

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 LAYOUT OF THIS PLAN**

The chapters following this introduction contain the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Arlington as updated in 2015 and certified in 2017 by the Washington Department of Commerce and Puget Sound Regional Council.

For ease of use, the Plan is broken into three main components. The first component is comprised of Chapters One through Three. These three chapters contain the City's Vision Statements, Maps, and Policies.

The second component is comprised of Chapters Four through Nine which contain the background information behind the goals and policies.

The third component is Appendices A through J which include a glossary of terms, the procedures for the siting of essential public facilities, plan consistency with countywide planning policies, the Department of Commerce Checklist, information about Arlington's natural environment, the environmental review of this plan (SEPA) and the ordinance adopting the Plan update.

## **1.2 PLAN OBJECTIVES**

In the 1995 Comprehensive Plan the City Council adopted a vision statement as presented by the Select Committee established to write the plan. The Vision Statement (Page 3) is still as appropriate today as it was when it was first adopted. The principal theme of the Statement is that the City of Arlington would like to maintain its character and identity, or simply put, a "small town" atmosphere. The overall goals found in the third chapter of the plan are essential in maintaining this atmosphere and a fine quality of life for our citizens. As the Plan is implemented the goals will provide direction and guidance.

We would, as a City, like to remain the same, but on a larger scale with the same amenities now treasured by our present citizens. We want to preserve our community-oriented character. We want our citizens to be able to find the type of housing they want and can afford and insure that they be able to work and shop locally. Excellent municipal services, facilities, and infrastructure need to be provided without overtaxing our citizens.

To the West and North of our city limits lies the Stillaguamish Valley. It is fertile farmland within the flood plain of the Stillaguamish River. As an awe inspiring entrance to our City, it is unequalled.

We will be tested at times during the next twenty years as we fit more citizens into less space. But the rewards will be great as we look westward at a preserved Stillaguamish Valley and inward to a balanced residential and job-creating community. Safe, well-kept neighborhoods and commercial areas are the ultimate goal of this plan and will continue to be so as we step forward into a bright future.

### **1.3 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

The following chapters outline how well the City is positioned to achieve its goals and targets by 2035. The Growth Management Act requires that where targets are achievable, an implementation strategy be presented, including proposed code revisions, projects, specific policies and programs. Where targets (population, employment, housing, buildable lands, etc.) are in some jeopardy, a set of “reasonable measures” should be developed. These may be the same as implementation measures. The objective is to make the community’s plan workable.

In 2017 the following Plan implementation strategies are adopted as part of the GMA update. The list will be updated annually.

#### **City Land-Use Code Changes (Title 20)**

1. Reform the City’s entire Land-Use Code. Specifically:
  - Revise existing regulations to incentivize Cottage Housing.
  - Combine RMD and RMLD land use designations/regulations into one RMD land use designation.
  - Develop and adopt a Mixed Use code for use in attracting well planned developments to the City’s commercial land base. Revise the permitted-use table to add clarity and consistency.

These code changes are not required for compliance with GMA requirements. They will be developed after Plan adoption in Summer, 2017.

#### **Land Use Map**

1. Remove the TDR overlay designation from the Brekhus/Beach Subarea.
2. Combine the RLMD and RMD land-use designations into one RMD designation.

3. Provide for the addition of Mixed Use overlay designations to the Land Use Map based on approved development plans.
4. Revise, as needed, the Arlington/Marysville Manufacturing Industrial Center (MIC) designation to reflect the PSRC Regional Centers Framework.

