

CHAPTER VI

LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to present a practical and balanced set of policies to address and/or resolve land use issues within the City of Mill Creek and surrounding Urban Growth Area (UGA). The policy statements and locational criteria discussed in this chapter have been developed to influence decision-making within two geographic planning areas - the UGA and Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA).

The Land Use Element first presents a list of land use issues that should be addressed in the coming years. These issues were derived by comparing the results of an inventory and analysis of existing conditions with the intent of the overall goal statements contained in Chapter IV.

Next, a series of locational criteria for the designation of future residential, commercial, business park/industrial, open space and public and institutional land uses are presented. The locational criteria are intended to be utilized in conjunction with associated policy statements when establishing the appropriate land use designation for undeveloped lands in the City and surrounding areas that may be annexed in the future.

The locational criteria are followed by policy statements, which are considered as both general and specific courses of action to follow toward the resolution of land use issues, as well as implementation of the goal statements presented in Chapter IV of this Plan. The Land Use Policies contained herein have been developed to express clear direction and purpose, so that citizens and developers have little doubt as to what the community believes in and stands for. The policies address residential, commercial, industrial and public land use actions and economic development initiatives.

THE URBAN GROWTH AREA

According to the Washington State Growth Management Act, a UGA is an area where urban growth shall be encouraged. Areas outside of the UGA should not be characterized by urban development. The Land Use Plan Map displays the City's UGA, which defines the logical geographic area that the City may consider expanding into through annexation within a 20-year planning period. The UGA boundary has been selected consistent with the applicable Countywide Planning Policies and the objective of delineating a realistic area that includes vacant, developable and serviceable lands as well as existing developments that relate to, as well as promote a "sense of identity" within the City. The boundaries delineating the UGA have been selected using both cultural and physical elements including roads, property lines and natural features. Annexation requests will only be considered for lands situated within the UGA.

THE MUNICIPAL URBAN GROWTH AREA BOUNDARY

In September 2000, the City embarked on a planning process with eight other cities in Southwest Snohomish County to define the ultimate growth boundaries around each city. Referred to as the Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) process, the goal is for each city to define its ultimate growth boundaries within which the city may extend its own city limits and UGA if applicable and entertain annexation requests.

On June 10, 2003, the City Council adopted a MUGA boundary for Mill Creek (see MUGA Boundary Map). Official recognition of each city's MUGA boundaries is intended to be accomplished by interlocal agreements. The City will work closely with Snohomish County to address planning issues in the MUGA.

SUBAREA PLANS

The Growth Management Act provides for Subarea plans to be developed. Subarea plans focus on a specific area within an Urban Growth Area that has unique circumstances or planning needs different from the jurisdiction as a whole. The City of Mill Creek has adopted two subarea plans—the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan was adopted in August 1998, and the Mill Creek East UGA Subarea Plan was adopted in March 2003. Each subarea plan is described in the following sections.

SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan

In December 1998, the City Council adopted the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan. This plan repealed the land use policies and map of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan for a 156acre area west of SR 527, north of Town Center and south of Dumas Road.

The Subarea Plan was prepared under the Growth Management Act and includes plans, policies, design guidelines, fiscal analysis, an environmental impact statement, special zoning districts and a Planned Action ordinance. The plan provides for compact residential neighborhoods within close proximity to the Town Center, a future office park south of Dumas Road and preservation of the North Creek Greenway. The intent of the plan is to stimulate economic development consistent with predetermined environmental mitigation measures, while creating compact livable neighborhoods and reducing unnecessary vehicular trips between living, shopping and employment areas.

East UGA Subarea

Developable land within existing City boundaries is diminishing. To create options for future expansion, the City Council extended the UGA boundary east of 35th Avenue SE in 2001. The East UGA Subarea contains approximately 1,700 acres of unincorporated land and is generally bound by SR 96 on the north, the Seattle City Light power lines on the east and 183rd Street SE on the south.

The expansion of the City's UGA was followed by the adoption of the Mill Creek East Subarea Plan by the City Council in March 2003. This plan was developed to achieve several goals:

- Establish land use designations for a full range of residential densities and areas for commercial development;
- Ensure that new development within the Subarea is consistent with existing development patterns in Mill Creek neighborhoods;
- Provide for adequate parks and open space facilities;
- Provide for adequate transportation systems to serve new development and minimize impacts to existing City roads; and
- Protect the natural environment.

The Mill Creek East UGA Subarea plan will apply to the property if and when all or a portion of the area is annexed to the City. The Subarea Plan is available at Mill Creek City Hall.

In 2005 the City annexed 553 acres of the East UGA Subarea. This annexation was known as the Area A/Northeast Area Annexation and is generally bound on the north by 132nd Street Southeast, on the east by Seattle Hill Road, on the west by existing city limits, and on the south by 144th Street Southeast.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN GROWTH AREA

The Growth Management Act (GMA) and the Countywide Planning Policies encourage a fiscal impact analysis of the long-term financial impacts of comprehensive plans, implementation measures, annexations, capital facility investments and private development projects.

In recent years, the cost of providing services to City residents has increased. At the same time, revenue sources have not kept pace with the cost of providing services. As a result, the City must carefully evaluate the long-term fiscal impacts of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, private development projects, capital facility improvements and annexations.

In 2003 the City performed a fiscal analysis for the East UGA Subarea. This analysis looked at the feasibility of annexing predetermined neighborhoods in the Subarea into the City. Based on the assumptions of the study, the future annexation of certain neighborhoods located in the northern portions of the Subarea would be revenue positive. Any future annexations should be carefully evaluated to avoid negative impacts to the City's fiscal outlook.

LAND USE ISSUES

Based on the inventory and analysis of existing conditions presented in the Background Document for this plan, a summary of land use issues has been prepared for each land use category and includes residential, commercial, business park and public and institutional lands.

Residential Land Use Issues

Future annexation of residential land to the City may not be compatible with existing development standards.

As undeveloped and developed land is annexed into the City, the residential housing mix may be different than the predominant housing mix in the City. The community wishes, however, to enhance and maintain the City as a predominantly single-family residential community while accommodating well-designed densities that will support transit opportunities and commercial land uses.

