

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION AND APPLICATION

The City of Mill Creek's Comprehensive Plan is an official public policy document for use by both the public and private sectors of the community. The plan is intended to be a comprehensive guide to be used in making decisions concerning future land uses, establishing urban growth boundaries and city limits, extensions of community services and facilities, locations of future transportation/circulation facilities, parks and open space, designation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas and desirable urban design elements of the City. Several citizen committees and boards helped to formulate this plan including: the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the City Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, Town Center Steering Committee, Housing Advisory Committee, the City Council, City staff and the citizenry.

The plan is designed to be both comprehensive and general as well as long-range in nature. It is comprehensive in that it encompasses major geographic areas of the City and the functional elements that affect physical development or preservation; general in that it summarizes major policies and proposals; and long-range in that it not only addresses current issues, but also anticipates problems and possibilities for the future.

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan updates required by the Growth Management Act created an opportunity for the City to evaluate its existing goals and policies and determine whether they still represent the vision of the community.

Mill Creek has changed significantly since adoption of the first GMA plan in 1994. Nearly all land available for residential uses has been developed and the Mill Creek Town Center is under construction. SR 527 has been widened from a two-lane rural road to a five-lane urban arterial, significantly changing the character of Mill Creek. Thus, the 2004 Comprehensive Plan focuses on revising several of the plan elements as follows:

- Updates demographic data for population, employment and housing, and establishes a population growth target for 2025;
- Incorporates the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan into the main planning document;
- Updates existing conditions and identifies future capital facility projects for parks, roads, sidewalks, stormwater facilities and other capital facility improvements; and
- Includes strategies for increased protection of threatened species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ZONING AND SUBDIVISION CONTROLS

As enabled by the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act, the Comprehensive Plan is a mandatory public document adopted by the local legislative body to guide the physical development and conservation of a municipality or county. The implementation of the plan occurs through the application of the zoning and subdivision regulations, Critical Area Regulations, transportation and capital improvement programming and other official controls intended to meet the goals and objectives of the plan. The City will prepare and adopt such regulations by December 31, 2004.

This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared pursuant to 35A.63 RCW and meets the requirements of the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act. This document amends the 1999 Mill Creek Comprehensive Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The comprehensive planning process creates a blueprint for the logical development of the City and effective means to implement the plan's policies. The process addresses, through a logical sequence, the various land use related factors that must be considered to formulate responsible land use policies and proposals. These factors include the following:

- The establishment of citywide goals;
- The inventory and analysis of land use, housing, population levels, capital facilities, utilities, parks and open space, environmental features and transportation facilities;
- The understanding of issues, both technical and citizen-related;
- The development of public policies/proposals to resolve and/or address the relevant issues;
- The involvement of citizens in the plan and policy-formulation process; and
- The transformation of policies into the land use, transportation, environmental features, parks and open space plan maps and attendant implementation tools.

The planning process is continual. It involves not only the formulation of the Comprehensive Plan document, its implementation and the application and use of various regulatory tools, but also continual monitoring and periodic updating. The success of the planning process in the City relies heavily upon the City's ability to keep the major elements of the plan current. Thus, the plan should be updated regularly by the Planning Commission and such revisions should adhere to the various sequential

stages in the planning process.

The chart on the following page illustrates the sequential steps of the planning process.

ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan document is organized to be consistent with the sequential steps of the planning process, and the required elements of the Growth Management Act. It is intended to present the basic information and data necessary for the preparation of development regulations and plans. Thus, after a brief history of the development of the City, a series of goal statements intended to provide the overall direction of future growth and conservation planning for the City is presented. A brief description of the current population and projections for future expansion are then discussed in the summary of population and employment. Next, the plan elements are presented, which provide the fundamental decision-making tools concerning Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Transportation, Streetscape, Environmental Features and Parks and Open Space. The plan elements also include related maps that graphically portray the spatial interpretation of policies. The final section of the plan includes amendment criteria, which establishes the process and means of revising the plan policies and maps within the public review process. The inventory and analysis of existing conditions are presented in a separate document entitled *Comprehensive Plan Background Summary*.