### **Neighborhood Plans**

1. Develop design standards for the Old Town Business District and the Old Town Residential District.
2. Develop “high-level” master plans for Brekhus/Beach Subarea and future Lindsay Annexation area within the Hilltop Subarea.
3. Complete annexation in the Hilltop Subarea.
4. Review the following “emphasis areas” for further planning strategies:
  - a. SR9/172<sup>nd</sup> St, in the Lindsay annexation area.
  - b. Airport Business Park.
  - c. Arlington-Marysville Manufacturing Industrial Center.
  - d. Island Crossing and Stillaguamish tribal property.
  - e. West Bluff
  - f. Smokey Point

### **Environmental Protection**

1. Identify areas of potential slide hazards (e.g. Burn Road/Stillaguamish Avenue) and determine regulatory or other protections.

### **Economic Development**

1. Help implement the Stillaguamish Valley Economic Development Plan.
2. Participate in PSRC regional centers study.
3. Pursue conceptual master plan of Manufacturing Industrial Center with Marysville, EASC and property owners.
4. Review zoning in underdeveloped commercial centers (e.g. Kent Prairie, Hilltop) to find incentives for development (e.g. HMU zoning).

**Transportation**

1. Develop plans for street connectivity
2. Accommodate nonmotorized transportation modes (trails, sidewalks, etc)
3. Develop street networks within the Brekhus/Beach Subarea, and the future Lindsay Annexation Area.

**Plan and Project Review**

1. Reports, plans, project reviews or other actions by the City will contain an analysis of the GMA Plan and policies to ensure consistency or describe variations.
2. Reports, plans, project reviews or other actions by adjacent jurisdictions will be reviewed against the Comprehensive Plan, with comment being provided to the decision-makers.

The July 2015 GMA Comprehensive Plan was granted conditional certification by the Puget Sound Regional Council, subject to completion of several items outlined in its March 2016 review (Appendix I). Certification is required for review of transportation funding requests under the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which Arlington will be pursuing over the coming months and years. This 2017 Plan reflects changes based on that review.

**1.4 DOCUMENTS ADOPTED BY REFERENCE**

The City of Arlington Comprehensive Plan incorporates by reference the following documents:

- 2005 Arlington GMA Comprehensive Plan, except as otherwise amended by the 2015 Update.
- West Arlington Subarea Plan.
- Arlington Water Systems Plan.
- Arlington Sewer Systems Plan.
- Arlington 2016 Transportation Plan.
- Stillaguamish Valley Economic Development Plan.
- Snohomish County Countywide Planning Policies, June 2013.
- Multi-County Planning Policies.
- PSRC Vision 2040.
- PSRC Transportation 2040.

- PSRC Industrial Lands Analysis, 2015.
- Updated Regional Transportation Demand Management Action Plan.
- Updated Transportation 2040 financial strategy.
- Coordination with planned Community Transit services.
- Coordination with Sound Transit planning.
- Puget Sound Cleans Air Agency Growth Management Policies.
- Regional Open Space Strategy.
- International Building Codes, including Fire Code.
- Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan.
- NPDES Phase II Stormwater permit.
- 2012 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Lakewood School District Capital Facilities Plan.
- Arlington School District Capital Facilities Plan.
- Snohomish County UGA Land Capacity Analysis Technical Report, June 10, 2015

The documents listed will have direct influence on decision-making where provisions are prescriptive. Where advisory only, the documents will be balanced with other policies, regulations and priorities.

### **1.5 RE-ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The Comprehensive Plan includes a Capital Facilities Element (Chapter 9) and Transportation Element (Chapter 8), each describing how infrastructure will be developed concurrently with growth. The City may not be able to finance all proposed capital facility projects. This will be assessed annually. Where capital facility shortfalls affect concurrency, the following are the options available:

- Increase Revenue
- Decrease Level of Service Standards
- Decrease the Cost of the Facility or Reduce the Scope of the Project
- Decrease the Demand for the Public Service or Facility
- Reassess the Land Use Element

In deciding how to address a particular shortfall, the City will balance the equity and efficiency considerations associated with each of these options.