The residential development patterns originally designed into the Mill Creek Master Plan are representative of a planned residential community that incorporates identifiable residential neighborhoods separated from incompatible uses through the provision of strategically placed open spaces, pedestrian paths, architectural controls and a functional vehicular transportation network.

Several residential neighborhoods in the City were developed under different provisions of the zoning regulations that did not require the same aesthetic considerations as the original Mill Creek Master Plan. These neighborhoods have been developed consistent with traditional zoning standards that provide for minimal open space and standard lot sizes, building heights and yard setbacks.

As other existing developed neighborhoods are annexed to the City, development patterns and standards will differ from the original master planned neighborhoods. Different residential development patterns bring diversity to a city in neighborhood design and provide alternative housing types. The costs and who pays for infrastructure upgrades (e.g., sidewalks, street improvements, neighborhood parks and stormwater facilities) are important considerations to be made by the City when considering annexation proposals.

Given the two distinct types of neighborhood design, an issue to consider is whether to encourage the design of future residential proposals to be consistent with the planned residential development component of the zoning regulations or conventional methods of subdivision design.

Residential development in the SR 527 Corridor is discussed in the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan. The primary objectives related to residential development within this Subarea include the following:

- Encourage compact, well-designed, high-density residential development to meet the City's growth targets, and to create an employment base for future office uses planned for the Subarea;
- Encourage multifamily development to meet the City's goal of providing a full range of housing choices;
- Establish a population base to support the Town Center;
- Support transit by concentrating development along SR 527; and
- Protect the North Creek Greenway.

The majority of residentially zoned land in the SR 527 Corridor Subarea has been developed.

Commercial Land Use Issues

There are only a few undeveloped sites remaining designated for commercial use within the UGA. The City must ensure that these properties are developed with high-quality design standards that reflect the image of the City and are compatible and complementary with surrounding residential and other commercial uses. In addition, these commercial sites should provide services that satisfy the needs of existing and future residents of the City as well as adding to the tax base revenues for the City.

Existing commercial development patterns are not conducive to safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian access. The City should continue to take steps to ensure that these developments are retro-fitted to be more transit-oriented and improve pedestrian circulation. As new commercial uses are proposed, the City must continue to strive for well-designed site plans that address efficient access, pedestrian circulation and aesthetically pleasing architecture.

The Town Center Development Plan and SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan have been adopted by the City Council and are incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as a part of this Land Use Element. The Town Center is under construction with a targeted completion date of 2007.

The commercial portion of the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan (zoned Neighborhood Business) is still occupied by the Halo Mobile Home Park. This site is intended to provide a limited range of retail sales and services to surrounding residential neighborhoods, as well as residential uses above the ground floor of retail buildings.

In 2008 the City Council redesignated the commercial corridor along the south side of SR 96, east of 35th Avenue SE, from Community Business to Town/Village Center and zoned it Planned Urban Village (PUV). This area is known as the East Gateway Urban Village. The policies within this land use element and the PUV zoning regulations require residential uses along with a mix of commercial, institutional, and public uses.

The East Gateway Urban Village is planned as a mixed-use development that includes a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and open space designed in a low to mid rise development pattern and organized around a functional street grid. The plan is intended to complement the surrounding existing residential, commercial and institutional uses. The East Gateway Urban Village Illustrative Development Plan has been adopted by the City Council and is incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as a part of this Land Use Element.

Although complete implementation of these plans may take several years and be subject to fluctuations in area-wide office, commercial and residential markets, it is important to maintain consistency with the general goals, policies and development concept of the plans.

Business Park Land Use Issues

The City currently has approximately 155 acres in the Business Park zone district. While the land supply is adequate to accommodate future business park users, much of the area is still without adequate utility service and includes extensive environmentally sensitive areas.

In January 1998, the City adopted the SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan that resulted in establishing an Office Park zone on a 53-acre site located in the southwest corner of SR 527 and Dumas Road. This site will serve as an employment area within close proximity to residential neighborhoods within the corridor. Careful site planning, mix of uses, transportation, transit and pedestrian connections are crucial to ensure a successful employment area.

With the planning and zoning of adequate business park land, consideration should be given to servicing and attracting business and industrial uses that are appropriately scaled to the community's geographic area of influence, can be served with a full range of urban services, reflect the aesthetic character of the City through good design principles and that can co-exist with environmentally sensitive areas.

The existing business park development occurred without a coordinated circulation plan that connects neighboring uses or provides for easy pedestrian access. As future business park sites develop, the site design, compatibility of uses and circulation of vehicles and pedestrians should be carefully planned.

Public and Institutional Land Use Issues

In 2003, 40.5 acres of public neighborhood park land served the City's population of 12,260. Based on existing Mill Creek Level of Service (LOS) standards adopted in the Parks and Open Space Element (two acres of neighborhood park/1,000 population), the quantity of neighborhood park land needed for the City equals 24.5 acres.

Thus, the City has an adequate land supply of neighborhood park land for its 2003 population of 12,260, as well as a 16 acre surplus. When this surplus is allocated to the

2025 UGA population projection of 36,178, an additional 32 acres of neighborhood park land would be needed. Four additional neighborhood park sites have been identified in the East UGA Subarea Plan. When developed, these parks would help maintain the City's Level of Service for neighborhood parks.

The City has applied its current policy of requiring park land mitigation for residential developments that have impacts on the park system. The present mitigation policy, however, does not address the significant development impacts of new non-residential development on park lands.

LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

Many of the land use policies relate to the designation of future land uses within the City and UGA, and as such require the development of systematic criteria to guide both the public and private sectors in the consistent allocation and designation of future uses. A brief discussion of the rationale for the land use designations precedes the description of the locational criteria. All residential densities are expressed in terms of dwelling units per gross acre.

Residential - Low Density (4 d.u./acre)

1. Rationale:

As the City expands to the limits of the UGA boundary, a range of housing types and densities will occupy the developed and current vacant land areas deemed appropriate for residential development. With the established goal that the predominant residential land use type in the City continue to be low-density residential, the majority of new residential housing locations will be planned for low-density residential attached and detached housing types.

