commercial hub by providing efficient and reliable goods movement, enhanced freight access to industrial areas and intermodal freight facilities, multimodal access to employment districts and schools, as well as balancing rail/freight and human safety and delight considerations.³
5. **Equity.** Foster safe, efficient, convenient, and affordable modes of transportation equitably across Aberdeen.
6. **Environmental health.** Encourage an environmentally sustainable transportation system that is increasingly reliant on active transportation, renewable energy, or electricity from renewable sources to reduce air pollution, water pollution, noise, and reliance on private vehicles.
7. **Fiscal responsibility.** Analyze and prioritize capital and operating investments to cost effectively achieve the above goals and responsibly manage existing assets.

Policies

1. Focus on complete streets (multiple modes and functions) in places consistent with the urban form framework and Aberdeen’s destinations.³
2. Layer functions that meet multiple objectives, such as green stormwater infrastructure for rainwater storage and facilities for people walking, biking, and rolling for active living.⁶
3. Apply, maintain, and implement street design classifications consistent with the urban form framework, environmental context, and land use plans.³
4. Level of service policies...
5. Slow down pass-through traffic downtown.³
6. Continue bridge maintenance and replacement.³
7. Plan phased repair and replacement of residential streets.⁶
8. Continue expanding trails and pedestrian/bicycle routes.³
 - a. Action: Connect the Chehalis River Trail around Seaport and to the Basich Trailway to complete the regional trail system.⁶
 - b. Action: Continue advocating for bike lanes on the US 101 Chehalis River Bridge.
 - c. Action: Add a pedestrian overpass on the south side of the US 101 Chehalis River Bridge.
 - d. Action: Establish public paths across steep topography per the Active Transportation Plan’s Stair Walk Conceptual Map.
9. Plan for longer and more trains to Port of Grays Harbor while minimizing impacts on pedestrian and vehicular routes and crossings.⁶
 - a. Action: Study feasibility of separating rail from people routes.

10. Coordinate with Grays Harbor Transit to ensure safe, efficient, equitable transit service to Aberdeen’s neighborhood centers and destinations.
11. Encourage car-sharing and on-call transit service for travel outside of bus hours or service areas.⁶
12. Construct boat ramp on the Chehalis River for river access.
13. Encourage new commercial and multifamily housing to provide at least one EV charger for tenants/owners/guests. ⁶

Capital Facilities

Emergency (Police, Fire, Medical), Community Services (e.g., city hall, libraries, corrections), Parks, Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Solid Waste, Transportation (Roads/paths covered in Transportation; schools covered under separate planning)

Existing Aberdeen Comp Plan includes the following in their Capital Facilities Element. There is some overlap with the Utilities element for water, stormwater, and sewer.

Capital Facilities Element

1. INTRODUCTION

Adequate roads, sewage disposal, water supply, fire and police protection, parks, libraries, and other public facilities and services are necessary to protect the public, health, safety and welfare of Aberdeen residents. Planning for public facilities and services can ensure that they are provided as the community grows, and can reduce public costs by encouraging maximum possible use of existing facilities and cost-effective service extensions.

If planning under GMA, requirements include:

(3) A capital facilities plan element consisting of: (a) An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities; (b) a forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities; (c) the proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities; (d) at least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identifies sources of public money for such purposes; and (e) a requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent. Park and recreation facilities shall be included in the capital facilities plan element.

Goals

1. **Support envisioned land uses.** Maintain safe and financially feasible facilities to support community services and infrastructure for Aberdeen’s population, jobs, and changing conditions.
2. **Location and design.** Locate and design facilities for reliability, resilience, human and environmental health, and to support Aberdeen’s urban form concept.
3. **Health, equity, prosperity, and environment.** Invest in capital facilities and services to improve equitable service provision, support economic prosperity, and human and environmental health.
4. **Level of service standards.** Establish and uphold level of service standards for City facilities and services to meet community goals and the urban form concept.