## 1.6 Growth Management Act

In 1990, the Legislature enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA) to guide and coordinate local planning. The GMA recognizes the diversity of growth management challenges facing Washington's large, urban, small, and rural cities/counties and establishes distinct planning requirements for all cities/counties that vary depending upon population and growth rates. Local plans must be consistent with and supportive of the planning goals outlined in State law:

1. **Urban Growth** - Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce Sprawl** - Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.
3. **Transportation** - Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city Comprehensive Plans.
4. **Housing** - Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this State; promote a variety of residential densities and housing types; and encourage preservation of existing housing.
5. **Economic Development** - Encourage economic development throughout the State that is consistent with adopted Comprehensive Plans; promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this State, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons; and encourage growth -- all within the capacities of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
6. **Property Rights** - Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
7. **Permits** - Applications for both State and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. **Natural Resource Industries** - Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries.

9. ***Open Space and Recreation*** - Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities; conserve fish and wildlife habitat; increase access to natural resource lands and water; and develop parks.
10. ***Environment*** - Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
11. ***Citizen Participation and Coordination*** - Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
12. ***Public Facilities and Services*** - Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
13. ***Historic Preservation*** - Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.

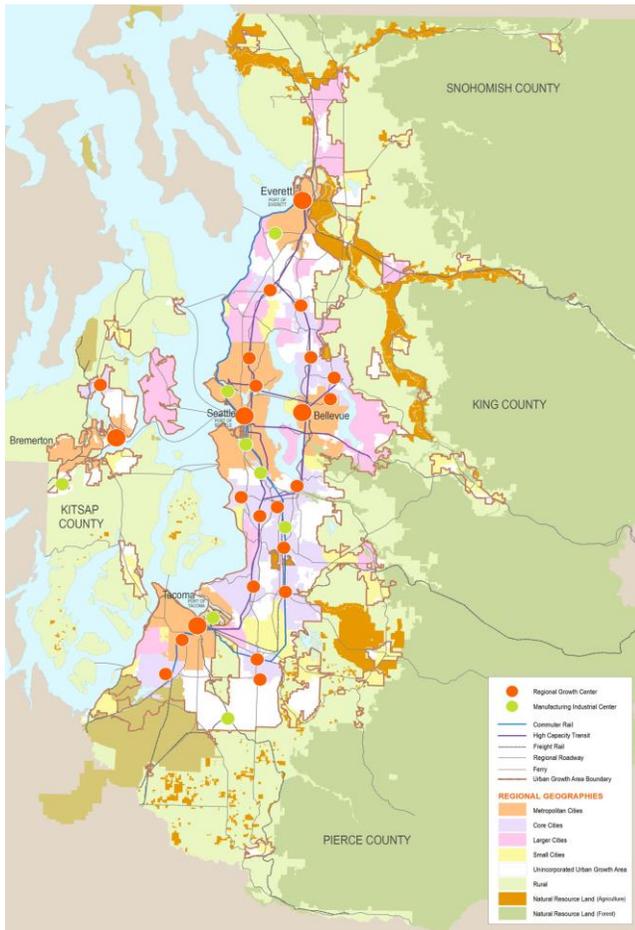
Against this policy backdrop, the GMA invests local government with significant decision-making power. The City of Arlington strongly endorses the thrust of the GMA as an essential and responsible series of planning and interlocal coordination measures that, when implemented, will help direct community, regional, and statewide efforts to enhance Washington's quality of life, environmental protection, and economic vitality. The City of Arlington continually works to maintain a Comprehensive Plan that establishes a clear intent and policy base that can be used to develop and interpret local regulations consistent with the GMA.

This Comprehensive Plan was developed in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070 -- the Growth Management Act -- to address growth issues in the City of Arlington, the adjacent Urban Growth Area (UGA), and what is shown as our future growth areas. It represents the community's policy plan for growth over the next 20 years, through 2035. The City of Arlington is interdependent with many other communities. In such circumstances, the long-term planning for the City needs to be adapted to unexpected or rapid changes. Therefore, rather than simply prioritizing actions, this plan assists the management of the City by providing policies to guide decision-making. The plan includes the following Elements:

- Housing
- Land Use

- Transportation
- Park, Recreation, and Open Space
- Economic Development
- Public Services and Capital Facilities

All of the planning elements have been integrated into a single, internally consistent plan, updated to reflect changes since its last review in 2005. The City of Arlington believes the Comprehensive Plan, as a whole, will be effective in working toward the community goals in an economically feasible manner.