The existing pattern of low-density residential land use development in the City has predominantly occurred east of SR 527 and on 3rd Drive SE. This pattern is anticipated to continue in the future, although the City is nearing build out of land zoned for low-density residential uses.

New development should be designed to optimize compatibility with existing low-density residential neighborhoods, transportation facilities and environmental and topographic characteristics.

2. Locational Criteria:

The criteria to be utilized in determining the appropriate land areas for the allocation of low-density residential uses is provided below:

- Appropriate land areas shall be served or be capable of being served with a full range of urban services including public sewer and water, fire, police protection and power.

- Land areas that contain a variety of terrain, offering fairly level, rolling and hillside sites, but avoiding steep or irregular sites.
- Close proximity to collector streets with direct connections (i.e., sidewalks and pedestrian facilities) to surrounding neighborhoods, transit, schools and recreational areas. The opportunity should exist for the provision of open space and recreational areas and for the delineation of appropriate neighborhood boundaries, which are bound by but not penetrated by major streets and internally served by a system of local streets fitted to the terrain with due consideration of drainage, sunlight, vegetation, critical areas and views.
- Land areas that are physically adjacent and contiguous to previously developed low and medium density residential detached or attached developments.

Residential - Medium Density (Maximum 12 d.u./acre)

1. Rationale:

The rationale for the provision of medium-density residential is to provide alternative housing types and site designs to the typical single-family detached neighborhood development patterns and to provide for clustered attached housing situated within close proximity to commercial activity areas and transit facilities.

Medium-density residential housing provides an alternative to low-density residential detached development and allows for a mix of housing types. Single-family attached housing also provides an alternative to single-family detached housing. This type of housing is consistent with the goal of remaining a predominately single-family community.

2. Locational Criteria:

Appropriate land areas shall be served or be capable of being served with a full range of urban services, including public sewer and water, fire, police protection and power.

Medium-density residential land areas may be planned within the central core or on the periphery of the central core adjacent to SR 527 or adjacent to transit facilities, commercial uses or compatible low-density residential uses.

Other areas appropriate for medium-density residential uses include areas that are situated adjacent to or within close proximity to transportation corridors, transit facilities, recreation facilities and major commercial and employment areas.

Residential - High Density (Maximum 24 d.u./acre)

1. Rationale:

High-density residential developments are a necessary component in the City's housing mix and its contribution toward affordable housing and effective transit planning. The majority of the City's high-density residential housing has been located in the SR 527 corridor, east and north of the central commercial core. Consistent with the existing development patterns, future high-density residential dwelling units should generally be planned in close proximity to the existing city core and west of SR 527 between Town Center and Dumas Road. Other areas where high-density residential development would be appropriate include within the Town Center and the area north of Dumas Road, south of SR 96 and west of SR 527.

The central core of the City is considered an activity center with a combination of commercial, business park, institutional, public and high-density residential development. At present the central core area has been planned, zoned and developed for densities ranging between 16 and 20 dwelling units per acre. Since the concept of the central core is to provide for a central activity area, high-density residential (24 units per acre) may also be situated here in order to concentrate higher residential densities within close proximity to commercial, employment and transit facilities.

2. Locational Criteria:

High-density residential should contain the same locational characteristics as medium-density residential, with the exception of location. High-density residential should be planned in the central core of the City, including the Town Center area, or adjacent to commercial centers and transit facilities.

Mixed-Use, High-Density Residential (Maximum 30 d.u./acre)

1. Rationale:

With the planning and development of the Town Center, which will serve as an extension of the existing commercial and business core, it is appropriate to provide additional high-density housing north of the Town Center in the SR 527 Corridor Subarea to contribute to the critical mass and pedestrian activity levels of the Town Center. High-density housing within close walking distance to the Town Center is desirable as a means of extending the neighborhood social realm to the shopping and employment area of the Town Center and reducing the number of vehicular trips. In addition, it is appropriate to encourage a mix of commercial and office uses to be integrated with the residential uses north of the Town Center as a means of extending the employment and retail services to the neighborhood level.

High-density residential with neighborhood commercial and office uses is appropriate in the northern portion of the SR 527 Subarea located at the southwest

intersection of SR 527 and Dumas Road and also on the east side of SR 527 south of Seattle Hill Road, due to the proximity to the existing commercial and office uses, transit and pedestrian connections.

2. Locational Criteria:

Situating high-density residential uses with neighborhood commercial and office uses within walking distance of the existing and planned office, commercial and employment areas, as well as transit facilities, is desirable to minimize vehicular trips. Well-designed, distinctive mixed use developments also function as visual gateways to the City.

Commercial - Neighborhood Commercial

1. Rationale:

The rationale underlying the neighborhood commercial land use designation is to accommodate centrally located and concentrated areas that provide a limited range of retail sales and services to nearby neighborhoods. Uses allowed in neighborhood commercial zones typically include retail sales and services (except automobile sales), professional and personal services, restaurants (other than fast foods) and automotive service stations. High- and medium-density residential uses are generally compatible within neighborhood commercial zones, but should only occur if designed to complement commercial land uses.

2. Locational Criteria:

Areas suitable for neighborhood commercial land use designations should conform with the following criteria:

- Parcels that are served by either collector or arterial streets;
- Parcels that have the same level of utility services as the surrounding neighborhood;
- The designation is situated in a location that is central to, or easily accessible, to residents living in surrounding neighborhoods;
- Parcels that are capable of being physically buffered from surrounding residential properties; and
- Soils are appropriate for construction of neighborhood commercial land uses.

Commercial - Community Business

1. Rationale:

The rationale pertaining to the community business land use designation is to provide for appropriate land areas that provide economic stability for the City through jobs and tax base. The designation intends to provide an appropriate amount of commercial land that is properly sited to take advantage of a safe and efficient transportation network and transit facilities, provides a broad range of goods and services and is compatible with surrounding land use designations and environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Locational Criteria:

An appropriate amount of land area that is centrally located in or outside the core of the community in concentrated forms.