5. **Development and concurrency.** Maintain capacity data and manage new development to uphold level of service standards.
6. **Water supply.** Protect and maintain an adequate water supply for Aberdeen’s population.
7. **Regional coordination.** Coordinate with the City of Cosmopolis, City of Hoquiam, and Grays Harbor County to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficient service coverage.

Policies

1. Level of service policies and requiring concurrency...
2. Continue updating service and facility plans for the following:
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Water and sewer
 - c. Stormwater³
 - d. Parks and recreation
 - e. Emergency services (police, fire, and medical response)
3. Continue supporting the levee project.³
4. Reduce or eliminate carbon emissions in both the private and public sectors.
 - a. Action: Develop a Climate Action Plan for the city (or in partnership with nearby communities) that identifies strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that align with WA State’s emission reduction targets.
 - b. Action: Review and update zoning and development codes and other regulatory programs to address priority climate actions, including solar-ready development, electric vehicle infrastructure, and tree canopy preservation.
5. Consider and prioritize capital projects that increases Aberdeen’s resilience to climate change and hazards.
6. Continue planning for climate change, flooding, tsunامي, and other hazards.³
7. Focus on green infrastructure—trees, natural stormwater drainage and retention, and natural areas—to minimize flooding and landslide risks and reduce urban heat island effects.
8. Promote water use efficiency and acquire watershed lands to meet water supply needs.
9. Promote green stormwater infrastructure, such as natural areas and landscaped natural drainage facilities, to manage stormwater.
10. Reduce any disparities or gaps in service.
11. Avoid disproportionate construction or other impacts.
12. Essential Public Facilities. Ensure that essential public facilities are sited and designed in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act.
13. Encourage new City fleet vehicles to include electric or hydrogen vehicles to reach 70% by 2040.
- 14.

Utilities

*Energy (Grays Harbor PUD, Cascadia Natural Gas), Telecommunications
(Roads/paths covered in Transportation)*

Existing Aberdeen Comp Plan includes the following in Utilities (some overlap with Capital Facilities):

Chapter 10

Utilities Element

1. INTRODUCTION

Utilities include all lines and facilities used to distribute, collect, transmit, control, or dispose of water, surface-water and sanitary sewage, solid waste, electricity, petroleum products, and telecommunications. Most utilities within Aberdeen are operated by special-purpose districts and private companies, although the City provides local domestic and industrial water, and sanitary and surface-water disposal. The City's responsibility for utilities provided by other agencies ranges from managing their use of public rights-of-way to defining their geographic service areas.

If planning under GMA, requirements include:

(4) A utilities element consisting of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines.

Goals

1. **Support existing and future development.** Build, maintain, upgrade, site, and design public utilities to protect public health, safety, and the environment; ensure services are equitably distributed Aberdeen-wide; accommodate population and employment growth; and be efficient, sustainable, cost-effective, and resilient.
2. **Level of service standards.** Establish and uphold level of service standards for City utilities and services to meet community goals and the urban form concept.
3. **Regional and utility coordination.**

Policies

1. Set an appropriate broadband connectivity level of service requirement.²
2. Support and advocate for local and regional strategies that reduce carbon emissions and support the transition of the local electrical grid to clean energy.
3. Create area microgrids for ensuring emergency power supply in the event of an emergency and to create a resilient grid.
 - a. Action: Identify potential opportunities (e.g., new developments, campuses, etc.) through climate action planning.
 - b. Action: Review and update development codes and other regulatory programs to address barriers.
4. Require electric appliances in all new construction.
5. Increase the resilience of high-risk and critical infrastructure through monitoring, planning, maintenance, investment, adaptive technology, and continuity planning.
6. Co-location policy...

Where we heard the idea

1. Housing Focus Group
2. Economics Focus Group and Interviews
3. Public Works Focus Group
4. Aberdeen Historic Preservation Plan
5. Aberdeen Active Transportation Plan
6. Visioning Charrette (Part 1 and 2)
7. City Council Workshop