### 1.7 CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

State law requires, and Arlington supports coordination of its Plan with those of neighboring communities and with regional and countywide planning policies.

#### Countywide Planning Policies

The GMA requires that each county planning under the act adopt countywide planning policies to which all comprehensive plans developed within that county must conform. The Snohomish County Countywide Planning Policies have provided guidance in the planning process and this Comprehensive Plan is consistent with them; in fact, those policies are adopted as Appendix C to this Comprehensive Plan.

### County Comprehensive Plan

Snohomish County, like Arlington, must update its comprehensive plan every ten years. These processes took place concurrently. Arlington was an active participant in the work of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (ICC) and

Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) committees. Each is a component of the County's GMA planning effort. Arlington also participated in the review of the County's Comprehensive Plan update and provided comment to the Draft Plan and environmental impact statement. The updated Arlington Plan is consistent with the County document.

### **Puget Sound Regional Council -- Vision 2040**

In October of 1990, the Puget Sound Council of Government (PSRC) developed and adopted a growth and transportation strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region known as *Vision 2020*. It was eventually updated as *Vision 2040* and *Transportation 2040*. This strategy is aimed at reducing sprawl, air pollution, and traffic congestion by calling for the containment and densification of growth within designated growth centers, thus limiting the extent of sprawl into surrounding farmlands, forests, and open spaces. It concentrates new employment into about fifteen centers and connects the centers with a regional transit system. The vision emphasizes the movement of people through increased transit and ridesharing investments.

Through a collaborative process among jurisdictions in Snohomish County known as Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), Arlington was originally given the designation of "Urban Small City". Subsequent to the 2005 Plan adoption it was re-classified to "Larger" cities along with Marysville, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo and Monroe. Larger cities are intended to absorb significant population and job growth, with "Small" cities absorbing growth in a less intensive manner.

## **1.8 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

The Arlington Plan serves many purposes: to outline a vision for the community through 2035, to outline specific actions to accomplish the vision, to assist in the review of land use or capital investment decisions and to assist discussions by the City with neighboring communities on issues of mutual interest.

Future public or private projects and decisions will require an analysis of this Plan to measure consistency with the City's vision and policies. To use this document as the City's Comprehensive Plan, for the basic plan elements the reader is directed to the Chapter 1, the Figures and Maps (Chapter 2), and the Goals and Policies (Chapter 3). This is all that is needed to know what our future plans are. If one wishes to see the background supporting data and analyses on how these plans, goals and policies were developed, he/she is directed to the appropriate Element addressing the item being proposed.

The Plan is also an “integrated SEPA/GMA document” meaning that it serves both as a Plan and an environmental impact statement. Future actions that are consistent with the Plan policies and environmental findings will have reduced analysis needs and faster permit processing. To use this document in its capacity as a supplemental EIS for the Comprehensive Plan, the reader is directed to the project description (Chapter 1, Introduction), the description of existing conditions (Chapter 4, Description of Planning Area), the goals and policies (Chapter 3, Goals and Policies), the analyses of the plan and its environmental impact and the environmental findings (Appendix F, Environmental Impact Statement with Addendum).

Over time, it is possible that some of the information will have become outdated. Such information may be updated during annual or eight-year periodic, Comprehensive Plan updates. Persons preparing an environmental checklist or other application document will be directed to the description of existing conditions (Chapter 4, Description of Planning Area), and the environmental impact analyses and environmental findings (Appendix F).