Community business designations outside the core are appropriate where a concentrated pattern of higher intensity activity exists or is planned adjacent to and served by major transportation arterials and is consistent with the following locational criteria:

- Accessible by continuous pedestrian pathways, collector and arterial highways and capable of being served by transit facilities;
- Can be served with a full range of urban services;
- Contain sufficient land area to accomplish a clustered retail design as opposed to a lineal or strip commercial design and can accommodate a mixed-use design concept with high-density residential development as secondary uses; and
- Where community business land uses will not result in incompatible or deleterious effects on surrounding non-commercial land uses.

Commercial - Town/Village Center

1. Rationale:

The rationale underlying the Town/Village Center land use designation is to provide areas for an integrated form of development where a vibrant people place can be created. The Town/Village Center designation provides adequate area for a mix of medium and high density residential, commercial, institutional, and public uses to form an urban community and provide economic stability for the City by providing jobs and a diversified tax base. The designation is placed on properties that take advantage of access from arterial highways and transit facilities as well as being accessible to residents within the surrounding neighborhoods.

In addition to commercial land uses, medium and high density residential, institutional, and public land uses are desirable within the Town/Village Center areas to contribute to the pedestrian activity levels by extending the neighborhood realm into and amongst the commercial areas. In addition, vehicular trips can be reduced by providing various land uses within walking distance from each other.

2. Locational Criteria:

An appropriate amount of land area that is centrally located in or outside the core of the community in concentrated forms.

Town/Village Center designations are appropriate where a concentrated pattern of higher intensity activity exists or is planned adjacent to and served by major transportation arterials. Designations of Town/Village Center shall be consistent with the following locational criteria:

Land areas that:

- contain sufficient land area to accommodate a mixed land use pattern including medium and high-density residential development;
- are located in an area that is central to, or easily accessible, to residents living in surrounding neighborhoods;
- include parcels that are capable of being physically connected to surrounding properties with vehicular and pedestrian facilities;
- include sites where commercial, residential and mixed-use land uses will not result in incompatible or deleterious effects on surrounding non-commercial land uses;
- are capable of being physically buffered from surrounding residential properties;
- are accessible by continuous pedestrian pathways, collector and arterial highways and capable of being served by transit facilities; and
- can be served with a full range of urban services.

Industrial - Business Parks

1. Rationale:

Manufacturing, assembly, distribution, health services and facilities and wholesale/office activities assume a significant role in the City's economy by providing jobs and adding to the tax base. To support these types of land uses in the local economy it is necessary to provide for the appropriate amount of land.

The major form of business park land uses should occur in campus style development and on large tracts of land that are planned, developed and operated

as integrated facilities. Special attention shall be given to circulation, transit access, parking, utility needs, aesthetics and compatibility between uses both within the business park and with surrounding uses.

The underlying rationale for the business park designation is to provide an appropriate supply of land for a variety of light industrial and office uses that may depend upon close proximity to other industries and are dependent on an urban labor supply. In addition, the designation should promote efficient public and private utility and transportation expenditures, and promote compatibility with surrounding non-industrial land uses and environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Locational Criteria:

Areas that are suitable for business park land use designations shall conform to the following criteria:

- Land areas that contain flat topography, have soils with sufficient bearing capacity to support large structures, contain parcels of adequate size to accommodate buffer and parking requirements and allow a number of business/industrial uses to be located on the site.
- The areas should be capable of being served by collector or arterial transportation facilities including transit. Site design should allow employees to easily walk to safe, covered transit facilities located on the abutting arterial roads and to businesses providing customary support, goods and services.
- The land areas should be located where they can take maximum advantage of existing and planned utility systems, including transit, in order to optimize the cost of providing essential public services.

Office Park

1. Rationale:

Office activities assume a significant role in the City's economy and this role is anticipated to continue in the future. To augment the role of this type of employment-based land use in the local economy, it is necessary to provide for the appropriate amount of land use for future office-related uses. The office park development should promote efficient public and private utility and transportation expenditures, and promote compatibility with surrounding non-industrial land uses and environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Locational Criteria:

The major form of office park land uses should occur on large tracts of land within the SR 527 Corridor Subarea that are planned, developed and operated as integrated facilities for a number of individual offices. Special site planning consideration shall be given to circulation, transit, parking, utility needs, pedestrian

circulation, aesthetics and compatibility between uses both within the office park and with surrounding uses.

Areas that are suitable for office park land use designations shall conform to the following criteria:

- Land areas that contain flat topography, have well-drained soils with sufficient bearing capacity to support large structures and contain parcels of adequate size to accommodate buffer and parking requirements.
- The areas should be served by collector or arterial transportation facilities including transit. Site design principles should be applied that allow employees to easily walk to transit facilities and adjacent uses including residential neighborhoods.
- The land areas should be located where uses can maximize existing and planned utility systems, including transit, in order to optimize the cost of providing essential public services.

Public - Institutional

1. Rationale:

Public and institutional land uses are important components of the City, and add immeasurably to the quality of urban life. Public/institutional land uses denote that they are owned by the public and operated for the benefit of the community at large. The demand for more and varied public lands and services increases as the City expands, population grows and the older facilities become outmoded and living standards and public expectations rise.

The intent of the public and institutional land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan is to supply an appropriate amount of community facility uses and needs to serve the ever increasing demands of the residents. Public and institutional land uses include civic uses, transit facilities, neighborhood and community parks, and public open space. Although privately owned, the community's nature preserve, tot lots and golf course are also included in this major land use designation with their ownership status appropriately noted.

2. Locational Criteria:

Civic Facilities

Civic facilities such as a community center, post office, library and city hall, should be located in or near the core area, be easily accessible by transit, pedestrian trails and collector and arterial streets, and be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Neighborhood Parks

Where possible, neighborhood parks should be sited near the center of neighborhoods and within a ¼ to ½ mile walking radius to the neighborhood population groups served.

Recreational activities related to neighborhood parks include both passive and active uses. Active uses usually include non-organized sports facilities; i.e., basketball, baseball, soccer, skate boarding, tennis and play equipment, and should be conducted in such a manner as to be compatible with the surrounding residential areas. Passive uses include open play areas, nature trails, greenways and picnic areas.

Community Parks

Community parks should be greater than five acres and preferably range between 10 and 35 acres and include both active and passive uses. Active uses for community parks include organized sports. Community parks should be located on collector or arterial streets that provide easy vehicular access to the residents of the community. Since community parks may be surrounded in part by residential development, active organized sports should be planned in areas that will not detrimentally impact surrounding residences.

Open Space - Greenway

Public Open Space - Greenway uses should be planned in areas where natural amenities such as streams, wetlands, natural vegetation areas and large open spaces can be utilized for pedestrian (hiker/bicycle) linkages and as separators between urban land uses. Such open space/greenways can also be used to buffer potentially incompatible land uses and provide visual quality and identity to neighborhoods throughout the City.

Religious Facilities

Religious facilities should be planned on reasonably level sites, provide adequate parking and landscaping, and be convenient to potential membership.

For religious facilities serving neighborhoods, walking convenience is important; for religious facilities serving the community, accessibility to major collector arterial streets is important. Both neighborhood and community facilities should be located on or near collector arterials and should be compatible with surrounding residential uses.

Private Parks and Open Space

Private open spaces include the existing golf course, nature preserve, tot lots and other open space corridors that are owned and maintained by private property associations. Private tot lots should be located within easy access to surrounding neighborhood residences, while private open spaces should be planned in areas to separate land use incompatibilities and complement the pedestrian trail system.

Transit Facilities

Transit facilities should be located within the core area and on collector and arterial streets conveniently sited near population and employment areas. They should be incorporated into the overall design of the adjacent land use, and be designed to include shelter/weather protection facilities.

LAND USE POLICIES

Residential Policies

Policy 1.01

The residential character of the City should be composed of a range of residential densities while maintaining and enhancing the City as a predominantly single-family residential community.

Policy 1.02

The original Planned Residential Development master plan adopted by Snohomish County, and by the City upon incorporation, should continue to be implemented, where appropriate. Amendment requests to the original Master Plan shall be evaluated for consistency with the appropriate land use locational criteria set forth in the Land Use Element.

Policy 1.03

The City's existing residential development pattern is configured with the higher densities located nearest to the City's core, on the west side of SR 527 north of the Town Center and south of the Gateway shopping center. Medium to low densities are dispersed to established residential neighborhoods or higher intensity activity areas. As the City expands, this pattern of higher densities locating near designated neighborhood centers should be continued.

Policy 1.04

New residential development should be compatible with surrounding land uses in height, scale and design and be in character with the high quality of development in the City. Design guidelines and strategies such as those included in the Residential Development Handbook for Snohomish County Communities and those in the City's Development Code (Chapter 17.34) should be incorporated into the design of new subdivisions.

Policy 1.05

High-density residential (24 units per acre) development should be located in the City's core area, which is generally bound by: 153rd Street SE on the north, 173rd Street SE on the south, and the eastern property lines of the current multiple family developments on the east and west of SR 527, including the area designated as the Town Center. In addition, high-density development is appropriate in the 132nd Street corridor adjacent to commercial uses in the Dumas Road area. Examples of high-density residential housing types include apartments, townhouses, multiplex attached units and single-family units on small lots with densities greater than 12 dwelling units per acre.

Policy 1.06

High-density residential development is appropriate in the Town Center area when developed as a component of a mixed-use development. High-density residential uses that are planned in the Town Center area should be designed to complement and be

compatible with the planned commercial and office uses and be secondary in terms of floor area ratios to the commercial uses.

Policy 1.07

High-density residential land uses of up to 24 dwelling units per acre are appropriate within the SR 527 Corridor Subarea from the planned Town Center north to Dumas Road and south of Seattle Hill Road on the east side of SR 527. Housing types associated with this density category should include multifamily attached housing in the form of condominiums, apartments and townhouses. Single-family attached and detached are also appropriate housing types. Multifamily residential uses planned to front on the primary access road are encouraged to provide office and/or retail uses on the ground floor with residential units above. This mixed-use approach is intended to blend the office and commercial uses into the primary street corridor of surrounding residential neighborhoods. High-density residential developments that include ground floor retail or office uses may achieve a maximum residential density of 30 dwelling units per acre.

Policy 1.08

Medium and high density residential development is required within the East Gateway Urban Village situated on the south side of the SR 96 corridor east of 35th Avenue SE and west of Seattle Hill Road. In the area adjacent to existing low density land uses to the south, residential development that does not exceed three stories in height shall be provided to ensure compatibility with the existing residences. High density residential above retail and/or offices uses shall be encouraged in the areas designated on the development plan as mixed-use.

Policy 1.09

Medium-density residential between five (5) and twelve (12) units per acre may be located outside of the core area in the SR 527 corridor and be situated primarily east of SR 527. The land south of the Miller's Village development and east of SR 527 is appropriate for such development. Medium-density residential development is also appropriate next to the commercial area located south of 132nd Street SE and west of SR 527 south of Nickel Creek. Finally, the current site of the Pacific Topsoils operation, located west of 35th Avenue SE is suitable for medium-density residential development. Representative housing types include multiplex attached units, townhouses and single-family units on smaller lots with densities ranging between 5 and 12 dwelling units per acre.

Policy 1.10

Low-density residential that does not exceed four (4) units per acre shall be the predominate density in single-family residential neighborhoods. Single-family detached and attached uses are typical low-density residential housing types.

Policy 1.11

In addition to the existing neighborhood divisions of the original planned community, future low-density residential development is planned to occur in other neighborhoods situated within the UGA. These areas are referred to as Planning Neighborhoods (see

Figure VI-2). As these areas are considered for annexation to the City, the annexation will be referred to by its Neighborhood Planning Area. The UGA Neighborhood Planning Areas and their corresponding boundaries are described as follows:

1. Northeast Neighborhood Planning Area:

South of 132nd Street SE, west of 35th Avenue SE, east of Jackson High School and Heatherwood Middle School, and north of the Vine Maple, Huckleberry and Highland Trails developments.

2. South Neighborhood Planning Area:

South of the Emerald Heights, The Lakes, Lively Environmental Center, Wildflower and Highlands developments, east of SR 527, north of 180th Street SE and west of 35th Avenue SE.

3. West Neighborhood Planning Area:

South of 164th Street SE, east of 3rd Avenue SE and west of the current city limits, which generally follow North Creek, and north of 183rd Street SE.