## **1.9 THE PAST AND PRESENT**

Before looking forward to 2035, a brief look back will set the stage. The City of Arlington had last updated its Plan in 2008 because the City had changed dramatically since the previous plan was adopted in 2005. Recognition of the type of changes that are occurring and readiness to make decisions in light of such changes will allow the City to take advantage of positive opportunities and to address the effects on the quality of life.

In 2005, the population in the City has shifted away from the large single-family unit to include many smaller family units. The balance between the number of jobs and the number of housing units has shifted as the number of two-income families has increased. Concerns about environmental quality had also created a change in traditional land use practices as well as a preference for alternatives to the automobile. And, prior to the Great Recession, the economy was shifting away from land-intensive industries to light manufacturing and service industries.

In 2005, the City undertook an extensive public participation process to ensure the vision of the community expressed in the Comprehensive Plan reflected the needs and desires of the local population. In 2005, the City of Arlington was experiencing pressures from growth within its boundaries as well as from the more urbanized areas in the County, State, and other states.

There was increasing demand for public facilities such as traffic improvements, police, utilities, and fire protection.

In 2015-17, growth pressures continued. The City has chosen to take a proactive role in attracting developments to meet the needs of the citizens, prioritizing alternative uses of land and public resources, and identifying in explicit terms the impact proposed developments will have on the community. This 2017 update continues the themes called out by the public in 2005 and adds those facts and figures that keep it current with 2017 trends. The 2005 Vision remains.

Population is expected to grow to almost 26,000 people by 2035, an almost 40% increase. Jobs are forecasted to grow to 20,884, although if the proposed Manufacturing Industrial Center (See Chapter 5) develops to its potential, up to 75,000 jobs will exist between Arlington's airport and central Marysville.

Where new residents will live is a significant issue in this Plan. In 2005 and 2008, because of plans by the City and County to promote Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a tool for agricultural preservation and more compact urban growth inside the City, the eastern city limits (Burn Hill) were expanded. In 2017, those plans are still under discussion because of infrastructure issues. The City has updated its capital facility plans for transportation, water, wastewater and stormwater in the past few years and the City's ability to serve its customers seems secure through 2035 (See Chapter 9). Road funding will present a challenge as the Burn Hill area and future Manufacturing Industrial Center (AMMIC) rely on future funding sources for major and local arterial streets serving future development. With the recent Connecting Washington gas tax approval in November 2016, SR531 will be improved as a major access point for these areas. The City is cooperating with the Stillaguamish Tribe in road and other improvements to accommodate each's land use planning along SR 530.

### **1.10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Public Participation Plan is included as Appendix H.

In developing the 10-Year update in 2005, the Planning Commission and City Council held numerous public workshops and hearings to take testimony from the public. Public notices and articles were printed in the Arlington Times and Everett Herald for all meetings as well as quarterly updates and announcements in the City's newsletter and on the City's website.

Through the visioning process the City identified the following opportunities that provide a basis for planning and the 2005 Plan:

- Maintain quality of life;
- Reduce land use conflicts and haphazard development;
- Maintain infrastructure;
- Determine what public services the City wants to provide and decide at what level of service it is willing to provide these services;
- Determine how to finance and pay for these public services;
- Determine how to acquire and spend public resources;
- Anticipate future expenditures;
- Build on current stewardship of land;
- Build on and take full advantage of existing assets.

Because the 10-Year update for 2015 was intended to update information while adhering to the 1995 and 2005 Vision, a less extensive public outreach program was used. It was assumed that the public was comfortable with the Vision and the greatest need was to ensure that current trends and information supported it. Once the technical analysis (population, buildable lands, employment forecasts, etc.) were confirmed and updated in the Plan, the Plan was taken to the public for discussion.

The City employed several means of involving the public and other stakeholders. These included use of the City's website to post updates, the City's Facebook and newsletter, posting copies at the Arlington library and City Hall; and direct communication with inquiries via e-mail.