4. Northwest Neighborhood Planning Area:

South of 128th and 132nd Streets, east of I-5, west of eastern boundary of McCollum Park and north of an extension of Trillium Boulevard and Meadow Place SW.

5. East UGA Subarea:

Generally south of 132nd Street SE, east of 35th Avenue SE and west of the power line and north of 183rd Street SE.

Policy 1.12

Future development in the Northwest Neighborhood Planning Area shall be planned pursuant to sound land use planning principles related to land use compatibility with the existing single-family residences and commercial uses, environmental protection and preservation of wetlands and steep slopes and coordination of transportation improvements to SR 527 and Dumas Road. In addition, site development should be compatible with transit service. Site planning and development of these land uses shall reflect a high quality of building design and layout, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and tree retention and landscaping since the area will serve as an activity area and is intended to be the northern entrance to the City.

Policy 1.13

Low-density and medium-density residential development in the Northeast Neighborhood Planning Area shall be developed consistent with land use compatibility to the Heatherwood Middle School and Jackson High School sites and existing residential uses. Commercial development shall also be compatible with residential

uses in the surrounding neighborhoods. Due to the existence of extensive wetlands in the area, special attention shall be given to the preservation of wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Policy 1.14

Future development adjacent to 35th Avenue SE and SR 96 shall be coordinated with any planned transportation improvements to the highways and the Streetscape Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1.15

Future development in the East UGA Subarea is subject to the Mill Creek East UGA Plan, which includes the following neighborhood design principles:

- Future residential neighborhoods should be of sufficient size and density to support neighborhood facilities and services, transit and pedestrian activity, with definable edges and a focused center (e.g., park, open space, plaza).
- Where possible, residential street layout and design should be based on a grid system featuring narrow streets, short blocks, sidewalks and landscaping. This development pattern should provide good connections to other activities and uses, optimize accessibility and circulation within neighborhoods, serve a variety of travel modes and disperse vehicular congestion. Street design should discourage rapid or high volume traffic that disrupts neighborhoods, consistent with the Streetscape policies.
- Transit service should be accessible within one-quarter of a mile from areas of higher residential density.
- Residential architecture should “greet” the street with welcoming facades and front porches, de-emphasizing front-loaded garages. Where possible, garages may be located in the rear or set back from the façade.

Policy 1.16

Future residential development in the West Neighborhood Planning Area shall be planned to be compatible with the existing development in the Cascadian Way and 3rd Avenue corridor and to reflect the fragile ecosystem of North Creek and its associated wetlands and wildlife habitat. Where possible, residential neighborhood design shall provide for vehicular and pedestrian accessibility to the SR 527 corridor and to the Town Center. The preservation of the existing vegetation on the slopes west of North Creek shall also be a major consideration of future residential design since it provides a significant visual backdrop to the City core.

Policy 1.17

The South UGA Planning Area includes existing residential developments and undeveloped lands planned for future low- and medium-density residential uses and limited neighborhood commercial uses. Medium-density residential uses are also appropriate east of SR 527. Future site planning of this area should include transportation improvements to SR 527 consistent with the Streetscape Element,

Seattle Hill Road realignment, preservation of significant vegetation and steep slopes and compatibility with surrounding low-density residential land uses located to the east. Individual developments along the SR 527 corridor should be connected with local streets and pedestrian ways to reduce unnecessary trips on SR 527.

The majority of the area bound by 180th Street SE, SR 527, 35th Avenue SE and the Highlands has been developed in low-density residential uses. Although the majority of the area has already been developed, future site planning of the remaining undeveloped land should include the provision of adequate parks and trail systems to connect to new and existing developments, preservation of significant vegetation, high quality residential development that is compatible with development in the City and transportation and streetscape improvements to 35th Avenue SE and 180th Street SE

Policy 1.18

Proposed multifamily and mixed-use projects in the SR 527 Corridor Subarea shall utilize the neighborhood, site, landscape, parking and building design principles set forth in the Urban Design Guidelines, Chapter IV, of the Subarea Plan. Proposed development projects are encouraged to prepare site and building plans that focus on pedestrian-scale neighborhoods, a strong relationship to the public realm of streets, open spaces and other public places, pedestrian and vehicular connectivity and compatibility with adjacent uses.

Policy 1.19

The peripheral boundaries of each residential development should contain appropriately-sized buffer areas. Referred to as property buffers, these vegetated areas provide neighborhood and development identity; provide wildlife habitat corridors; pedestrian linkage to other residential developments and activity areas and protect residential areas from visual and audible disturbances. Where appropriate, topographic change and natural areas shall be used to separate developments and to reinforce this identity.

Policy 1.20

Future residential development shall be planned and designed to accomplish an identifiable neighborhood character. Entrances to residential areas shall be clearly identifiable and aesthetically pleasing. Arterial and collector streets in residential areas shall be designed to include greenways or landscape buffers consistent with the Streetscape Element to provide consistent streetscape character with the existing developed areas of the City. Elements of neighborhood development should include preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, existing vegetation and natural grades, underground utilities, building mass in scale with lot sizes, safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation and useable open space.

Policy 1.21

New residential developments shall be designed to be compatible with similar uses and structures located within the subdivision or development as well as with adjacent developments. Compatibility should be measured in terms of structural mass, exterior

building materials, landscaping and screening, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and similar restrictive covenants where appropriate.

Policy 1.22

High-density residential housing, group homes, congregate care facilities, day care centers and like uses, shall be located in appropriate areas consistent with the locational criteria so as to be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Commercial and Business/Office Park Policies

Policy 2.01

An adequate amount of commercial and business park land shall be identified, zoned and reserved to increase the supply of the City's commercial and business park land base.

Policy 2.02

The size of retail commercial centers should be scaled to serve the needs of Mill Creek and immediate environs rather than seeking to satisfy larger multi-regional shopping needs.

Policy 2.03

Clustered retail commercial development shall be encouraged rather than strip commercial development. Light industrial development shall be of an office park or campus style design and the City shall actively seek such development.

Policy 2.04

The commercial and business park land uses situated at 180th Street SE and SR 527 provide both neighborhood and regional goods and services. Efforts should be made to improve the frontage and streetscape of both roads. This area represents the southern entrance or gateway to the City's UGA and as such should be enhanced with roadside landscaping, tasteful signage, pedestrian facilities and aesthetic building facades. If this area remains under the jurisdiction of another governmental entity, the City should negotiate an interlocal agreement to ensure compatible design and development standards.

Policy 2.05

Future commercial and business park development should provide for careful, thoughtful control of design of architectural elements so as to integrate the business community in a common and tasteful theme. Urban design elements should include efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation movements; transit opportunities; passive open spaces; underground utilities; and well designed parking facilities, signage and landscaping.

Policy 2.06

Commercial and business park developments shall be compatible with surrounding land uses and be designed to be in character with the high-quality of development in the City. Landscaping shall be used to screen and buffer residential developments. All

commercial and business park design elements shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board for compliance with all applicable City regulations.

Policy 2.07

To accommodate the existing and future employment needs of the City, two individual business parks are planned in the following general areas:

1. North Office Park:

Bound by Dumas Road on the north, SR 527 on the east and the extension of Trillium Boulevard and North Creek Drive on the south and east.

2. South Business Park:

Bound by SR 527 on the east, an extension of 175th Street SE on the south, North Creek Greenway on the west and Penny Creek on the north.

Policy 2.08

Office and business parks shall be well-designed to be easily accessible to transit, provide for efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation movements, include adequate open spaces, provide aesthetic controls for future building development and complement the surrounding uses. Proportional transportation improvements to adjoining road frontages and consistency with the Streetscape Element of the plan shall be components of site development. Natural features such as North Creek, Penny Creek, ravines and wetlands should be preserved and integrated into the open space elements of office/business park design.

Policy 2.09

To accommodate the existing and future commercial needs of the City and the UGA, seven commercial areas are planned in the following general areas: 128th Street SE and I-5 interchange; the area bound by 132nd Street SE, Dumas Road and SR 527; southeastern corner of SR 527 and 132nd Street SE; southwestern corner of 132nd Street and 35th Avenue SE; south side of 132nd Street SE and east of 35th Avenue SE; northwestern and southwestern corners of the intersection of 164th Street and SR 527 south to Penny Creek; the area surrounding the intersection of SR 527 and 180th Street SE; and the area surrounding 173rd Street SE and on the east side of SR 527.

Policy 2.10

Uses within the North Business Park area, adjacent to the Town Center, and within the East Gateway Urban Village shall complement and reinforce the physical design and pedestrian elements of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Town Center Policies

Policy 3.01

The Town Center site is located generally south of an extension of 139th Street SE, west of SR 527 and east of the North Creek Greenway. The Town Center is a well-

designed mixed-use development that establishes an extension of the existing commercial core for the City. Town Center is a pedestrian and transit friendly development, with planned transit stops and pedestrian linkages to existing neighborhoods, the original commercial core and the North Creek Trail.

To this end, the Town Center Design Guidelines have been adopted by the City Council (originally adopted in 1997, and subsequently amended in 2000 and 2003). The primary goals of the Town Center Design Guidelines are as follows:

- Encourage density and a diverse mix of uses in the center;
- Create a Town Center that is strongly pedestrian oriented and transit friendly;
- Create strong identity for the Mill Creek Town Center;
- Create places that provide for the needs of a diverse population of different ages;
- Integrate the Town Center with existing commercial development and the surrounding natural environment; and
- Phase plan to allow for future growth and economic viability over time.

The Design Guidelines control the aesthetic components of the Town Center including site design and site features, landscaping, building architecture, public plazas, streets, sidewalks, parking areas and signage.

Implementation of this policy has occurred through the application of the Planned Community Business zone district, which requires a Master Development Permit for the development of the site.

Policy 3.02

The design of the Town Center should reflect a small town character with uses that generally cater to the local residents. The building design, signage, lights and landscaping should be coordinated to enhance the character of the Town Center and create an identity for the City of Mill Creek. Public places for people of all ages to gather such as a plaza, a village green or square, a fountain or a community center should be the focal point of the Town Center.

Policy 3.03

Mixed-use buildings with residences or offices over first floor commercial should be encouraged and be oriented to public open spaces whenever possible. The design of the Town Center should incorporate a trail system that connects the public open spaces within the greenbelt along North Creek.

Policy 3.04

The Town Center should incorporate dense, good quality, high-density housing with up to four stories. These residential units should have verandas and/or private open spaces and should be oriented to the wetland and greenbelts when appropriate.

Policy 3.05

Develop streets that incorporate pedestrian amenities such as wide sidewalks, awnings, banners, street trees, landscaping and buildings with display windows. On-street parking should be provided in front of commercial uses, while parking lots should be provided behind buildings and be well-screened. The automobile circulation pattern should provide for efficient, safe access to the Town Center and incorporate bike ways and transit stops.

East Gateway Urban Village Policies

Policy 4.01

The East Gateway Urban Village is located generally south of 132nd Street SE between 35th Avenue SE and Seattle Hill Road. The primary goals of the East Gateway Urban Village are as follows:

- Encourage density and a diverse mix of uses in the center;
- Create a strongly pedestrian oriented and transit friendly development;
- Create strong identity for the East Gateway Urban Village;
- Encourage the development of a sustainable neighborhood supported by a diversity of businesses and types of residential development;
- Create a safe and efficient internal transportation network through the entire site to move goods and services as well as customers, employees, and residents.
- The transportation network should have a controlled access point onto SR 96 and connect to Seattle Hill Road;
- Create places that provide for the needs of a diverse population of different ages;
- Provide for adequate buffers and trails around the perimeter of the East Gateway Urban Village to enhance pedestrian connectivity between uses while minimizing impacts to existing surrounding uses;
- Protect the existing adjacent property uses by developing design guidelines that incorporate design techniques such as limiting light from spilling onto adjacent properties and limiting building heights; and

Realization of these goals will occur through the application of the Planned Urban Village zone district, which requires a Master Development Permit for the development of the site. One of the requirements of the Master Development Permit is consistency with the Design Guidelines, which will control the aesthetic components of the site design and site features including but not limited to; landscaping, building architecture, public plazas, streets, sidewalks, parking areas and signage.