The City Planning Commission is the ongoing steward of the Comprehensive Plan. In this role they provide advice and recommendations to the Mayor, Council, and City staff on planning goals, policies and future plans. Throughout the update process, the Planning Commission provided input to City staff with input regarding the Plan drafts, public participation, the preliminary and final environmental review documents.

City staff was available to answer specific questions by the public on a day-to-day basis. Audio recording of Commission and Council meetings were available to the public. Public hearings were held by the Planning Commission in May and by the City Council in June. Each meeting was preceded by a workshop to allow informal discussion of the Plan with citizens.

The data used to develop this Comprehensive Plan are to the greatest extent possible the best available data. The City has also coordinated its plan with that of adjacent jurisdictions and

agencies and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), which also acts as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO))` in order to achieve compatibility and consistency. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan has considered, and incorporated where applicable, the Growth Management Act's thirteen goals, listed below.

As part of PSRC certification of its 2015 Plan, the City undertook a “reconciliation” process in 2016 to ensure that land use policies and assumptions were coordinated with the County population, employment and housing targets for 2035. Upon successful conclusion of the process, certain amendments were made to the Plan, which was adopted as an update on September 18, 2017 by City Council. This was followed by full certification of the City’s plan by the PSRC as compliant with Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040.

Arlington’s Plan now conforms to:

- established regional guidelines and principles,
- the adopted long-range regional transportation plan, and
- transportation planning requirements of RCW 47.80.026. The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2040 encompass these requirements

### **1.11 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

Adopted plans must contain implementation and monitoring procedures developed in order to establish a system for measuring progress in implementing the goals and policies. This process also prepares the City for updates in the future. These procedures address:

- Citizen participation in the process;
- Updating appropriate base-line data and measurable objectives to be accomplished in the first six-year period of the plan, and for the long-term period(2035);
- Accomplishments in the first ten-year period, describing the degree to which the goals and policies have been successively reached;
- Obstacles or problems which resulted in the under achievement of goals and policies;
- New or modified goals and policies needed to address and correct discovered problems; and
- A means of ensuring a continuous monitoring and evaluation of the plan during the ten-year period.

Although adopted by ordinance, a Comprehensive Plan has traditionally been a policy document with the implementation carried through by land development regulations and other

ordinances. However, the Growth Management Act has authorized action in a variety of innovative regulatory and non-regulatory implementation methods that should be considered. The City will continue its public education program following plan adoption in order to inform the entire community about the rationale and goals of the plan as well as the changes that will take place in the City because of the plan's implementation. Arlington believes that broad support for the plan is crucial for effective implementation.

Development regulations must be updated to be consistent with the plan shortly after its adoption. In reviewing regulations for consistency, the City should ensure that the development patterns suggested in the plan are encouraged. In addition to the new development regulations identified in the land use plan other regulations will be enacted as necessary to implement the land use plan.

Planning is an on-going process, and improved data or changing circumstances will require amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, the plan will be updated once every eight years to reflect revisions to the Office of Financial Management population estimates and revisions to the Capital Facilities Plan. The update will also address any specific concerns, clarify inconsistencies that were identified during the decade, review the adequacy of the adopted level of service standards, and update any environmental information. In addition, every eight years the City will review the densities permitted and the usage of the land with the Urban Growth Area.

The City of Arlington is committed to following its adopted Comprehensive Plan and will allow for an adequate period of time for policies and actions to take effect prior to considering changes to it. The City is also committed to working with the County and other jurisdictions to coordinate and resolve problems. As with other communities, Arlington allows the public to submit requests for plan amendments once a year. The “docket process” ensures that changing circumstances that warrant changes to policies, zoning or projects are adequately considered to keep the Plan vibrant.

The City, through its monitoring and annual review process, will ensure that the Plan remains concurrent with State, regional and local policies. If a concurrency issue arises, the re-assessment process (See 1.6 above) will be initiated.