Policy 4.02

The design of the East Gateway Urban Village should reflect an urban character with a wide mix of uses that generally cater to the local residents. The building design, signage, lights and landscaping should be coordinated to enhance the character of the East Gateway Urban Village. Public places for people of all ages to gather such as a plaza, a village green or square, or a fountain should be the focal point.

Policy 4.03

Mixed-use buildings with residences or offices over first floor commercial should be encouraged and be oriented toward the public realm of streets and open spaces whenever possible. The design of the East Gateway Urban Village should incorporate a trail system that provides a buffer and connects the development with the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 4.04

The East Gateway Urban Village should incorporate dense, high quality housing in a mid-rise building scale (four stories of housing over one-story of ground floor retail/office) and a low-rise building scale (up to three stories) adjacent to existing residential development outside the East Gateway Urban Village.

Policy 4.05

The design of neighborhoods, buildings, streets and stormwater facilities in the designated East Gateway Urban Village shall adhere to sustainable design principles such as those set forth in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEEDS) certification requirements. Said design principles shall focus on pedestrian-scale neighborhoods, a strong relationship of buildings and open space to the public realm of streets, connectivity to surrounding uses, high quality aesthetic design, and compatibility with adjacent uses.

Policy 4.06

Streets that incorporate pedestrian amenities such as wide sidewalks, street trees, landscaping and buildings that meet the sidewalk with display windows should be provided. On-street parking should be provided in front of commercial uses, while parking should be provided behind or below buildings. Any parking that is adjacent to the "public realm" shall be well-screened. The vehicular circulation pattern should provide for efficient, safe access and incorporate bike ways and transit stops.

Policy 4.07

Single-use commercial building footprints shall be designed to complement the pedestrian and neighborhood character of the Urban Village land use designation.

Policy 4.08

To improve traffic flow and reduce potential vehicular conflicts on 132nd Street SE, 35th Avenue SE and Seattle Hill Road, new development(s) shall utilize shared access drives and provide for internal circulation when practical and appropriate to minimize traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 4.09

Single-family neighborhoods that are located adjacent to the East Gateway Urban Village should be protected from potential negative environmental impacts by providing adequate vegetated buffers around the perimeter of the East Gateway Urban Village. Said buffers should incorporate pedestrian trails and provide appropriate pedestrian connections at such locations as 135th Place SE and 137th Street SE.

Policy 4.10

Where possible and practical, existing stands of mature trees should be preserved and incorporated into open spaces.

SR 527 Subarea Policies

The following policies are contained in the SR 527 Corridor Subarea plan, and are reprinted here to provide a complete set of land use policies in this Plan document.

Policy 5.01

The land area situated at the southwest intersection of Dumas Road and SR 527 is planned for a large office complex to accommodate the market demands for professional services, high technology manufacturing, research and development and "flex-tech" uses in the SR 527 corridor and community. This area should be developed as a major employment center with a full range of urban services including transit and limited commercial to serve the employees and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The office park will also function with the existing and planned commercial land uses situated north of Dumas Road. Upon full development, the proposed office park should contain manufacturing and office type uses housed in buildings that are well designed, serviced and complement the high-quality development character of the community. Retail uses intended to primarily serve the users of the office park and surrounding residential neighborhoods are also appropriate in high local traffic areas especially adjacent to North Creek Drive.

Policy 5.02

The land area that exists at the southwest corner of the proposed intersection of 145th Street SE and SR 527 is an appropriate site for a future neighborhood business complex. This site should be planned for a combination of office, retail and possible multifamily residential that is intended to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods with limited convenience-type commercial uses. Since a portion of the site fronts on SR 527, it would be appropriate to locate several office buildings adjacent to the frontage while utilizing the western portion of the site for retail uses. Design of the neighborhood business complex shall utilize the design principles in the Design Guidelines section of the SR 527 Subarea Plan.

East UGA Subarea Policies

The following policies are contained in the Mill Creek East UGA Subarea Plan, and are reprinted here to provide a complete set of land use policies in this Plan document.

Policy 6.01

The size, location and distribution of parcels in the East UGA Subarea present the opportunity to plan and develop a pedestrian-oriented village center, at Seattle Hill Road and 148th Street SE. The village center should comprise a diversity of mixed uses, including a range of residential densities, neighborhood-scale commercial, office and public gathering places and open spaces to effectively provide convenient services to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Policy 6.02

The 148th Street SE and Seattle Hill Road village center should be designed and function as a neighborhood in and of itself. Future development should be connected with surrounding neighborhoods with streets, sidewalks and open space corridors. The design and function should serve as the neighborhood focal point and where possible, integrate with public parks that support active and passive uses.

Economic Development Policies

Policy 7.01

The City shall promote and maintain an atmosphere that encourages business to locate in the City and to selectively target desirable types of commercial and/or industrial uses.

Policy 7.02

The City shall prepare a business and industrial action plan to implement the economic objectives through legislative activities, public/private cooperation in education and employment programs and joint problem solving.

Policy 7.03

The City shall ensure that permits and licenses are evaluated and processed in a timely manner.

Policy 7.04

The City shall encourage capital improvement projects in commercial and business park areas to improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems and stimulate more intensive and concentrated activity.

Policy 7.05

The City shall develop an equitable tax structure that keeps and attracts businesses while maintaining the City's ability to provide a high level of service for commercial and business park uses.

Policy 7.06

The City shall work cooperatively on economic issues with local businesses and industries.

Policy 7.07

The City shall enact energy conservation measures that will result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy 7.08

The City shall develop strategies to promote a diversified and sustainable economy that is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Policy 7.09

The City shall encourage climate-friendly businesses and business practices and a clean energy economy.

Accommodation of Growth Targets

The City has defined a UGA and established land use designations that will accommodate the population and economic growth anticipated to occur through the year 2025 (see Table 1 in Chapter V, Population and Employment). Future growth will be guided by the Land Use Map and land use policies established in this chapter for residential, commercial, and business park development and for the provision of parks and public uses.